

# Of One Heart: Introduction

Charles R. Menzies

Of one heart is a loose translation and reference to the Sm'algyax (Tsimshian language) phrase *syt güülm goot* – being of one heart. This phrase has become ubiquitous today. One finds variations of the phrase used to highlight the underlying idea of interconnection and relatedness. *Syt güülm goot* codifies an important pan-Tsimshianic value of belonging and an ethic of care about all beings. We reference that spirit in the title of our collection *Of One Heart*.

The sub-title – Gitxaala and our Neighbours – is also a self-conscious reference, this time to our western intellectual predecessors. Jay Miller and Carole Eastman edited a collection of papers in honour of celebrated Tsimshianist Viola Garfield. Their volume was called *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors of the North Pacific Coast*. In the three decades since *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors* was published much has changed in academic sensibilities. For one, the objectifying and outsider view of “The Tsimshian” and “Their” neighbours – grammatical structures that turn our people into objectives of study clearly presented from an external vantage point – has been supplanted by a far more collaborationist and cooperative stance. The explicitly colonial vantage point of earlier researchers studying vanishing peoples in some kind of terrain is no longer as common as it once was. While we honour our academic predecessors our own focus is more internalist: hence our use of Gitxaala and OUR Neighbours. As a member of Gitxaala and a practicing academic I consider it critical that researchers orient their work and writing within the theoretical and intellectual framework of our Indigenous communities. The time for treating us as data sources or laboratories for externalist colonial theories has long passed.

Our collection builds upon the legacy of our Indigenous and academic ancestors and mentors. Included in this volume are papers from the generation of scholars published in *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbours* and the related volume *Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present* (edited by Margaret Seguin Anderson). These senior scholars have laid down an academic tradition that facilitated the work of new Indigenous Scholars and non-Indigenous fellow travellers. We are honoured to have chapters by James McDonald, Margaret (Seguin) Anderson, John Dunn, George MacDonald and Joanne MacDonald included in this collection.

George and Joanne's chapters relate directly to matters of import to Gitxaala. George uses a series of hard to locate photos and images to detail the history and structure of Gitxaala's late 19th century home village. Joanne's chapter explores the museological and historical aspects of Gitxaala's famed twin stone masks. Margaret and John explore linguistic concerns. Margaret's chapter highlights important techniques for language maintenance. John's chapter raises a controversial and intriguing linguistic history of the northern invaders: who were they and where did they come from? Jim's chapter highlights a critically important concept of internal social organization that has not received as much attention in Tsimshianic studies as it deserves. I will return, toward the end of this introduction, to the overall importance on central place of Jim's work to the Tsimshianic and Indigenous studies. As the reader will note we have dedicated this volume to the memory of Jim whose life and work has touched many of us.

Three chapters by emerging scholars, Oralia Gomez-Ramirez, Robin Anderson, and Danielle Gendron, were made possible by a longstanding UBC-Gitxaala research collaboration. All of these papers focus on critical contemporary concerns of relevance to Gitxaala: food, health, and social wellbeing. Oralia's chapter explores the dynamics of racialization and the provisions of social services for Aboriginal women in Prince Rupert. Robin's chapter examines the way regulatory and economic processes restricted Gitxaala harvesting capacity and how that has contributed to high levels of diabetes. Danielle's chapter, the most recent of the three, focuses upon the important link contemporary Gitxaala members place upon consuming one's own foods gathered from within Gitxaala lands and waters. In the chapter "Newcomer Self-Provisioning" my colleagues Caroline Butler, Linda Mattson and I explain the ways in which non-Indigenous north coast residents also engage in wild food harvesting. In this chapter we highlight the importance their harvesting practices play in newcomer social relations.

Taken together these chapters bring together a bundle of longstanding research concerns with emerging contemporary issues. This is accomplished by centering our inquiry with Gitxaala and then looking out to consider the ways of our Indigenous and Newcomer neighbours who share our common home.

I now return to our dedication of this book to James A. McDonald, friend, activist, scholar and intellectual mentor.

James McDonald (b. 1951 d. 2015) was a sociocultural anthropologist whose first work on the Northwest Coast, starting in 1979, involved a

happy coincidence: Kitsumkalum Band Council decided it wanted an anthropologist to make a study of their social history that would assist them in their land claims and economic development. Since I [McDonald] intended to do an historical study of the political economy of an Indian population, our paths came together in a mutually beneficial way. [1985:22]

From the start, Jim's work was a collaboration with the leadership of the community. This was part of a new wave of engaged anthropology that had its roots in Kathleen Gough's call for new proposals that placed anthropology at the service of colonized peoples (Gough 1968; see also Marcus and Menzies 2005). Jim notes that he "usually met with people as a representative of Kitsumkalum Band Council, although the connection between my [his] work and theirs was not clear cut" (1985:24). Upon completing his dissertation, Jim worked for a decade as curator of ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum. In 1994 he was hired by the University of Northern BC to take over as chair of the First Nations Studies program.

Jim's form of collaboration created a space for the co-generation of knowledge. That is, working on projects defined and requested by Kitsumkalum, Jim was able to focus his research in ways that would illuminate issues and perspectives relevant from an Indigenous perspective. At the same time his theoretical framework (political economy) and engagement in the academic arena brought insights to community understandings on their own social history that would not necessarily have been the case had they simply hired a consultant. Jim's work is an example of a transformative model of collaboration that marks a decisive turn away from the model of anthropologist as research coordinator employing an Indigenous key informant. With Jim, the researcher became engaged in a collaboration that starts with the interests of the Indigenous community front and centre.

Through Jim's longstanding research, personal, and political engagement with Kitsumkalum he was officially adopted into *Waaps Nishaywaaxs* and received the name *'Wii Goot*. This is more than the typical anthropological tale of being adopted – a distasteful anthropological trope. The annals of anthropology is replete with photos of smiling anthropologists posing in front of somewhat less than happy looking 'natives.' One can still hear anthropologists at conferences talking about "their tribe," "their village," "their people." Jim was an anthropologist of a totally different order. Along with his name in *Waaps Nishaywaaxs* came an expectation that he was and would continue to be a full participant in the affairs of the house.

Jim's commitment was built through a long term relationship and it was manifest in the celebration of his life and honouring banquet held in February, 2015 in Kitsumkalum. Jim's name rested through the mourning period and then, a year later was placed upon his heir in a naming feast in the late spring of 2016.

We dedicate our work and words collected together here in honour of the memory of the good works of our friend and mentor James McDonald.

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