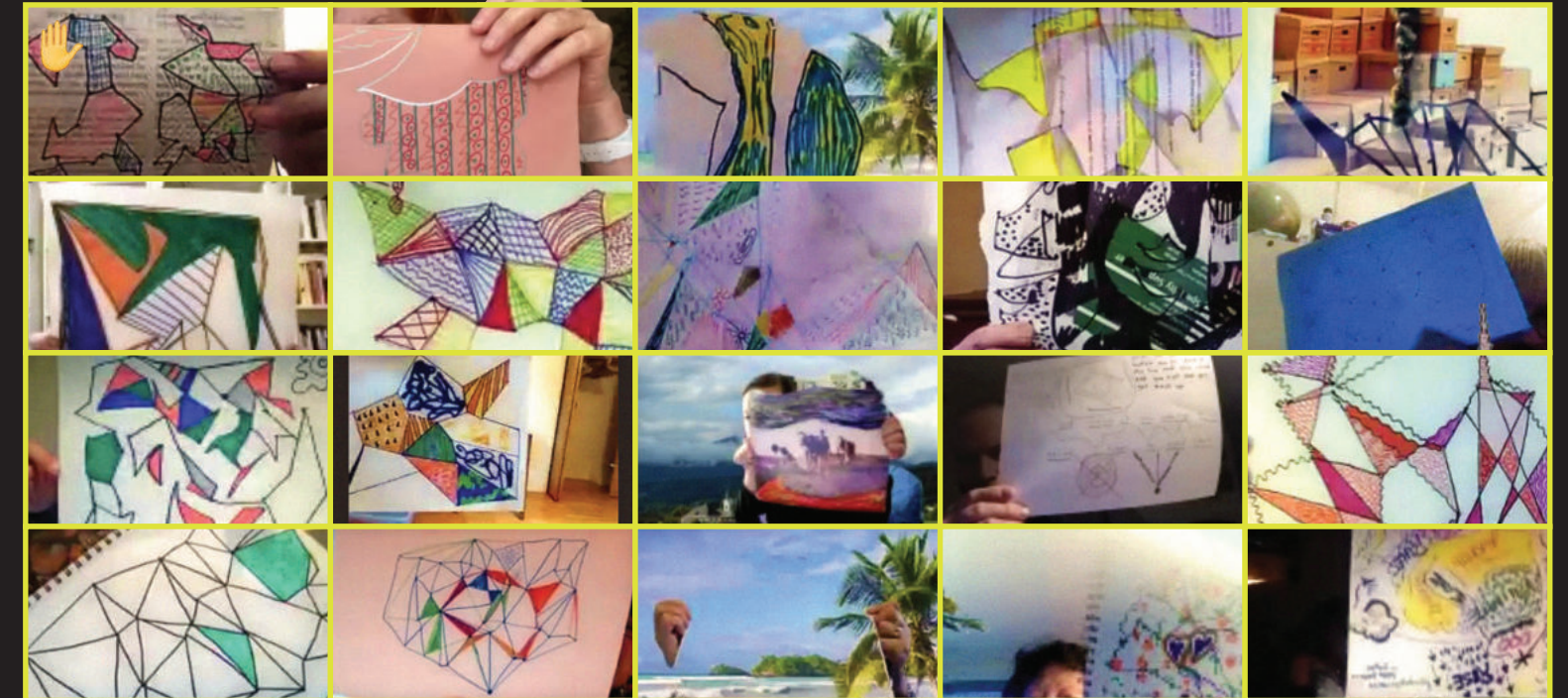


Turn on original sound

1/3

Look what happens when everyone



depends on everyone else

Invite

Captions

Humanities  
101 community  
Programme

HUM (HUMANITIES 101 COMMUNITY PROGRAMME)  
DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE/SOUTH & FACULTY OF ARTS

#270 Buchanan E, 1866 Main Mall, University of British Columbia  
on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the hə́ŋqəmiṇəṃ  
speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1  
tel 604.822.0028  
h.u.m@ubc.ca  
humanities101.arts.ubc.ca

Participants 58

Share Screen

Chat

Reactions

Polls

Breakout Rooms

Join

Hum

*Hum*

## PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

### ***Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else***

This was the year when speculations about “what if” materialized, when everything in the world shifted, when everyone depended on each other for support and to find new ways of being safe while mingling... so Hum, the Humanities 101 Community Programme, looked and listened to what was happening, closely. Overlooking each others’ masks, we looked more deeply into each others’ eyes and found that with some creative and technological modifications, we could not only stay together, but grow. Everyone became stars in the new “Hollywood Squares” world of video conferencing, every thumbnail image depending on its neighbours no matter how far away, with UBC souls sitting right next to University of Alberta souls in our first ever collective Hum courses.

### ***What if everything depends on everything else?***

Hum is honey: it’s utterly specific, each and every time, for all involved; it depends. Like bees’ ways, like hummycombs, Hum’s a practice and an expression of interconnecting and interdepending, of reciprocal relationships that make their very own, situated, organic shapes. For Hum, the question “What if?” is about speculative fiction...and about making a living sweet spot where everything Hums, everything flows and mingles. And when everything in the world shifts, we hum along by finding safe ways to keep on depending.

### ***Find freedom in the context you inherit***

Hum is part of communities in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Downtown South (DTES/South), at the University of British Columbia on unceded, ancestral, traditional, Coast Salish territory, and across Canada and beyond. With tuition-free courses that are prerequisite-free, participants who join in freely, free Public Programmes downtown (and online), and a Steering Committee perpetually open to all participants and alumni, Hum demonstrates that university can be “set free” of some of its precepts and remain intensive, empowering and enthusiastically-attended—in fact, it turns out that this is what Hum is in a perfect position to do + know + show, still.

### ***Hum word bound***

Who is involved? Hum participants live in the DTES/South and nearby areas, with diverse experience and knowledge: Indigenous people and people from around the world. They are working to overcome personally-felt oppressions and obstacles that are financial, institutional, educational, governmental, health-related and social, while experiencing intense gentrification and displacement in their home neighbourhoods. The Programme works closely with DTES/South communities and is sponsored by UBC’s Faculty of Arts and private donations, largely from UBC alumni. Its dedication to being situated and responsive to both DTES/South residents and UBC communities means that Hum is always changing....

### ***No carrots no sticks!***

The Programme is committed to being responsible through respectful, long term relationships based in learning. It runs four free, dedicated, university-level, Cultural Studies-style courses, which are grounded in relevant, interdisciplinary, critical and creative thinking practices: two are interdisciplinary courses strong in Critical Indigenous Studies, delving into 20+ disciplines/areas with many invited teachers over a full academic year (Hum101 and Hum201), and two are hands-on writing courses that touch on 13 genres in 13 weeks (Writing 101 and Writing 201). Classes are a lively mix of people coming together, sharing knowledge, expertise and humour, and creating conversations that may carry on for years....

### ***Where there’s walls there’s holes***

Prerequisite-free, and with many supportive practices to meet students’ material and learning needs, Hum’s courses value participants’ own situated knowledges and desire to join in. Each year, courses have a different theme, such as Find freedom in the context you inherit (a quote from Stó:lo feminist writer Lee Maracle), Hum word bound, No carrots no sticks, Where there’s walls there’s holes, What are you in a perfect position to know + do, now?, Where we walk becomes the path, and this year Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else. Participants do preparatory readings, engage in small group discussions and read their work aloud at the start of classes if they wish to, are famous for asking tough questions of experienced teachers, and complete assignments—poems, reflections, essays, artworks—that are gathered in yearly publications.

### ***What are you in a perfect position to know + do, still?***

While classes are based at the UBC campus, Hum is as much a part of its downtown communities, also running weekly free Public Programmes at DTES/South community centres (Carnegie Centre, the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, néçáʔmat ct Strathcona Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, and the Gathering Place). These Programmes are initiated and led by participants, alumni and volunteers. Members of Hum’s Steering Committee, which meets regularly in the DTES, stated “Hum takes us on an adventure of open-mindedness, possibilities, social participation and connectivity by unpacking preconceived ideas. Hum generates direction, community, knowledge, opportunity, possibilities and self-awareness through practices that distinguish our unity, creativity, knowledge, self-esteem, self-respect and self-determination.”

### ***Where we walk becomes the path***

At 22, Hum is the first and largest programme of its kind in Canada, with 16 annual publications. To date, almost 1150 students have graduated and there have been over 235 volunteer teachers and scores of supportive UBC student/alumni volunteers who assist the dedicated Programme faculty and staff. Many more people are enmeshed in the growing number of devoted sister programmes across Canada and similar courses elsewhere. Along with the current focus on support for Indigenous people’s educational desires, responsible relationships between universities and communities, and international interest in freeing education, Hum is part of many movements....



## INTRODUCTION

Hum’s 23<sup>rd</sup> year, oh yes, it happened! Our community of graduates and alumni is now well over a thousand strong—even greater with Hum’s hundreds of volunteers, teachers, student-staff, staff, faculty and supporters in the Downtown Eastside and Downtown South (DTES/South) of Vancouver, at the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, across Canada and abroad. Hum has come to depend on all these people on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations on the west coast, and on the ancestral territory of the Papaschase Nehiyawak Cree First Nation, Treaty 6, in Amiskwaciwâskahikan / ᐱᓂᓕᓴᓕᓴᓐᓴᓐᓴᓐ (Edmonton). We want to express our great respect for these Nations, and especially for the contributions of Indigenous participants in Hum, some of whom have included their ancestry with their names.

This year’s Hum course theme is “Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else.” It’s hinged to last year’s theme “What if everything depends on everything else?” but shifts from speculating—asking, WHAT IF?—to experiencing: experiencing being connected and interdependent on grand and intimate scales; experiencing a global pandemic from within the confines of precarious health, loss, lengthy social/physical distancing practices, delays in vaccinations, and ever-present masks. Masks work as an everyday semiotic sign of the pandemic, yet overlooking each others’ masks, we looked more deeply into each others’ eyes and found that with some creative and technological modifications, Hum could not only stay together, but grow. Everyone became stars in the new “Hollywood Squares” world of video conferencing, every thumbnail image depending on its neighbours no matter how far away, with UBC sitting right next to the University of Alberta in our first ever collective Hum courses, held online this spring.

Living a profound experience of global interdependencies pitched by COVID-19 put us in the perfect position to feel and see, learn and tell what happens. In Hum courses, we looked with the questions and practices of many academic disciplines and interdisciplines, through the eyes and words of our teachers and classmates, and toward yet-to-be-made futures where we may well understand and care for each other, Mother Earth and the stars, with more awareness of how truly we depend on each other. These interdependencies ARE who we are in the world with each other, and not just humans, not just now but in pasts and futures understood as unequal power-based relationships: Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate, Idle No More, Every Child Matters, women and children in a sea of rising violence matter. The DTES/South community matters, and we honour the memory of our respected Hum alumni AJ Low Horn Komperdo (Piikani, Siksika, Ojibway, Mohawk, Cree Nations), Gerry Adams (Dene First Nation) and Johnny Jaworski, who were taken by the syndemic. Listening widely and locally,

we hear this syndemic announcing the structural and lived inequalities that have gained volume, telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else while in deeply unequal relationships.

In all of Hum’s courses this year, the focus and content danced with a single invitation: to look at what happens when everyone depends on everyone else. In the summer, to hold our sense of continuity and belonging, we piloted a series called “Learning together, apart”; these physical distance, self-directed projects were designed for recent Hum alumni who received weekly sanitized learning packages (aka “the class is in the bag”) which held inspiring materials to personally animate each weeks’ focus—such was our summer of site-specific situated pedagogy!

In the autumn we moved our gig online while gaining increased access to technology and support. These sessions were held twice weekly, with online lectures for all students followed by course-specific tutorials a few days later, where students discussed the week’s course content and read their “groundwork” (homework assignments) aloud, if they wanted to. Each week was a set piece, so this book is arranged to keep with that rhythm, with the course content and participants’ work depending closely on each other, side by side. Here, each week’s content tells what happens when everyone depends on everyone else for splendid lectures, stimulating tutorials, and participants’ own groundwork responses, edited for this destination through strong practices of consent and confidentiality. So each week is a self-referential section, complete and linked to the overall courses: look what we did together!

All this cohabiting intricacy... yet one class stands out and is featured on this book’s cover: the evening we spent with the mighty art educators from the Surrey Art Gallery. They’d made up dynamic art-making packages for all Hum participants, staff and volunteers in Vancouver and Edmonton which were delivered to everybody in advance, itself an act of such generosity. In class, all ready, sitting inside our own Hollywood Squares, our initial art instruction was to look carefully at a piece of paper from your package, look soooo carefully at this blank

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<sup>1</sup> “Two categories of disease are interacting within specific populations—infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and an array of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These conditions are clustering within social groups according to patterns of inequality deeply embedded in our societies. The aggregation of these diseases on a background of social and economic disparity exacerbates the adverse effects of each separate disease. COVID-19 is not a pandemic. It is a syndemic.” Richard Horton, “COVID-19 is not a pandemic” *The Lancet*, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)32000-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32000-6/fulltext). Sept. 26, 2020.

page that you begin to notice something on the page that’s a little different, that stands out when you really take the time to look for it in the edge of the light. Put a mark there, then another, then connect them. Keep going. What appears? Such careful looking for subtle shifts leads to drawing connections, to noticing interdependencies that trace a singular pathway that becomes Hum, different every time, every year, with every hand and eye and word and sound and pencil held. Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else, the never-before and never-again shapes which that particular ME WE make. See our artwork on the cover, then read writing by the Hum folks behind the drawings, between the sheets.

Through all of this, we depended on Hum Vancouver’s Programme Coordinator Paul Woodhouse, our top magician who makes the impossible appear before our eyes, again and again; Reuben Jentink, Hum’s Writing Coordinator and our very own Samwise Gamgee; the nimble UBC student-staff and volunteers Shalon Sims, Kenzie Witschi and Mat Arthur; our stellar colleague Lisa Prins, Coordinator of UofA’s Hum programme, her staff and volunteers Kendra Cowley, MorningStar Willier and Jay Freisen, and Hum’s profound supporters, Gage Averill and Gerald Ma, who amidst the most hectic of years kept us close under their wings. We also want to recognize the other cross-Canada Hum-style programme Directors/Coordinators who helped to formulate what we could do together during the pandemic, some of whom who wanted to but weren’t in a position to join in the collective course.

Immense gratitude goes to two people deeply involved with Hum for many years who embody being connected and interdependent on intimate and grand scales: Reuben Jentink and Terry Lui. In the myriad Hum roles of student staff, volunteer coordinator, research assistant, Public Programmes facilitator (leading us on a two year weekly ‘read aloud’ trek from Hobbiton), teacher and Writing Coordinator, for seven years Reuben has lent his strong legs and wise fortitude to help loads of people to find and make their own, their very own, rings. What more could we want! And, through his global eyes and deft touch, for six years Hum alumnus Terry widened the scope of DTES/South film audiences’ worlds through his curation of Hum’s *Documentaries for Thinkers* film series at Carnegie Centre, taking up the mantle from the late Hum alumna Colleen Carroll who founded and ran the film series for seven years. Happily drawn into beckoning seats, crowds of devotees travelled together these Saturday evenings to learn from Terry’s research and selections, and to benefit from his great enthusiasm. Terry and Reuben are living legends of what can happen when dedicated education activists create interdependencies through their love of learning. We thank them heartily for all they’ve done with and for us!

As well as at the UBC campus, Hum is part of downtown Vancouver communities, and, apart from this year, Hum alumni and volunteers have long initiated and run free, open Public Programmes at many DTES/South community centres: Carnegie Centre, the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, néćá?mat ct Strathcona Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, and the Gathering Place. This year, long-time Hum honey Mat Arthur ran an

online Public Programme “read aloud” group called “Haraway Talks: Reading and Figuring Worlds.” Every year, so many people shape and hold Hum, especially the Programme’s Steering Committee of Hum students and alumni; all are truly thanked in class, in person, and recognized in the Acknowledgements section that concludes this book.

It’s been such an honour to spend this distant time so closely together with you, to have noisily celebrated our immense lively (im)patience. I thank everyone for contributing to creating such a beautiful climate of open-mindedness, curiosity, and armchair adventure, where interests water themselves, catch themselves on the wind...and ripen. Usually our ripening is caught in group photos; this year, it’s in a boisterous, free-form centrefold collage of photos of ourselves, which we especially like, from any time of our lives at all.

I congratulate all of the graduates, staff and volunteers, plus all the teachers and supporters who’ve helped Hum continue to grow, and especially our new friends and colleagues at the University of Alberta led by the very wise woman, Lisa Prins.

Dr. Margot Leigh Butler  
Academic Director, Hum  
Associate, UBC Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies

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# *Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else*

**Faculty:** Dr. Margot Leigh Butler (Hum Academic Director and Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC) in collaboration with Lisa Prins from February – April, 2021 (Hum 101 Coordinator, University of Alberta, & collective member of the “Walls to Bridges” (W2B) Program at The Edmonton Institution for Women federal prison).

**Students:** This year’s Hum courses are for recent graduates of Hum courses, and rely on those participants’ experiences in Hum courses to participate. Hum has a strong commitment to its communities in the Downtown Eastside/Downtown South and at UBC, and is committed to keeping our courses running during the pandemic... which entails some changes that we’ll all work through together!

**Locations:** June to September: Self-Directed Study | October to April: Online

**Summer Term:** June 5 – October 2, 2020

**Fall Term:** October 6 – December 1, 2020

**Spring Term:** January 5 – April 8, 2021, collaborating with University of Alberta February – April 2021

**Graduation Ceremony:** April 26, 2021

**Summer Term:** Here’s how Hum’s three summer projects work: every week over the months of June, July and September, students receive an enticing learning package of Hum joy to work with on your own. These prepared, sanitized packages (shells) will include a summary of the week’s themes, a number of tantalizing short readings, online activities, and some questions for you to write, draw, sing and daydream with. There will also be paper and pens, tea and chocolate, and inspiring materials that animate this week’s focus. After receiving your shells, you might find a spot on your own—either in the shade or sun (weather permitting!)—to get going

# Learning together, apart

on the readings and makings. All aspects will be done on your own, but through these shared readings, writings and Hum experiences, it will be almost as though we're together again. All writing can be submitted for feedback to [hum@ubc.ca](mailto:hum@ubc.ca).

**Fall & Spring Terms:** Everything that Hum usually does has simply been REARRANGED for this online context, so classes still include presentations by teachers, small group discussions, writing, assignments and readings (readings to be done by all students are marked on the course outline with an asterisk \*, followed by additional readings for the academic Hum stream). This year, the first half hour before classes is for “social time” and questions about accessing the course and materials. Class assignments will receive feedback, of course, and should be sent to [h.u.m@ubc.ca](mailto:h.u.m@ubc.ca). In addition to Hum’s core course, the online Public Programme series enables alumni to pursue even more shared intellectual and creative interests.

**Day & Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays term 1, Mondays and Thursdays term 2. Every week, courses meet ONLINE on Tuesdays/Mondays at 5:30 pm for a shared lecture AND all courses meet ONLINE on Thursdays for course-specific tutorials: Hum stream at 5:30 pm, Writing stream at 7:00 pm. You can access Zoom through [canvas.ubc.ca](https://canvas.ubc.ca) using your name (CWL) and password. Course readings and activity sheets will be accessed here too.

## Staff & facilitators:

Reuben Jentink (Writing 101/201 Coordinator, Equity Studies in Education MA (All But Thesis))

Paul Woodhouse (Programme Coordinator, Sociology Graduate Program MA (All But Thesis))

Shalon Sims (Student Staff) and Kenzie Witschi (Student Staff)

Mathew Arthur (Public Programme facilitator)

*in collaboration with:*

University of Alberta’s Humanities 101 Program from February to April, 2021

Kendra Cowley (Student Staff), MorningStar Willier (Student Staff), Jay Freisen (Faculty of Arts & Community Service Learning, UofA)

Kelsi Barkway (Hum volunteer)





## Scavenging: Land & Waterscapes; Plants & their Names; Rocks, Ruins & Relations; Seeds & Speculations

A land-based special project for 2019-20 Hum graduates during June 2020.  
Designed & facilitated by Reuben Jentink

Now, as before, there are so, so many ways that people have found to tell stories about the land and of our place in the land. These stories range across geographies and places; they differ throughout time, and take shape within specific cultures and histories. People write about these relationships to place and to land in myriad ways, through poetry, memoir, short stories, graphic novels, science fiction, as well as personal and academic writing and their hybrids, most of which were studied in the Writing 101 and 201 courses! And then there are those other languages, the stillness of stones, the geometry of a pinecone's scales, the tireless dance of a tree's branches in the wind...

**Scavenging** was a four-week-long self-directed project for Hum 2019–2020 graduates that looked closely at the many different ways that we relate to and are a part of the world around us, in keeping with that year's theme, "What if everything depends on everything else?" Over this past year, we've learnt so much about our place in this lively world, and how much we depend on one another (human and non-human)—even when "depending" means staying put and taking care during this pandemic. Each Friday, participants received a "shell" (a sanitized package), which included masks, readings, a summary of the week's themes, inspiring materials, and questions for participants to write, draw, animate, and daydream with!

Like a mushroom forager's carrier bag, the themed shells gathered together a bunch of related things, each unique and worthy of consideration—yours to ponder, turn upside down, weave together, and maybe share. Like the science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin does with her carrier bag, participants might have found themselves scavenging, foraging, and adding other things to their shell! Science fiction is a way of describing the world, Le Guin writes, and what's "going on, what people actually do and feel, how people relate to everything else in this vast sack, this belly of the universe, this womb of things to be and tomb of things that were, this unending story."

A scavenger hunt, the childhood game from which this project takes its name, is just the sort of game that we could play right now—together while physically apart. Setting off with a common project we might have moseyed in the city, lingered in a written place, or gotten comfortable in a park. There was an opportunity to submit writings for feedback. Participants did all aspects of the project on their own, but through shared readings, writings, and Hum experiences, it was almost as though we were together again.

## What if...everything you need is already inside you?

A sound-based, four-week-long special project for 2019-20 Hum graduates during July 2020  
Designed & facilitated by Margot Leigh Butler

What if we already have within us awarenesses we can depend on to ease and perhaps inspire our way through this pandemic, and afterward, too? What if they can be roused through sound? Through listening inside to our heartbeats and breath, then listening to the sound of a squeaky door hinge on the way out for a cherished walk, anticipating the whole world opening up. And when you step outside, the earth welcomes you with myriad sounds. Just listen. Just walk.

A "soundwalk" is walking while doing nothing but listening, immersing ourselves in the sounds we're always bathed in, unaware, and becoming aware of the sounds already inside us. The soundwalk is a listening practice where the walker improvises with their acoustic, sonic environment, concertedly. Each and every Hum experience is an improvisation where everyone depends on everyone else. "Depends on" can mean listens to, respects, values, and perhaps grows to care for.... Improvising is being in the moment, immersed, implicated, situated, and working with who and what is there. Improvising is *doing*! It's a *willingness*... and improvising is always already inside us. Find a sweet spot—perhaps in your shower...or at a BLM demonstration, and let your voice ring out: if you can hum, you can shout, you can sing!

Consider the sounds abounding at CRAB Park, the only beachfront park in the Downtown Eastside, fought long and hard for by local residents and so named with the acronym of Create a Real Available Beach, and dedicated to the memory of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. There are tender and joyous sounds there, always. And there are sounds in so many registers, since this park hosts helicopter pads, a hovercraft mooring, train tracks, jetty construction, trucks hauling containers from the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority... yet within this you can hear the resonance of a drum circle, of musicians playing cello, crystal bowls, trumpet, guitar, drums, of birds and barking dogs, laughter and more. It is a rich soundscape to improvise with!

Deep listening practices tone up our awareness of place, embodiment, experience, nuance, of making distinctions, of listening to silence AND making noise (our heartbeats, our drumbeats).

This project's shells contained images, readings, methods and instruments for improvising with and immersing ourselves in the sound around us, maps for local soundwalks, breathing exercises, reminders of how our body breathes and how to appreciate this even more, musical notation books for writing about these experiences in, and Chinese wind chimes small enough to fit in any window.

## Exploring human-digital relations in the age of “big data”

A big data-based special project for Hum 2019-20 graduates during September 2020  
Designed and facilitated by Paul Woodhouse

Remember waking up to torrential rain... when just twelve hours prior the weatherperson predicted blue skies and sunshine? Not too long ago, right? But nowadays, a weather app can give a reasonably accurate prediction of how the weather will behave several days ahead. Smart technologies collect massive amounts of environmental data, observe patterns within the data, and then predict the weather’s future behaviour. Technologies that utilize the predictive power of big data are increasingly found in the social world too, enabling us to see in new and different ways. It is these human-digital relations that were the focus of this special project.

We live with an expanding array of digital technologies that are directed at recording aspects of human lives and bodies, and rendering them into digitized information for purposes which we explored together. Devices like the phone in our pocket, mobile apps, and sensor-embedded spaces all generate flows of personal data that can be used to keep track of our doings, tastes, preferences, interactions, thoughts and feelings, music and movie preferences, places we visit and how many steps we take to get there, intimate conversations, secret desires, the profound and pointless questions we ask google, and much much more.... Data tells stories, and it is in our interests to hear the types of stories big data tells about us.

Disruptive technologies like *artificial intelligence* (AI), *machine learning*, *facial recognition* and the *internet of things* have begun to service all aspects of our lives, and *big data* is the raw material driving the change. Taking a closer look at these enchanting, cutting-edge technologies, we found them to engage with familiar concepts—tracking, surveillance, knowledge, power—while transforming their operations and effects in new, interesting and often unscrupulous ways. We thought creatively and critically about the implications of these human-digital dependencies, how they are revolutionizing the way we live now, and speculating about what’s to come in the future.

This project included works of fiction, journalism and scholarly writings (paper copies were included in “shells”), plus film, podcasts and interactive digital art projects (available online). The four weekly themes built upon one another, and various activities helped participants transition into Hum’s online fall courses.

Sept. 4: Track and trace: what if preventing the spread of Covid-19 depends on big data?

Sept. 11: What counts as privacy and power in digital surveillance?

Sept. 18: The realm of 0 and 1: what do algorithms want?

Sept. 25: More than just a number: quantifying the social.

## Haraway Talks: Reading and Figuring Worlds

An online “read aloud” Public Programme for Hum 2020-21 students, from October – December 2020  
Designed and facilitated by Mat Arthur



Every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. we came together over Zoom to read aloud from interviews with feminist technoscience theorist Donna Haraway. Her work explores how human lives are tangled up in histories of science and empire and in messy relationships with nonhuman others. She generates concepts and figures that dream up ways of living together on a damaged planet.

Taking turns, participants were invited to read a paragraph or a page, or just listen along. Because we were reading to learn new and surprising things together and from our own lived knowledges, we wallowed in the rich array of accents and dialects, not worrying about making mistakes or correcting one another.

The full list of readings can be found at <http://doingsts.com/>,

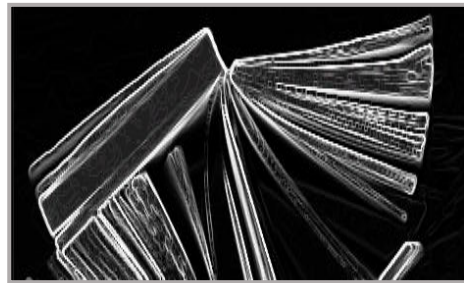
# What on earth is going on? We're going online!

The \* (asterisk) Indicates readings done by all students, followed by additional readings for the academic Hum stream students

## OCTOBER 6 & 8 WELCOME BACK

with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum & Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC, Reuben Jentink, Hum & Equity Studies in Education Graduate Program, SFU, and Paul Woodhouse, Hum & Sociology Graduate Program, UBC.

### Look at what we read



\* Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. “Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation.” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* vol. 3, no. 3, 2014, pp. 1-25.

Begay, Jade. “From Independence to Interdependence.” *NDN Collective*, 4 July 2019, <https://ndncollective.org/from-independence-to-interdependence/>.

Cisneros, Natalie Avalos. Abstract. *Interdependence as a Lifeway: Decolonization and Resistance in Transnational Native American and Tibetan Communities*. 2014. University of California at Santa Barbara, PhD dissertation.

### Look at what happened in class

In Hum classes, we talk about place and representation, which is the use of languages to convey meanings within and across cultures. This year, our classes took place in the constructed, human-made field of digital representation called Zoom. Our theme this year, “Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else,” is related to last year’s theme “What if everything depends on everything else?” but shifts from speculating—asking, WHAT IF?—to a mode that’s more aware of what being connected and interdependent can mean.

In our first ever online Hum class we learned to think of this new virtual space as a place and experience of connection. It’s a highly visual space, and not only do we look at each other, we look at ourselves, too. Together we worked through the platform controls and got a sense of the different ways to communicate with one another, like the chat function, emojis, hand gestures, and (un)mute.

Our interactions in virtual space are grounded in a physical place, on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and the Tsleil Waututh peoples. To acknowledge the land where we live and learn together, our welcome back to class icebreaker, called “Time & Place,” allowed us to understand and tell each other about our position or “positionality” in time and space—not only to orient ourselves, but to understand ourselves and each other better, and our relations to this place. We reflected on our relation to Indigenous territory by sharing our responses to the questions: When/how did you arrive in the territory you are currently on? What is your background? Where are your ancestors from? And are there any other territories you’ve spent time on?

### Groundwork aka Homework

Leanne Simpson’s article, “Land as Pedagogy,” begins with a short story about a young Nishnaabeg girl named Kwezens. It’s a story about how Kwezens learns to harvest maple syrup and then shares that knowledge with her community. The essay that follows Kwezens’ story refers over and over to so many of the different teachings that are contained within this short story! These teachings are especially specific to Anishinaabe lands and territory, and to everyone living there. There are other stories that might be more specific to other places—like here.

After reading through the article by Leanne Simpson, write a short story describing an experience that you had with the land—wherever you are—where you learned something that is important to you. You can follow the form and structure of Kwezens’ story, if you like—or follow a different path. Like Simpson says at the end of the article, urban areas are full of stories, too.



## Wabi-Sabi: finding beauty in imperfection

EVA WATTERSON

Shed light upon the storm clouds,  
For after the rain, appears the sunshine.

Vibrant purple, pink, and yellow blooms,  
Give off fragrant perfumes while fluttering in the breeze.

Coloured petals cling to their branches,  
Winds whip across the fields with fury.

As winds die down, raindrops appear to nourish the plants.

Parched beige, dry leaves spring to life,  
Standing upright again with confident pride.

The thirsty plants drink off the plentiful rainwater.

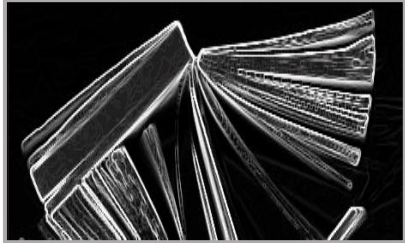
Vegetables in the gardens take root and become nourishment for everyone.



Wabi-Sabi: finding beauty in imperfection, by Eva Watterson

**“Exploring human-digital relations in the age of big data” with Paul Woodhouse, Hum & Sociology Graduate Program, UBC.**

**What we read**



\* Mayer-Schonberger, Viktor, and Kenneth Cukier. “Datafication.” In *Big Data: The Essential Guide to Work, Life, and Learning in the Age of Insight*. London, UK: John Murray Publishers, 2017, pp. 73-97.

Bunz, Mercedes, and Graham Meikle. “First Things.” In *The Internet of Things*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018, pp. 7-25.

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[www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/01/why-weather-forecasting-keeps-getting-better](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/01/why-weather-forecasting-keeps-getting-better).

**What happened in class**

All animals leave traces... little bits of information that tell us something has happened in the world. Traces are like data; they only make sense or come in useful when they are interpreted or processed to give them context and meaning. Data means “given” in Latin, in the sense of a “fact.” A folded page in a notebook, a record of your daily calorie intake, or the code of our DNA are all forms of data that represent facts or traces of the past. Nowadays, we also leave a trail of digital traces. The process of turning traces of our lives into computer-readable format is called “datafication.” But datafication is nothing new. For millennia, humans have created data by devising instruments to measure and record the world, for instance nautical routes and maps (in the 19th century); the widespread adoption of Arabic numerals (rather than Roman) and the invention of accounting (between the 12th and 14th centuries); or histories of mapping (beginning with Ptolemy’s *Geographia* around 150 CE). The collecting, sorting, and analyzing of data is done to make sense of a phenomena, and to make knowledge claims. So, what’s new with *big data*? Well, the yardstick has given way to new digital tools that mean more data can be collected (volume), more types (variety), and at far greater speeds (velocity). But it’s not just the case that big data captures more varied information faster; big data enables us to see in new and different ways, and is applied to all sorts of fields, like workplaces, policing, and healthcare. For instance health apps on smartphones or facial recognition cameras use microensors to read blood oxygenation, skin conductance and body temperature—information that might come in handy when trying to diagnose viral symptoms. Our bodily vitals, movements, interactions, entertainment preferences and much more are being “datafied” and “digitized”—our lives are rendered into computer-readable data. This can reveal a lot about ourselves, and when one person’s small data is put together with everyone else’s, this big data reveals broader societal trends and behaviours. Like weather sensors that rely on big data to predict global weather patterns and give advance warning to millions of people about an impending hurricane, or on a less dramatic scale to give notice of when to plan a picnic in the park, the predictive power of big data can be applied to the social

world. We are living in a moment where big data wants to track and know more personal information, like our relationships, experiences, moods, attitudes and many other behaviours—human nature is being put under the microscope. It naturally leads us to ask, where is this information going? For what purpose? And to whose benefit? Privacy is a central concern, yet there are deeper challenges to safeguard free will, moral choice, and human agency—the power to act and make meaning.

**Groundwork aka Homework**

Science fiction writing and films, such as Phillip K. Dick’s famous “Minority Report” often speculate about imaginative and futuristic relationships and worlds with innovative technologies. Some of the technologies covered in this week’s readings and lectures are old, while others are brand new or not-quite-yet and are only just starting to have a real impact on society. Think about the way you interact with people, or the way you move around the DTES/South, or some mundane thing you do regularly, and write a speculative story about how a technology might alter these relationships—feel free to choose any technology mentioned in the readings (e.g. computers, smartphones, GPS or other sorts of location-tracking devices, Facebook and Twitter, fitbits, or the Internet fridge...), or lecture, or make up one of your own!

Alternatively, you can write, draw, paint or sing about one or both of these two quotes from the other two essays you read for this week, and that pertain directly to our theme “Look what happens when everyone depends on everyone else”:

- a) In “Why weather forecasting keeps getting better,” by Hannah Fry: “Interconnecting aspects of the weather are nearly impossible to tease apart. Wind depends on temperature. Temperature depends on pressure. And pressure depends on wind. It’s an intricate mathematical tapestry that is far too intertwined to unpick by hand” (4).
- b) In “First Things” by Mercedes Bunz and Graham Meikle, the “internet of things” is described in this way: “The internet is no longer just about connecting computers—now, equipped with sensors and connectivity, every single thing can be connected” (10).



## We are the world of sensors

CINDY QT

In the old days, we tried to figure out our limits and play within them. With technology today, the only limitation is our imagination.... For instance, we see the world around us through other kinds of “eyes” powered with different lights: we view outer space by telescope, and we visualize the function of some organs or tissues (physiology) by X-ray, ultrasound, etc., which helps to generate medical imaging for us to view inside our bodies. We do all this because of our curiosity and because we’d like to figure out things around us, things inside of us, as well as things out of our reach. Through our five basic senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch—our human body receives sensory information. With technology, we can support our sensory capacities, make measurements and evaluate the information. We can use these evaluations to make predictions, innovate and then share this information with others. Technologies also extend and enhance our five senses. For example, by using different kinds of lenses, we can improve the eyesight and focus of people with different kinds of eye conditions like myopia and presbyopia. By using a camera, we can have 360-degree view, and by recording with a camera, we can have 24-hours non-stop surveillance video.

Then comes datafication. Datafication is a technological trend turning many aspects of our lives into data. We are building a brand new virtual network via all different kinds of sensors and indicators, which can collect information and turn it into data for sharing. Through modern networks, including the internet, we are all connected, related, and also become relevant to one another via the data we share.

Sensation consists of signal collection and transduction. We use all kinds of sensors to collect signals and turn them into data, and then use all kinds of processors to analyze the data to make it valuable. We use all kinds of indicators to visualize our data. Once we get used to having access to the data, we become reliant on the data being continually generated. For example, without knowing the highest and lowest temperatures, I really don’t know how to dress—what the right clothes are to keep myself warm enough to go out. Now, when I get ready for the day, I’m used to checking the high and low temperatures on the TV instead of going to the balcony to feel how cold or how hot it is outside.

In the future, we might wear smart glasses equipped with external sensors (cameras) and processors (picture translators) as extensions of our bodies. Such glasses might enable us to read foreign languages without first learning the language. Depending on the kinds of sensors that these glasses are equipped with, they might also help us by improving our vision and allowing for special vision, such as augmented reality (AR). With more and more technologies being applied to our lives (sometimes right onto our bodies), we come to rely on them and also to increasingly trust them because their results are measurable and seem to be more precise. To have more data, we install more and more sensors until our world is full of sensors! Then, finally, we might feel that the

world is under our control. No doubt, we live in the world we have built: all things we have made measurable and transparent to us because we think they are under our control. Take, for example, vaccines. We don’t like viruses from nature, but we enjoy creating vaccines because the vaccines we create are under our control. But is it really under our control just because we make them? I am questioning that, are you?

## Telling what happens when humans depend on open borders in the future

JOHNNY FRASER

I see a future where Michel Foucault’s ideas about surveillance society and membership are taken to the extreme. I have captured this future in the following short story.

As my eyes open, I feel a synthetic morning light emitting over my eyelids. I squint and try to turn over, but the least annoying of the mandatory alarm options, "rainforest sunrise," gets me up.

I get up on my feet, stretch, and swipe through the day’s news notifications as I stand on the designated blue footprints, turn to face The Oracle™—my room’s smart camera—and receive my daily body scan. The little frowny face and red arrow in the top right of the screen remind me that, because I was late for work last week, my social credit score went down. Looks like I'll need to make the time up with some extra shifts on the weekend. That's okay! I remind myself there has not been much to do on the weekends since the Eastside district was put on lockdown after 5:00 p.m.

My stomach rumbles as I shuffle over to the food printer to check how much I have in food credits for the month. I tap the Spartan® WeWatchI\_I™ smart device installed in my wrist, then a halo pops up from the screen and displays my balance: low, but I knew that. Here in the Eastside district, we look out for each other and I always help my neighbour, Willy. He can't work as many shifts as he used to, so I always make sure that he has some extra credits in his account. I swipe past the fancy, unaffordable food options on the *gold* menu, and after tolerating a few unskippable ads on the *blue* menu I select black "coffee," and put my cup under the spout. Warm black mud sputters unceremoniously into my cup: delicious.

I gulp down the coffee, quickly get naked and hop into the shower. I press the only button on the shower wall and it does the usual thing: The Oracle™ mini-cam in the showerhead performs a wellness body scan while playing two loops of that old Kenny G song, "Going Home." Fun fact: once a week The Oracle™ tediously explains that eight minutes is the optimal shower time. The “Going Home” single version® actually has a run time of four

minutes and fifteen seconds, which allows all Spartan® employees to enjoy, at no charge, a groovy eight minutes and thirty seconds of mindfulness every morning. If you believe in the Pavlovian response, then you would know that whenever a Spartan® employee hears the docile tones of the soprano sax they feel panic, rage and a frantic urge to wash their ass. The Oracle™ asked me if I wish to extend the experience and listen yet another time. It would cost me credits that I don't have so I say no, and the water shuts off. As I step out and grab my towel to dry off, I wonder if Spartan® paid Chinese malls to license this song and whether they're breaking even.

My daily health and wellness goals flash on the mirror as I wipe away the condensation. Sponsored by the recent Fitbit-Pfizer merger, I'm slightly annoyed, but altogether unsurprised, by the frowny face and downward pointing red arrow flickering on my wrist implant. The shower scan and room cameras have micro-analyzed my facial expressions and body language, resulting in an assumption that my happiness is on a downward trend. According to my wrist implant my happiness is down 20% from yesterday, and it suggests I express gratitude three times more than usual by thanking five people before the end of today's shift.

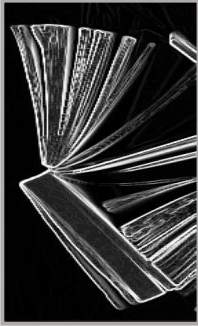
Stepping outside, I head for the blue line bus, which is three blocks further down the road than the gold line. As I walk to my place in the blue line, I pass the well-dressed gold line people hidden behind their privacy face masks. I remember Willy had mentioned that he used to be a mechanic and worked with an earlier version of the privacy mask. It's a fascinating bit of tech! More than just a mask it's a sound proof orb helmet that broadcasts what you want to see. Don't like looking at blue line employees getting on the bus? The helmet shows a generic smiley face. Don't want to be spoken to by someone not wearing a privacy helmet? The outer display warns the "offending stranger" that if their harassment continues, the police will be notified immediately.

Queued two meters apart, I wait to be scanned by a transit drone. It hovers like a lazy bumble bee and scans everyone waiting in line. My turn is next. A green light flashes above the drone's camera lens to give me the all clear before moving on to scan the person behind. I hear the drone buzzing angrily as it warns the person behind me that they are standing outside of their "stand here" box painted on the sidewalk. I don't look back, but I can hear the person shuffle quickly into place as the drone calms down and gives off an approving chirp and a dance before droning lazily down the line to the next person. The Spartan® self-driving bus doors open. I get on, and my face is scanned. To pay my fare I tap my wrist on the pad, then my details appear on the bus's large screen. It reminds me, and everyone else, that I'm down to my last two paid rides. I sigh, and feeling slightly embarrassed take a mental note. Knowing I need to refill my transit account, I might have to get by without my puffer this week, but perhaps I can ask Willy for help if the smog gets particularly bad. I find a window seat and watch the world around me. All I see are faceless gold line citizens in their privacy helmets.

I visualize myself in my own privacy helmet and wonder how they see the world. The advanced graphics, 3D modeling, and AI filters change the world into an "ideal" reality. I imagine the dark grey smog pumped out from the Spartan® fulfillment centers transformed into beautiful white clouds with silver linings against a clear blue sky. The broken buildings are fixed and stand proud. The broken people look wholesome; regenerated through the illusion of technology. Everyone is in their designated blue and gold boxes. I worry about gold citizens blindly following their privacy helmets' suggestions, and the ways Spartan® harvests mountains of personal data to match citizens using The Oracles™ algorithm. Instead of fearing being replaced by automated technologies, all Spartan® employees happily and automatically perform their designated tasks with the helpful assistance of advanced Spartan® technology.

I start to feel a deep angst and hopelessness until the wrinkled leathery face of Willy pops into my mind's eye. His knowing smile with its few missing molars from chewing a tough nut he couldn't crack. Willy always teaches me something new about loving the land and living with others in the now. I hear his deep rusty voice say, "One foot in the past an' one foot in the future means yer pissin' on the present, kid." A weight is lifted from my heart as I take a deep breath and wiggle my toes. Grounding myself in the moment I feel worry and anger, but also joy, hope, and I feel alive! What my wrist implant and the digital surveillance system built around me do not comprehend is that we humans work together and sacrifice for a better tomorrow. I relax my shoulders, tap open the wrist implant and shout, "moolah." Seems silly I know, but this helps to produce a genuine smile in me. Laughing at the absurdity of it all I feel grateful for my Eastside district and the people in it because I don't ever want to hide behind a privacy helmet that masks the ugly, yet beautiful, truths of what makes being alive so special. Ironically, the wrist implant beeps an approving tone and a smiley face with a green arrow pops up on the screen. My happiness increased 10%.

What we read



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\* McGuire, Richard. *Here*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2014.

Le Guin, Ursula K. “The Author of the Acacia Seeds.” In *The Unreal and the Real: Selected Stories of Ursula K. Le Guin Volume 2: Outer Space, Inner Lands*. Easthampton, MA: Small Beer Press, 2012, pp. 265-272.

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What happened in class

All of this week’s readings examined different kinds of relations. McGuire’s graphic novel showed how the past and future might already be a part of the present, in *this* place, right here right now. Anna Tsing practiced the art of noticing, paying attention to how “humans, pines, and fungi make living arrangements simultaneously for themselves and for others,” how they make multispecies worlds. Ursula Le Guin imagined the careful work it might take to learn the language of another being, like an ant or an eggplant. And Alexis Pauline Gumbs asked what might happen if we understood ourselves as planets.

In this class on place writing, Reuben invited us to think about past, present and future relations in our home neighbourhood through three writing exercises. These in-class exercises were as follows: 1) Choose CRAB Park, the DTES/South, or your home neighbourhood as your location, and then tell a short story in which you are a main character. This might be a story about collaboration, an unpredictable encounter, or a surprising event. 2) Think way, way back!—maybe 70, 400, or 20,000 years ago—and, using the same location as in exercise 1, tell a story of a different meeting. Write from the perspective of a non-human (like a rock, a pine tree, a red squirrel, or a lamppost—like the networked one from Paul’s lecture). 3) Think way, way forward!—maybe next year or at the turn of the next century—and write a scene imagining how your same location might look in the future. You might ask, who’s around? Are they human? Were they ever? What kinds of relationships do they maintain with other beings?

Groundwork aka Homework

Taking the writing that you did in class tonight, collage the three writings together. Following the form of Richard McGuire’s graphic novel *Here*, layer each separate piece on top of or below the other. The writings might be wholly unrelated to one another except for having happened in the same place. You might want to use different pieces or colours of paper to cut and layer on top of each other. Your collage might look something like this one that Reuben made:





## Granville Street

LORNA JOHNSON

1886

I am a *pseudotsuga menziesii* and I live on Granville Street. My friends call me Douglas Fir. Some folks think I belong in their parlour at Christmas time. No thanks! My height will be 295 feet and my diameter 13 feet, if I am able to reach old age. I worry about my future. The neighbourhood is changing. As I look at Granville street, I remember my childhood. At that time, Indigenous Peoples shared the forest with me. They were Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations. We were sympatico. I have seen many changes on Granville street. Over the years, people from overseas arrived. The Indigenous Peoples were pushed out. On this spot, I have heard CPR leader William Van Horne speak, and watched Mayor MacLean walk past. Sometimes I see Seraphim “Joe” Fortes from Barbados, walking past me on his way to the ocean. Today I have not seen anyone I know at Granville. Oh, oh, some men with large tools are approaching. Oh dear, they are cutting my bark! Excuse me, this is painful. Oh! Ehhh! I am feeling weak and off balance.

May 31, 2020

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) rally at Robson Square has ended and I join other people at the Granville SkyTrain station. Demonstrators in the SkyTrain entrance are placing their signs on the floor. Many of us pause to talk and reflect upon the injustices of recent days. George Floyd murdered May 25th. He was pleading for air, but the police officer did not remove his knee from George Floyd’s neck. Breonna Taylor dead March 13th. She was shot by police executing a search warrant on the wrong apartment. We talk about the deaths and place signs. Vancouver BLM posted on Instagram, “Black Lives Matter EVERY DAY. Indigenous Solidarity, ALWAYS.” The deaths are contrasted by the bright, circular station lights. A station elevator door opens and closes sporadically. The floor is white. On the station floor the signs lean, curl, overlap, like salmon fighting to leap upstream.

May 31, 2030

Granville SkyTrain station entrance is filled with youth from a Black Lives Matter group. Today, a strong voice from a radio station fills the entrance as a speech from Vancouver’s first Indigenous Mayor is broadcast. She is a few blocks away, on Union Street. Her speech is playing, while the youth hand out flyers to commuters. The flyers announce the opening of the brand-new Nora Hendrix Cultural Center. The Mayor is announcing the opening and introducing speakers from the Hogan’s Alley Society. She stresses that May 31st, 2020 was a critical juncture for Vancouver. From that day forward, the city worked tirelessly with people from Hogan’s Alley Society to ensure the cultural center would be built. Everyone is jubilant. The youth in the station remember their parents describing May 31, 2020. For the parents, this SkyTrain entrance was a place to leave signs of sorrow. Today, the station looks the same as it did in 2020, but so much progress has been made. The flyers, the BLM youth group, and the Nora Hendrix Cultural Center pushes us forward.



BLM demonstrators’ placards at Granville St. SkyTrain Station, May 31, 2021

## The cliffs of Bonaire: past, present, future

CHRIS MARQUIS

**4B.yrsB4Now!4B.yrsB4Now!4B.yrsB4Now!4B.yrsB4Now!4B.yrsB4Now!4B.**  
4 billion years before that blip in time when someone rode my waves, I was **yrs**  
just starting to perceive my identity as some toasty star stuff getting flung **B4**  
out there. They say we were already 9 or ten billion years old but I really **Now**  
don't remember. Was I ever a part of the big pop? I leave that up to my **-3B.**  
ancestors. As far as I'm concerned I'm rock solid or rock liquid, born of hot **yrs**  
gaseous parents and flung out to what became the third planet of its white **B4**  
dwarf sun. Small suns are good. It is the big ones who go pop too soon and **Now**  
knock out their planets before they've had a chance to turn into earth and **-2B.**  
grow stuff. This one grew a lot of stuff, but not a lot of plants got a foothold **yrs**  
on my black volcanic rock. Before I turned solid, black and pockmarked, I **B4**  
had a fun time as volcanic magma. Some of my neighbours, like Monserrat **Now**  
here in the Caribbean, and the Andes chain, are still dancing a jig as lava both **-1B**  
below and above the land. But I'm glad to be settling down over the millennia **yrs**  
and billennia. Mind you, my shore can be pretty exciting! I call myself a cliff **B4**  
but I'm mostly underwater, continually stroked up and down by the swells of **Now**  
the Atlantic on the windward side of my little Caribbean island. And although **1M**  
little grows on my topside, the churning ocean on my cliffside harbours all **yrs**  
kinds of fish and marine life! Human swimmers? Nah! They all stay on the **B4**  
leeward side, the Caribbean Sea. A load of adventureless nerds I say! But one **Now**  
guy, this one time jumped right in, even though my swells were doing their **-50K**  
usual 15 feet up, 15 feet down, against my razor sharp volcanic cliffside! But **yrs**  
heck! Since we've reached this Human Now Point, he can tell you himself. **B4**  
**Now!Now! Now!Now!Now! Now!Now! Now!Now! Now!Now! Now!Now! Now**  
Oh, hi guys! Travelling Limey here. Yeah, we have very short lives, compared to  
my rock friend here. Nicest, most fun, rock cliff I've met this lifetime! He interacts  
so well with Mother Atlantic, and there I was, dropped off by my ship's excursion  
guy while everyone else went to some namby-pamby white sand, turquoise ocean  
beach. An awesome sight and an awesome dynamic it was, but soaking up the sun

just a few clicks north of South America, I had to decide how I might experience  
these mighty Atlantic swells and yet get out alive and unbloodied. Then it came to  
me: I was wearing tennis shoes so all I needed was to keep them on! This I did, and  
jumped right in!

Quite amazing it was! Better than any carnival ride ever invented and Mother  
Nature at her best! I had to be ready to be picked up after 2 hours, from this remote  
location. So after a while I had to get out, scale that razor sharp cliff, or time it just  
right to have a wave deliver me to the top. The shoes worked, but lack of gloves  
made it tough. After many 'untries' (that is where you get ready to step or jump  
but cancel in favour of a better future wave), I made it up and over with just a  
slightly bloodied hand. Totally worth it! And if you ever go to Bonaire, be sure  
to check out the Atlantic side! **Now!Now!Now!Now!Now!Now!Now!Now!Now!**  
**Later -Later -Later -Later -Moving into the Future -Moving into the Future**  
Well, life goes on... Well, comes and goes... that would be more accurate. But **50k**  
heck! We go on. Rocks and Oceans and Star stuff! Had a short period recently **yrs**  
for maybe ten thousand years, when I didn't see any humans, very few birds, **Ah**  
and a little less fish. Skies were overcast for two or three centuries, then the **ead**  
sky turned green. After that, humans landed on my island in space suits. Heard **5M**  
one talking about Mars. It seems these humans had a base there since before **yrs**  
the skies turned green. Wonder how Alfred is doing on Mars? We were in the **Ah**  
same star stuff factory a few billennia ago. He always wanted to be a mountain **ead**  
and I heard they have a big one on Mars. Well, I look up at the sun sometimes **5B**  
and think of my folks. It's been 5 billion years since that human jumped in my **yrs**  
waves now, and I'm seeing a change in our sun, like it's getting bigger and **Ah**  
redder. I've heard it could get so big it will consume Mercury, Venus and burn **ead**  
up Earth. Maybe I'll get to be magma again! I'll miss the Atlantic. **5B.yrsAhead!**  
**5B.yrsAhead-5B.yrsAhead-5B.yrsAhead- 5B.yrsAhead -5B.yrsAhead -5B.yrs**

*(Human talking: A very slight liberty was taken with "NOW" since my trip to  
Bonaire was one or two decades ago, but that is awfully close to "NOW" from the  
rockface's point of view.)*



**“What if everything we need is already inside us?” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum & Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC**

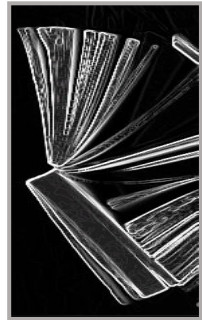
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\* Kujala, Jorma. “Soundwalk: Connections: West End Vancouver.” *Vancouver New Music*, 22 May 2020, <https://newmusic.org/spring-soundwalks-may-24-31-2020/>.

\* “Hum Programme Description.” *What if Everything Depends on Everything Else?* Humanities 101 Community Programme. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, 2020.

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**What happened in class**

Soundwalks involve walking while doing nothing but listening, immersing ourselves in the sounds we’re always bathed in, unawares, and becoming aware of the sounds already inside us. The soundwalk is a listening practice where the walker improvises with their acoustic, sonic environment.

Each and every Hum class is an improvisation where everyone depends on everyone else! “Depends on” can mean listens to, respects, values, and perhaps grows to care for.... Improvising is being in the moment, immersed, implicated, situated, and working with who and what is there. Improvising is doing! It’s a willingness...and improvising is always already inside us. If you can hum, you can sing! Hum improvises with many university-oriented disciplines and interdisciplines in our courses and Public Programmes, and we ask our teachers to improvise with the theme that changes every year, while we ground ourselves through five touchstones: people, power, place, knowledge and time.

There are many ways to listen. In this class we learned about Indigenous critical listening practices that involve “positionality,” which is how our individual and collective experiences, backgrounds, and ways of being in the world influence how we listen, how we encounter music and other sonic experiences. We practised becoming aware of our listening positionalities to “listen otherwise,” becoming aware of how our experiences, identity markers, and backgrounds influence our listening, as we listened to Indigenous women’s songs: the “Women’s Warrior Song” gifted by Martina Pierre from the Lil’wat Nation to the people, sung each year at the Women’s Memorial March through the DTES, and elsewhere; M’Girl’s “Eyes Wide Open” filmed in a DTES alley; and two music videos by the Inuit throat-singing duo called PIQSIQ (a piqsiq is a natural phenomenon, a wind storm that conjures the impression of snow falling back up towards the sky).

**Groundwork aka Homework**

- 1) Choose one aspect of the course so far that really interests you, and write a short paragraph about it. For instance, perhaps you’re very interested in big data and how it’s selling you to yourself.
- 2) Then, find one or more songs that you like that match that interest’s energy, tone, sense. You don’t need to know all the lyrics already (you can always look them up) but the energy, tone, sense ought to match. Maybe the show tune “Big Spender” comes into your mind, and then other songs arise. Rather than looking around, try listening inside yourself first, give it time and the songs will most likely come into your mind. Immerse yourself in the world of one of the songs, its sounds, silences, rhythm, feelings, its characters. Listening inside is a part of improvising which involves paying attention to being in the moment, depending on what comes up, and working from there. When you’re “in the moment,” wherever you are, whatever you’re doing, your mind AND body are right there. There’s no dwelling on the past, the future, or any difficulties you may be encountering in your life. If you’re in the moment, you’re right here, right now, nowhere else.
- 3) Begin by writing new lyrics that convey your interest. Try working with a few of the songs that come to mind, but don’t push them, just let your thoughts flow spontaneously, uncriticized. The chorus of “Big Spender” is “Hey big spender... spend a little time with me” and could become “Hey big data... why won’t you let me be free.”

After you’ve written a few verses, a character (human or non-human) INSIDE THE SONG needs to IMPROVISE! The first line of “Big Spender” is, “The minute you walk in the joint, I could see you were a man of distinction,” could become “The minute she turns on her phone, she begins to do misleading searches.” Draw on Hum’s five touchstones: people, power, place, knowledge, time to move the story along. Create relationships of inter-dependencies and critical listening practices. Show what happens when everyone (human and non-human) depends on each other.

Days of social distance  
SHAHLA MASOUMNEJAD

Morning, Night.  
Morning, Night.  
Morning, Night.  
A year gone!

UBC is lonely!  
Hallways empty,  
Stairs quiet,  
Classrooms dark,  
Classmates absent.  
Where are you my friends?

I take a seat in the dark  
And in my imagination dreams begin,  
Of days of togetherness,  
Crazy happiness at no cost,  
And eyes talking to eyes followed by meaningful smiles.  
Where are those days?

Grey metal seats sit cold.  
Walls stand tall and unbreakable and the  
Whiteboard, abandoned.  
Where are those moments of wonder?

Back in my room at home,  
I talk to my little laptop,  
My only connection to passing life!

Oh my friends!  
I miss you,  
I dearly miss you!

PART THREE

# They want, and they want us to want with them

NOVEMBER 3 & 5 POLITICS

“Trumpeting the ‘Century of the Self’” with Margot Leigh Butler, Hum & Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC, and Paul Woodhouse, Hum & Sociology Graduate Program, UBC.

What we read

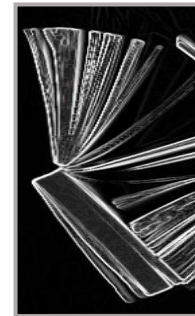
\* Bollas, Christopher. *Free Association*. Cambridge, UK: Icon Books, 2002, pp. 3-11.

\* Bump, Philip. “Trump’s Campaign Depends on his Supporters Putting their Health at Risk.” *Washington Post*, 27 Oct. 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/27/trumps-campaign-depends-his-supporters-putting-their-health-risk/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/27/trumps-campaign-depends-his-supporters-putting-their-health-risk/).

\* Horton, Richard. “COVID-19 is Not a Pandemic.” *The Lancet*, vol. 396, no. 10255, 26 Sept. 2020, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32000-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32000-6).

\* Duckles, Beth M. “Permaculture Principles and your Life.” *Medium*, 12 Dec. 2018, <https://medium.com/@bduckles/organizing-your-life-with-permaculture-principles-401dob3b91d6>. Excerpts.

Babocsa, Zsolt. “The Century of the Self—A Summary, Critique and Practical Lessons.” <https://zsoltbabocsai.org/self-documentary/>. Excerpts.



What happened in class

In 1932, Ernest Hemingway wrote: “All our words from loose using have lost their edge” (in *Death in the Afternoon*, about Spanish bullfighting). In the system in which we live, we’re assailed by two words in particular: the words “free” and “freedom,” which tend to be used too loosely, too frequently, dull-ly, coercively. They are being sold to us, and we are being sold and asked to buy back certain versions of ourselves—such is capitalism, for starters: think Free Trade, Free Choice, and there’s no such thing as a free lunch.

Or how this election has been pitched as a fight over certain freedoms. The photograph accompanying the article “Trump’s campaign depends on his supporters putting their health at risk” in *The Washington Post*, which we read for tonight, shows a young person at a Trump rally having their temperature taken. The person is wearing a mask with the message, “I am being forced to wear this by the government.” Here, the freedom to not wear a mask is on the ballot... and of course, this election is for the self-declared “leader of the free world,” of the home of the free and land of the brave...

However, just because free and freedom are problematic, that doesn't mean we should throw those words away or abandon them—just that we can pay even more attention to what freedom and free can mean to each and every one of us; we can be self-determining, sovereign, and decide for ourselves how to alter our contexts to make and to be those freedoms that we value—or might, if we fancied. So rather than *thinking*, how about *feeling* the words free writing, free fall, free spirited, and get out of jail free.

With the field of freedom so over-filled and over-sold, it can be hard to get at it frontally...so why not go sideways? Going sideways is a way to think about the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud’s concept and practice of “free association” that we read about for this class in the essay by Christopher Bollas. Free association relies on the distinction between the “conscious” and Freud’s concept of the “unconscious,” where repressed aspects of ourselves (the juicy bits) are held or stored or contained (Freud saw the unconscious as a leaky container).

In the west, freedom is often used synonymously with individualism. In Adam Curtis’ *Century of Self* that we watched in this week’s class, we learned about the rise of the Public Relations industry (PR) founded in the US by Freud’s nephew Edward Bernays, who used his uncle’s theory of psychoanalysis to tap into and manipulate the desires of the post-war American population by appealing to their sense of individuality. In these films, people are seen as irrational and unable to control their desires—and moreover, their desires can be manipulated to serve the business and political elite. This goes against western Enlightenment values which position humans as rational (using reason over emotion, men’s ways over women’s, law over justice), controlled and, in some ways, as responsible for more than their own self-interest. Two contrasting applications of psychoanalysis are explored in the Curtis documentary. First, the use of psychoanalytic therapy as a way to understand and then contain patients’ irrational desires by impressing conformity to social norms. Second, the use of “focus groups” to discover what people want, especially their irrational desires, and then create lifestyle products and services that pander to these desires—and sell back to individuals, aka consumers, an ideal conception of self only realizable by consuming, consuming, consuming.

**Groundwork aka Homework**

Recall that Freud’s practice of “free association,” also known as “free talking,” is described in the Christopher Bollas reading, *Free Association*. Use free talking or free association and “thinking out loud” to discover what’s on your “unconscious” mind about the current global situation. While we may not be going on trains as much nowadays, sitting at a table while looking out a window at the rain is an excellent method for engaging in free associating. This way, you can take note of your associations, or you might like to talk out loud into a recording device.

A cross-cultural interpretation of face mask wearing  
WILLIE LI

From growing up in China, I have old memories of wearing face masks to prevent disease infection. I remember having to wear a mask or bring it with me every school day when I was in primary school. If I forgot to bring it, I would get a word of warning from the school. At a young age, we were educated that wearing face masks can be an effective way to prevent all kinds of diseases transmitted through the breath system among people. At the time, I remember almost all medical doctors wearing face masks. And we learned that wearing face masks is a very good invention discovered in Western countries. These strong practices of wearing face masks to prevent virus infection and protect personal health became a strong belief in my mind.

Even during the very early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, for me, personally, it felt very easy to understand and simply accept the recommendation to wear a face mask to fight and prevent the pandemic from spreading. I even complained because in the early period, government officials didn’t seriously require everyone to wear face masks mandatorily for public safety. If they had done so, the number of infected cases in British Columbia would be much lower. I didn’t think that this simple and easy act would be so difficult to implement among the people in this province. At the very beginning, people didn’t like to wear face masks in public areas. I gradually realized that my own understanding and reaction is based in the years of education and practical influence in my particular living environment in the past. Many people like me with a similar cultural background would consider that wearing face masks is an easy and simple way to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, and many people in our society have multi-cultural backgrounds. However, we shouldn’t be surprised that people coming from different areas and cultures, ages, incomes, backgrounds, education, beliefs, and so on, would have different perceptions and responses about the same circumstances! Therefore, what looked like a simple matter transformed into a very complicated implementation.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic started, many people in China were already used to wearing face masks for a variety of reasons: they wear them during the flu and cold season, because of environmental air pollution, to keep warm in winter and to protect themselves from sunburn in the summer, too. So, encouraging people to wear face masks during the pandemic is not a difficult thing to do in China, because people already have years of experience wearing masks as a social practice to protect their health, and for many other reasons! Canadians do not all know this social practice of mask wearing, so it is a more complicated issue for the Canadian government than for the Chinese government. Even when there are government regulations in Canada around COVID-19, and it’s clearly stated that people gathering is recognized as the most dangerous way that people become infected by the virus, many people don't pay any attention to it and still have parties. Every time, after cultural festivals or longer holidays, the number of infection cases increases a lot in our province.

I know that people in China are required to stay in their own homes, that no gathering or visiting is allowed. Of course, some enforcement is also applied to implement these rules, and the government puts a lot of effort into public propaganda to educate people to understand that they will be in danger if they are still gathering. Education is a good way to teach people how to protect themselves and prevent the virus from spreading. Of course, some severe enforcement has to be employed in some cases. If government officials had made it mandatory for all people to wear face masks in the earlier period of COVID-19, the cases of infected persons and deaths would be much lower.

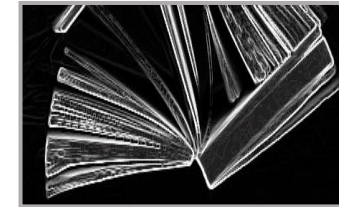
I wonder if government officials may have had some bias in their minds, since they seem not to be learning from other countries' experiences, especially from what they see as former "backward countries." Learning from experts may be easy to do, but learning from ordinary people may not be! Ordinary people have learned how beneficial it can be to wear face masks for all sorts of reasons—wearing face masks is easy, inexpensive, and is an effective way to cut off or obstruct the virus from spreading amongst people. This has been proven by practical experience and scientific theory to radically reduce the serious hazard for the whole nation. We are continuing mandatory face mask wearing as the current public regulation, and the vaccines are already arriving. At the same time, we have to think more seriously about the COVID-19 global pandemic, but who knows if, in the future, there may even be biological warfare, and if so, what can we do? We will have learned from our experience with COVID-19 and other types of anti-pandemic measures. We have to think deeply about this serious situation.

## NOVEMBER 10 & 12 CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES

**"Imagine Otherwise" with Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee Nation), First Nations and Indigenous Studies, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC.**

### What we read

\* Justice, Daniel Heath. "Introduction: An Uncanny Outlaw." In *Raccoon*. London, UK: Reaktion Books, 2021, pp. 7-16. Unpublished proof.



\* Kimmerer, Robin Wall. "Speaking of Nature: Finding Language that Affirms our Kinship with the Natural World." *Orion Magazine*, Mar./Apr. 2017. <https://orionmagazine.org/article/speaking-of-nature/>.

Justice, Daniel Heath. "R is for Raccoon." In *Animalia: An Anti-Imperial Bestiary for Our Times*, edited by Antoinette Burton and Renisa Mawani. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 153-161.

### What happened in class

This class celebrated Daniel's soon to be published book *Raccoon*, written in the spirit of his previous Reaktion book *Badger* (2014). Through his motto "Imagine Otherwise," Daniel invited us into the world and cultural figures of raccoons, a peek into how they embody "otherwise."

Animals are co-habitants of the world which means that the histories of animals are also the histories of humans: they are entangled, messy places of symbolic significance filled with associations that grow and shift, some more troubling, more disturbing, than others. How are raccoons and humans entangled, and what can humans learn from raccoons now? Raccoons are "neophilic" which means that they LOVE the NEW, they are adaptive omnivores and powerful examples of survivors who see the human population as a tool for their own population growth. Raccoons are indigenous, they are situated in Indigenous histories in North and South America, and feature as tricksters which are both creative and destructive. Now exported, raccoons are no longer limited to the Americas, and often with no natural predators their population grows.

Daniel shared his special interest in animals that are persecuted as vermin, including raccoons that are often pictured by humans as outlaws, malevolent, and difficult... though the relationship may not have begun that way. A huge response to a Japanese cartoon called *Rascal* (*Araiguma Rasukaru*) in the 1970s, based on a popular American book, created a fashion of importing raccoons which were at first welcomed.... Without natural predators, however, their population has grown, run amok, destroying valued heritage sites and becoming one of Japan's biggest ecological threats. The Fukushima nuclear reactor site has become a breeding ground for raccoons and boars since, as "nuclear animals," they can't be hunted. And climate change is working in raccoons' favour, too: with 60% of earth's landmass now favourable for raccoons, this has expanded the territory into which their population can expand. These are examples of the way that any animal and its cultural



figures can shift from a welcome guest to an “invasive species” when their interests are different than the interests of humans.

During the last part of the class, we talked more about how raccoons and badgers feature in our own lives, how they are represented, and looked at Daniel’s own “coat of arms” which features a badger. There was so much curiosity and interest in coats of arms that we talked about them at length, and added the option for everyone to make their own coats of arms as their Groundwork assignment.

**Groundwork aka Homework**

Robin Wall Kimmerer’s essay about language and nature challenges human exceptionalism, and re-imagines human-nonhuman relations by attributing personhood to other beings, like raccoons. Kimmerer uses the terms “ki” (no longer it but a “being of the earth” from Potawatomi) and “kin” (ki in plural form from English). In Vancouver, we’ve all had experiences with raccoons, heard stories about them, and perhaps even had “raccoon dreams.” For this week’s groundwork assignment, please write or draw a story about a raccoon encounter—if you’ve never met a raccoon (or if you’ve simply got a better story to tell) you may choose to write about a different animal. Start with a description of the opening “scene” and then improvise with a newly imagined encounter using ideas of ki or kin.

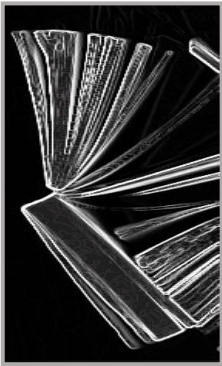
Alternatively, draw your own coat of arms with any kin animal of your choice.



Photo: “What bee kin want” hinge crest, by Margot Leigh Butler

**NOVEMBER 17 & 19 SOCIOLOGY**  
**“The play of fate and contingency on everyday experience” with Tom Kemple, Sociology, UBC.**

**What we read**



\* Simmel, Georg. “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” In *The Blackwell City Reader*, edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, 2nd ed., Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2013, pp. 103-110. \*All students read this essay.

\* Baldwin, James. “Stranger in the Village.” In *Notes of a Native Son*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1955, pp. 163-179.

\* Das Gupta, Debasree, and David W. S. Wong. “No More ‘Social Distancing’ but Practice Physical Separation.” *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, vol. 111, 29 June 2020, pp. 488-489, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-020-00370-x>.

Simmel, Georg. “The Stranger.” In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited and translated by Kurt H. Wolff. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1950, pp. 402-408.

**What happened in class**

In *Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903), which we all read for today, Georg Simmel argues that relationships in small towns tend to be emotional and built on personality. Emotional relationships between persons rest on their individuality, whereas the intellectual relationships of the city deal with persons in calculated, de-personalized ways. The metropolis creates the conditions for “indifferent,” “blasé” and “matter of fact” outlooks. While urban folk live in close proximity, neighbours can be socially distant. In such an impersonal culture people are perceived in uniform ways. However, to save personality, Simmel states, “extremities and peculiarities and individualizations must be produced, and they must be brought into the awareness” (19).

By the time this class took place, we’d been thoroughly inculcated into a society dealing with a global pandemic, dealing with daily, weekly, monthly lockdowns, shortages, personal and interpersonal limitations, and top-down, often-changing, often-confusing rules. We had been inculcated into the image of “bubbles” right from early on, and this image was new to some people, but in fact quite common to university students who often referred to their experience at UBC as being “in a bubble,” in terms of separation and distance from the rest of the world.

Tom brought his wisdom to clarify that there are two dimensions to any social experience, time and space/distance, to critique the figure of the bubble in its current use, and to insist that we’re actually in INTERCONNECTING SOCIAL CIRCLES. We’re all in social circles, everyone depends on everyone else, but not in the same way and not equally. His figure of INTERCONNECTING SOCIAL CIRCLES lets us see HOW we are interdependent, and, perhaps, what we can do from t/here.



Attending to how we are **interdependent but not in the same way and not equally** was amplified by George Floyd’s murder, as we read Simmel’s *Metropolis and Mental Life* alongside “Stranger in the Village” by gay Black American writer and activist James Baldwin. Baldwin’s essay concludes: “This world is white no longer, and it will never be white again.”

**Groundwork aka Homework**

For this week’s groundwork assignment, please choose to work on Question 1 or 2...unless you’d like to do both!

1) Think of a particular place where you were a stranger, that is, a place where you didn’t know anyone at first, but later stayed a while and got to know people. How long did it take for you to feel more at home or to find some acquaintances or friends?

2) Think of two social circles you’re a part of: someone you’re close to or people you interact with frequently; and someone you know by name or by sight but only interact with infrequently or not at all. In what ways can you be physically close but socially distant, or socially close but physically separated?

I would dream other people’s dreams when I could have had my own,  
had I known  
**DEIRDRE PINNOCK**

**Where Is My Black History?** It seems so simple yet made so complex.  
Why was I painted out? **Where is my story my Black herstory?**<sup>1</sup>  
From the invention of the improved traffic light to zig zagging sewing machines<sup>2</sup> to the separation of red blood cells<sup>3</sup>, I’ve googled this list of Black inventors before and found the list too long to memorize<sup>4</sup>.  
When I saw the cotton gin on the list I felt betrayed. How could a slave enslave more Blacks quicker to up production?<sup>5</sup>  
I pondered: Where were the women, where are the Black women?  
Didn’t they invent? Didn’t they produce? I had to seek this out. Something must be written besides the movie roles and their song and dance!  
Where are my *Hidden Figures*?<sup>6</sup>  
Oh yes, it’s here, my herstory of dreams, dreams I could have had by knowing these inventors<sup>7</sup>, the women behind the room heater, the fibre-optic technology or the closed-circuit television security systems. Black women were inventing.

<sup>1</sup> see AfroBiz, “31 Inspirational Black Canadian Women,” afrobiz.ca/31-inspirational-black-canadian-women; and, Ms. Magazine, “Black Herstory Month,” msmagazine.com/tag/black-herstory-month/  
<sup>2</sup> see Leo Deluca, “Black Inventor Garrett Morgan Saved Countless Lives with Gas Masks and Improved Traffic Lights,” scientificamerican.com/article/black-inventor-garrett-morgan-saved-countless-lives-with-gas-mask-and-improved-traffic-lights/  
<sup>3</sup> see James Johnson, “Black History: Dr. Charles Drew invented blood banks,” goerie.com/news/20190220/black-history-dr-charles-drew-invented-blood-banks  
<sup>4</sup> “Before the abolition of slavery, the United States Patent and Trademark Office excluded slaves from owning patents. Because slaves themselves were considered property, they could not own property,” Claudio Cabrera, nytimes.com/2019/02/24/us/black-inventors.html; see Christopher McFadden, “The A-Z List of Black Inventors,” interestingengineering.com/the-a-z-list-of-black-inventors; see “1,000 inspiring Black scientists in America,” crosstalk.cell.com/blog/1000-inspiring-black-scientists-in-america  
<sup>5</sup> “[T]he person who provided [cotton gin inventor Eli] Whitney with the key idea for his gin was himself a slave, known to us only by the name Sam,” John Lienhard, “No. 127: Black Inventors,” https://uh.edu/engines/epi127.htm 8 Black Inventors Who Made Daily Life Easier history.com/news/8-black-inventors-african-american  
<sup>6</sup> *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race* is a 2016 nonfiction biography written by Margot Lee Shetterly [free download https://book-drive.com/hidden-figures/] that was made into an award winning film. See A.O Scott review, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/22/movies/hidden-figures-review.html  
<sup>7</sup> see Lindsey Weedston, “10 Black Women Innovators and the Awesome Things They Brought Us,” yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2016/03/21/10-black-women-innovators-and-the-awesome-things-they-brought-us

**Say what? Black women were inventing!**

Did Sister Rosetta really compile gospel blues and the old Negro spirituals and folk songs to bring about a new tune in 1930... now we call it Rock ‘n’ Roll *baaaaby*<sup>8</sup>. Herstory as a Black woman who invented the synthetic bristle hairbrush<sup>9</sup>, 3-D technology<sup>10</sup>, oh my oh my, the land surveying of downtown LA County and the inventor of laser cataract surgery<sup>11</sup>. I see her legacy her story... that was kept from me in books and school and in life. I was so eager to learn as a child, I am still eager, making up for lost time.

Why was I painted out? "I could have been somebody I could have been a contender. I could have been somebody!"

Well I learn't about Samuel de Champlain (‘cause I had to), Jacques Cartier (he was everywhere), Christopher Columbus (he took everything), Lewis and Clark (the USA was theirs to take: mapped out and government approved), there must be a female explorer out there... or a pirate or two, look here! Well, let me go check this out, check out her story Arr mateeeee!!!!!!<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> see Jessica Diaz-Hurtado, “Foreberers: Sister Rosetta Tharpe, The Godmother Of Rock 'N' Roll,” [npr.org/2017/08/24/544226085/forebears-sister-rosetta-tharpe-the-godmother-of-rock-n-roll](https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/544226085/forebears-sister-rosetta-tharpe-the-godmother-of-rock-n-roll)

<sup>9</sup> “Lyda Newman was a remarkable Black female inventor who patented the first hairbrush with synthetic bristles. She is the third Black woman to ever receive a patent and is also known for her activism in the women’s voting rights movement of the early 20th century,” [lemelson.mit.edu/resources/lyda-newman](https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/lyda-newman)

<sup>10</sup> see Jasmine Grant, “Meet Valerie L. Thomas, the Black woman who revolutionized technology” [revolt.tv/2021/2/17/22287474/nasa-valerie-thomas-interview](https://revolt.tv/2021/2/17/22287474/nasa-valerie-thomas-interview)

<sup>11</sup> see Patricia Bath biography, [biography.com/scientist/patricia-bath](https://biography.com/scientist/patricia-bath)

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Hillary was the first African-American woman to reach both the North and South Poles... when she was in her 70s! Black women pirates may be found on [myauctionfinds.com/2012/03/15/plying-the-trail-of-black-female-pirates/](https://myauctionfinds.com/2012/03/15/plying-the-trail-of-black-female-pirates/)



## Thanksgiving dinner

CALLA JAMIESON

The late afternoon sun crept and dappled across the small parlour, brushing its weightless light ladder-rays across all the bits of it in turn. The end table, where the sun-ray paused to add a brighter light to a fringed table lamp lit even in the middle of the day. The sun-rays slid over the settee and rested lightly on the face of the sleeping woman, her head thrown back against the ecru lace antimacassar, her lips parted as if to receive sacrament. The soft warm light seemed to caress the woman's face, revealing that she was quite a bit younger than at first look. The golden clouds reached her eyes, and the woman began to wake, eyelashes fluttering with the effort to return. She stretched back, then dropped her neck forward to ease out the stiffness.

Looking at the thin, gold watch on her equally thin left wrist, she smiled. On her left, under the window, a smallish sideboard stood. The woman opened the top centre drawer and reached in with both hands, looking down with pleasure, to take the heavy linen tablecloth. She had carefully embroidered it the first year of her marriage. When the cloth was laid, around the edges of the table all the edible flowers and plants from that first garden were displayed, colours meticulously matched to the actual plants. In spring, radishes and green onions, early lettuce, marigolds. Summer, thyme, rosemary, sage, violets, sweet peas, pole beans and shelling peas. Autumn, potatoes, more lettuce, kale and squashes. Winter for cabbage and kale. She remembered feeling lucky that she had four seasons to spread the work out. From the console section of the sideboard, she reached for a deep red velvet case. Her own grandmother's silver service set for eight, carefully husbanded through wars, moves, all the depredations that a fully-lived life can throw a person's way. Taking a soft chamois cloth from the inner pocket, she polished each salad fork, dinner fork, soup spoon, dinner knife, butter knife, dessert fork, dessert spoon and coffee spoon to high shine, placing them carefully at each setting. She didn't bother with the fish and seafood equipment, leaving it slightly tarnished in place. Better not take any chances with a shellfish allergy in the family.

Carved and painted wooden charger plates followed the cutlery, and the crystal water and wine glasses added sparkle. On each charger plate she laid a small velum scroll, tied in gold ribbon and adorned with a tiny pencil. Before they tucked in, everyone would open each scroll and write about their gratitude for the people and places that gave meaning to their lives. The woman then began to build, on a thin slab of marble and surrounding a shallow brass bowl, a centrepiece of rosemary, tiny pumpkins, hazelnuts and stems of cranberry. The finished scrolls would go into the bowl, piled high to signify the family's blessings.

She took a deep breath, savouring the smell of roasting turkey, well-stuffed and nestled in a bed of carrots, parsnips, potatoes and onions, rosemary and thyme. Checking her watch, the woman moved to the window,

pulling aside the curtain to peer further down the road. No sign yet. The woman glanced at the large mirror, tweaking a grey curl, then returned to the window.

“What is she doing, Ana?” asked the young care aid as she watched the woman through the large two-way mirror. The head nurse looked briefly at the young aide and returned to watching the not-so-old woman on the other side of the mirror.

“She is setting the table for her family. Thanksgiving dinner.”

“But Ana, there is nothing on the table. And no one comes to see her anyway.” Ana sighed sadly and turning to the young girl, began to speak.

“I suppose you had better hear the whole story, Flora, so hopefully you will understand and be kind. It was, oh, eight or nine years ago on Thanksgiving. Her husband booked one of those big limousines to pick up the family from the ferry and he'd gone up to Horseshoe Bay to surprise them. Her daughter and her husband with their two young boys, baby daughter had come from Salt Spring Island. Her boy had been up visiting his sister, so he was along too. Anyway, a gravel truck lost its brakes on the Cut and just T-boned that limo. Everyone killed. Poor woman lost her mind, waiting for them at home. Table set and turkey waiting to be carved and it was the Police on the doorbell.”

“Oh my god, that is so sad.”

Flora looked through the mirror and began to understand what she was seeing, the woman on the other side of the glass going through the motions of setting the table for a big dinner. After a few moments Ana began to speak again, her voice tightly controlled so as not to let the pity out.

“We don't know how she knows it's Thanksgiving, but she does. So when we take her meal and meds in, we try to greet her like family. I'd appreciate it if you did too, if you think you can.”

Flora turned to her supervisor, eyes brimming with as yet unshed tears, “I will try.”

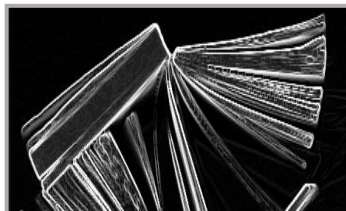
“Good girl. Now pull yourself together and put a smile on your pretty face. In we go.”

Ana quietly turned the key in the door to the old woman's room, and with a tap-tap on the door, opened it calling, “Hello, anybody home? We're here!”

## NOVEMBER 24 & 26 ARTS

**“Strengthening and lengthening Hum’s sticky threads in amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton)” with Lisa Prins, Coordinator of Hum (Humanities 101), University of Alberta, and a UofA collective member of the “Walls to Bridges” (W2B) Program at The Edmonton Institution for Women federal prison. W2B is centred around increasing support for Indigenous women’s accessibility to post-secondary education.**

### What we read



\* King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press, 2003, pp. 62-67.

\* McIlwraith, Naomi. “ê-wîtisânîhitoyâhk asici pîkiskwêwin – Language Family.” In *Kiyâm*. Edmonton, AB: Athabasca University Press, 2012, pp. 28-32.

\* McIlwraith, Naomi. “Naomi McIlwraith Reads Her Poem, Language Family.”

YouTube, uploaded by Edmonton Journal, 28 Feb. 2018, <https://youtu.be/dYBSZAODW5U>.

\* “The Club From Nowhere: Cooking for Civil Rights.” *Hidden Kitchens: The Kitchen Sisters* from NPR, 4 Mar. 2005, [https://npr.org/2005/03/04/4509998/the-club-from-nowhere-cooking-for-civil-rights?utm\\_campaign=storyshare&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social](https://npr.org/2005/03/04/4509998/the-club-from-nowhere-cooking-for-civil-rights?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social). “Food and Storytelling.” *HUM 101 On Air!*, from HUM 101, 6 Nov. 2020, <https://hum101onair.wordpress.com/2020/10/11/week-4/>.

### What happened in class

Thinking about connections between learning and sharing, this class highlighted how the UofA Humanities 101 Program has continued to adapt and create during a global pandemic by following sticky threads. Lisa introduced our class to the multiple courses that are facilitated under the Humanities 101 umbrella and how each class has threads woven between them, the learners, and the guest instructors. We also thought about how the UofA and UBC programs are connected and remain supportive of each other.

We followed Lisa through the program’s evolution from one small class to three core classes that take place on campus, in a women’s shelter, and inside a federal prison for women.

The journey led us to the present, where Lisa shared with us the current incarnation of the program in response to the global pandemic. Because so many of the Hum participants do not have access to technology, stable internet, or spaces to wholly engage in learning, and with the libraries and campuses closed down, the program had moved on air. Broadcasting over the community radio station CJSR 88.5 FM, the course was being listened to across the city and especially inside the prison where previous in-person courses had allowed for the sticky threads of relationship to be laid. The supportive strength of those threads made possible quick and positive uptake of the radio class.

### Groundwork aka Homework

For this week’s groundwork assignment, which was prepared by our teacher Lisa Prins, please choose to work on either question 1 or 2...unless you’d like to do both!

1) Write a poem. To write this poem—even for those of you who aren’t so-called “poets”—you will have to search your memories. Follow the six steps (written below) down memory lane and put your writings together to make a “Where I am from” poem. Feel free to add more if you wish and don’t overthink it. Write down what comes to mind, no need to fret about making a “poem,” the exercise is more of an introduction to you, which we hope you will share with us.

- Think about the house or apartment you grew up in. Think about objects that were around your home: DVDs, ashtrays, books, etc. What posters were on your bedroom walls? What music was on your shelf? Write down a few details.
- Think about the food you ate as a kid, what you loved to eat, or what you had to eat often, that you remember very vividly.
- What did adults in your home used to say to you? Were there phrases that they would say over and over?
- What music played in your childhood home? Can you remember one or two song lyrics? Write those down.
- Think about the adults and kids in your home. What specific physical features do you remember from them? Long grey hair, jingly earrings, thick eyeliner? What clothes did they wear? Write down a physical detail of any of those styles, pieces, sartorial decisions.
- Write down a few details of the neighbourhood or land around where you lived—the colours, the way the space felt, the smells, the sounds.

2) Write a recipe. Please share a recipe and include a story about why that recipe matters to you, your family, your friends, or your community.

## My recipe ANONYMOUS

So, years ago, before my husband and I had children, we volunteered for half a year in a Romanian orphanage. We were foster parents to 3 kids, because we were trying to teach Romanians the foster care system (in 2000 that didn't exist there, state orphanages were the thing). We were in a grouping of 4 housing units that contained 15 children(ish) and a bunch of staff. We would all meet together for lunch (the main meal in Romania, and the one children came home from school for). We had a paid cook for that. It always started with soup and bread and then generally some meat and a starch (usually rice or potatoes). Because it was winter, no veggies. One day the cook was sick, and I was asked if I could make the meal for 30 plus people. And my provisions were few. Some chicken that was butchered but I needed to defeather and take some of the guts out. We had some rice. So I boiled the rice and made something along this line.

- Pieces of chicken cut up, coated in flour
- A whole lot of garlic
- Tomato paste

Fry the chicken in fat until crisp all over. Add garlic and fry until golden. Add tomato paste and stock (we didn't have) or water. Boil until tender. Serve with boiled potatoes or rice.

Not much for a recipe, but everyone ate it and I felt so accomplished. At the time there were no spices in Romania, no extras. We had starches and a bit of meat. And I did it. I fed 30 plus people with really nothing in the cupboard. And all the staff and all the children nodded with me in approval as if I made the cut about being Romanian enough. I wasn't a foreigner anymore. I was there for those children and to figure it out. And that simple meal boosted my confidence. I could help orphans. I could help children with reactive attention disorder. I could be a difference within a broken system in which there was a stigma that orphans weren't worth it... they were gypsy... they were thieves... they were up to no good. That simple meal changed me from a foreigner to someone who was invested.

Sometimes I lose confidence in myself in my current life circumstance. Sometimes I make this very simple meal to remind myself that I am capable.

## DECEMBER 1 END OF TERM CELEBRATION

**Zoom PARTY... including unrehearsed and improvised performances by Hum songsters, poets, grammarians, artists, filmmakers, advocates, gardeners, incense-makers....**

### What happened in class

For our end-of-term party, we celebrated with a semi-catered, personalized dinner from The Delly at UBC. Paul, Margot and Reuben collected students' online menu desires, then in three cars went up to UBC to pick up all the food and then delivered dinner along with a bag of fun stuff: felt antlers, silly glasses, chocolates, a UBC mug, grad certificates and more. After enjoying our dinners, we met on Zoom. And what better way to throw a party for such an eclectic bunch of people than a talent contest! It sure made for a fun time, with people demonstrating their wide-ranging talents through singing, poetry reading, joke telling, Kung Fu, and possibly the most offbeat performance of the night, how to debone a whole chicken! After all the excitement, we couldn't quite part until January so we organized another party for December 23.

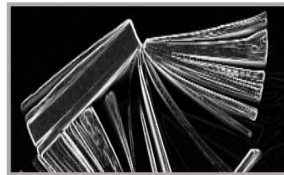


# It's all in *how* you tell it...

## JANUARY 11 & 14 NEW MEDIA

“The computer cord’s connected to the outlet; the outlet’s connected to the power grid; the power grid’s connected to the hydro dam...” with Mathew Arthur, web designer, Hum volunteer and Public Programme facilitator, & PhD student, SFU.

### What we read



\* Duarte, Marisa Elena. “Preface.” In *Network Sovereignty: Building the Internet Across Indian Country*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2017, pp. ix-xii.

\* Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly. “New Media and New Technologies.” In *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed., London, UK: Routledge, 2009, pp. 9-16.

### What happened in class

The book *Network Sovereignty*, a section of which we read for this week’s class, is about building the internet across “Indian Country” (a more American phrase). The author, Marisa Elena Duarte, is Yaqui, and her home is the Sonoran Desert landscape around Tucson and the northern Chihuahuan Desert in southern New Mexico. Her book starts by saying, “The word is bound to the breath, and the breath is bound to the spirit. The word is a loose bead running on a cord connecting the breath and the heart and the mind. The mind is filled with ideas, these ideas are like stones.” Duarte’s book is a basket for them. Our course theme, “Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else” is also a kind of basket, gathering together all our different students’ and teachers’ interests and telling each other about them, integrating and networking them.

In our class on New Media with Mathew, we learnt that using the computer (and Zoom!) depends on a whole lot of everything else. Mathew led us along the computer cords to the power grid; from the power grid to transoceanic underwater cables; from the cables to mega mines; from the mines to the sites of e-waste. We learnt how using the computer implicates us in global industries of resource extraction, histories of transatlantic slavery, and power systems (including both the electrical and political kinds).

The term media is typically used to describe “‘communication media’ and the specialised and separate institutions and organisations in which people work: print media and the press, photography, advertising,

cinema, broadcasting (radio and television), publishing, and so on. The term also refers to the cultural and material products of those institutions, the distinct forms and genres of news, movies, soap operas which took the material forms of newspapers, paperback books, films, tapes, discs...” (Lister et al., 9). New media introduces new technologies and processes for audiences or users to produce, distribute and consume media content. The “new” in new media has many meanings, and includes such things as the internet, blogging, virtual environments, or a computer game. The qualities and characteristics of these technologies make new types of relationships—or dependencies—possible.

### Groundwork aka Homework

Tonight’s groundwork exercise asks you to write a short, speculative story, using the course theme as the impetus: “Telling what happens when X depends on Y (in the future).”

You might think about this as a genre exercise in science fiction or speculative fiction. Speculative stories are based in imagining, and often extrapolating with what counts as facts and evidence to make different presents and futures.

Here’s what to do:

1. Pick a term, concept, or being from groupings X & Y. You can choose from the word lists below, or feel free to add and use your own.
2. Plunk your choices into the corresponding spaces in the phrase: “Telling what happens when X depends on Y (in the future).”
3. Then, imagine and tell a story of a world (or a future) in which your phrase is reality—where, for example, Hum (X) might depend on red yarn (Y)!

**X Words:** Hum • Interaction • Science • Nurturing • Technology • Energy • Work • Love • Politics • Mass production • Good memories • Religion • Food supply • Healthcare • COVID-19 vaccine • Presidents/Prime Ministers • Media • Death • Communication • Humans • Laughing • Big data • Reflection • Teachers

**Y Words:** Internet • Stones • Baskets • Zoom • Left hand • Positive outlook • Sleeping • Sunlight • Crystals • Tree roots • Fossil fuels • Seaweed • Students • Jellyfish • Cheap labour • Singing • Lava • Open borders • Robots • Red yarn • Water • Undersea cables • Mushrooms • Patience

**Bonus:** If you’d like, check out this website called Artbreeder: <https://www.artbreeder.com/start>

Artbreeder is an online AI that learns from millions of different images to create weird, fantastical, and sometimes frighteningly unnatural images—the images and the AI are a kind of new media. Then, pair an image you create using the AI generator or choose one that you find in the archive to accompany your short story. You’ll need to create an account (with an email and password) if you want to play around with Artbreeder.

## Telling what happens when love depends on patience

RENEE TABATA

Love: Glasses clink as she sits at the bar in her red dress with a push-up bra. Her long hair is perfectly primped. Drink the drinks that give self-confidence and eliminate fear. All she has to do is hit up a conversation, aspire to become beguiling. At the fancy bar where the bartender wears black, she can ask him for a drink or a round table to share. There are only a few other patrons and only one that catches her eye. Some sort of Don Lothario. Have a conversation—it doesn’t have to go deep. Be flirty. Her romantic bar rises as she touches his hand. Get to the point, a steamy exchange, then lean over for a first kiss and whisper a few words in his ear, telling him that she wants this get together to leave.

The alcohol has a strange effect on her sleep. Quickly pass out, then just as quickly wake up feeling stressed. She has to think about where she is and then remembers. Hiding her head under the pillow, she counts to ten as she goes through what happened the night before. His arm lies on top of her as he spoons her. Pretend for a moment, deeply feel his warm body and his touch—just about anybody’s would do. At the count of ten, she takes a deep breath and moves his arm. She has a throbbing headache. No, no relationship building is needed—time to go, grab her clothes, and get out before he wakes up and she has to witness someone left with hurt feelings, or even before polite conversation. She peruses who this man might be from his photos on the wall. A selfie with his friends, a cap and gown at some sort of collegiate graduation. She takes a deep breath and walks out of his apartment. If she could reset the existential crisis of her love life, she would. In bright red lights like a GTA game, her love life was “wasted.”

In reality, she is not in a pretty dress with perfect hair, but rather somewhere in our world of pandemic anti-social blues. She wears pyjamas and rarely brushed hair while she sits on a couch with a game remote in her hand. She fantasizes about love, using the game’s flirty paintings and heart-shaped buckets that might make getting romance easier, or even better, and what she really wants—a real human touch.

When the doorbell rings, it brings her out of the delirium of her virtual world. She opens the door and there he is—the pizza delivery man dressed all in black. He leaves the pizza and beer on the doorstep and stands six feet away. They have their weekly conversation and joke about how things are going before he gets into his car. As she watches him leave, she thinks about her future. Was the closest thing to romance a virtual simulation? After she eats a couple pieces of pizza she presses reset. All that was needed: Patience.

## How laughing depends on mushrooms

BILL LIM

In Ancient times, there was a people who knew only how to eat fruits and vegetables, rice and meats. In that village, the people had no emotions except one, and it showed in their eyes. The look of destroying life so that they could live. Gradually destroying life is the only reality of existence for them. They felt a glory in discovering that a sharp object allowed them to be the consumer rather than the consumed. That is all that the people wanted. To survive.

One day, there came a dark cloud that never cleared; it covered the sky for days. Because there was no photosynthesis all the plants started dying. Then the animals started getting really skinny, and the people couldn’t eat them because the animals were becoming just skin and bones. Wade was a little boy in the village. His mother looked at him and said quietly, “Wade, we have run out of food. All your brothers and sisters are getting really hangry. I hear them muttering that you should be eaten because you’re the youngest and therefore should be the tenderest for a main dish. You must hide in the forest until the clouds part and the sun comes back to earth.”

Wade, knowing the evil in his own brothers and sisters, did not want to leave his Mother. However, his Mother felt that she was becoming old and weak, and could not move anymore. She told Wade not to worry about her and to run before they took action on their sinister plan. “Sometimes,” she cried, “I wish I had only one child.” Wade started crying with her.

Wade then ran off, crying and crying, wondering why his own brothers and sisters, his own blood, could have even thought of doing this to him. Soon, he came to the forest. As he entered, he noticed that the glow of the silvery moon accompanied him. The light stayed with him as they both fled deeper and deeper into the forest.

Finally, Wade got so tired from the running and the cold that he had to stop and rest. He bent over, breathing as hard as he could to recover from the enormous effort he had to muster to escape from his conniving siblings. All of a sudden, he heard a strange sound. It was loud and sporadic. It sounded like a machine gun of exhalations—with a lot of “ahs.”

It went like this: “Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.” It sounded like someone’s voice, deep and raspy, and very, very thunderous. Wade walked very slowly, very cautiously towards the sound and saw a girl with hair shaped like an umbrella, and showing a lot of well-kept teeth. She was looking into the heavens and her whole being was shaking with these very strange expirations.

Suddenly, he heard a twig crack underneath his feet, and the girl spun around, still making those strange expiratory sounds. When she saw him, she stopped, but still had that smile that sent chills up his spine. Yet he wondered why he felt as if he had known her all his life, and that he could trust her with his life.

He looked at her and asked, “Why are you making that strange sound?”

She looked back at him. “What strange sound?”

He looked down his feet, feeling awkward, “The haha sound.”

“Oh,” she said, “it’s called laughing—and it’s because of this,” pointing at a basket full of lumps with tops like umbrellas.

“What is that?” he asked.

“It’s called mushrooms, *doong koo* in Cantonese. These ones make you laugh and make you feel good.”

He looked at her sadly and said, “Can I have some? I am so sad because my brothers and sisters want to eat me. I want to laugh and be happy.”

“Of course,” she said, “Have as much as you want.”

Grabbing a double handful, Wade began to munch as much as he could. Suddenly, he felt a tingling and started breathing deeper. All of a sudden, he started to guffaw, “hahahahahaha!”

“Thank you,” Wade said, breathing a sigh of relief.

“Just call me Doong Koo,” she replied, smiling.



Image: Doong Koo. Created on Artbreeder.

Indian country  
KURT GONSALVES

When humans say they will become dependent on Artificial Intelligence (AI), they forget that they actually built it. The smartest, most fierce AI in our future will be produced by a human being, leaving it just as reliable or unreliable as any other technology in existence today.

As a single man with no kids, I look forward to AI cleaning me up, instead of a human being. This saves the shame that comes with such a dependence. The psychological significance of the ethically preprogrammed AI that will support our future elders in their wellness is still to be determined.

The Internet offers the ability to communicate with tribes across the world, to be able to connect and reconnect with each other and discuss the past, present and future of our clan’s or tribe’s existence. However, security of personal information is what brings a sour note to this Internet netbook dream that could, and probably will be a nightmare.

It has been said that the next world war will be a war of data, and that data has been the missing link to Indian country as we struggle to figure out exactly who we really are. It has also been said that the powers that rule the so called “free land,” such as the USA, also own and operate the Internet’s worldwide fiber optic network and the data that flows within it.

Our past and present leaves the human beings of Indian country desperate to side with a force that has created warfare and domination over our existence, and somehow out of all this we are supposed to submit or fold. Folding is not an option. We have no choice but to conform to these power relations, or live without the Internet. The current pandemic demonstrates exactly what we can and cannot do once the orders are set.

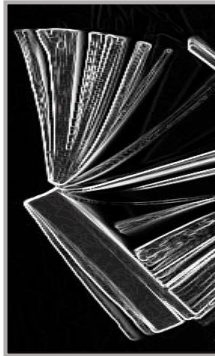
HUMAN RIGHTS ARE WAIVED UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OVER INDIAN COUNTRY ENFORCE.

With AI, in the form of a robot cleaning my bum, or a bot cleaning up my cloud data, we need to understand that it is only as fierce as the creator of it. We need to educate future AI creators, such as Lex Fridman, about the ethical treatment of our data, which is ultimately the ethical treatment of our lives.

**“What if Hum’s theme accurately encapsulates one’s view of life and the universe?” with Gage Averill, Dean of Arts & School of Music, UBC.**

### What we read

\* Averill, Gage. “Everything’s Connected to Everything.” 2020.



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Piercy, Marge. “The Seven of Pentacles” (1982). *Famous Poets and Poems*, [http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/marge\\_piercy/poems/19240](http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/marge_piercy/poems/19240).

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Isaacson, Walter. “The Mona Lisa.” In *Leonardo Da Vinci*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2017, pp. 475-491.

Butler, Margot Leigh. “Leonardo and Renaissance Engineers.” *Mute*, vol. 16, no. 16, 10 Apr. 2000, <https://metamute.org/editorial/articles/leonardo-and-renaissance-engineers>.

### What happened in class

For this class, Dean Gage Averill and his daughter Fiona put on a majestic, uplifting, 90-minute live concert, streamed from their home music studio. All songs were written and composed by Gage, including a very special number he wrote especially for Hum, called “Everything’s Connected to Everything.” He was excited to teach and perform this song in March of last year, but his class was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Gage’s song lyrics span a vast range: from understandings of the universe (like the Big Bang theory) to the near-invisible mycorrhizal fungal network connecting the forest underground; from the ancient arrival of water aboard asteroids to the “salty tears in our eyes.” The lyrics—many of which were inspired by the poets’ works we read for this week’s class—make connections between millennia-old events and present-day goings-on. A “leaf of grass,” wrote Walt Whitman (quoted in the song), “is no less than the journey-work of the stars.”

Likewise, in the reading about the *Mona Lisa*, Walter Isaacson writes that “the flow of the landscape into the image of Lisa is the ultimate expression of Leonardo’s embrace of the analogy between the macrocosm of the world and the microcosm of the human body. The landscape shows the living and breathing and pulsing body of earth: its veins as rivers, its roads as tendons, its rocks as bones. More than being merely the backdrop for Lisa, the earth flows into her and becomes a part of her” (487). Isaacson suggests that Leonardo painted into

his painting his own understanding of how everything is connected to everything else: representing those connections through the merging of the background landscape with the foreground body.

### Groundwork aka Homework

1) Start with the first two lines of the chorus of Gage’s song, “everything’s connected to everything / echoes of the big bang keep rippling through and through (and through).”

2) Then, write your own verses about something that, to you, shows how everything is connected to everything else. You might think across geographic, temporal, bodily, or creaturely scales. Gage’s song makes connections between and across the universe/the Big Bang/mycorrhizal fungal networks/asteroids/water/the saltiness of our tears/etc. What speaks to you of these cosmic, earthly (& earthy), bodily, and climatic connections? Are there others? Last week, we learnt about the undersea cables that make possible our digital connections to one another; so feel free to use other kinds of examples from technology or media.

3) Try writing tonight’s groundwork as a poem or song, rather than as a piece of prose. So, feel free to also play around with how your groundwork is composed on the page!



## Everything is connected

RENEE TABATA

Watched the news today, but I had only a moment to pause  
Everything's connected to everything amongst all its flaws  
Heard the big bang's echo, the sounds kept rippling through  
A new leader sees the old one displeased from his fallen coup

The oceanic moon's pull and push: a magnetic force  
In and out, high and low, nature's power source  
Some say from the gods above, for others an act of science  
Twice a day, a moment of thought, a choice, a lunar alliance

The ocean wave crashing against the gritty, sandy beaches  
Survival is the water line the beckoning crab reaches  
Is politics the same, a change, the washing in of food?  
Tide a rising swell of support or unity renewed

Navigational power helps a captain beseech the flow  
An act of freedom which comes in the high tide afterglow  
Rebirth water flows to areas where the pot must stir  
Pollutants mixed with nutrients in a circulated blur

Inflow and outflow of energy can be made with highs and lows  
Feel the weather from the tide, the warmth, the cool air flows  
Connection we speak of, the incoming and outgoing of change  
Today we must ponder on the water—life is an exchange

## The big bang

CHER HURRELL

“Everything is connected to everything, echoes of the big bang keep rippling through and through”  
(Averill, 2020).

A sun breaks open its seeds, spilling its life force into the void.  
Large and small fragments sail into the emptiness of space.  
Some go nowhere, others are drawn towards a new sun and orbit,  
“turning and turning in the widening gyre” (Yates, 1920).

Once the father has it in its proper place, the detailed work begins.  
Hot fire oozes from the core bouncing and bubbling, “like half-submerged balls” of fire from the fragment's  
surface (Piercy, 1973).

Steam rises, and rain falls, cooling the steamy surface with its magical kiss.  
Life begins to form in wondrous, glorious ways, creating life from a simple atom and or clay.

CLAY, FIRE, WATER, SUN, LAVA, ICE move life forward...  
It begins and ends and begins and ends again, connecting life from the start.

The being stands upon the hard, solid surface and perceives,  
“a host of peering, sashaying angels,” peeking through the clouds (Butler, 2000).  
The universe unfolds in seemingly easy ways.  
Man holds the tools of Leonardo from today, yesterday, and tomorrow,  
adding a new beginning and ending only to begin again.

“Interconnected [like] rabbit runs and burrows and lairs” (Piercy, 1982).  
From the void, the bang, the sun, life, and ideas are born, connect, and re-connect.

While awaiting Her call to create new life, the sound breaks.  
All are joined to the universe, a star, and a bang,  
WHEN A NEW STAR OPENS ITS SEEDS.

## Citations

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Piercy, Marge. “To Be Of Use” (1973). *Poetry Foundation*, <https://poetryfoundation.org/poems/57673/to-be-of-use>.

Yeats, William Butler. “The Second Coming” (1920). *Poetry Foundation*, <https://poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming>.

## JANUARY 25 & 28 FIRST NATIONS & ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

**“Writing Oral Languages: Look what happens when writing depends on speaking” with Mark Turin, First Nations and Endangered Languages, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC.**

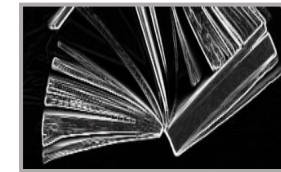
### What we read

\* Thicke, Lori. “Vanishing Voices.” *Trek Magazine*, no. 36, 2014, pp. 12-14.

Marquis, Chris. *Inglish Maed Simpəl*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press, 2020, pp. i-ii, 1-5a, 18-18a, 20-20a, 25a.

\* Brown, Pam, Jennifer Carpenter, Gerry Lawson, Kim Lawson, Lisa Nathan, and Mark Turin. “Uplifting Voices.” In *Reflections of Canada: Illuminating Our Opportunities and Challenges at 150+ Years*, edited by Phillipe Tortell, Margot Young, and Peter Nemetz. Vancouver, BC: Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, University of British Columbia, 2017, pp. 264-269.

\* Cullis-Suzuki, Severn. “Quarantine as Ceremony: COVID-19 as an Opportunity to Quietly Rebel against the Dominant Langscape.” *Langscape Magazine*, 22 July 2020,



[https://terralingua.org/langscape\\_articles/quarantine-as-ceremony-covid-19-as-an-opportunity-to-quietly-rebel-against-the-dominant-langscape/](https://terralingua.org/langscape_articles/quarantine-as-ceremony-covid-19-as-an-opportunity-to-quietly-rebel-against-the-dominant-langscape/).

Eisen, Erica X. “Indigenous Activists are Reimagining Language Preservation Under Quarantine.” *Slate*, 10 Aug. 2020, <https://slate.com/technology/2020/08/indigenous-groups-language-preservation-pandemic.html>.

### What happened in class

This week focused on the relationships between oral and written languages. What happens when oral languages are written down, when speech is represented through writing conventions that allow readers to connect spelling to sound to meaning, or when a certain writing system needs improvement? Our teacher, Mark Turin, spent six years developing the first and official dictionary for the Himalayan language, Thangmi. In this class, Mark shared stories of his remarkable experience. The Himalayas is an area where one sixth of the world’s languages are spoken. These languages depend on the actual, fertile land (also known as a biome, a distinct biological community formed in response to a shared physical climate) so they’re considered “high context” languages. Whereas a “low context” language like English can seem independent of a specific place...and can be (dangerously?) mobile. With the dominant Nepalese language being transmitted through the education system and media, and a lack of recognition for peripheral languages, children are no longer learning their native tongues—to the point where entirely different languages are spoken across three generations of family members living in the same home.

Mark’s work is part of a wider Indigenous language revitalization movement. In this week’s readings we learned about the role of digital technologies in certain language revitalization projects, and (in the case of the papers by Cullis-Suzuki and Eisen) on the impact that the ongoing pandemic has had on language learning—whether personally, professionally, or communally. Despite the serious health and safety concerns brought about by the

pandemic, for Cullis-Suzuki, all the time at home has allowed her to really immerse in X̱aayda kil (the Skidegate dialect of the Haida language), to be in what she calls a “language quarantine.” Meanwhile, Eisen suggests that even though life under quarantine is characterized largely “by anxiety and loneliness, communal language revitalization projects go some way towards combating precisely those feelings.” When you’re on a Zoom call with people from around the world talking about the similar work that you’re all doing, these “feelings quickly fade.” Brown et al. emphasize the positive impact digital tools can have on language revitalization projects, while also acknowledging some of their limits. They see language as being at the core of the Canadian experience, much like class is at the core of British experience, and race the American. The authors “call upon others, both individuals and organizations, who seek to uplift Indigenous languages to listen to and learn from Indigenous communities, and support community-led revitalization programs through respectful partnership” (269).

The relationship between how a language is written and how a language is spoken (how it sounds) is also territory covered by Hum participant Chris Marquis in his new book *Inglish Maed Simpəl*. In Thursday’s tutorials Chris launched his new book and provided instruction on how to apply *Inglish Maed Simpəl* to our writing.

**Groundwork aka Homework**

Brown et al.’s paper coincided with Canada’s sesquicentennial celebrations “Canada 150” in 2017. They conclude with a vision for the future; “a defining element,” they write, “in Canada’s next 150 years will be the extent to which Canadians and their governments respond to the language sections of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (TRC) Calls to Action from 2015. Another defining element will be the resurgence and celebration of First Nations and Indigenous languages and culture in print and on air, in person and online. Will the rest of Canadian society accept, listen to, and value Indigenous languages and join us in uplifting them?”

Today’s Groundwork asks you to respond to the question: “Will the rest of Canadian society accept, listen to, and value Indigenous languages and join us in uplifting them?” Please feel free to draw from the readings, lecture, your own experiences, questions and commitments, and write with a specific reader or listener in mind, perhaps your local officials, policy makers, organizations you’re a part of and places you frequent, those who agree and those who disagree, etc.

**Bonus writing translation exercise:** When you were reading the article “Quarantine as Ceremony,” you might have noticed that the Haida language is spelt differently from the anglicized version: X̱aayda kil is the Skidegate dialect of the Haida language. It sounds the same but has two different spellings. When you read it aloud, did you hear their shared meaning? Using Chris Marquis’ “Inglish Maed Simpəl” system, Ƴoo miet trie rieting ə sentence Ƴor Groundwerk uezing Inglish Maed Simpəl. Please write your response in English first, and then try your hand at translating it into Inglish Maed Simpəl.

A walk in the woods  
CHER HURRELL

I acknowledge Lady Flidais (Flee-ish), as I saunter to the store.  
Into the nature trails I roam, where life pulses galore.

I acknowledge our Father/Mother, God, creator of the suns,  
I am thankful for them giving me a place to live and run.

Seeing robins (counting ten), their red breasts proud and strong,  
They chirp and sing a hearty song; “Winter is almost gone.”

Let’s not forget the animals who always scamper by,  
The dog gives chase, but Grandma’s place is to keep her by her side.

We stop for just a moment, to breathe a little slower,  
Just as a rabbit hops by, heading for their burrow.

I acknowledge next the blackberry bushes, their fruit does serve us well,  
It feeds the birds and animals too. PLUS, it sure makes yummy jell.

The mighty pine, the cedar, and the naked Arbutus trees,  
All give shelter to the living creatures and help protect their families.

SO TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE, I acknowledge in my heart and mind,  
A people who have shared with me this land, you are so very kind.

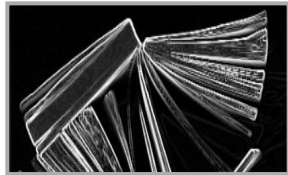
Thank you, First Peoples of Canada.

# Deep listening practices

## FEBRUARY 1 & 4 CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES

“Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else, on respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being” with Christine Stewart, English and Film Studies, University of Alberta, and Lisa Prins, Coordinator of Hum (Humanities 101), University of Alberta, and a UofA collective member of the “Walls to Bridges” (W2B) Program at The Edmonton Institution for Women federal prison, and Margot Leigh Butler, Hum & Associate, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies, UBC.

### What we read



\* Venne, Sharon H. “Treaties Made in Good Faith.” *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* vol. 34, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-3.

\* 4 Seasons of Reconciliation. “‘We are all Treaty People’ (Module 4).” Reconciliation Education. Powerpoint presentation.

\* “Treaty Walk: A Journey for Common Ground.” Created by Brad Leitch/Rebel Sky Media. 2019. <https://treatywalk.com/treatywalkajourneyforcommonground>.

Borrows, John. “Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government.” In *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference*, edited by Michael Asch. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1997, pp. 155-172.

“The Royal Proclamation: October 7, 1763.” *Canadian Constitutional Documents*, [https://solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/PreConfederation/rp\\_1763.html](https://solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/PreConfederation/rp_1763.html).

### What happened in class

In her article, “Treaties Made in Good Faith,” Sharon H. Venne makes the important observation that treaties and treaty-making processes predate European arrival and that treaties have long existed between Indigenous nations on Turtle Island. These treaties were negotiated between nations using their own, Indigenous legal traditions and are still in place today. Venne uses the example of the Cree-Dene Treaty, which demarcates the two territories at Peace River (and which predates the arrival of Europeans). “When I cross the Peace River going north into Dene territory, I always give thanks to the Dene for letting me come into their territory,” writes Venne.

In this week’s lecture, Christine emphasized that treaties are about relationships, and we are all treaty people. Treaties are alliances intended to establish peaceful relationships and guarantee agreements around trade, land, peace and respect amongst many other things. Relationships between sovereign First Nations and the settler Canadian government are defined through numerous legally-binding treaties, to which First Nations peoples continue to hold settlers accountable. For example, The Two Row Wampum Treaty (est. 1613) between the Onkwehonweh (original people) of Turtle Island (North America) and European immigrants represents two distinct groups respecting and working alongside one another according to their own customs, without interference in one another’s affairs. Although the settler government reneged on this Treaty (and many more), Christine believes these treaties can still be taken as a framework for decolonization and reconciliation. Holding true to treaties means supporting the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada to self-governance and sovereignty.

The video, “Treaty Walk—A Journey for Common Ground” (2019), follows a group of Indigenous Elders, public health care union workers, representatives of faith communities and others as they embark on a 14-day long walk from Edmonton, Alberta in Treaty 6 Territory to Calgary in Treaty 7 Territory. The walk was guided by the leadership and teachings of Indigenous Elders. This group of determined walkers explore together what it means to be treaty people working and living on common ground, in the context of the inequality and racism that Indigenous peoples in Canada face. The journey has an emotional impact on the walkers, and the video, too, may have an emotional impact on its viewers. Through learning and living into the Natural Laws of Kindness, Honesty, Sharing, and Strength, they all walk to transform themselves and the communities they visit along the way. This film’s story has already inspired many, becoming a symbol for what is possible in the four directions, for all our relations, across Turtle Island.



**Groundwork aka Homework**

This week’s groundwork was designed by our teacher, Christine Stewart, and is called “Finding Your Place.” Here’s what to do:

1. Find a place to visit regularly. This might be a place that you already frequent regularly or one that you hope to spend a little more time in now and in the future.
2. Go alone, or with company (and please always be safe).
3. Choose a place—somewhere down by the river valley (in Edmonton), or by the ocean (in Vancouver), a local park, close by a tree you admire, your backyard, your back alley, your balcony, or the view out your window.
4. Once you have chosen a place to visit, record and journal on your visits. In certain academic disciplines—anthropology, for example—this is called taking “field notes!” There’s many ways to take field notes about the place that you settled on; you might draw, write, or take sound recordings of your place. You might want to take brief notes while you’re out and then rewrite them later in a different style or with more detail. You might take a quick sketch that you turn into a more detailed drawing later. It’s important, though, that your field notes remain true to what you saw, felt, heard, smelt, or even tasted. Your field notes can include sound recordings, photos and or small videos of your place!
5. Here’s some questions you might start with: What is it like where you are? Is there water? Are there trees? Where are the birds? Can you feel the wind? The grass? Think about your relationship with the elements (earth, fire, water, air/wind), engage with your readings about treaty and consider themes of reciprocity, of interconnectedness, of family.
6. Listen/look/feel around for connections.
7. Introduce yourself to the beings whose home this place is.
8. Are there connections here, existing between the land and our bodies?

**Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else: on respecting  
Indigenous ways of knowing and being**  
**JOEL KUMAR**

Most mornings, I walk to the Lost Lagoon at Stanley Park. I like to pick blackberries to mix with my breakfast, when they’re in season. I enjoy foraging in the park. It helps me understand how nature can help me heal, and it gets me in touch with the good, bad and ugly spiritual vibes. I need all of them. I bring them to the DTES and share with the community where I work, volunteer, share and play.

Today, I walked around the lagoon and found the animals, plants and humans in good spirits, enjoying life together. When they depend on each other through this cold day of winter, it’s amazing to see all the animals, plants and humans so happy and humble. People are glad to say hello, birds eat and hum, otters swim and feast on fish in gangs of four, ducks and geese feast too—while quacking away. All together we breath fresh air as the rising sun beams down through the clouds. Nature receives its vitamin D, which is needed to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. Looks like it will rain sometime soon, making the morning light just perfect for animals to hunt and gather food.

First Nations treaty-making was the best thing that happened on Turtle Island, or what is now known as North America. Before the settlers came the Indigenous peoples had treaties of their own, with other tribes as well as with nature. For instance, across the demarcation known as the Peace River, the Dene occupied land on the north side, and the Cree to the south. The dividing line that separates the Cree and Blackfoot confederacies represents a commitment by Elders who used pipes and prayers to make treaty. All of us have to obey and respect this land, because all of us are treaty people. Treaties symbolize peace, friendship and respect, and they are meant to be obeyed forever. Treaties govern, they maintain spiritual values, favour peace over war and conflict—just like what I saw with the animals, humans and nature today.

Indigenous people also made treaties with settlers. Treaties, like the 1764 Treaty of Niagara, are formalized and set in stone through the two-row Wampum Belt (Burrows, 1997). The belt consists of two rows of purple beads on a white background. The three rows of white beads symbolize peace, friendship and respect. The two purple rows symbolize two paths, or two vessels, travelling down the river. One row symbolizes the Indigenous peoples with their laws and customs, while the other row symbolizes European laws and customs. The two rows are in agreement: Indigenous peoples and settlers can co-exist while maintaining their own ways of life. It is a travesty that the Canadian government broke some of the treaty promises. Indigenous people have not been given respect they deserve, or even basic human rights. For instance, little support on education, and unhealthy water systems on reserves.

I didn’t see turtles in the park today. They are animals from millions of years ago. They have survived all the planet’s natural disasters and are still living with us today.

Happy times.

**Citations**

Burrows, John. “Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government.” In *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada*. Eds. Michael Asch. UBC Press. 1997.

## The all-welcoming park

EVA WATTERSON

Land is a part of Who We Are, a part of our blood, our past, our current life and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and around us, at all times.

When I am at the ocean I feel at peace with the world, with people and nature.

There is the calm Pacific Ocean opposite the park—calm compared to the North Atlantic Ocean, where I was born in eastern Canada.

Trees are spaced about 15–20 ft. apart at the back of the park. Trees are plentiful as a backdrop and barrier to the wind.

The birds are free to fly in the air, or swim in the ocean. Pigeons, seagulls, crows, and Canada geese wander in the springtime, everywhere in the park.

The wind blows constantly, sometimes slowly rustling the leaves and lifting the branches off the trees.

The grass in this park is always well maintained by the city. There is a well-kept atmosphere for grass and shrubbery. If someone calls 311, the city workers come promptly to fix whatever problems have arisen.

I feel that I'm grounded with the Earth. My feet are flat on the ground as the wind blows through my hair. I feel cleansed by the movement of the air on my face and body.

The water is rough some days, and on other days one can see gulls and ducks bobbing up and down as the currents move the water in and out, up and down.

Everyone is welcome in this park. If they encounter an angry person, they leave. There are many police cars patrolling this park.

The beads on the Two Row Wampum Belt are side by side. A treaty to live beside each other and still uphold separate traditions and customs. All of the bands in a row.

In this park I have met a few very kind, generous and interesting people. I began coming to this place last summer. I have listened to many different peoples with many different stories and feelings to share with the world.

I bring seeds, whole-grain bread and leftover pork, beef, and sausages cut into small pieces to feed the birds. They gather around me, sometimes twenty at a time. I talk to the birds in my mind. They appreciate the goodies that I bring for them, and feed ferociously on them, as if there is never going to be another meal.

We are all human beings with different needs and traditions. We all come from a different place, yet in the end, we have the same wants and needs. Freedom of speech, love of our family and people in general. A need to feel wanted and or accepted, a need to feel important and respected in the grand scheme of things.

Treaties  
SHAHLA MASOUMNEJAD

This is my bench by the ocean,  
in the midst of life,  
under the blue sky,  
by the green grass,  
and on the earthy ground.

Come close my little friend.  
You can fly into the blue,  
no need to treaty, no share, no ownership.  
Listen to the loud silence of the blue sky,  
to the running clouds,  
to the pouring rain.

Fly up, and up,  
and take me with you,  
where your “word” means “promise.”

Walk me through the bare trees,  
narrow waters, long paths, quiet lands,  
and listen to the song:  
we won’t disappear,  
we won’t leave,  
we won’t forget.

Let’s breathe,  
breathe,  
breathe,  
together.

Let’s touch the heaven,  
down the river,  
together.

We can still hold on to that piece of land,  
on our earth-toned treaty paper,  
and go down the same path,  
but “in our own vessels,”  
as holding our framework  
our “two row wampum.”  
We can still share life.

Behind my closed eyes,  
I can see the old tree bending,  
the narrow water crying,  
the wandering wind mourning,  
as if the whole world is rehearsing the old, familiar song:

“Treaties are forever,  
for as long as the grass grows,  
the water flows,  
and the wind blows.”

## WET PAINT: People are trying to communicate here

ANTONIETTA GESUALDI

This collage, "WET PAINT: People are Trying to Communicate Here," is a compilation of photographs I have taken on a mobile device while walking through the Downtown Eastside during my work days throughout the last seven years. These succinct individual graffiti function as a unique community bulletin board: written by actual community members, for their friends and neighbours, with no intent to convince anyone of anything nor entice them to attend a workshop or event, but simply to convey observations, knowledge and art. The messages and art work are often echoes of longstanding issues affecting the DTES. This bulletin board is a commons, existing wherever people might walk by. No one has to preapprove posting, and everyone's perspective is valued, be it humorous, abstract, or grave.

Often on the north east corner of Gore Avenue and Hastings Street, the graffiti is constantly being painted over. The paint is barely dry before another profound message or beautiful artwork takes over the blank canvas. The need to fill this particular section of the bulletin board with information is urgently ongoing.

I have learned that my capturing these random and moving community posts is a form of field notes. I took the photos of graffiti in the DTES, but assembled them in front of my building, where I have lived with my daughter (who identifies as Indigenous), for the last 16 years. I am connected to this neighborhood not solely through work, but through my family. My mother-in-law was a residential school survivor. Depending on various sources, "1525 residents in the DTES identify as Indigenous, 9.8% of the population versus 2.2% city-wide" ([vancouver.ca/files/cov/dtes-plan-2014-2019-implementation-infographics.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/dtes-plan-2014-2019-implementation-infographics.pdf)), whereas the Indigenous Reporting website ([indigenousreporting.com](http://indigenousreporting.com)) states that "this neighborhood has the highest proportion of Indigenous people in the city at 31%."

I would like to acknowledge that I am just a visitor on these lands. I would like to thank the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Watuth Nations for the opportunity to live, work and LEARN on the lands.

I would like to thank the astute anonymous artists who always made me stop not only to think, but to feel what was going on in the neighborhood.



WET PAINT: People are trying to communicate here

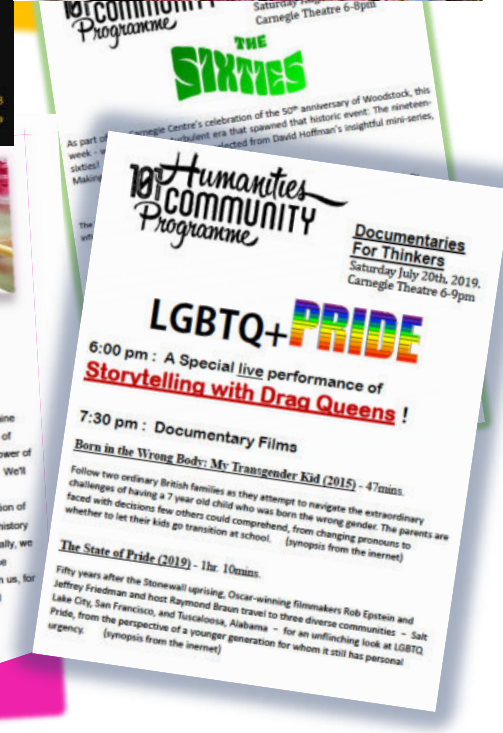
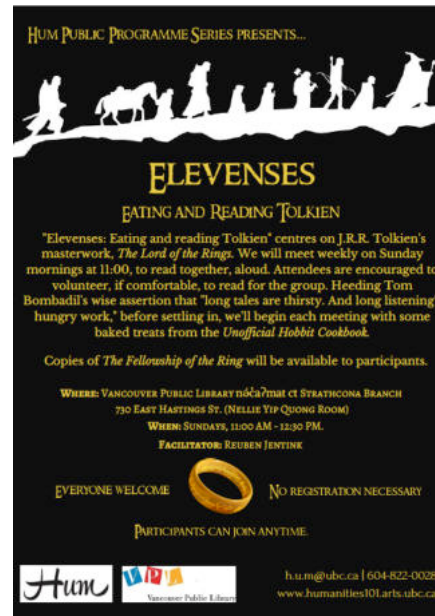






## OUR GRATITUDE TO LONGTIME HUM EDUCATION ACTIVISTS REUBEN & TERRY!

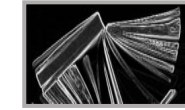
Immense gratitude goes to two people deeply involved with Hum for many years who embody being connected and interdependent on intimate and grand scales: Reuben Jentink and Terry Lui. In the myriad Hum roles of student staff, volunteer coordinator, research assistant, Public Programmes facilitator (leading us on a two year weekly ‘read aloud’ trek from Hobbiton), teacher and Writing Coordinator, for seven years Reuben has lent his strong legs and wise fortitude to help loads of people to find and make their own, their very own, rings. What more could we want! And, through his global eyes and deft touch, for six years Hum alumnus Terry has widened the scope of DTES/South film audiences’ worlds through his curation of Hum’s Documentaries for Thinkers film series at Carnegie Centre. Happily drawn into beckoning seats, crowds of devotees travelled together these Saturday evenings to learn from Terry’s research and selections, and to benefit from his great enthusiasm. Terry and Reuben are living legends of what can happen when dedicated education activists create interdependencies through their love of learning. We thank them heartily for all they’ve done with and for us!



## FEBRUARY 8 & 11 FORESTRY

“Three stories closer to understanding complexity theory” with D’Arcy Davis-Case, Forestry, UBC.

### What we read



\* Davis-Case, D’Arcy. “Context to a Conversation.” In *Where They Walked Became Their Path: The Value of Practiced Complexity in Sustainable Forest Conservation*. Feb. 2020 Draft. University of British Columbia, PhD dissertation.

### What happened in class

This week we read an excerpt from our teacher, D’Arcy Davis-Case’s, PhD dissertation, *Where They Walked Became Their Path: The Value of Practiced Complexity in Sustainable Forest Conservation* (draft, February 2020). From D’Arcy, we learned that there are three different kinds of problems: simple, complicated and complex. We can use this model to think about and share our experiences and problems while living with this pandemic, where everyone depends on everyone else and everything depends on everything else (our theme!). Focusing on complex problems, D’Arcy writes,

Transitions, social innovation and change might combine simple, complicated and complex kinds of problems, but the least understood is the complex. Westley (2006) argues that the uncertainty inherent in a complex problem (unlike the predictability of baking a cake or sending a rocket to the moon) is that there are no clear rules to follow to guarantee success. Every parent knows that raising one child provides experience, but is no assurance of success with future children, because each child is unique and external forces cannot be controlled by the parent. The flour does not suddenly change its mind, and gravity can be counted on. But children have minds of their own, and interventions are always interactions, and parent and child interact to create outcomes. The task is to know which kind of problem is presenting, and proceed accordingly (3).

In class, D’Arcy shared three + one stories to demonstrate the consequences of treating complex problems as simple problems. First, the story of tree planters who were provided with standardized tools to use in incommensurable terrain. Workers had to adapt the standardized equipment and adopt ways of living to the unique conditions of British Columbia. This included modifying their shovels and developing food practices that reduced the likelihood of bears intruding on their camps. Second, the story of fuel-efficient stoves. Sudanese women found little use for fuel efficient stoves that were designed without their specific local needs in mind. For instance, the bulky stoves meant that the women could not flee when authorities came to shut down their street vending operations; and they didn’t cast the same kind of light as cooking by a small fire. Third, the story of bore wells in Africa. Effective cement watering troughs to feed livestock were replaced with ineffective metal ones. In the sun, the water became too hot to drink and the troughs themselves lasted only a few years, and the metal deteriorated and leached into the water. In all these instances, simple solutions were devised by

governments and corporations in faraway places, by people who had little understanding of the specific needs and contexts that local people faced. They provided simple solutions that did not factor in the complex context. A fourth story about autonomous forest conservators in Inle Lake, Myanmar—which D’Arcy researched for her PhD—offered a contrast to the supposed “expert” solutions from outside the community. D’Arcy described the forest conservator’s community forestry practices as akin to kissing or feeling a child’s forehead to check on their health (excited, calm, cold, feverish...): monitoring the child to see what’s working and what’s not working. The forest conservators do the same with their forests!

## Groundwork aka Homework

For your Groundwork, think about how you'd respond to these three current problems, listed below. You're invited to share how you have approached living with these three problems.

1. Mask-making, or choosing what mask to wear (a simple problem with clear instructions)
2. Mask wearing in public spaces (a complicated problem with multi-part instructions)
3. Managing to live through a pandemic—socially, economically, mentally, spiritually, etc. (a complex problem with no clear rules to guarantee success).

To get started, think about and list how you've, personally, been approaching each problem over the last year (mask-making or choosing what mask to wear; mask wearing; and managing to live through a pandemic). Then list off those aspects that seem most important or relevant to approaching each kind of problem. Start with the grid below and add as many rows as you like.

Second, turn your account into another genre of writing, such as storytelling, poetry or song lyrics, an argumentative or personal essay, satire, technical or instructional writing, or you can simply list your thoughts. You might also choose to represent your responses to these three problems in visual form (drawing, collage, painting) or in sound.

Simple	Complicated	Complex
Mask making, or choosing what mask to wear (simple problem with clear instructions)	Mask wearing in public spaces (complicated problem with multi-part instructions)	Managing to live through a pandemic—socially, mentally, spiritually, etc. (complex problem with no clear rule to guarantee success)

## Masks save lives

**GHIA AWEIDA**

Try making a mask without a sewing machine,  
make a pattern from your disposable mask,  
or one that you print online,  
now cut the pattern,  
trace it on the fabric of your choice,  
try sewing by hand,  
dealing with tangling thread,  
drawing a line  
keeping to the curves,  
the straight lines,  
taking small stitches  
with like-coloured threads.  
A slow process for your eyes,  
you want to give up,  
only to receive a mask  
from another's handiwork,  
for you see many who purchased  
masks, spending dear money.  
Now, you experiment,  
to find one that fits,  
one approved by professionals,  
though non-medical suffices,  
many with designs  
men, women and children wear,  
ones you wash after every use.

How wonderful not to wear a mask  
in one's own private home,  
yet remember to wear a mask  
in all common areas.  
Notices remind you,  
keep you safe,  
listen to professionals and scientists,

their word is law,  
remember your mask  
before you board the bus,  
or take a ride in a cab.

Monitor yourself daily,  
check your temperature,  
care for yourself,  
lest you get asked  
if you experience flu symptoms,  
answer honestly,  
your temperature is taken regardless  
and if elevated,  
you are turned away.

Keep to designated areas.  
Only go with loved ones  
where there is a need,  
changing to a disposable mask  
when in clinical institutions,  
or on hospital grounds,  
visiting loved ones in care homes  
or in seniors' homes,  
dispose of the mask when possible,  
loops behind the ears are best  
but you prefer ties behind the head.

Count your lucky stars  
you need not wear a mask  
when riding a bicycle  
or taking a stroll along  
side streets,

when park paths are blocked  
when barriers lay in place,  
when recreation,  
fitness centres and swimming areas  
are closed.

You saw buses  
going on half empty  
not knowing where to sit,  
for you cannot sit  
with the loved one with you,  
nowadays you sit anywhere,  
only to hear a lecture  
from another  
since you choose  
not to budge,  
for the seat is now available,  
and ask the passenger  
to keep their mouth shut,  
choosing to ignore,  
for you both wear masks,  
and have eye protection,  
and the seat is now available,  
for you don't care  
what they say.

Still, you are not contagious,  
while the passenger thinks  
you are to make them ill,  
and they leave the bus,

while others call you rude,  
but you turn a deaf ear,  
explaining you wish  
to stay put, for you are  
in such a rush for errands,  
ignoring all who call you rude,  
not wanting to listen to anyone.

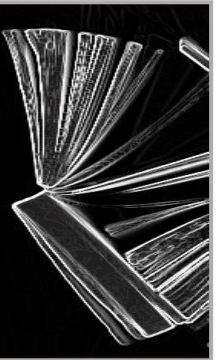
You know you participated  
in events in previous years,  
Gay Pride Parade cancelled  
to avoid gatherings,  
you love to see  
lunar new year  
be low key and virtual,  
yet you question  
why the Downtown Eastside didn't  
modify the Valentine's Day March  
this year to remember murdered  
and missing women,  
televising such an event,  
following into the footsteps  
of the Heart of the City Festival.  
Our hearts were there, and I wondered,  
When will we be safely together again?

We know masks save lives,  
for they protect others from you  
and you from them.

**FEBRUARY 22 & 25 CRITICAL INDIGENOUS STUDIES**

**“Unsayable: Voices in contemporary Indigenous art” with Tracy Bear (Montreal Lake First Nation), Faculty of Native Studies and Women and Gender Studies, and Director of the Indigenous Women’s Resilience Project, University of Alberta.**

**What we read**



- \* Edge, Lois Elizabeth. *My Grandmother's Moccasins: Indigenous Women, Ways Of Knowing And Indigenous Aesthetic Of Bead Work*. Spring 2011. University of Alberta, PhD dissertation. Excerpts.
- \* Beavis, Lori. *to know dibaajimowin: a narrative of knowing: art, art education and cultural identity in the life experiences of four contemporary Indigenous women artists*. Feb. 2016. Concordia University, PhD dissertation. Excerpts.
- \* Belcourt, Christi. *This Painting is a Mirror*. 2012, Collection of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Gatineau, QC. Acrylic on canvas.
- \* Ontario Arts Council. “Indigenous Arts Protocols.” YouTube, uploaded by OAC CAO, 23 Oct. 2016, <https://youtu.be/c6VuHJi6OoQ>.

**What happened in class**

Two quotations set off our class tonight, both attributed to Jonathan Dewar, Director of Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre at Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. “Art has the ability to say the unsayable.” And “Art gives us a way to access even the most difficult things—those things for which we can’t find the words.”

Tracy identified three critical premises of contemporary Indigenous art: First, the past is always present. Second, art can embody stories and relay critical cultural knowledge. Third, art often plays on and modifies images between Indigenous peoples and the established art world.

Tracy showed us some amazing Indigenous artworks in so many different media, including quills, shells, beads, hides, paintings, sneakers, umbrellas, video, body modification, theatre and film. She explained how these artistic traditions were (and sometimes still are) dependant on place, on specific parts of the world around us, and on the sustaining lifeways of a place. For example, on the Plains, artistic traditions emerged that were more easily packed up and transported (such as beading), whereas in the Pacific Northwest, heavier, more permanent artistic forms emerged (such as the carving of house posts and totem poles).

In one of this week’s readings, Métis artist Christi Belcourt (whose painting we studied) is quoted as saying, “Like the generations of Aboriginal beadworkers before me, my art celebrates the beauty of flowers and plants while exploring their symbolic properties. I follow the tradition of Métis floral art, inspired by the traditional beadwork patterns of Métis and First Nation women, and use the subject matter of plants as a metaphor for



our own lives to relay a variety of meanings, which include concerns for the environment, biodiversity, spirituality and awareness of Métis culture.” Closely studying Belcourt’s painting, we discussed what we learnt about plants, and how the artwork helped us to remember forgotten things we once knew about plants, and about our broader natural environment.

#### Groundwork aka Homework

This week’s groundwork is adapted from an exercise shared with us by Tracy Bear and is called “The Flower Beadwork People.” It’s different from much of the groundwork we have done so far in that the writing exercise is paired with Christi Belcourt’s acrylic painting, *This Painting is a Mirror* (2012). The groundwork asks us to look at, interpret, engage with, and reflect on what we each, personally, see in the painting. In doing this reflective and interpretive work, we’ll learn more about Métis beading as an activity of self-reflection or meditation, a community tradition as well as a social activity, and examine its symbolic meaning for Indigenous Peoples.

Here’s what to do:

Start by closely looking again at *This Painting is a Mirror* (acrylic on canvas, 206 x 256 cm, 2012). And then ask yourself some or all of the following questions. Make sure to take note of your answers.

- Does the design of this painting seem familiar to you? Where have you seen this type of design? (For example, is it similar to beaded designs on mittens, moccasins, vests, etc.?)
- List the plants and animals you recognize in this painting. (There are, among others, bees, blue jays, hummingbirds, moths, robins, blueberries, strawberries, oak leaves, poppies, roses, chokecherries, and bunchberry flowers.)
- What do you make of the painting’s symmetry? Try drawing an imaginary line down the middle of the painting. Can you find the elements that don’t follow the symmetrical pattern? (For example, the bees and the brown orbs representing the Spirit World.)
- What do the plants and animals represent in this painting? What can you infer about the meaning of the painting from the artwork’s title?

Once you’ve spent some time thinking through these questions, now think about how you might commemorate someone who’s important to you in your life. Think of a particular person to commemorate, such as a family member, a close friend or yourself. List that person’s gifts, qualities and role in your life. Correlate these with elements found in nature. If you’d like, feel free to make a composition (drawn, collaged, painted, etc.) of your commemoration.

## Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else

### LIEN TIET

Teamwork, organizing, and building trust make things go well. Everyone depends on everyone else, like with family relationships.

Teamwork and great organizing; that is a bee’s life. They do “everyone depends on everyone else” in order to do all life’s essential work. It is just like we human beings. We need food, shelter, nursing, and we take care of families. A bee’s life is amazing work. They trust each other to do their jobs. Each bee has their own work position. Worker bee works outdoors, flying around outside to collect pollen and nectar from flowers. Queen bee, Honey bee and Worker bee all work inside, building their own beehive. Worker bee depends on Honey bee to work on the honey from the Worker bees’ nectar and pollen yield. Queen bee needs to take care of lava babies and produce special food for feeding her babies. Queen bee needs honey to feed herself. They all depend on everyone else to produce food for survival. Their family connection is similar for us in our society.

A bee’s life involves teamwork to organize and make whole colony strong. Everyone has good living; plenty of honey food. I wish human beings learn from bees’ activities. Learn from bees’ lives the information needed to build up our own wealthy life and happy living.

## My dad

JENNIE LEWIN

My dad is like a bulrush. Plain to look at, simply made, easily passed by, but handles the cold wind as it whips around without any protection.

My dad is like a violet. Grows in tough locations, close to the ground, unnoticed, not wanted, blossoming even when they shouldn't. You have to search for it to see its beauty, and most people step on it without even knowing.

My dad is like muskeg. On the surface not eye catching, but while standing in it you know that you are in the midst of so many complex layers that you can't begin to understand. And each of those layers will hold you while you are sinking.

My dad is like a spruce tree. Weeping sap on the outside, messy. If you get close, your hands will become dirty. However, if you choose to stay close, underneath you will see that the roots are planted firmly and unmovable. When the tree is taken away, you will look at the stump and remember how much the sap looked like jewels that glistened when the sun caught them. It is the purest thing you have ever seen. And you were glad you held it... despite your dirty hands.

My dad is like an endless sky. Honest. Giving. Open. And when things were at their worst, he would put his hand on your shoulder and you could suddenly breathe in the fresh air and see the colour blue.

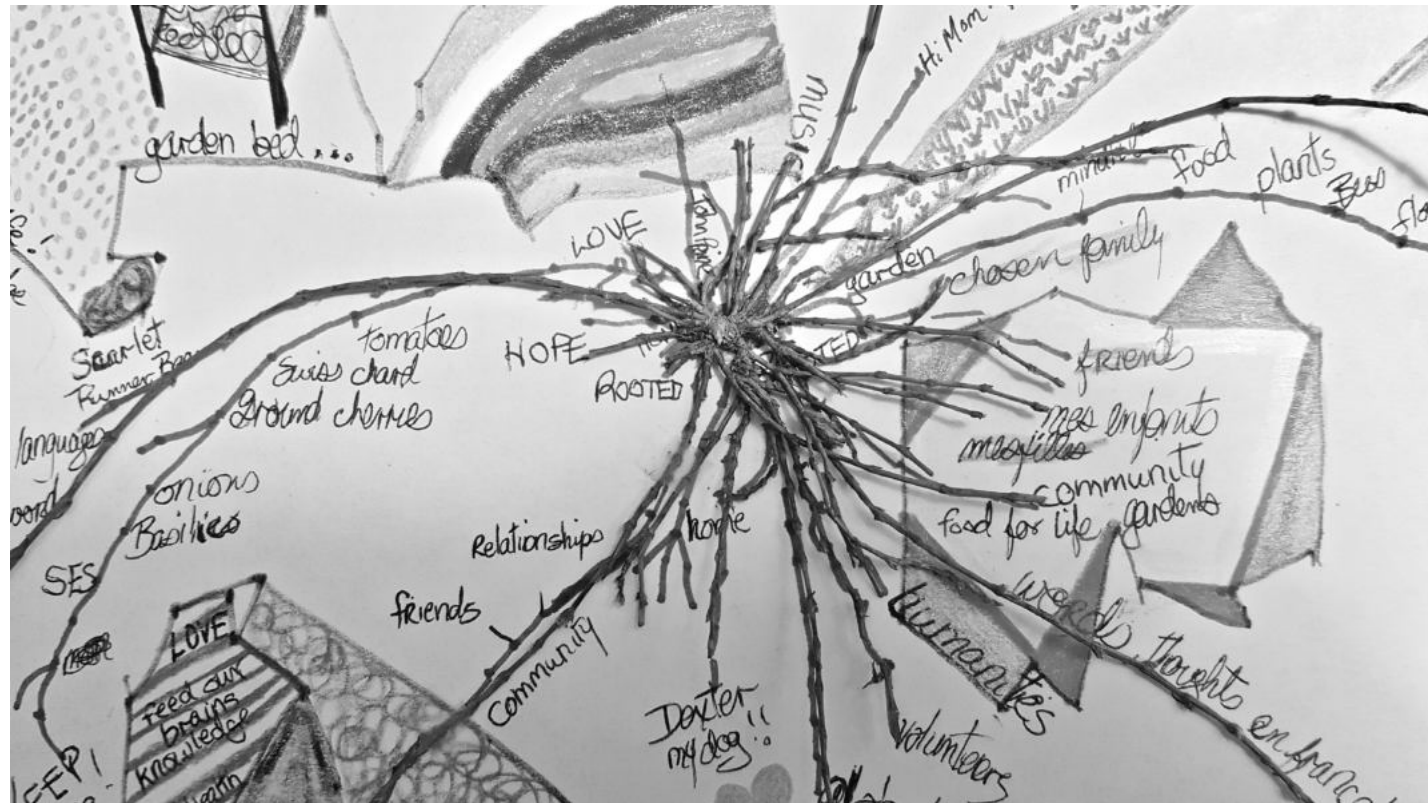
My dad is like wheat. Nourishing, golden, and providing. And when the sun sets, you see the culmination of all of it. The hard work. The sacrifice. The challenges. The unfairness of weather and circumstance. And then you see the result. A perfect field of gold swaying in the wind. Van Gogh couldn't have painted something so beautiful. You glance to the man that made this. A man that was also given a field of unfairness. And you choose to gaze at the artist and not the art. With his eyes glowing as bright as the sunset, you know that you made the best choice.

My dad is like a birch tree. Cancer ravaged his body like weather on thin bark. The bark that easily peels away the surface of the translucent skin that protects what is inside. You can't do anything to stop it. So you sit by the bark and you try your best to preserve the thin layers. After a while you realize that it is helpless. You are left merely gathering up the translucent pieces and holding them close to your heart, realizing that soon it will be all that you will have left.



My dad is not like the shiny hardwood that his coffin was made out of. Something else would have suited him better. Wood that he was familiar with... perhaps poplar or spruce. He was not comfortable with fancy. He would have not been comfortable in the suit he was buried in. The only time he wore it was for times like this, where he would adjust himself in the pew, pulling at his tie. He would also not be comfortable with this cemetery: too many people. He would have liked it better being buried in a field that quietly keeps secrets, where the only noise that comes is from the rain nourishing the ground. Buried in his flannel shirt, overalls, and skewed ball cap.

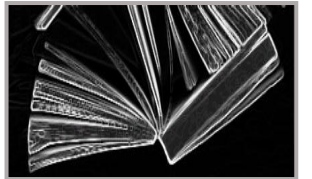
My dad is like the poppies that spring up in a place that once held a garden. The soil is no longer tended. You wouldn't have known that anything was there. But for three glorious days the poppies bloom every year. A reminder that a good life leaves you something beautiful behind. How long will those poppies continue to bloom? I suppose it doesn't matter. It only matters that there is someone that sees them and knows who planted them. Someone who remembers the calloused hand that cupped the seeds that gently set them in the soil. And when she sees them she will smile.



**“Everyone is different and you could be wrong”** with Christina van Barneveld, Education & Humanities 101 Programme Coordinator, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

### What we read

- \* van Barneveld, Christina. “Glossary of terms.” Mar. 2021.
- \* Robinson, Ken. “How to Escape Education’s Death Valley.” *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*, Apr. 2013, [https://www.ted.com/talks/sir\\_ken\\_robinson\\_how\\_to\\_escape\\_education\\_s\\_death\\_valley?utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=tedsread](https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=tedsread).
- \* Orzel, Chad. “Schrödinger's Cat: A Thought Experiment in Quantum Mechanics.” YouTube, uploaded by TED-Ed, 14 Oct. 2014, <https://youtu.be/UjaAxUO6-Uw>.
- \* King, Thomas. ““You’ll Never Believe What Happened’ is Always a Great Way to Start.” In *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press, 2003, pp. 1-29.



### What happened in class

Christina presented us with the following thesis statement: If we can respectfully acknowledge that (a) we are not all the same and, with humility, acknowledge that (b) there is some uncertainty in life, then maybe we can make room for curiosity and maybe an opportunity to learn.

Christina emphasized that people are different because of their physiology, life experiences and personal background and that these differences all shape how we perceive the world. She highlighted culture, school and physical differences as ways in which people vary, and told some stories to illustrate how these variations shape the way we perceive the world. Christina then introduced us to the concept of probability to demonstrate that behaviour or physiologies are predictable to a certain degree. Then, together, as a whole class, we discussed this question: if we are all unique people, what might explain how groups behave in predictable or conformist ways?

### Groundwork aka Homework

“The truth about stories is that that’s all we are,” Thomas King (Cherokee and Greek).

This groundwork activity, designed by our Edmonton colleague Lisa Prins, invites students to write the story of your life, your autobiography. It can be written any way you like, but do not include your name. Make sure to change family names, places and other aspects of your story which could identify you so that other readers cannot tell who you are.

Here are a couple prompts you might try to get started:

- Pick three objects around you, things that you can experience with your senses (touch, feel, smell, hear, see). Tell a story about you based on these objects.
- Open a box of things that has been left unopened for a long time. What story do the things inside that box tell about you?

In your story, make YOU the main character. Write yourself however you choose, but make sure it is about YOU. Choose what you want to share and what you want to leave out. It is all about you writing you. Remember that there will always be fiction in an autobiography as we often have to rely on the stories and memories of others. It doesn't have to be accurate from the outside, only your own truth and understanding matters in this activity. We hope this is enjoyable. If you find that it is a painful activity, put it away, do something different, talk to someone, turn on the TV, open a window, listen to some music. We are not trying to unearth pain, but rather celebrate your own words and your own self.

## A critical autobiography SANDI ROOKE (SAULTEAUX-CREE)



As an Indigenous adoptee, I call what happened to me "privatized residential." My biological mother mentioned she was working as a camp cook and had left us in the care of her sister. She came home one day and found us gone. We were removed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and placed in an English home. This is called the "Sixties Scoop."

My Scottish mother drove to Regina, SK, to pick up one child, but my brother wouldn't let go of my leg, so she took us both. It was a shock to my then Dad who arrived home later that day and found us in his home! My mother wore the pants, made the decisions, and proceeded to do what she thought was right. She relayed to us a statement, "we are now adopted and are no longer Indians." I did not know what it was to be "Indian" anyway.

Our days were regimented. We would start each day with flashcards. Flashcards in the sixties were a bank of cards, like playing cards but with a picture on one side, and the other side an English meaning. For example, a picture of an owl and on the reverse the words "wise and educated." As we grew older, flashcards turned into



homework, piano, and ice skating. We walked across town to get to school, and returned home for lunch. After school, we were required to come home promptly and do activities like band class, dance class, sports, or clubs like brownies and scouts. This was considered social time and other friendships were not to develop. Pen and paper were only for school. No journals, no books—unless chosen by our mother. One hour of TV a day. Daniel Heath Justice (2018) calls this type of *assimilation* and *improvement* through settler colonialism as “Indigenous deficiency.” It makes clear the realization and the reality of being less than Indian, to take out the “savage” and become civilized and heteronormative god-fearing members of society. During the school year, not wanting to be the savage Indian that was taught in school, or on the TV, I made the decision to declare myself as a “Heinz 57” person—a term Henry J. Heinz used to refer to his own hidden, mixed ancestry. In our town, the only other people of colour were the Chinese residents who operated the Great West Cafe.

I call my early history a *happening*, an idle memory with a somewhat vacant persona that I developed from the small Euro-colonial prairie grain-town in Saskatchewan. There were no compliments, no “I love you,” and no affection, even if we excelled at something.

With the education I now have, I can see the type of oppressive treatment that I received, and I understand what happened to me. I became a colonized Indian; an “invisible” Indian. This writing may resonate like a victimized tone because, at that time in history, I was a victim, and was obliterated by it: a time of confinement, unsure identity, and puritanical rule. The town of Eston, with a population of 1500 people, had five denominations and a Bible School. When I left that town, I became free from all those oppressive societal constraints. I dispensed with all forms of writing and reading, except for magazines and fluff I had not been able to read as a tot, teenager, and young adult. I did not pick up a book for years. Psychologically speaking, I floundered around for years, trying to figure out who I was. It wasn’t until I arrived in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) twenty-three years ago that I started to *feel* like an “Indian.” I had managed to get away with being a Heinz 57 for many decades.

In the last seven years, I got tired of feeling empty. My spirit began to materialize. I took a real good look at the many flyers posted on notice boards at the free lunch organizations I attended. I wondered at the time if I still had the capacity and fortitude to start and finish a program. It turns out I did. I graduated from a six-month program called Reclaiming Our Spirits, offered by the Aboriginal Women’s Intervention group with UBC’s College of Nursing. This completion started a new phase of reconsideration for me. It helped to reshape the way I think about life.

I entered UBC’s Humanities 101 Community Programme (Hum) in 2014. The Writing 101 and 201 courses turned out to be very therapeutic. I felt safe to explore creativity with writing. Hum provided a montage of different genres and topics with volunteer lectures and presentations by professors and other educators: Sarah Hunt, Gage Averill, and Daniel Heath Justice to mention just a few. The Hum community was and still is a supporter of

empowerment and provides a great introduction of Indigenous literature which spurred my curiosity toward Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous history. I learned to have more respect for myself as an Indigenous woman and today, I find personal writing a healing release.

I have more awareness and connection with my DTES community by involving myself in other Indigenous programs. This led to becoming a peer representative on two Indigenous committees that strive for Indigenous Health, Wellness and Gender Equality. I see that this hands-on experience working on critical issues for the betterment of the community as a realistic and worthwhile contribution to the community, and a personal learning benefit. I am treated with the utmost respect, my suggestions are listened to, and I feel more positively positioned—something other than just “a DTES resident.” Engagement with these other educated Indigenous women helped move me further in my education.

This autobiography may seem more of a narrative than a critical autobiography. It is important to see the revitalization from my past, through to my present reawakening. I intend to take direct action by Indigenizing my writing in order to offer a worthwhile intervention that helps change the stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, while also offering a positive representation of the DTES. The DTES is a community that is a socially responsible, active, culturally diverse, resolute, and has a big heart. This is my demographic, and it has shaped me. It has led me on a decolonizing path and to the place I am now. I have a sense of pride in who I am. With humility, I will move forward to support the challenge of Indigenous reclamation and identity. I will honour Mother Earth’s respect and my ancestors for guidance and truth.

I am Tataquason, Saulteaux on my mother’s side and Cree from St. Boniface on my father’s side. I grew up on the lands of the Plains Cree. My brother and I have five other siblings, four of whom were also adopted out.

*Miigwetch* Thank you (Saulteaux)

### Citations

Justice, Daniel Heath. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press. 2018.

## SQ’o’leq, friends always 2021

KIMBERLEY HURRELL

The year was 1989 and it was my first day at Douglas College. I was enrolled in a personal development class focusing on self-awareness and I was upgrading my Adult Basic Education (ABE) to get a Grade 12 education. The College was just up the street from the SkyTrain where my cousin and other people would buy drugs. I remember thinking that I wished the police would arrest all those dealers. Why were they not getting busted?

My first day of class did not seem to be too stressful. At that time, I found it difficult to smile some days, and this day was a “half-smile” kind of day. The first thing I saw when I walked into the classroom was a rectangular table with approximately fifteen students sitting together. Feeling shy, I started to count the square floor tiles, then tried calculating for the total area based on these tiles. My mind wandered to length X width.... Wow, social anxiety is so scary, I thought.

The first person I felt to be approachable was a young Indigenous woman who I nicknamed, “Dream Time.” At the time, there was lots of interest in the new age and hippie movements and I didn’t yet know how this nickname would be offensive. “What is that vibrant stone in your ring?” I asked her. “It seems like it constantly reflects light, all the shades of the rainbow. Is it a white onyx? It is interesting, the stone houses the colours black, brown, white, red, and yellow—sort of a complete world in itself.” All the colours of man in one place, I thought to myself. “Does it protect you from evil, or bring you love, or strength? Did you buy it near Bear Mountain?” This was my favorite place to purchase stones. I babbled on for a few more minutes before she answered.

“‘Dream Time,’ why do you call me Dream Time?” she asked. “Are you aware that name is sacred to Australian Aboriginal peoples? Do I sound like I am from Australia?”

“Oh, oh...” I stammered. “I am so sorry for being so rude.”

“Yes, the stone is a white onyx,” she replied. “My fiancé gave it to me as an engagement ring. This ring is very sacred to me. I can marry who I love without losing Status. What is your name? I asked. “My actual name is Harrisen, not ‘Dream Time,’” she chuckled.

I replied, “my name is Dentric. It’s nice to meet you.”

“May I say something to you?” she asked. I nodded. “You remind me of a Bald Eagle fighting the locals. Your stone would be Irish agate. I see that you’re insecure. They call that low self-worth.”

I was stunned. What does that mean? I wondered to myself. My cheeks felt hot. I was ashamed for not thinking before I commented.

“Did you choose to be where you are at now?” Harrisen asked me. That was our class’ first project question. I was struggling to understand the symbolic meaning of her comments. My soul felt like it was trapped in water then shaken through volcanic rock, so much information to take in.

“Harrisen, do you believe everything happens for a reason?” I asked. “Us meeting each other, do you believe this was an accident, or were we both brought spiritually here to learn from each other?”

“I am guessing you are not interested in discussing that gold brought wealth to many nations, but to my people it brought small pox...” Harrisen replied.

“Maybe my name should be crazy,” I chimed, thinking that this new friendship could become a political debate. I felt I had to practice good manners, so I curbed my tongue, instead of telling her that my ancestors had risked their lives defending this nation during the First and Second World Wars... and that the British abolished slavery in 1807, and that I thought all wars are bad.

Harrisen spoke softly, as if she heard my thoughts. “Why do you put yourself down? You are not crazy. Your soul is true. But you’re misinformed about my people. Let’s meet after school. I will teach you how to make a leather and beaded medicine bag, and explain to you the amendments to the Indian Act in Bill C-31.” She then told me that the new amendment that passed in April 1985 changed the status rights of all Indigenous women who had previously lost access to education, medical, housing, and inheritances, when they married non-Natives. This change to the Indian Act, called Bill C-31, allowed Harrisen to keep her Indigenous status and to pass status on to her children. (For more information, see “Bill C-31,” Indigenous Foundations, 2009, [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/bill\\_c-31/](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/bill_c-31/).)

My new friend helped me to understand that, for Indigenous women, Canadian female empowerment was more than just the 1960s “Burning of the Bra.” At the time, I did not yet understand how important these changes were in regards to Indigenous rights, human equality, equal treatment of men and women, and of course the changes it had in empowering and protecting the human rights of other vulnerable persons within the Canadian legal system.

Harrisen and I hung out for over ten years and we learned a lot from each other. Harrisen would always say “Friend Always” and “IYES,” which means “Woman Friend” in her family’s Coast Salish language. We eventually went our separate ways, but in February 2021, we found each other over social media, during the Covid-19 pandemic. I sent her a “friend request.” Harrisen replied back, “SQ’o’leq,” my buddy. “Let’s meet up after the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted in the near future.”

## Finding my place

INES OKANOVIC

Here I am. Sitting still. Loyally. For years now. It feels like I am losing my place. A place I actually have never been in, yet. Along the concrete and rock shorelines, some buildings reside in poison. Somehow, they're very well disguised by wonderful blossoms. Those blossoms are heroically perfuming the city streets with their mesmerizing scents. Together with the concrete jungle's wonderful views and the welcoming coastal lifestyle, the city truly embraces the unlimited opportunities for whatever talents it may attract.

Our building has changed its colours the same number of times it has changed the owners. Although I strongly disagree with painting over the walls of old-school, unreplaceable bricks. Why hide its natural beauty? Is it not worthy of a historical stamp? Indeed, if only such walls could speak. If the descended roots of these wonderful trees could share a movie screen, in a Fibonacci sequence, that is. In fact, many people do see what these walls and trees have witnessed. Daily pains, sorrows, as well as the laughing smiles of people pursuing disobeyed interests. I wonder whether some people will ever know what is really happening all around them? Is that even a question that I should be asking, when my own life is a relentless nightmare. Just another "in-the-works," snappy mess.

Sitting here. Constipated, with my own thoughts. Grasping any fresh air, when remembering such despair and survived pain. Isolated, within my very own grounds. Yet still, the wrecking balls do exist. Somehow. Always. Present. When I'm just about to stand my ground, the cement knocks me right back down. It's been years now. Many of the "same old" us are gratefully still here. Even though the buildings may be falling apart, our spirits thankfully maintain their energies in the high rises. What an atmosphere! I glance daily out of our single occupancy—yet double occupied—room window. The street corner is so busy. At night, the intersection emerges even more lively. It is truly the only outing most of us receive. I've been told that I have voluntarily placed myself into isolation. Even prior to the deadly virus.

Very well, I could share so much about how we were able to survive so far. Music is my main cure, and hemp flowers turning slowly into soft, baked brownies. Looking out of this window, daily, seeing more than I should have shared. I am still trying to find my place within my own mess of a nightmare's stress.

Monday through Friday, I patiently await my overdue mail. It is such a surpassed anticipation with my ID. I've been promised something by so many, only to lead myself astray blindly. Now I see that it is all a part of someone else's irrational indisposition, which almost grew into me fully. I realize that is NOT my role. I've unwillingly volunteered for too long. Now, it's a daily, unasked for, fight for survival. So, hey! I am still finding my place. Despite my belief and trust in many harmonious others, I should have put myself first. Most have made me

selectively ignore chances to achieve things for myself. Another year has gone by and I'm still in this unconditioned mess. Somehow deep down, I do want to help the whole world somewhat heal. I've been crushed many times, and have found incredible strengths, thankfully.

Look promptly: most people are running around, yet have nowhere to be placed. Look at me closely: staring out the window, awaiting eagerly on something good for my place. I hope my mail will arrive to me, eventually. I still do not have any valid ID. It has been too many years now. I sincerely do not know where the time has flown off to: quite embarrassing. Such shame chasing lost days. Finding myself in a loop of sleepy procrastination and haze. I catch up for everything mostly by giving thanks. I'm strong enough to stay strong, in order to find my place. Trying to place myself in a strong hold, to find my purpose. The deep search is continuously interrupted. Making a solid foundation in such times: impossible.

The howling winds that forcibly breeze through this smoke-filled 180-foot room are a steady reminder of possibilities never imagined. Despite the concrete, someone's clouds of abused substances drift within the hallways, as well as the front and back alleys. Sometimes the ignorant dog walker does not pick up after their furry four-legged responsibility. Finding "your place," often becomes challenging. Remembering and asking myself deeply: why do some struggles seem to be worse than before, instead of getting any better? I wish I could say otherwise. However. Truth is growing stronger. There should be no more denying. Finding "my place" has been happening for many years now. And crunched, I have searched far and wide. Although I've been idle by believing someone else's ways, and forcefully abandoned what it is that I actually stand for, I am now remembering how to find my purpose with full embrace. Somehow I must make up to the "old times" sake.

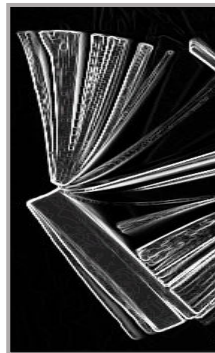
As I struggle to fight my waterfall of tears, holding in mixed emotions about finding my place, I am crying out in GRATITUDE, to still be here and to still have a place to help me find my *deserved* place. Najveća zahvalnost ide mojoj predivnoj, pokojnoj Mami. Tvoja ljubav i vjera u mene je što me održava na životu.

# What can being apart teach us about how to be together?

## MARCH 8 & 11 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

“Comedy as learning and telling” with Jay Friesen, Faculty of Arts and Community Service-Learning, University of Alberta.

### What we read



\* Scott, Sophie. “Science of Laughter.” YouTube, uploaded by Serious Science, 5 May 2017, [https://youtu.be/A1Ou7\\_yd6dM](https://youtu.be/A1Ou7_yd6dM).

\* Skinner, Oliver, Peter Knegt, Reiko Milley, and Eleanor Knowles. *Super Queeroes!* CBC Arts, <https://cbc.ca/artsprojects/superqueeroes>.

\* McGraw, Peter, and Joel Warner. *The Humor Code: A Global Search for What Makes Things Funny*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014, pp. 6-8.

\* Reid, Martine J. “The Irony of Things: Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art.” In *Carrying on Irregardless: Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art* (exhibition catalogue), edited by Martine J. Reid, Peter Morin, and Mike Robinson, Vancouver, BC: Bill Reid Gallery, 2012, pp. 16-25.

\* Reid, Martine J., Peter Morin, and Mike Robinson, editors. *Carrying on Irregardless: Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art* (exhibition catalogue), Vancouver, BC: Bill Reid Gallery, 2012, pp. 39, 42, 48, 54, 56, 62, 64, 70-72, 79, 94-95.

### What happened in class

During this semester, we considered how context plays an important role in how we each uniquely communicate and see the world.

In Jay’s lecture, he presented humour as a context in itself. And that the expectation for humour creates something almost like a weather forecast: it can be like the forecast for a sunny day! When we think something

is meant to be funny, we are less likely to carefully consider its context.... Take, for example, Monty Python’s “Always look of the bright side of life” (from their 1979 film *The Life of Brian*). (In this closing scene, Brian is serenaded by all the surrounding crucifixion victims hanging from crosses near to his own. The scene makes a grim joke of the notion of a “stiff upper lip.”) Jay showed us this sketch to emphasize how, oftentimes, the claim that something is “just a joke” can be quite misleading and even dishonest. For one thing, even though we do see, hear, or understand something to be a joke, others might not and, when this happens, there is a breakdown in communication. This breakdown, according to Jay, offers a chance to think about how (and why it is) we differ in what we see as humorous? Or the qualities that might make something funny rather than tragic?

Jay introduced us to the four main theories of humour. The Superiority Theory (relies on a “Who”): we laugh because we feel better (or to feel better) than someone else. The Relief Theory (based on a “Why”): we laugh to let off steam...we’ve all been there before. The Incongruity Theory (based on a “Where”): we laugh because there’s “nonsense” where we expect “common sense.” The fourth, more recent theory of humour is that humour comes when we experience something that is not harmful (it’s benign), but which violates something we expect to happen. Because we all see the world differently based on our personal experiences, what we might see as benign might be seen as a violation to another person.

### Groundwork aka Homework

In tonight’s groundwork, there are two options for you to choose from: **A)** involves reflecting on comedy in the media (specifically the comedy series, *Seinfeld*) and reflecting on another piece of comedy that you particularly love; while **B)** involves observing your own experiences with laughter. You’re welcome to do one or both of these for your groundwork!

**A) Media:** We’re going to use an example to think through how context changes our interpretation of an event. First, watch the clip from *Seinfeld* called the “Soup Nazi” (You can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euLQQNVzgY&t=48s>).

Then, think about the following questions:

1. Do you find the clip funny? Why or why not?
2. This clip features a laugh track, which means laughter was added to make it feel like other people were laughing with you. Did this affect the context through which you viewed the clip?
3. Next, watch this second clip, which has the laugh track removed. In the clip, the audience (us watching) now has no extra context to draw on that would lead them/us to the conclusion that the events are supposed to be understood as funny.



4. How does this new context change your understanding of the clip? For example, how does your interpretation of the clip change without the laughter of others?

We can apply what we’ve just done to our own experiences as a form of reflection. Let’s go through the following steps:

5. Think about a comedy that you enjoy that you feel others also relate to. This should be something that might appeal to a wide range of viewers, and that isn’t likely to cause a lot of division because it’s too dark or obscure. In this step, we’re aiming for positive and upbeat relatability.

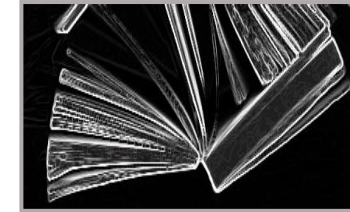
- A. What did you pick?
- B. Now, break down the piece of comedy to try and identify the pieces of “common sense” knowledge that people would need to share to appreciate the humour? In other words, what is the shared context that makes the comedy work?
- C. Now, let’s step into someone else’s shoes and try to imagine why someone might not see things the same way as you?

**B)** What can we learn when we listen to laughter? The researcher Sophie Scott, whose video called “The Science of Laughter” we watched for this class, suggests that laughter is a social practice. So, observe laughter around you—that of others as well as your own laughter—and reflect on what you notice. What contexts and/or social practices are involved? What is communicated through the laughter? How does the laughter affect the meanings being made between humans, ancestors, dogs, cats and more? Who are the intended audiences for this communication and what happens when you listen and laugh “sideways” as the non-ideal audience? What are the qualities that humour takes up, such as incongruity (the bringing together of disparate things in unexpected ways), playfulness, lightness, amusement, irony? And what kinds of humour might be at play, including slapstick, teasing, knock-knock...and more? How is humour culturally specific, for example, the figure of the Trickster in Northwest Coast Indigenous cultures?

## MARCH 15 & 18 PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION

“Look what happens when universities suddenly move teaching and learning online” with Christina Hendricks, Philosophy and Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, UBC.

### What we read



\* Gannon, Kevin M. *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2020, pp. 1-13, 22-27, 32-38.

\* McMullan, Thomas. “What does the Panopticon Mean in the Age of Digital Surveillance?” *The Guardian*. 23 July 2015, [www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jul/23/panopticon-digital-surveillance-jeremy-bentham](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jul/23/panopticon-digital-surveillance-jeremy-bentham).

### What happened in class

In the context of our transition to online learning, Christina talked about hope in respect to the future possibilities of and for education. She talked about a kind of hope and optimism for post-secondary education through the experiences of the past year—a welcomed perspective to pierce the general doom and gloom rhetoric. In one of the readings, author Kevin Gannon said that “radical hope” avoids despair in the face of problems, challenges, and obstacles, but also requires looking towards a future that may not yet be fully clear. “Radical hope eschews despair,” Gannon writes, “but does so in a way that often relies upon the faith that our current thinking and actions will create a better future—even without specifically understanding what that future will look like” (4-5). Gannon outlines four principles for radical hope in education: 1) Education should be life-affirming; 2) must center student agency; 3) is inclusive, and; 4) is praxis (both theory and practice). What does he mean by this? **Life-affirming** teaching fosters lifelong learning, and it ensures teaching and learning are vital, rather than static and lifeless processes. In **centering student agency** [in Hum we define agency as “the power to act and make meaning”] both teachers and students are cocreators of knowledge and co-participants in the scholarly conversation; students are not merely passive recipients. Courses should focus on what students can do, rather than what they cannot do. To be **inclusive**, students must have equitable opportunities to participate in the classroom, so the learning environment needs to welcome, affirm and support all participants. Courses should be relevant and responsive to participants' circumstances, using **praxis**, which is by definition a process of both action and reflection. Hmm, does this feel familiar anyone?

Christina introduced the concept of the panopticon. What does the panopticon mean in the age of digital surveillance?, Christina asked us. This question is especially relevant when all online student activity can be recorded by the university and measured for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation. The basic setup of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon is like this: “there is a central tower surrounded by cells. In the central tower is the watchman. In the cells are prisoners—or workers, or children, depending on the use of the building. The tower shines bright light so that the watchman is able to see everyone in the cells. The people in the cells,

however, aren't able to see the watchman, and therefore have to assume that they are always under observation" (McMullan). In his book, *Discipline and Punish*, the French philosopher Michel Foucault argues that this means people under observation, whether in a prison, a school, a workplace, a hospital, etc., will act according to expectations and rules because they could be being watched at any time. But in fact, it may be that they're not being watched at all. We discussed the benefits and drawbacks of using panoptic methods in the digital classroom, and questioned their use, value and, especially, their ethics.

**Groundwork aka Homework**

Thinking with Gannon's four principles for radical hope in education, does your experience of Hum describe what Gannon wants?

To help think through the groundwork question, you may want to ask yourself some of the following questions: What does a life-affirming way of teaching and learning mean to me? What does it mean to feel valued and empowered in the classroom? How can a classroom or course be inclusive? What does a meaningful education look like? How is the course content relevant? How is what I learn useful in different contexts I face in everyday life? You may also want to think about how moving from in-person to online learning has changed your Hum experience.

The benefits of online learning during the Covid-19 crisis

MARY BELLE

This past year, the world was beset by a crisis that changed our social, work, and educational environments in a dramatic way. Due to the worldwide COVID-19 virus, people got sick, or died in numbers so alarming that it led to governments and public health officials initiating lockdown measures aimed at limiting physical contact. As people were forced out of workplaces and schools, educational programs like Humanities 101 responded by shifting to online learning, in creative ways. In contrast to being able to attend classes at the university, I want to highlight some of the benefits to online learning.

I feel that I have enjoyed many benefits to taking classes online. While being on campus had its excitements, the reality is, I found travelling on the bus time-consuming and exhausting. I was especially happy to avoid the elements on a cold winter night, especially the nights standing at a lonely bus stop in the pouring rain. Somehow, the tea and cookies, which were thoughtfully presented, never completely made up for having to deal with the inevitable torrential downpour that came before and after class. I discovered the joys of making tea at home.

Being at home and doing class online created a greater sense of intimacy among the participants. The glimpses into one another's personal environments created a sense of some real-life challenges that others were bravely facing. This is especially true in seeing someone committed to joining a class from inside their car or riding the SkyTrain. The power of the mute button removed environmental noises and aided in better listening to one another's perspectives.

Our COVID-19 world seemed to be contracting and expanding at the same time. While hunkering down in our respective spaces, Zoom created an opportunity for Hum students to experience meeting others across the country. It has generated a new introspection, and ventures that are moving us towards developing educational opportunities that teach us to encourage and engage with one another in ways that were not available before COVID-19.

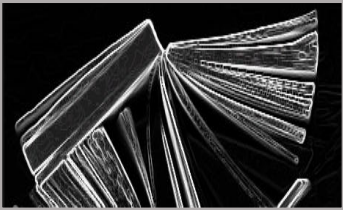
MARCH 22 & 25 ART

**“Art Together: Look at what happens when dependencies enable shared learning and creative expression” with Alison Rajah, former UBC Hum Writing Coordinator and current Director of the Surrey Art Gallery, Alanna Irene Edwards, Chris Dawson-Murphy, and Claire Cilliers, Surrey Art Gallery artist staff.**

**What happened in class**

At the Surrey Art Gallery, Alison, Alanna, Chris, Claire, and the rest of their team have had to—just like us!—adapt their programming to an online context. They created an online series of programming called Art Together so that people can continue to engage with artists and with the Gallery from home! In preparation for our class, Alison made up packages of art supplies, packed full with different kinds of artist drawing pencils, conte charcoal, smudging sticks and erasers, newsprint paper and card stock, and many other tools! Then, in our class, we got to use so many of these supplies during Alanna's drawing workshop. Alanna taught us a technique first developed by the surrealists called “entopic graphomania”—a way of revealing the hidden patterns in paper...and in our unconscious! We started by taking a piece of paper (any piece), looking for tiny inconsistencies like blemishes and creases, and marking them with a dot with a felt pen, pencil, or marker. Next, we connected the dots with lines, squiggles, or dashes to reveal patterns in the paper. For the final 20 minutes, we used our materials to flush out the patterns any way we wanted: we coloured in sections, drew around the edges, and mixed colours. For this process, our teachers asked us to get rid of any preconceived ideas about what we might want the final image to look like, and instead cede control to our unconscious! (You can see some of the gorgeous pieces we produced on the cover of this book!)

**Reading & Groundworking**



This week we did things a little differently. We combined next week’s readings and groundwork into one, in preparation for the last taught class on Monday, March 22. This means that all of the reading and groundwork to date can be reviewed, used as a kind of wrap-up, or as preparation for the very last class on March 29—our “Sharapalooza”—during which you’ll have a chance to give a two-minute presentation, if you’d like.

There are two options for this reading/groundwork, A and B, and the option you choose will determine or influence your readings; sometimes this is called “self-directed research!” This week, “telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else” will take a swerve from the usual written assignments, and instead will be done through creative visual representation forms like charts, diagrams, graphs, genealogies, collages, blueprints, mind maps and animation which can show relationships that are represented in visual spaces. We’ll call them “charts” for short, and here are a bunch of ideas...as always, please feel free to combine them and make others! The web pages are listed below most of them, so if you’d like to learn more...just follow the links.

**A.** The first option involves charting the dependencies and interdependencies between Hum course content that interests you. So, for your readings, you’ll go back and look again at the essays you read for this class (that is your research) and work from there. You’ll no doubt notice different inter/dependencies and relationships in retrospect (after almost finishing the course) because you did the readings before the lectures. As they say, there’s no sight like hindsight!

**B.** The second option is geared more to your personal life, yet still related to the Hum course. Please chart relationships that interest you in one or more of these areas: tracing the paths of your personal **musical/art** interests and influences (by the way, is all music the manifestation of sonic interdependencies?), of **social changes** (for instance, life before, during and after a pandemic), of **Indigenous resurgence** (experiencing and learning with/about Indigenous cultures and practices), and/or of your **relationships with nature**.

**Ravens on shift**  
**Yael Neville**

On my mail run to Kingsway Mall one late afternoon I walked past several construction workers heading home from the construction site at the Capital Care Norwood property.

Two large buildings across from Kingsway Mall stand tall, each with their own crane to carry the construction materials to and from the buildings.

By the time I reached the intersection of the construction site, I noticed that there were no workers left. The gates were closed. The powerful lights turned off. The cranes resting for the night. It was still light out. The sun had yet to set.

Parcel in hand, I left the mall to head home. The sun had begun to set. It was twilight. Not day, not night. Somewhere in between.

A couple of black birds flew by, heading towards the tower on the left. No flapping wings sounded. Just cantankerous squawks. I looked up to the roof line. I saw black birds lined on the edge of the roof. Ten, fifteen, maybe twenty or more on the left tower. I looked at the tower on the right. About the same number there. The black dots were making noise and moving about on the two cranes, the scaffolding and the stair railings on

each side of the buildings. Just as many birds hovered above the entire worksite, squawking and flying, I asked myself how come I never noticed this before?

The street between the bus stop and the construction site was very quiet, hardly any vehicles passing by. Three black birds swoop past and land right on the middle of the street. These are not your average crows. They are huge, with beaks longer than my pointing finger and a wingspan of at least six feet. These are ravens. In my years in Alberta, I may have seen one or two. This was a sight and sound to be experienced. Seeing so many ravens concentrated in one place reminded me of Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds*.

The bus took longer than normal to arrive. This gave me more time to observe what was going on. I started to ask myself: Why are there so many ravens hanging around this construction site? How come they are not around during the day, or late afternoon? Why did they not show up until recently? Where are the other birds: the crows, pigeons and magpies? Does the pandemic have any connection? What is it about this construction site that is attracting such a large number?

As a zoologist, perhaps this interests me more than your average person. One comment that I heard was that there may be a dead body somewhere at the site and that could be attracting them. Possible. However, with that many construction workers, the body would have been found. The ravens kept coming. They avoid the day and only come at twilight. One thing that stood out when I observed them was that, unlike pigeons, they perch apart from each other. Almost as if they were social distancing. Their behaviour is consistent every day. Recently, I was walking with my friend near the construction site at shift end and I commented to her, “one shift ends, another one begins.” She gave me an inquiring look. I asked her if she recalled the *Bugs Bunny Show*. She said yes. I then told her of one of the episodes involving Wyle E. Coyote and the sheep dog clocking in for work. The coyote eats sheep and the sheep dog protects them. When their day was done, they both clocked out and another coyote and sheep dog clocked in for their shifts. My friend asked me “what does that have to do with the construction workers?” So, I explained my observation of the ravens. The construction workers clock out and then the ravens clock in soon after.

Several days later I happened to be near the construction site just when the ravens were arriving, and I noticed that they were flying in from around the Royal Alex Hospital. Now a whole new set of questions ran in my brain. While many would see ravens as an omen, I see the beauty of nature, and their relationship with the world around them, and us humans. While many would run away from them, I am curious to learn more about them.

One conclusion is that despite our urban environment being designed for humans, animals adapt to our built environment. The new trees that ravens use for perching are the numerous metal and concrete structures.

# You depend on the universe, and the universe reciprocally depends on you

## JO BEGIN

We live in a tiny, tiny world. Many individuals feel alone, useless, or abandoned by the universe. However, the real question to ask is, “who is abandoning whom?”

Let's take a look at how small our world is, our planet, by thinking about the universe scale. On this scale the community in which we live is like a grain of sand on a beach. Our planet is part of a solar system that consists of our star, the Sun, and everything is bound to it by gravity. There are eight planets; Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, plus 807 dwarf planets, like Pluto. More than 200 moons have been found, 1,070,279 asteroids, 3,720 comets, and numerous meteoroids (NASA, 2021). An estimated 25 million meteoroids, micrometeoroids, and other space debris enter Earth's atmosphere each day, and this results in an estimated 15,000 tons of material entering the atmosphere each year (Henderson, 2021). Our solar system is located in the outer spiral of the Milky Way Galaxy. Beyond our solar system, thousands of other planetary systems have been discovered (Howell, 2018).

A low guess for the extrapolated universe is 10 to the 24th power solar systems with planets, or 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, or a trillion trillion (Bob K., 2017). Assuming our solar system is typical, multiply this by eight or nine to get the total number of planets, plus all the rest. And that's only the visible part of the universe. Let's not forget that it's hard to measure what we cannot see, like a black hole. Is there something behind it, or in it? History has taught us that some stuff deemed invisible to the naked eye can still be measured using suitable instruments and methods. With a high level of confidence, I can dearly hope that there are still plenty of indispensable tools to be invented soon.

The Butterfly Effect is the idea that small things can have non-linear impacts on a complex system. The Butterfly Effect theory still cannot be measured for now. Mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz introduced the Butterfly Effect in the context of atmospheric predictability (Loginnigoi, 2021). The concept is imagined with a butterfly flapping its wings and causing a typhoon at the other end (fs.blog, 2017). The Butterfly Effect is considered accurate because small changes at small scales can change the weather forever, but many doubt that a butterfly could have any meaningful effect on the temperature. Up to what point is it so wrong or so true in other spheres?

A single ship can disrupt the world's trade. We recently witnessed the 400-meter (1,312-foot) Ever Given, one of the world's largest container ships, run aground while entering the Suez Canal from the Red Sea, blocking hundreds of vessels at either end of the waterway (Psaropoulos, 2021). This event created a tailback of other cargo vessels carrying billions of dollars’ worth of goods between Asia and Europe. Global shipping has been



thrown into chaos because of a mishap on a major waterway. According to data from Lloyd's List, the Suez Canal blockage roughly cost 12 percent of global trade and was holding up trade valued at over \$9 billion per day: this is the equivalent to \$400 million worth of trade per hour, or \$6.7 million per minute! (Das, 2021). See how something invisible like the wind combined with a sand grain—something considered by many as insignificant—can effect the world.

A tiny microorganism can effect everything. Humans are complex organisms made up of trillions of cells, each with its structure and function (Healthline, 2021). Scientists have come a long way in estimating the number of cells in the average human body. Recent estimates put the number of cells at around 37.2 trillion (Dutfield, 2019). Written out, that's 37,200,000,000,000! It is not a final number, but it's an excellent start. Nevertheless, we also know that a virus can affect all of them. For example, Covid-19, or the Spanish flu.

Do what we can to avoid the worst. Of course, we could keep on waiting for each other to do something, like a bunch of messiahs to come, while continuing to do nothing else than feeling alone, useless, and abandoned from the rest of the Universe. Do you think that humanity should keep on following the last century's path? If that were to happen, life as we know it would disappear, and human beings would soon be extinct. Regardless of what people could think or say, we would bear no other merit than being part of that extinction. I believe that it is not what you want either. I do not get desperate. I know that the fight is not over, and we are yet to give the best of ourselves.

As with the human body, each of our worlds is comparable to a human cell on the universe's scale. Let's always keep in mind that if a cell can affect the whole human body, we can also change the universe, just like the sandstorm effected global trade, or the butterfly with the weather.

If you are one of those who feels alone, useless, and abandoned from the rest of the universe, you need to start looking at it from a different perspective. By your inaction, you might be the one that is abandoning the universe and not the one being abandoned. You might need to knock on a few doors to start. He or she who does not knock on doors, does not see any that open.

Do you want to change something permanently in the world and leave your footprint? Do not just wait for the people to reach out to you; you might have time to die a hundred times before it happens. Not everyone has your gift nor your inspiration, so do not ever quit and keep on spreading it. Follow the example of a virus that no one asked for, but in a better way, combining it with the antibodies. Be unpredictable and take everyone by surprise in a way that leaves them no time to counteract. Then stick like antibodies but be even wiser to constantly mutate in a way that no one can get rid of you. Become leading viral antibodies!

You depend on the universe, and the universe reciprocally depends on you.

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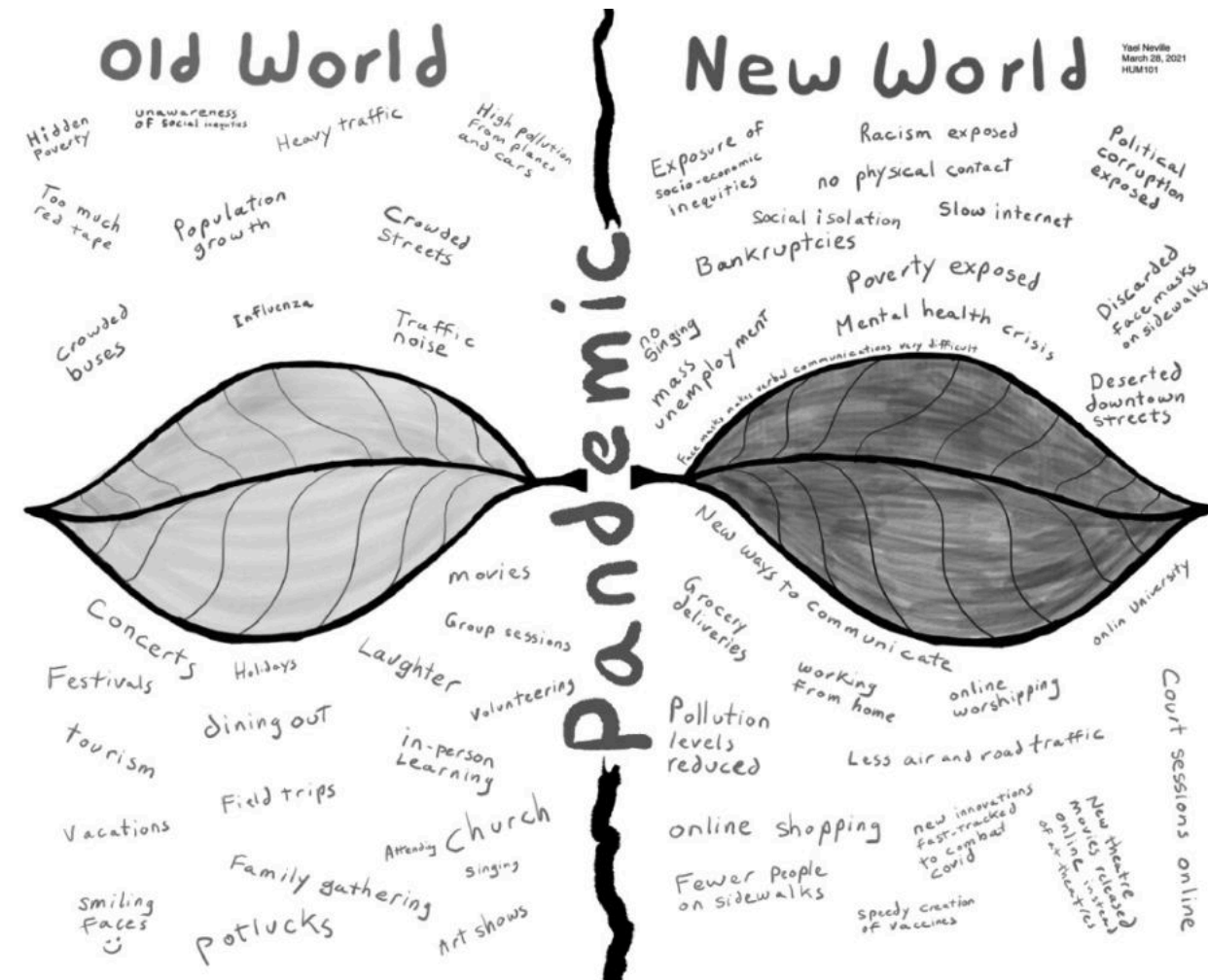
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“Telling each other what happens when everyone depends on everyone else” with student presentations!

### What happened in class

Hum’s first ever UBC and U of A collective courses wrapped up with a “Sharapalooza.” 28 student presenters took to their Hollywood Squares and delighted the eager audience with poetry readings, jokes, storytelling, drawings, video animation and more.



“Transition to New World,” by Yael Neville.

### WELL-WISHES

Dear hummers,

What a year this has been: to simply be, to be together, to meet—not, as we once did—but in new ways, online and through Zoom or else outside, distanced, masked. And still we got on, *together*, learning from one another, from our readings and writings, from our teachers, and always from the world around us. In all sorts of creative and intellectual and written ways, we learned what it means when everyone depends on everyone else. My heartfelt, enthusiastic congratulations to each of you and to all you've accomplished this past, most difficult and extraordinary year! Until we meet again,

**Reuben Jentink**, Writing Coordinator; Environmental Humanities: “Scavenging: Writing with the world around us”

From my experience, HUM has been among many things, about the joy of sharing our personal learning practices with each other. Film has been one of my favourite tools for learning, and one I find most effectually shared in a group. There’s a certain magic in film’s ability to simultaneously tap into our perceptions of sight, sound and time—to affect a visceral experience that few other mediums can duplicate. Given my love for film, it’s only natural that for the past six years, it’s been both a privilege and pleasure for me to curate and present HUM’s *Documentaries for Thinkers* public programme at the Carnegie Theatre. I hope you had a chance to enjoy the kaleidoscopic array of film subjects and special collaborations we've presented at this learning “pit-stop” between UBC campus and the Downtown Eastside. And let’s not forget the remarkable conversations we’ve shared over coffee and treats from the Carnegie kitchen during our mid-show coffee breaks. I remember each one of those evenings (and you guys, especially). Before the next inspired Hum’er takes over this effort started by the late Colleen Carroll in 2008, my thanks to Margot, Paul, Reuben, Maureen and everyone in the Hum office (It's been so much fun being on the Hum team), Rika at Carnegie Arts and Education, and all of you who have ever dropped into the audience to support us, or collaborated with me over the years. But most especially to those “regulars” (and you know who you are) who have sustained and inspired me, and whose love and enthusiasm for this programme have not only made *Documentaries for Thinkers* a community success, but a very special one for me personally. Thank-you! OK, now roll credits...

**Terry Lui**, Hum alumnus & Public Programme Facilitator: “Documentaries for Thinkers”

Although I always appreciate my chance to talk with the HUM 101 classes, this year I took a special risk, performing with my daughter some of the songs I’ve been writing in recent years. My music reflects my intellectual, political, and aesthetic evolution, so it’s not in any way divorced from my research, but I couldn’t imagine a more receptive, engaged, and indeed generous audience for these strange little songs I’ve written. Every year in HUM 101, I come away with a renewed sense of how powerful ideas can be in combination with the world views, experiences, and the desire for change among our students. My humblest thanks to our HUM 101 students for all that they bring each year to me as an instructor but also more broadly to the University and our communities.

**Gage Averill**, Dean of Arts, Ethnomusicologist (and amateur songwriter/musician),  
Music: “What if Hum’s theme accurately encapsulates one’s view of life and the universe?”

Dear all,

What a tremendously challenging year we had. In my view, we must do what we can to stay hopeful knowing that this difficult period shall pass and we will be able to embrace each other’s presence again. I am grateful to have been part of the Hum movement for so long and hope that Margot and her team will continue to help us to grow as a unit. I will leave you with a quote from my Irish colleagues: “In the shelter of each other, the people live”!!

With blessings,  
**Gerald Ma**, long-time Hum supporter

It was wonderful to be able to talk with you about what happens when a university moves teaching and learning online, something that you all have experienced directly of course! Your perceptive comments and questions added depth and nuance to my thinking on the subjects we were discussing. I am so glad you were able to continue to learn together during this most unusual year, and that I was able to join you for a class. Congratulations on completing this year, and I hope your learning experience in HUM continues to resonate and reward for years to come.

**Christina Hendricks**, Philosophy and Education: “Look what happens when universities suddenly move teaching and learning online”

Thank you Hum students, staff, faculty, and teachers for making my year so lush. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to meet all of you and learn so much from you. To Hum students, I am immensely grateful for your generosity in sharing with me your knowledge and groundwork. I hope to carry your insights and kindness with me wherever I go. To Margot, Paul, Reuben and Shalon, I admire all the hard work you’ve put into taking Hum online and cannot thank you enough for all the laughs we’ve had over Zoom. And to the Hum teachers, thank you for giving me much need perspective during these unprecedented times. I wish you all the best, and I look forward to continuing to depend on each other in the years to come!

**Kenzie Witschi**, WorkLearn Student Staff

Let's share and be humble,  
Let's recycle and be kind,  
Let's be honest to ourselves and be happy,  
Let's be with nature and be healthy.

**Joel Kumar**, Hum stream

“Telling What happens when everyone depends on everyone else”

It is amazing to know a bees’ life—their teamwork, their organizing.

It makes me think of how important *what happens when everyone depends on everyone else* is. If we build trust and with some good organizing things are done perfectly. Like worker bees work hard flying around outside to collect pollen and nectar from flowers, worker bees are put in a very important position but they could not get all things done by their own selves. They need Queen bee and Honey bee. Honey bees make honey from the nectar and pollen from the Worker bees. Other bees need everyone working their duty, building the beehive, making honey, taking care of the babies, protecting the colony each one has their own position and purpose. Queen bee has her work for laying eggs. It is teamwork, organized to make the whole colony strong, and to produce plenty of honey.

We can learn from bees’ lives and organizing how to build up a wealthy life, a happy living.

**Lien Tiet**, Hum Edmonton

When we first found out campuses were closed because of Covid-19, Margot and I immediately got on the horn and started talking possibilities. We began thinking about a shared online course. Developing curriculum together was exciting and such a gift during a time of increased isolation and anxiety. Our very first class, on pages of zoom squares, felt familiar, comfortable, and where I wanted to be. Thank you everyone for participating, contributing, and caring for this course. It has been an incredible term and I am excited to see what new possibility will surely come from this! Thank you, and I wish everyone connections to other beings, to land, and to learning. Till we meet again!

**Lisa Prins**, Hum Programme Coordinator at the University of Alberta; Arts: “Strengthening and lengthening Hum’s sticky threads in amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton)”; Critical Indigenous Studies: “Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else, on respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being”

Dear Friends and Students in Hum 101,

I have been thinking of you a lot recently. I just finished reading an extraordinary book entitled *The Language Warrior’s Manifesto: How to Keep our Languages Alive No Matter the Odds* by the searingly brilliant Dr. Anton Treuer, an Ojibwe language activist and professor. The sights of this text are explicitly levelled at Indigenous language workers, whom Treuer is seeking to transform from being language worriers to being language warriors. As I read Treuer’s book, I reflected back on our class of 25 January, and of the singular creativity of our time together—which we somehow managed to convey over Zoom—and of the generous, open interest that you showed me and one another as we talked and shared our own walks with language.

Many of you thanked me at the end of class, but really, I should be thanking you. Your energy *energized* me. I left class fuller than when I entered it, full of ideas, full of hope and full of love. Towards the end of *The Language Warrior’s Manifesto*, we are introduced to the late Anna Gibbs, one of Treuer’s language teachers and great mentors. She shared a proverb with the author, which he wrote down and which I would now like to pass on to you: “Every time they tried to bury us,” Anna Gibbs said, “they didn’t realize that we were the seeds.” I am moved to tears each time I think of the resilience, resurgence and regeneration encoded in these few words, and it inspires me to keep thinking and talking about what happens when everyone depends on everyone else.

With all my respect and appreciation,

**Mark Turin**, First Nations & Endangered Languages: “Writing Oral Languages: Look what happens when writing depends on speaking”

Thank you everyone involved in this session of Hum101. We appreciate all of you, and the time we spent learning and growing together.

**Randy and Susan Siemens**, Hum Edmonton

To the students, thank you for sharing your evening with me, learning and laughing together. I wish you all the best for the next step of your learning journey. May the road rise up to meet you.

Cheers,

**Chris van Barneveld**, Education: “Everyone is different and you could be wrong”

Thank you to all Hum staff, Margot, Paul, Reuben, Kenzie and Shalon for bringing Hum into our homes during Covid-19. Your class brought warmth and joy, and special connections during a worldwide pandemic. I feel much gratitude for all your caring, encouragement, understanding and work in expanding our perspectives of the world.

**Mary Belle**, Hum stream

Dear Hum lovers,

We started this path together, each of us from a different start. We were enthusiastic and curious. WE were alone but together. We were tired but strong.

In our gatherings, one thing was always key: our love to know more in Hum classes where Hum people were so generously contributing to the idea.

Days pass quick and leave behind good memories of our togetherness. Months and years of good memories that can give us the sweetest taste of knowledge.

Let me thank you all for your warm hands and warm hearts, and wish you a lovely walk down the path.

**Shahla Masoumnejad**, Hum stream



Dear Hum—I know that one day I will be out amongst the trees, at the spot in the river valley where I stop to think about my relationship to this place, and I will think of you all and the learning we did across distance and territorial obligations. I will look at my Christie Belcourt poster and be reminded of the connections between animals, plants and our loved ones that she inspired us to draw. I will hear Lucille Ball's voice and remember how important laughter is to learning. And I know, when I encounter a pedagogy of radical hope, I will certainly think of you and the vibrant space that we nurtured together.

Thank you for sharing your relationships, thoughts and vulnerabilities with me. I have learned so much from you and the generous space that Hum created. I can't wait for all the moments that will remind me of our time together.

**Kendra Cowley**, Hum Programme Assistant at the University of Alberta

I would like to thank all the Hum 101 Staff, including Margot and Paul, and Reuben for making Hum101 available this summer in an outdoor format, and this fall over Zoom. Thank you for keeping Hum going during this pandemic, Hum matters even more now. Thank you to all the volunteers behind the scenes. Thank you to all the professors for their time and amazing lectures. And thank you to all my classmates for sharing your fantastic Groundwork.

**Antonietta Gesualdi**, Hum stream

A long time ago in the 50s, yes, in the 1950s, I remember standing on the corner of a park on a Summer day. There were a few immigrant Chinese teenage boys sitting there quietly, I myself was nine at the time. Suddenly, another Chinese teenage boy appeared, walking slowly.  
“You guys want some bread?” he asked.  
“Sure,” one of the guys said.  
He handed over the bread, and we all had a piece. It was like communion—without the religion, but it was the sharing that gave me peace.  
I feel the same way with Hum.  
Thanks Hum, and all you good folks.  
In a way, I feel that same sense of sharing and sense of peace that I felt with my Chinese teenage friends long, long ago.  
So, thanks again, Hum, for bringing back that sense of peace.  
**Bill Lim**, Writing stream

Tân'si Nltôtemtik (hello friends),

What a wonderful opportunity it was to share a little bit about my heartwork and research. I want to leave you with this amazing quote by my friend, Billy-Ray Belcourt who says, “To write is to live on. The page rescues us from a longing for finality. Grief doesn't wholly assail our imaginations. The creative drive, the artistic impulse, is above all a thunderous yes to life.” We have all been through a lot my friends, we will continue to go through a lot. For myself, I am emboldened and take courage from people like you who say a thunderous yes to life, and to learning. Thanks for including me in your learning, all the bestest of the bests. Ekosi!

**Tracy Bear** (Montreal Lake First Nation), Critical Indigenous Studies: “Unsayable: Voices in Contemporary Indigenous Art”

HUM allowed us to realize how gifted each one of us is and how much inspiration we all have.  
I wish everyone of you to spread your gift as much as possible  
and become leading viral antibodies!

**Jo Begin**, Writing stream

What an appropriate theme for the semester, exploring what it means to depend on everyone else. It was a pleasure to join old friends from Edmonton and new friends from Vancouver each week; for me, it cemented how much I depend on HUM's familiar rhythms each week and how much I love learning with everyone. At first, I worried about how HUM would work in the virtual space, but I was quickly reminded that HUM folk are dependably curious, thoughtful, and engaging. Thanks to everyone for the wonderful semester, and congratulations to everyone for any other fantastic semester of HUM!

**Jay Friesen**, Comparative Literature: “Comedy as learning and telling”

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the teachers, staff, and volunteers of the winter HUM Programme.

The winter of 2021 has been both educational and entertaining. Featuring new speakers each week on subjects such as Music, Art, Treaties, and Laughter to name a few. These classes show the hard work and diligence that staff and coordinators put into bringing us into their zoom rooms.

This would not be possible if it was not for the continued efforts of Margot Butler, Paul Woodhouse, Reuben Jentink, Kenzie Witschi, and Shalon Sims. These people worked together with our sister programme in Alberta to make this colourful course come to life. Lisa Prins, Tracy Bear, Christine Stewart, and Jay Friesen of the University of Alberta, and Christine van Barneveld of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, thank you all so much.

Your insights into the struggles that Indigenous people are having at this time, and in the past, has altered my opinion and my ideology.

I can definitely see what happens when everyone depends on everyone.

Wishing you all many happy HUM classes.

**Cher Hurrell (The Christmas Lady)**, Writing stream

I am Thankful to: Great Mystery for creating this sacred land we call home (Canada).

I am Thankful for this connection between All cultures, All Animals, All Plants: I Am Thankful for this sacred Nation.

Honey Bee, you traveled across the sea, by ship. Your work to pollinate plants in our natural world/ mother earth, I am grateful to you. We are energized by: Creator. Respecting the rights of each other in good faith.

I am Thankful to the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and all Indigenous persons across Canada for sharing with us all.

I am grateful to all Hum: Teachers, Staff, Volunteers, and Students for this educational experience. May Good Health, Prosperity and Happiness come upon your door.

**Kimberley Hurrell**, Writing stream

May I give a Sincere Well Wish to the Hum/Writing TEAM: Reuben, Margot, Paul and some others I may have missed, for introducing all the writing students to my new book: *Inglish Maed Simpøl*. The writing courses put me in the frame of mind and action to get the book I had bottled up inside of me into a professionally edited and expertly published international book. Getting my book to the Writing class, and allowing me to give a short lecture to both classes was a very nice bonus.

Yours,

**Chris Marquis**, Writing stream, & 2020 author of *Inglish Maed Simpøl: English Should be Written as it Sounds and Sound as it is Written!* (available as paperback, e-book, or through the Vancouver Public Library)

Great big thanks to HUM staff and volunteers, and also to my classmates. I am so glad to be a part of this community for the past couple years and so enjoy learning from you! I am also grateful for our lectures and readings, which really help me better understand our current society and our history. In addition, I am expecting I can learn more how we shape our future's society.

**Cindy\_QT**, Writing stream

Wela’lioq. Thank you for the opportunity to share and for your open and kind hearts. I hope to see you all again.

**Alanna Irene Edwards** (Mi’gmaq and settler descent), Art: “Art Together: Look at what happens when dependencies enable shared learning and creative expression”

I’m writing to wish you all the best, and to thank you for the kind invitation to join you for an evening. It was a privilege so share time with all of you and so good to meet you all. Congratulations on the exceptional work that you’ve done in HUM, I was inspired and moved by the session, and so I can imagine that you all are moving forward charged with contagious positive energy! With much appreciation,

**Chris Dawson-Murphy**, Art: “Art Together: Look at what happens when dependencies enable shared learning and creative expression”

It all started with one bat. Now our world has changed. We remember the times before the pandemic and the new way of doing things now.

A grateful thank you to the many people I met along my university journey. There is still much more to learn. We all depend on each other more than ever before. I have learned about the history of how the treaties were created. Forestry management, quantum mechanics (which I realized it is something I have been doing for many years at work all along), education, communication and storytelling through art. All this has encouraged me to get out of my comfort zone and seek to understand the world around me. I had plenty of self-reflection about my place in this world. How we depend not only on each other, but with nature and our environment. How actions can affect others and how other’s actions affect me.

Thank you to our instructors, guest lecturers and classmates. Though this year has changed the way we attended class, it has united two universities to work as one. A thank you to my best friend, Rocky, who gave me feedback on some of my writings for the groundworks and for being patient on the days I had class and the study days during the week.

Looking forward to the exciting changes in the new world. New adventures and learning opportunities.  
Peace and love.

**Yael Neville**, Hum Edmonton

We come together to engage in writing and on the way we learn culture, ethics, and our connection to each other. I am honoured to share these pages with you. Dr. Margot Leigh Butler, Paul Woodhouse, Reuben Jentink, Shalon Sims and MacKenzie Witschi, and our sister HUM from Alberta, have my highest respect and gratitude. They truly are the Ambassadors of the Humanities.

**Calla Jamieson**, Writing stream

This, my second year at Hum, has been an absolute pleasure! While I have missed seeing my Hum friends in person and sharing our space at UBC, we have managed to show ample care and warm regard over the internet. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with such amazing people, and to get to know more about Indigenous issues in Canada, as well as the many other important topics that we study at Hum. I want to wish the class of 2020/21 a fabulous summer and hopefully we'll meet in person soon!

**Shalon Sims**, WorkLearn Student Staff

Well Wishes to the 2021 Graduating Class.

Humanities 101 remains my absolutely favourite class. You are wise and valuable ambassadors to your communities, your families and friends, and to the world. I admire you all for working through your studies during COVID and (like me) learning new technologies. What a gift...(eh?) to understand how much we desire to stay connected that we go beyond our comfort zone to learn new ways to connect.

I wish you well in your next years as you continue learning and questioning with your open minds, and learning again and again. Remember to bask in your strength and be proud of what you have accomplished.

Learn on!

**D’Arcy Davis-Case**, Forestry: “Three stories closer to understanding complexity theory”  
(A “shout-out” to Ghia Aweida who absorbed the concept in such a brilliant way.)

I wish everyone only the best and most exciting (but also relaxing) future. I will always remember my time with HUM and all of the stories we have heard and shared together, there was definitely never a dull moment. Thank you for helping me fall in love with learning and education once again, you all have a very special place in my heart. :)

**MorningStar Willier**, Hum Programme Assistant at the University of Alberta

"It matters what knots tie knots what thoughts think thoughts"  
—Donna Haraway

I'm so happy to have thought thoughts with each of you—and your boundless creativities and intelligences, your deep sensibilities of compassion and openness. Especially in such different and difficult times. I'm glad to have been along for the ride. Our Mondays together have been an anchor in what seems like an endless sea of Covid and torrents of Vancouver rain! Mondays sweep in like waves of connection. From my little rectangle in the grid to yours: congratulations.

**Mathew Arthur**, New Media: “The computer cord’s connected to the outlet; the outlet’s connected to the power grid; the power grid’s connected to the hydro dam...””; Public Programme facilitator: “Haraway Talks: Reading and Figuring Worlds”

Exploring human-digital relations this year was an absolute blast! Who would have thought online classes could be so lively, engaging and creative. My initial ambiguity about Hum’s fit for the online realm was quickly quashed thanks to the fabulous group of people who enthusiastically embraced this year’s courses. Much more was asked of everyone this year—extra readings, weekly assignments, tutorials—and the success of the courses depended on everyone embracing this hefty workload, turning up to classes, reading aloud, groundwork, and diving into deep, thoughtful conversations. The concerted effort and eagerness of students, staff and volunteers turned a potential underwhelming experience into a wonderful one. Thank you for a fabulous year!

**Paul Woodhouse**, Programme Coordinator; Sociology: “Exploring human-digital relations in the age of big data”; Politics: “Trumpeting the ‘Century of the Self’”

Thank you HUM 101 class of 2021 for inviting me into your course (and your homes)! This has been a year of opening strange doors, building new bridges, and learning how interdependent we all are, whether we are near or far from one another. Wishing you all the very best,  
**Tom Kemple**, Sociology: “The play of fate and contingency on everyday experience”

Many, many thanks to the scholars of HUM from Treaty 6 territory and Métis Region #4 and to the Humanities 101 scholars from the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Watuth Nations!

I was very grateful and happy to meet you all! It was a wonderful opportunity to be together like that and to have the chance to think alongside you about land acknowledgments, treaty and land negotiations.

It was also particularly special for me to be able to talk about this with folks from Vancouver *and* Edmonton—two places that are so close to my heart. What couldn't we do if we did that more often?? That was the good feeling I was left with.

So, thank you again for your brilliance and your hard work and for being so warm and welcoming!

Thank you also to Lisa and Margot for beginning the conversation and for bringing us all together!

all best,  
**Christine Stewart**, Critical Indigenous Studies: “Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else, on respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being”

The last seven years I have involved myself with the Hum Programme, I have experienced an incredible journey of knowledge, encouragement, support, and academic kinship. I stand in awe with the memorable guest lecturers, mind-opening readings, and with great minds from the DTES in the comfortable space on campus to the cool adaptation of Covid-Zoom classes. I really enjoyed the collaboration with the Edmonton sister campus. Thank you Hum for the empowerment and the tremendous ways of reaching out, enabling learning in any situation. Thank you for the interesting themes: dangling the carrot, walking the path to What if? Hum word bound has been and still is, life changing. Wishing you all the best to those educators who have given freely of your time, to the staff, volunteers and fellow classmates. Wishing you all a wonderful educational time well spent with Hum! A big shout out to Margot and Paul!  
Miigwech, (thank you)

**Sandi Rooke**, Hum stream

I want to respectfully acknowledge the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam)—on whose traditional, ancestral, unceded territory, I am writing from today.

With heartfelt gratitude and vast appreciation, I truly want to thank the University of British Columbia, the Ministry of Social Development, WorkBC, the Humanities (Hum) Community and Programme, my landlord at the Laurel, my loving neighbours, the amazing co-students, my wonderful Okanovic and Duracak and Hasanovic family and relatives, my handful of precious friends, the UBC volunteers and the hardworking staff of the Humanities Public Programs, and the Faculty of Arts, for your undivided champion support. We were able to overcome some very rough times, and had some very appreciable times, as well. I thank you all for always inspiring me, exactly when I felt downhearted and hopeless. Sehr viele Danke!

Words are powerless to express my gratitude to the Academic Director, our incredible professor, Dr. Margot Leigh Butler. My gratitude to you for all you consistently taught us, and the super fun and intellectual classes, which I will always treasure. I truly appreciate you and Mr. Paul Woodhouse, and Reuben Jentink, Sharon Sims and McKenzie Witschi. Thank you very much for your attentiveness in the lectures as well as the readings and the groundworks and the shells. No matter the circumstances, your wonderful understanding and dedication always influenced my constructive growth. Huy tseep q’u!

The connections made are not easily forgotten nor lost, and I will not forget the memories. ‘uts’odelhti.

I am proud to say: we are off to great places. Our mountains are waiting, so let’s get on with it and be on our ways. Class of 2021! WE DID IT!

**Ines Okanovic**, Hum stream



Look what we made happen together by depending on each other! I congratulate this year’s grads, you are the shining stars in Hum’s new “Hollywood Squares” style university courses–don’t forget that where there’s walls, there’s always secret passages for making surprising connections...just like we always do!

**Margot Leigh Butler**, Academic Director; Cultural Studies/Sound Studies/Critical Indigenous Studies (CIS):  
What if everything we need is already inside us?”; Politics: Trumpeting the “Century of the Self”; Critical Indigenous Studies: “Telling what happens when everyone depends on everyone else, on respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being”

For this Hum pandemic year, I would like to thank all the staff and students. Thank you for inviting us to participate online this year in a very fine Hum course. We have Zoomed from Vancouver to Edmonton to Thunder Bay! The Nester’s gift cards helped us so much to fill our shelves! We have all overzoomed (felt stressed from too many video calls), enjoyed balkonsängers (balcony singers) cheering at 7 p.m., shared abstandsbier (distance beers), and seen each other’s kitchen scissors coronafrisur (coronavirus style) haircuts. Danke schön.

**Lorna Johnson**, Writing stream

TRIBUTES

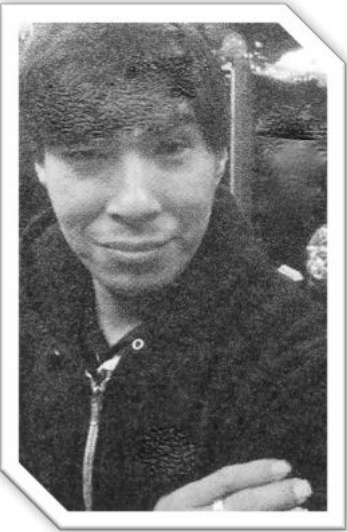
**HONOURING HUM ALUMNUS AJ KOMPERDO/LOW HORN (PIIKANI, SIKSIKA, OJIBWAY, MOHAWK, CREE NATIONS)**

We are thankful that AJ brought his joy to Hum and shared it with ease and flair. Our condolences go to his classmates, friends, relations and Nations who have been missing him since February 2020. We learned from his family that “Alvin was grounded within the spiritual way and loved to smudge not only himself but others that requested his prayers, he was a very kind but private person.”



AJ was a deep thinker, loved to write, and always kept a notebook with him. He wrote: “I’m told that others enjoy how I take time to think before speaking—and out comes a complex paragraph! This is one of my natural talents; it’s about reciprocation, this is my gift to them. The other contribution is humour in writing. We should all write something funny so that we can laugh at our own seriousness in our writing style, as it shows the reader that we have personality and life.”

AJ had the power of intellectual focus and concentration, which he demonstrated at our end-of-term party in 2014. Our theme that year was “No carrots, no sticks” education, and when it was time to smash the carrot-shaped party piñata, AJ’s dazzling ninja-like focus spilled into a captivating performance. As he pulled his black hood over his bowed head, a silence filled the room; poised with the stick held between his hands, he waited, then whipped it through the quiet air... CRACK and the carrot yielded its treasures!



Yes, AJ had depth and flair!

Taking his studies very seriously, he had lots to say about them: “Well, where do I begin? How about at the beginning. UBC has changed me from being an uneducated person to an informed individual. The way our professors have gone about teaching us, in class as well as on our field trips, gave me a sense of social activism and fighting for our rights as free citizens. Activism is right up my alley. So it would be sound to say that I paid attention to every class. The classes were

easy to understand and precise. One of the classes I really took an interest in was on ‘Knowing your rights’ when dealing with the police, and why it may or may not do you any good. There was a time when I was not a nice person and the police were always harassing me for one thing or the other. I didn’t know my rights back then so the police would lock me up every time they saw me. Now that I know my rights, the police leave me alone and stay away. I feel like a normal citizen for the first time in the city, and that, in itself, is what I’ve wanted all these years. I’m more productive than I was a year ago, and I really enjoy participating in class. The professors make it easy to understand what they’re teaching and I enjoy listening to the lessons.”



I last saw AJ at a 2019 talk at the Vogue Theatre on Granville by Carl Hart, an American academic and neuroscientist who advocates for legalizing drugs. It was a pleasant evening in late May, and I was standing outside the theatre in the wrong line-up and having some problems with my online ticket when AJ came up and helped me... then we got to talking and ended up sitting in the balcony together and spending the the evening immersed in Carl’s talk and our own opinions and experiences. I hadn’t known before how much taking certain substances had helped AJ, how they helped him to be

focused and feel comfortable. That evening he read me some of his current writing, his contemplations on his own innovative connections between philosophies. Here are some of them in the essay he published in the 2015 Hum publication.

Photos: From 2014-15 Hum Publication, *No carrots, no sticks*.

From all my relations to all of your relations,  
may we keep together on the path to peace.

ALVIN J KOMPERDO (PIIKANI, SIKSIKA, OJIBWAY, MOHAWK, CREE), HUM PUBLICATION, 2015

“Long ago before the dark years the people of Turtle Island were once a great people that got along with other tribes so they could trade among each other to survive the cold winters. I will not see that... but you will little one.”

- Albertine Low Horn

Those are the words my Grandmother said to me as a child so many years ago; you know what, she was right.

I've witnessed the idea of peaceful coexistence in the world we live in today, and I've seen the opposite.

The Oka Crisis is an example of non-peaceful coexistence. Here on one side is a tribe that has been moved around by greedy corporations and have never once lifted a finger against them. On the other side is a group of upper-class men and women who don't have any regard for life itself.

The Oka Crisis was a doorway for Canada and the world to look at itself and ask ourselves, “What do we as human beings truly value?”

The value of a human being or the value of a piece of land that a Nation of people have been taking care of since the beginning of civilization.

We have come a long way since then, such as the closing of all the Indian residential schools in Canada and the inquiry into the way the Canadian government and the Vatican treated the whole Aboriginal population as the outsiders we have become.

Yet not all is lost. Aboriginal students are going to more universities and graduating with PhDs than ever before, and even here in the Humanities 101 Programme Native and non-Natives are working together to help one another to get an education that either one would not be able to afford.

My Grandma Albertine Low Horn said I would see this happen and she was a wise woman to say so. The lessons that our professor Dr. Margot Leigh Butler teaches are relevant to our life outside of campus life.

When we go on field trips, we learn about the things that we can and are able to do as normal people with a limited income. I don’t know about you but I'm taking everything that the university and the faculty have to offer me and I'm going to change the world so future generations have the same opportunities that you and I have.

What we do with what we learned here will change the world for the better and who knows maybe we will one day be a great people once again...all of us on this rock we call Mother Earth.

I would like to acknowledge the Hum helpers for their contribution in making this a better world to learn, live, and love. Without them we would not be able to make this a world to respect and honour. Thank you.

From all my relations to all of your relations may we keep together on the path to peace.

**HONOURING HUM ALUMNUS GERRY “DENE WARRIOR” ADAM (DENE FIRST NATION)**

We were honoured to have known Gerry “Dene Warrior” Adam, a remarkable, dynamic person, so full of life and love. Hum joins his friends, family and community in missing him since November, 2020.

Dene Warrior graduated from Hum101 in 2010, and since that time stayed involved with the Programme. We often saw him at DTES neighbourhood events with his young grandson Anakin who he was helping his daughter to raise. Whether at the HomeGround festival held at Oppenheimer Park or the local library, we’d end up having a good old chinwag. Dene Warrior was a life force, he generated a sense of lively energy we’ll always remember.

He was a determined person, as this story recalls: after a Hum end-of-term party on campus, quite a noisy one, Dene Warrior realized that he’d lost one of his hearing aids. Everybody started madly looking for it, under hill and over dale, until we realized that we were not exactly sure what it looked like. So we gathered around Gerry who pointed to the fleshy side of his baby fingertip and said “It’s about that size, shape and colour,” and then the search really began... and continued until finding it at the very bottom corner of a large bin bag! We laughed about that unlikely find for years!



In his essay “Welfare Day,” published in the Hum 2009-10 publication, Dene Warrior’s commitments to his family and future, his astute criticisms, activism and wise local knowledge shine through.

Photos: *Left:* Dene Warrior with Hum 101 student Pat Haram and teacher Larissa Lai.  
*Right:* Dene Warrior, second from the left, in 2010, at a Sweat Lodge with First Nations elder, OldHands and Hum students and staff. This was the first time any of us had attended this sacred ceremony.

**Welfare Day**

**GERRY “DENE WARRIOR” ADAM, HUM PUBLICATION, 2010**

It is the end of the month and my welfare cheque should be here soon; yeah time to spend, party, and really enjoy the generosity of the British Columbia Government. I am making plans on how to spend my cheque well. There are so many things to do and see in Vancouver, so now how can I make do with the amount I receive—\$235.00 every month from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development of British Columbia. So now I shall sit, think and reflect; this is a whole lot of money for one person to spend and with so many options to choose from.

Now when I receive my welfare cheque, I know that the Ministry of Housing has already taken care of my rent, which they issue directly to the landlord; that in itself is a relief as it saves me having to worry about the rent. Then there are the other responsibilities to take care of myself, like grocery shopping, getting appropriate clothing for the impending winter weather, my cell phone bill and transportation around Vancouver. Going shopping for groceries is not much of a problem; however, the problem is, it can be very expensive, but nothing compared to my Reserve, where a loaf of bread is close to \$10.00. With the amount I receive from the Ministry of Housing, I still cannot afford to buy groceries; the grocery prices are so high, particularly downtown, it’s like these big chain grocery stores are there for the high-class people, without consideration for the lower class citizens, who also shop from them. One hundred dollars is not going to get me much, maybe some coffee, tea, sugar, Kraft Dinner, noodles, basic things to get me by. When you enter the store to pick up your items and all, you have but a few bucks left. The amount you spend on groceries is ridiculous at best, and what I pay for my cell bill—the average cost for a contract on my cell phone is \$75.00 per month. But I need my cell, therefore I am focusing on paying up my cell bill, which is the only connection I have with my kids in Saskatoon, and for work, so I have to pay that up and have my cell reconnected again. Since there are so many places to eat for free, I am going to settle for the option to eat free and have my cell reconnected, because I need it for kids, jobs, and a connection to others when I am in need and needed.

Welfare day is an embarrassing time for me because the average citizen seems to think of it as a day when all welfare recipients will be waiting in line at the liquor store or buying crack and other forms of drugs on the streets. I am thankful that I get my cheques by direct deposit, therefore I don’t have to wait in line at a bank or one of those cheque cashing agencies. It can be pretty embarrassing to be in line and listen to others complain, and if that’s not enough, often times those cheque cashing agencies run out of money to cash all the welfare



cheques and the waiting continues. Often times when welfare cheques come in, I wait a few days before I go into my account, so that I remain scrupulous and like I am not in receipt of the drudgery that it is, and the bad image it has on recipients.

Now for the sake of argument and ignorance, there are things that on the surface are not visible; although the amount is not sufficient to carry one through the month, it does not seem to amaze me how resourceful one can be. The food bank can also help; however, they are strapped with food donations, funding and other options, so it can get very difficult to get food. Churches are helpful to some of their parishioners, with food and other useful supplies which they feel is their Christian obligation to their congregation. Recently I came across an advertisement, not your typical advertisement on billboards, but nonetheless advertising food for a price which guarantees you meat, fruit, vegetables for a small amount. It is a great option compared to using the groceries stores, food bank and free food line-ups. I know this as the Good Food Box in Saskatoon, but at a reasonable price it makes good sense for those with children to utilize such a unique food program and option.

It is such an option to be on welfare, and an obligation for the government to help their citizens with such a program, however degrading, dehumanizing and embarrassing to some. Welfare also brings on embarrassment for the world view it has taken, the presumptions based on how it looks to others and not from the perspective of recipients, such as myself. I am a Humanities 101 student at UBC and I do my best to accept where I am, and who I am—uniquely a person of First Nations descent and a person with a disability. I am grateful and appreciate the government’s help, since I am having a hard time getting a job. I am also now thinking of taking another program at Simon Fraser University called Aboriginal Employment Prep Program and it’s for training in the hospitality industry. I would like to work as front desk clerk at a nice hotel and show that as a First Nations person I can be just as useful, resourceful and human as anybody can.

HONOURING HUM ALUMNUS JOHNNY JAWORSKI

Chihuahua’s couplets’ case for efficiency  
JOHNNY “CHIHUAHUA” JAWORSKI, HUM PUBLICATION, 2016

If the words don’t fit why join them together  
And attempt to be witty and crafty and clever  
Why steer your piece to some quantum dimension  
When a clean, concise style is the best invention



We are grateful to have known Johnny, a generous, enthusiastic and thoughtful guy who was very involved with Hum as a student, mentor and Public Programmes supporter for 14 years. He wrote: “Thanks to the places I was honoured to be a part of, I have learned to educate myself and become involved with the people and organizations that are a good 'fit' for me.” His enthusiasm for the topics we covered was contagious, and he was known for sparking lively discussions with his fellow classmates. He gave so much to Hum and the DTES/South community, not only in the classroom, but by playing his guitar and singing on stage at our celebrations where he’d rock the room into dancing! Last year but one, he wrote to Hum

the following day, saying, “When I played the Santa Boogie song, the only little child I met the whole day danced her sweet little heart and feet off in circles!! This was the highlight and the very best way I could have ever imagined to finish off a really excellent day!”

We were saddened to learn of Johnny’s passing in July, 2020, and our thoughts are with his family and everyone in the DTES community who knew Johnny as a friend, volunteer and singer. A fine writer, musician, songwriter, and social justice community activist, Johnny died as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown; rather than being amongst his neighbours, he was alone, subject to a reliance upon what has become a poisoned substance supply. With friends from Carnegie Centre, we celebrated Johnny’s life at a ceremony at the tent city in the DTES by making speeches, singing “Amazing Grace” to honour his faith, and singing songs he’d written and had just received a neighbourhood arts grant to record with his band. His songs express his commitment: “I am



confident that as human beings we can adapt to and overcome any obstacles or difficulties to make this world a better place.”

Johnny would often drop by the Hum office to regale us with a story or two... or a song, often with his trusty guitar by his side. He was a great one for sharing his philosophies and activism:

Yo Humbuggers!

I have sorta found my 'niche' now in probably the most effective way for me to give back, in my attempts to get actively involved in some social justice issues. I feel it is my duty now that I am an old fart with some time on my hands and a little more knowledge and a network for finding more. Thanks to the two places I was honoured to be a part of, I have learned to educate myself and become involved with the people and organizations that are a good 'fit' for me. I will share with you soon my super cool petition plan once I have it more together!

Johnny



He was a caring person, always thinking of other people. A few months after that letter, he wrote to us to say:

Yo Humdingers!

I had my appointment at the UBC law school (The Peter A. Allard School of Law) about the charity I am trying to start up in memory of my friend Timber. I now feel more confident in which direction to take further action. I am also happy to say that the young woman who I spoke with helped to confirm my belief that I am confident that as human beings we can adapt to and overcome any obstacles or difficulties to make this world a better place. Meeting young people like this warms my heart to think that the next generation are fully grounded and are going to make a huge difference in future.

Johnny

Johnny was nominated for a Hum award that recognizes the positive energy, atmosphere of warmth and friendliness he brought with him everywhere, especially to the classroom. He graduated from three courses, and he was a mentor in them, too, helping the staff and helping new people to feel welcome and comfortable. He was committed to bringing real change to people in his community. During his Hum years, he worked on a petition to end homelessness, based in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and published an advocacy essay in *Megaphone* magazine, amongst many other things.

One of the dearest memories Dr. Margot has of Johnny is when he launched a scheme to appreciate the people in his life by inviting them to dine at his favourite restaurant, Stepho's on Davie, and treating them to a feast, including showering us with cards and presents! She was so fortunate to be one of those people, and will never ever forget it, nor stop thinking well of our lovely Johnny Chihauhua Jaworski. He was loved and will be missed at Hum. And we know we're not alone.

Photos: Johnny at the Hum office with UBC Student Staff Kevonnie White and Margot Mabanta, and at Carnegie Centre where he long volunteered.

Hum gathers, with gratitude, on the unceded, ancestral, traditional territory of the hən'q'əmin'əm'-speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səɪlwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations; and in the spring term, also on the territory of the Papaschase and the Métis Nation in ᐃᑭᕐᕈᑦᐅᑦᐱᑦᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐ / Amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton), Treaty 6 territory.

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