

Reflecting on Manidoo Ziibi, A Digital Story

by Christina E. Pasqua

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Time: 4 minutes 36 seconds

Transcribed by Tasneem Badshah and Christina Pasqua, 2020-2021.

00:00-00:36

Christina [Narrating]: We call our project Story Nations, or *Kiinawin Kawindomowin* in Anishinaabemowin, because every nation is made out of stories. Stories for everyone. Framed by Digital Humanities and Indigenous methodologies, *Kiinawin Kawindomowin Story Nations* is a multimedia expression of our collective effort to re-story colonial documents and missionary history about Treaty 3 Ojibwe Territory, from Toronto to the Rainy River in Northwestern Ontario, and back.

00:36-01:04

While our research begins with a written story—the diary of an Anglican missionary, Frederick Du Vernet, who visited the Indigenous people of Rainy River, or *Manidoo Ziibi*, in 1898—our story is ongoing. We retell these written narratives in collaboration with the Rainy River First Nations—their stories, their art, and their language as sources of education, creativity, and critique.

01:04-01:41

As academics and community members, we know that language itself carries a story. Written and spoken. But stories can also be told with more than words. Stories are lived experiences—painted onto canvas, woven into baskets, beaded into belts, recorded and shared through digital files, over meals, in homes, and by moving across the land. Stories are seen with our eyes, heard with our ears [sound of rushing water], told with the mouth, and felt with the heart, hands, and mind.

01:41-02:12

Out of this archive, historical and embodied, including our many visits to the Rainy River since 2014, we maintain this project by sharing stories, as researchers and friends. The power of our stories transforms our thinking and our relationships to one another. We learn that stories crave

relationships, between tellers and hearers, each taking turns to speak and listen.

[audio from video clip overlaps with above narration]

02:10-02:18

Pamela Klassen: "It's so beautiful! It's blooming too!"

Art Hunter: "[inaudible] ... this is the only place I've ever seen it."

Meaghan Weatherdon: "Art, what's it called again?"

Art: "Hoary Puccoon. H-o-a-r- ... "

[video clip ends]

02:18-02:55

Christina [Narrating]: Stories flow between bodies, drawing connections. But stories, depending on how they are told, also provide room for interruption—mirroring how the relationships that stories build are never perfect. They develop over time. They change. Some elements grow stronger, and others weaken. In this process, we are made vulnerable. We fumble over our words. Familiar—Story Nations. And unfamiliar—*Kiinawin Kawindomowin*.

02:55-03:33

And we fumble around with clunky equipment: cameras, tripods, and microphones, never quite getting the perfect shot, never quite muting [sound of wind] the howl of the wind overpowering our voices along the banks of the rushing rapids. Here, we learn that storytelling is a process. A process in which we are open to spontaneity, speaking truthfully and honestly with humour and joy, grief and anxiety, with each piece of knowledge that we share.

03:33-04:20

In sharing, there is both frustration... and success [sound of laughter... "I finally got it right!]. And so, Story Nations, like any story, is a process. A process in which we tell and listen to stories, each piece of the narrative forming new relations that take time to build and strengthen, to solidify and transform. And while there is possibility of failure, what I find important is that in failing, we are being human. Together. Reflecting on and expressing not only ourselves and who we are, but also, who our people are.

04:20-04:36

[Roll credits: acknowledgements and advertisements]

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