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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Constellations: Decolonizing Multilingualism through Lilyology, Scholarly Personal Narrative, Wildness, Beauty, Imagination

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Abstract

This paper explores the ecolinguistic potential to nurture and advance multilingualism through Lilyology, Scholarly Personal Narrative, and multilingual landscapes through wildness, beauty, and imagination to decolonize multilingualism in innovative ways. Lilyology (Blair, 205) provides a theoretical framework in which elements of the natural world are used to integrate Indigenous wisdom and story, a sense of relatedness, connectedness, and belonging, into areas of historic marginalization and silencing of Indigenous peoples. Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) decolonizes multilingualism by embracing and conveying a rich tapestry of voices, experiences, histories, and identities. The exploration of language through the wildness, beauty, and imagination opens new lenses on linguistic landscapes toward a holistic recognition and appreciation of the languages in their richness and potential. The constellation of Lilyology, SPN, wildness, beauty, and imagination clusters multiple methods and ideas focused on decolonizing multilingualism and lifting Indigenous knowledges, contributing to ecolinguistic global sustainability.

Keywords

beauty; imagination; lilyology; scholarly personal narrative (SPN); wildness

CONSTELLATIONS

> The stars we are given. The constellations we make. That is to say, stars exist in the cosmos, but constellations are the imaginary lines we draw between them, the readings we give the sky, the stories we tell. (Solnit in Alto, 2020, p. 158)
>
> What exactly is lost when a language, the most massive, complex constellation of ideas we know, ceases to be spoken? (Harrison, 2007, p. 1)

I find myself in the early morning magic hours, the time before sunrise, cloaked in solitude and sanctuary, a time of darkness, candles, and coffee. I walk outside of my writing room into the blackness of the high desert night of Santa Fe, New Mexico. One of the infinite beauties of this place is that there is very little light pollution once outside of the city limits. I see stars strewn across the black velvet background of the night sky. When I let my eyes rest on the canvas, slowly clusters, patterns, and constellations emerge. I recognize Orion and sometimes the Big Dipper. Other than those two iconic shapes, I am not familiar with the others. Perhaps because

of this, and the fact that I am not looking for anything, the clusters and constellations that I notice shift depending on the night. I love the dynamism. It is an experience of discovery rather than identification.

The constellations of ideas that compose this piece came into my life in much the same way, a journey of emergent discoveries that initially appeared as discrete points, distinct stars. Clusters of constellations revealed over time. Once I became aware of the tender threads of connection, like staring up at the night sky, the constellations came into focus, "starting points for investigation, rather than end points of analysis" (Hill Collins, 2015, p. 4).

CONSTELLATION MAP

This paper[1] centers on decolonizing multilingualism through a constellation of Lilyology, Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN), wildness, beauty, and imagination (Figure 1; Blair, 2015; Nash & Bradley, 2011; Wink, 2022, 2023). This paper seeks to interweave Lilyology, SPN, wildness, beauty, and imagination into the larger ecosystem of decolonizing multilingualism and address, among other factors, the call to "make more explicit the ways in which the field of TESOL is implicated and, to an important degree, if unwittingly, *complicit* in the present sustainability crises so that a new ethic of language teaching in the Anthropocene era may emerge" (Goulah & Katunich, 2020, p. 2).

Figure 1. Constellation Map (by Dawn Wink)

[1] This paper is based on the author's doctoral dissertation (see Wink, 2021).

1. First, the paper begins with a positionality statement as an example of Me-Search within Scholarly Personal Narrative.
2. Next, there is an overview of the shifting paradigms around languages and how the constellation presented here decolonize multilingualism.
3. Following, there is an exploration of Lilyology, a theoretical framework expressly created to decolonize and integrate Indigenous voices.
4. Succeeding, the stages of Scholarly Personal Narrative and how this method weaves seamlessly with Lilyology.
5. Finally, upon this foundation, an application of the concepts of wildness, beauty, and imagination and how they decolonize spaces, processes, and methods.

Lilyology provides the theoretical foundations drawn from nature through an Indigenous lens and integrates unique voices, like the individual petal of the waterlily, into the brick wall of Western academia and beyond. *Scholarly Personal Narrative* provides the structure to integrate the stories of all into previously colonized spaces. *Wildness* liberates creativity and authenticity into our work and the world. *Beauty* explores language through the lenses of peace, balance, and harmony. Without action and expression, the work we were born to do remains powerless, impotent. *Imagination* encourages us to act.

POSITIONALITY

I situate myself as an advocate for multilingualism, for mother tongue languages, primary language literacy—the strongest indicator for success in any additional language, and for the inherent and legal human right to speak one's mother tongue in any and all contexts. Mother tongue language, heritage languages, are sculpted by history to create a unique identity expressed through language and story. A heritage language:

> is the language of the heart. It is the language spoken between parent and child to express love. It is the language of childhood and family stories. Each person carries within all of the norms, stories, politics, spirituality, expectations, and history of our heritage language … with all that it encompasses is a primary lens through which we experience the world. (Wink & Wink, 2004, p. 112)

I align with Fishman (1982) that the world benefits exponentially from diversity of ethnolinguistic presences for its rich creativity and for negotiating and navigating human problems. I applaud his stance that diverse ethnolinguistic influences foster "greater aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional capacities for humanity as a whole, indeed, for arriving at a higher state of human functioning" (pp. 6–7).

I situate myself alongside May (2012) in recognizing that one's individual and collective cultural values infuse research, and because of this influence, theoretical groundings remain essential. It serves all for a researcher to state their position, rather than assume a pretense of neutrality. Critical research recognizes wider power relations.

SHIFTING PARADIGMS ABOUT LANGUAGE COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION

Chet Bowers (2012) deconstructs the perception that languages are neutral forms of communication but are instead foundational metaphors in how we interpret our world, and that the historic metaphors of language teaching are ill-suited, if not actively harmful, to addressing the present linguistic and ecological crises. In the past, language learning was often framed as acquiring a set of tools or skills, like learning a craft or mastering a technique. This perspective focused on grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and drills, with the goal of achieving fluency and accuracy. Examples of this metaphor include "language as a building block," "language as a toolbox," or "language as a recipe."

The latest trend in language teaching views language as a dynamic and evolving system, rather than a static set of rules. This perspective emphasizes the importance of language variation, cultural diversity, and the role of language in shaping social identities. Examples of this metaphor include "language as a river," "language as a web," or "language as a garden." The language of decolonizing multilingualism lifts the spirit of Hélen Cixous, as she reflects on language and linguistic diversity with the recognition "that we have at our disposal the biggest thing in the universe, and that is language. What one can do with language is … infinite" (as quoted in O'Donohue, 2005, p. 53).

CONSTELLATION OF NEED TO DECOLONIZE MULTILINGUALISM

Multiple factors evidence the need to decolonize multilingualism, including the continued perceived hierarchy of languages, with those of the dominant cultures pervasively taking over primarily Indigenous languages worldwide. Nation-states frequently only officially recognize certain languages of those in power. May (2012) conveys that "currently, less than 1.5 percent of the world's languages are recognized officially by nation-states" (p. 5). It is estimated that "more than half of the world's languages have disappeared over the last 500 years, and if it continues at this rate, 90% of all the world's languages will be lost in the next 100 years" (Gorenflo et al., 2012, p. 1). Linguistic imperialism, linguistic genocide, and

linguicide are responsible for this language loss. Phillipson (1992) defines *linguistic imperialism* as "the dominance asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (p. 47).

Jesse Taken Alive, proponent of the Lakota language and culture and fluent in Lakota, died due to coronavirus in 2020. Before his death, Taken Alive encouraged young people to learn their heritage language of Lakota:

> The language comes from the creator, so it doesn't belong to one of us. The language belongs to all of us. So, my message to all of the young people — the young men, the young women, the boys, the girls — this is your language. When you learn it, you're going to be able to learn more about this beautiful thing called life, because that comes from Wakan Tanka. The opportunity to share your feelings, to share your thoughts, to express yourself comes with our language. And I ask you to take the courage. [speaking Lakota]. I believe that there will be a day that all of you will talk. [speaking Lakota]. Finally, in closing, I ask you to do this on behalf of all of us who are older than you. Take the courage to learn the language. (Taken Alive in Goodman, 2021)

The irony of this transcription creates a double distancing from the original context—through translation into an English-dominant environment and through transcription of the spoken word. This encourages the question of how do we embody its complexities and honor multilingualism?

Linguistic, cultural, socio-political, geographic, historic, and physical elements compose the constellation of factors highlighting the need to decolonize multilingualism, each star a powerful energy on its own. Yet, nothing is ever separate and alone. All is connected. Now, deep into climate change and new ecological realities, the loss of Indigenous languages in which thousands of years of sustainable practices and wisdom are often encoded takes on increased importance (Lyall, 2016; Maffi, 2001; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Wall Kimmerer, 2013).

Power dynamics infuse all, when speaking of languages. Noam Chomsky (1979) contends that "questions of language are basically questions of power" (p. 191). Skutnabb-Kangas and Harmon (2018) highlight that a language cannot be defined without also considering the power relations surrounding that language. Recognition of the power dynamics that underlie all questions of language, language endangerment, and extinction emphasizes that the majority of today's threatened languages are the languages of peoples marginalized politically. Jane Hill expresses the tragic impact of this loss:

> What is lost is a deep sense of belonging to place. Local Indigenous languages embody the speakers' way of being in the world, created over time as speakers navigate specific geographic areas and history. World languages may provide this sense only for a certain privileged core population of speakers, and the kinds of knowledge favorited by such populations. (as cited in Maffi, 2001, p. 176)

The impacts of linguistic imperialism and globalization strengthens dominant languages to spread and replace local languages (Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2023), resulting in a loss of sustainable local cultures and the ecological wisdom within their languages (Maffi, 2001; Phillipson, 2024, 2025; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2023). "There's a reason we are what we are. I looked at the language and I decided that I was not going to go back and learn my language. I am going to use this one, English. I'll use it as my act of revenge for … teaching it to me in the first place!" (Trudell, as cited in Nelson, 2008, p. 319).

Trudell articulates the layers of complexities of language with this statement. The deliberate sacrifice of a mother tongue to acquire the linguistic weapon of the colonizer to resist the colonizer. This dynamic reflects inherent nuances, tensions, and contradictions. Each person responds in their own individual and unique manner within this web. In alignment with Trudell, Inaugural Poet Laureate of the Diné Nation, Luci Tapahonso, wrote in personal correspondence (September 10, 2021):

> I, too, was forced to learn English and then learned it to express ideas that always originate in Diné first. In college, I found that writing in English with a strong Diné mindset and syntax lent my work a unique, clear articulation that is difficult to rephrase in either language. Trudell's statement resonates because through writing primarily in English, I have been able to advocate for and emphasize Diné ideas and beliefs in ways that are amenable to non-Diné readers with certain political or historical events that may be uncomfortable.

These are just two stars among the millions to create an infinite number of unique constellations of how people respond to linguistic colonization. Each responsive constellation reflects circumstances distinctive to each individual. The dynamics and intricacies of each individual response evidences the complexities of language, power, and the human heart.

ECOLINGUISTICS

A primary intention of ecolinguistic research focuses on protection and revitalization of biolinguistic diversity (Carjuzaa, 2017; Deloria, 1997). A global hierarchy of languages values the languages of dominant industrial and political powers (Wink & Wink, 2004). Due to the global hierarchy of languages (Wink & Wink, 2004) younger generations of language speakers

often forsake their primary language for the stature of speaking the language(s) of a more dominant power (Phillipson, 1992) and to enhance their opportunities for economic and socio-cultural success in a globalized world. The global hierarchy of languages reflects power dynamics and a perceived hierarchy among and within nations and is oftentimes the result of violence, discriminatory practices, linguicism, genocide, and linguicide (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, 2024). These dynamics are among those that drive the demand for English language learning around the world.

Language ecologists attribute the current decrease of linguistic diversity as intertwined with ecological endangerment and extinction (Maffi, 2001; Mühlhäusler, 1996; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2023). Linguistic diversity roots within the greater concept of biocultural diversity. Biocultural diversity encompasses the varieties of life in all expressions—biological, cultural, and linguistic—which are linked (and likely co-evolved) within complex socioecological systems (modified from Maffi, 1996, 2001). Steven Pinker (1995) refers to the "wide-scale extinction of languages [currently underway] is reminiscent of the current (though less severe) wide-scale extinction of plant or animal species" (p. 259). Without human actions to protect, preserve, and revitalize endangered languages, this unprecedented global rate of linguistic extinction will continue at the current rate. The global linguistic and environmental crises require us to move beyond discipline-specific and isolated analyses and into a richer and deeper perspective, as "only a thoroughly transdisciplinarity perspective can navigate such issues, which are at once technological, cultural, ethical, political, economic, and ecological" (Wells, 2013, p. 126).

Ecolinguistics explores stories and their links to biocultural diversity. The significance of this lies in the ecolinguistic belief (Stibbe, 2015) that "we must change the stories in people's minds ... This refers to re-minding [hyphenation in the original], which is an explicit call for something that has been erased to be brought back to attention" (p. 162). Ecolinguistics decolonizes linguistics through its inherent transdisciplinary nature:

> Concentrating on connective knowledge requires much more than interdisciplinary research. Truly transdisciplinary knowledge goes much further than this and seeks to generate an understanding of much deeper relations, which are mostly covert and thus more difficult to see and handle … True transdisciplinarity is demanding; it requires creativity, and often courage, but today it is a key requirement for future science. (Finke, 2018, p. 405)

The transformative features of ecolinguistics, which emphasizes complex connections within the ecological and linguistic web, holds potential to decolonize multilingualism, with the

expanded knowledge of how the role of ecolinguistic health remains vital for global sustainability. Ecolinguists work to weave ecology within the linguistic landscape. Most definitions fall within the paradigmatic realm:

> Ecolinguistics explores the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions of humans, other species, and the physical environment. The first aim is to develop linguistic theories, which see humans not only as part of society, but also as part of the larger ecosystems that life depends on. The second aim is to show how linguistics can be used to address key ecological issues, from climate change and biodiversity loss to environmental justice. (Skutnabb-Kangas & Harmon, 2018)

Proponents of dominant language superiority feel a decrease in the world's languages to be politically and economically beneficial (Phillipson, 1992). In many nations, elements of the inequitable apportionment of power and assets often fall along ethnic and linguistic lines. A comparison among nations with differing linguistic policies can reflect an implied correlation between poverty and multilingualism: "monolingual" Western states tend to be richer than multilingual non-Western states. It is also important to stress that these so-called "monolingual" states are inherently multilingual—it is that the other languages are largely ignored and silenced by the dominant society.

The purportedly monolingual state of South Dakota reflects this phenomenon in its historic and contemporary landscape of languages, including Lakota, Spanish, and a spectrum of African languages. Those who understand that the correlation reflects a causal relationship advocate that multilingual nations strive for monolingualism to strengthen their economies—monolingualism makes systems (industry, education, information, etc.) more efficient. This inherently presumes the assimilation of minorities, that is, no rights for minority languages and support for education in the mother tongue for minorities. Education plays a primary role in language loss (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017).

Monolinguals sometimes propose the relationship between multilingualism and poverty as causal one (Phillipson, 1992). Joshua Fishman (1989) demonstrates a potential correlation among factors connecting monolingualism and prosperity. Through a vigorous research study of 120 nations, Fishman suggests that the perceived correlation of monolingualism with prosperity may be characteristic of monolingually-oriented nations' focus on competition and glorification of power that justifies their exploitation of other (multilingual) countries whose cultures and governments value collaboration, cooperation, and humanist principles.

LANGUAGE LOSS

Language loss draws critical consequences toward the extinction of traditional knowledge, wisdom, and story of medicinal plants. “Medicine” conveys layers of culture, layers of language. Diné Poet Laureate Luci Tapahonso (2021) spoke:

> *Diné bizaad*, meaning the Navajo language, is derived from the *Diné Diyiin*, which means the Holy People, thus our language is sacred. It is said that our language comes from our mothers as we are a matrilineal people, so *shima,* my mother, can be defined as *hooghandé hoané*, the language of the home, the *hooghan*, the Hogan. *Bizaad* is also derived from *azee'* meaning medicine as well the word for mountains, *dziil*.

Each language is an archive of the collective experiences and wisdom of the people who inhabit a specific area of land. Language expresses the relationship of people and the language, people with one another, throughout time, as reflected by:

> The Welsh word “iaith,” … originally meant both language and community; the word for foreigner, “anghyfiaith,” means “not the same language”; while the word for compatriot, “cyfiaith,” means “of the same language.” Likewise, the Basques define their territory “Euskal Herria” based on where “Euskera,” the Basque language, is spoken. (May, 2012, p. 137)

LILYOLOGY

Linguistic repositories, along with historic cultural and spiritual relationships with the land, compose *Lilyology* (Blair, 2019). Created by Dr. Nerida Blair, an Australian Aboriginal educator and scholar, Lilyology provides a theoretical framework in which elements of the natural world integrate Indigenous wisdom and story, connectedness, a sense of relatedness, and belonging, into academic and research areas of historic marginalization and silencing of Indigenous peoples. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) illustrates how research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism.

> The word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary…The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples. “It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity” (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Smith articulates how it galls Indigenous peoples that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know “all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed these ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own cultures and own nations” (p. 1).

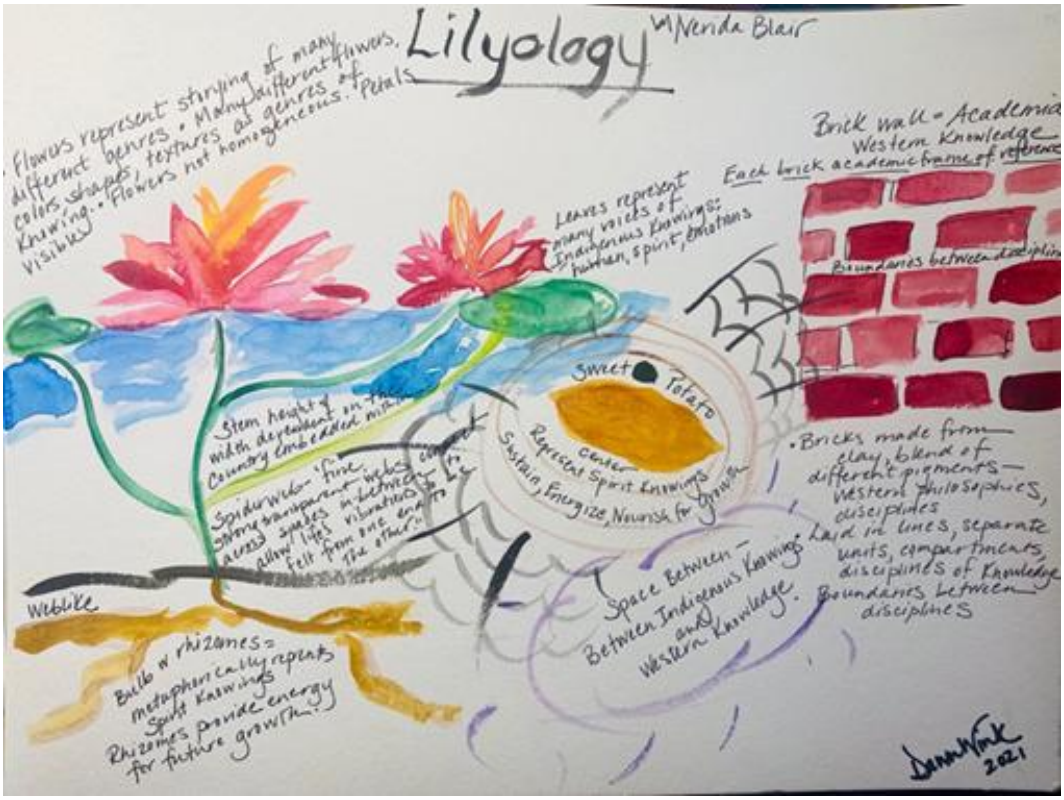
Drawing wisdom from nature, Lilyology embraces Indigenous cultures and languages. The waterlily represents the infinite palette of stories that convey Indigenous knowings, with the individual flower petals as the unique embodiment of a spectrum of stories, especially those traditionally marginalized, removed, or silenced. Spiderwebs weave connective strands throughout supposed separate disciplines. The spaces in-between hold the spaces of disconnection amidst Indigenous knowings and Western knowledge, while the transparent, strong threads of a spider's web create connections across disparate realms.

Lilyology grants a theoretical framework to decolonize critical ethical spaces for academic research. Lilyology is especially resonant and relevant to decolonizing multilingualism for the role of Indigenous scholarship with respect to addressing the impacts of genocide and linguicide through decolonizing research, and preserving and maintaining ecosystems, landscapes, and languages through honoring and centering Indigenous wisdom and knowledge.

Lilyology embraces natural landscapes, ecosystems, and Indigenous languages as essential, integral, and irreplaceable elements paramount for global sustainability. Lilyology, as a reflection of Indigenous wisdom through scholarship, elicits the natural ecosystem to lift the Indigenous ways of knowing and languages. Lilyology embodies "The right, the space, the voice to 'tell our own stories from our own perspectives' has been an important part of decolonizing knowledge…Unfortunately, we mostly hear that version from a dominant perspective that has assumed the right to tell the stories of the colonized and the oppressed that they have re-interpreted, re-presented, and re-told through their own lenses" (Smith in Archibald, 2019, p. xi).

Storytelling is deeply ingrained within many world cultures, including Indigenous, Latin, Southeast Asian, Asian, European, Southeast Asian, as an essential form to share wisdom (Harjo, 2020; Jacob et al., 2024; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Lilyology highlights story, "as a decolonizing framework … reflects a re-imaged concept of the waterlily. Lilyology metaphorically engages waterlilys, sweet potatoes, spiders, and brick walls, creating a space to reflect on and privilege Indigenous Knowings in the academic context" (Blair, 2019, p. 203). Blair suggests the reader "imagine a drawing of a flat square, a frame with different images inside it: a waterlily, a brick wall, an icon symbolizing a bush potato (sweet potato), and an image of lightning" (p. 208).

Figure 2. Lilyology (by Dawn Wink)



Each natural element represents a component of Lilyology framework. *Waterlily* petals are open, yellow stamen rises from the center to connect the petals. Stories are "vehicles that transmit Indigenous Knowings: the flower of the waterlilys. The height and width of the stem supporting the lily are dependent upon the Country embedded within. Stories have many dimensions and perspectives; the petals on the different lilys" (Blair, 2019, p. 109). Waterlily flowers bloom in as many distinct colors, textures, and shapes as stories. Each element of a waterlily connects with and is dependent upon every other for individual and collective flourishing. Each element of a waterlily connects to Country to encompass all of an ecological environment, comprised of "water, land, soil, air, sun, light, dark, atmosphere … If we all stop our imagining and listen, we can almost hear the different languages being spoken by all of these elements to each other" (Blair, 2019, pp. 209–210).

Brick wall represents Western academia. Each individual brick symbolizes a different philosophy or methodology within academia. Brick construction and composition represents the linear hierarchy inherent in traditional Western academia. Western knowledge is the mortar that holds the bricks together. The wall stands for divisions and boundaries. *Bush (sweet) potato* embodies Spirit Knowings (capitalization in original) that radiate from a sustaining, nourishing, and growth-producing central core. *Spiderwebs* exemplify the possibility to create

connections throughout the spaces in-between. *Space In-Between* refers to the distance between Indigenous Knowings and Western Knowledge (capitalization in original; Blair, 2019).

When I first read the components of Lilyology, I wanted to visualize Blair's invitation to imagine a flat surface of a square comprised of images within a greater whole: a waterlily, a brick wall, a sweet potato, and lightning. I drew out my watercolor paints and sketch paper and painted my way through my understanding of each element and what each represents. The painting of Figure 2 is my original playing with paints to be able to visualize Lilyology. Grounded in story, Lilyology decolonizes narrative structures: "It is iterative rather than linear. The storys [as in the original] are told in a circular or spiral theme, with each thematic repetition or spiral adding a little" (Blair, 2019, p. 213). The circular Indigenous expression of story contrasts traditional linear trajectory of Western story and aligns with decolonization to uplift threatened Indigenous languages and not lose their stories forever.

The Indigenous worldview of co-becoming with Country is imperative within Lilyology. Blair defines: "Country is the Aboriginal English word which encompasses this vibrant and sentient understanding of space/place which becomes bounded through interconnectivity" (p. 207). Blair broadens the philosophical grounding to depict how co-becoming "with Country [capitalization in the original] storys diverse communication and multiple languages, all intertwined into a tapestry of the cycle of life and death, of being in this world" (p. 208). The epistemological position of co-becoming with Country situates exquisitely to expand awareness around how a rich diversity of multiple languages enriches the world and bolsters decolonizing multilingualism. Lilyology honors the opinions of Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) as she contemplates post-colonialism:

> There is also, amongst Indigenous academics, the sneaking suspicion that the fashion of post-colonialism has become a strategy for reinscribing or reauthorizing the privileges of non-Indigenous academics because the field of post-colonial discourse has been defined in ways which can leave out Indigenous peoples, our ways of knowing and our current concerns. (p. 24)

Lilyology celebrates Indigenous wisdom and the natural world to lift up stories and knowledge historically marginalized by traditional academia; (i) bridge academia through story to strengthen Indigenous and silenced voices; (ii) highlight the significance of mother tongue medium education as an inalienable human right; (iii) affirm the integral connection between linguistic diversity and biodiversity. Linguistic genocide, especially in education, is a direct cause responsible for the elimination of the world's linguistic diversity (Skutnabb-Kangas & Harmon, 2018). Lilyology addresses the appeal for a future in which "disciplines merge and

lose their boundaries, and ecolinguistics will be one of the main contributors to this development … the fate of the species on this planet is related to the fate of its languages" (Fill & Penz, 2018, p. 437).

Decolonization of multilingualism embraces storying as understood through the Indigenous lens, as "Story explains, explores, and projects our being, our connections, and our relationships" (Blair, 2015, xxiv). Lilyology provides the framework to harmonize academic research with life stories to express voices often silenced within academia and academic publications, an illustration of how "justice may rule on the side of deep time and a storied landscape that has been held in place by the roots of Indigenous wisdom" (Tempest Williams, 2019, p. 17).

Lilyology promotes decolonization of multilingualism through a connective spiderweb across the spaces in-between to uphold endangered Indigenous languages and life stories often excluded, and uplifts the rich, full tapestry of story and encourages us to recognize the voices of Indigenous story historically silenced and how the connective strands of spiderwebs bridge the in-between spaces to highlight marginalized voices (Wink, 2022). Blair illuminates how Lilyology supports and encourages decolonization of multilingualism through her work and publications integrating Indigenous Knowings (Blair, 2015)—the lived experiences, stories, and wisdom of Indigenous people—into environments and realms where these voices were either silenced or portrayed by dominant culture researchers through their own cultural lenses, perspectives, and experiences. Blair writes of her experience in her research journal:

> How do I begin today? Words are inadequate. My experience here is my thesis – I am learning and being learnt by some very special people. Today, Yam, her grand daughter *(original publication spelling)* and old fella [Casuarina] took us to find a coolamon tree. We went to their camp first…and picked up some tools. That old fella showed me the string he was making from hair – for belts and head bands. We stopped and found the right tree and Yam chopped the tree and cut out the coolamon. [Two children] watched Yam for a while then cut down their own tree and began making coolamon…[Grand daughter] watched and made suggestions as Yam worked. She finished the inside of the whole coolamon. I am overwhelmed – feeling inadequate, in awe – a few words that don't come close. Sitting on the ground on the red earth and watching, trying to absorb, but so far away (J.E. November 2002). (Blair, 2015, p. 101).

Lilyology provides a system for linguistic decolonization through seeding the brick wall of academic spaces with voices, artistic expressions, and honoring of stories and story through expression not historically represented (visual art, Indigenous ways of speech and writing, and integration of the natural world).

SCHOLARLY PERSONAL NARRATIVE (SPN)

Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) intertwines effectively and beautifully with Lilyology, with its focus on weaving persona and lived experiences with rigorous scholarship. Examples of how Lilyology decolonizes multilingual education through my work include how when Lilyology is combined with SPN through narratives focused on Indigenous voices and ecolinguistics (Wink, 2023). Lilyology decolonizes multilingualism through its embrace of multiple ways of expressing data and story, including artwork and images. This decolonization was expressed through my inclusion and publication of watercolors (Wink, 2023, 2022) to represent mother tongue waterlilies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981) and the Lilyology framework.

The stars aligned in a unique constellation that brought Lilyology and SPN into my world and work. SPN decolonizes multilingualism through its embrace and conveyance of a rich tapestry of voices, histories, experiences, and identities. SPN falls under narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) and when done well, it "combines scholarship, personal stories, and universalizable themes and insights in a seamless manner" (Nash & Bradley, 2011, p. 24). Lived experiences and told stories inform this narrative method. Nash and Bradley invite research to use a four-step structure: "(a) Pre-Search: How do I get started: (b) Me-Search: What is my personal narrative regarding the ideas emphasized in my writing: (c) Re-Search: What scholars and researchers have informed my writing: (d) We-Search: What are the implications for my profession, or field of study, that can be generalized from my SPN?" (pp 6-7).

SPN decolonizes traditional research methods through its *axiology: vigour* rather than *rigour, subjective experience* rather than *experimental design*, *personal testimony* instead of *evidence*, *perspectives* over *data*, *introspective questions* instead of *interview questions*, *universalizability* rather than *replicability*, *according to my experience* that acknowledges *limitations*, *plausibility/honesty/coherence* replaces *hypothesis*, and *illustrative*, *embedded references* replace *literature reviews* (Nash & Bradley, 2011, pp. 82–85). Due to its focus on lived experiences, this method elevates voices traditionally ignored or silenced (Wink, 2024).

SPN integrates with Lilyology through four principles of respect, responsibility, reverence and reciprocity to honor Indigenous people, people, and languages by "engaging in holistic meaning-making that involves using the heart (emotions), mind (intellect), body (physical actions), and spirit (spirituality), as well as recognizing the relationships of these realms to oneself, family, community, land/environment, and wider society" (Blair, 2019, p. 1).

Why stories and personal narrative? Because "stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves, and you change the individuals and nations" (Okri, 1996, p. 21). Scholarly Personal Narrative, with its inclusive expansiveness, encourages an energetic, meaningful, and genuine relationship to raise all stories, not only those traditionally valued, and through this, decolonizes multilingualism. This is especially vital in multilingual education and research due to the historical underrepresentation of marginalized voices.

WILDNESS, BEAUTY, IMAGINATION DECOLONIZE MULTILINGUALISM

Wildness, beauty, and imagination offer lenses that expand and enrich understandings of languages, support biolinguistics diversity, and decolonize multilingualism. Lilyology and SPN integrate voices often absent from research in their own words and language. Wildness, beauty, and imagination deepen and enrich these frameworks through their focus on intuitive Indigenous Knowings (Blair, 2015). The exploration of multilingualism through the wildness (creativity and authenticity), beauty (harmony), and imagination (action) opens new lenses, away from historic positivistic and hierarchical language assumptions, and toward a holistic recognition and appreciation of the languages in their full richness and potential. When languages are experienced through creative lenses of wildness, beauty, and imagination, their depths and dimensions come to life.

Wildness

> "All that is wild is winged—life, mind, and language." (Griffiths, 2006, p. 1)

Decolonizing multilingualism holds the importance of all languages, not only those of majority cultures. Wildness connotes a deep sense of authenticity and connection. Tempest Williams (2019) expresses this relationship by encountering wildness as "akin to love, flush with chemical reactions hormonal and pheromonal, a firing of synapse in our brain that is integral to our survival. We are propelled by the currents of connection" (p. 42). She portrays how, "isolation is quelled. Fear is replaced by awe. We recognize wildness as creativity in the extreme" (p. 42). Wildness as extreme creativity and authenticity enlivens engaged awareness and active involvement. The sense of losing oneself within the moment embodies wildness through visceral and energy-filled forms, often experienced as timelessness and peace. Languages reflect extreme creativity, authenticity, and timelessness.

Languages embody and express wildness. With the loss of each language, so too do we lose an intuitive and intrinsic element of life. Griffiths (2006) addresses, "we may think we are domesticated but we are not. Feral in pheromone and intuition, feral in our sweat and fear, feral in tongue and language … This is the first command: to live in fealty to the feral angel" (p. 2). Live in fealty to the feral angel. If we explore the relationship between landscape and languages through this lens, what might this mean? Languages are beautiful. Landscapes are multilingual. Macfarlane (2015) interprets the multilingualism of linguistic landscapes with an awareness that there is "no single mountain language, but a range of mountain languages; no one coastal language, but a fractal of coastal languages; no lone tree language, but a forest of tree languages. To celebrate the lexis of landscape is not nostalgic, but urgent" (p. 10). Macfarlane reflects upon how actions mirror what people value and love. Macfarlane shares the impacts through the wise words of Wendell Berry, "People *exploit* what they have merely concluded to be of value, but they *defend* what they love and to defend what we love we need a particularizing language, for we love what we particularly know" (p. 10).

Each language realizes the rhythms of wisdom unique to those people, that place, their history and ecological surroundings, and the land (Basso, 1996; Macfarlane, 2015). What is lost when a language is lost? Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) describes how a great-grandmother pushed her walker up to a microphone to tell of language loss: "It's not just the words that will be lost. The language is the heart of our culture; it holds our thoughts, our way of seeing the world. It's too beautiful for English to explain" (p. 50). Languages embody the heart, history, and spirit of a people and the landscape they share.

Casandra López (Cahuilla/Tongva/Luiseño) channels language loss and grief within her poem "A New Language:"

> My words are always
> collapsing
>
> upon themselves, too tight
> in my mouth. I want a new
> language. One with at least
> 50 words for grief
>
> and 50 words for love, so I can offer
> them to the living
> who mourn the dead…
>
> In this new language our bones say
> *sun* and *sea*, reminding us of an old
> language our mouths have forgotten, but
> our marrow remembers. (in Harjo, 2020, p. 338)

Wildness conveys authentic and intuitive natural expressions, much like language. Wildness reveres that languages emerge from natural cultural, historical, and geographic landscapes, sculpted through time through human interaction with the environment. Gary Snyder (2020) summons the preservation of the natural lands and languages formed, shaped, and sculpted throughout time with the declaration:

> If there is a lad or lass is among us who knows where the secret heart of this Growth-Monster is hidden, let them please tell us where to shoot the arrow that will slow it down. And if the secret heart stays secret and our work is made no easier, I for one will keep working for wildness day by day. (p. 175).

Language expresses a connection to the land through words, stories, and ceremonies, which express the rhythms of the seasons, important places, traditional use, and spiritual and cultural values (Lyall, 2016). Lyall describes walking with her mom along the coast of British Columbia. While her mother had lost her mother tongue while attending St. Michael's boarding school, when picking berries, her mother would exclaim their names in Kwakwala, the Indigenous language of the Kwakwaka'wakw people, native to the mid-coast region of British Columbia. This inspired in Lyall a desire to learn Kwakwala to decolonize her own knowledge about the forest. Through this journey, she learned that literal translations demonstrate the Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw have intimate and complex understanding of land, ecosystems, and forests and of the interwovenness among animals, plants, environment, people, and spirituality. One example Lyall shares is the word *a'agala*, the literal translation "it grows in the shade."

McCaig (2005) asks, "Scholars, I plead with you, where are your dictionaries of the wind, the grasses? (pp. 434–435)." Decolonizing multilingualism lifts wildness in contrast to the ever-increasing homogenous linguistic landscapes. Embracing the wildness of languages decolonizes multilingualism. Wildness is essential in recognition of how the outer reflects the inner, and what this means for language extinction. Tempest Williams (2019) proposes: "The outer wildness mirrors our inner wilderness. Our adventurous nature is intrinsically tied to wild nature … If we destroy what is outside us, we will destroy what is inside us" (p. 40). The extinction of languages is an outward expression of internal disintegration.

Beauty

> "We have an obligation to make things beautiful, not to leave the world uglier than we found it, not to empty the oceans, not to leave our problems for the next generation" (Gaiman, 2016, p. 103).

Beauty is understood through the Diné word *hózhó*, a sense of balance, harmony, and integrity (Todacheene, 2014). Beauty implies united wholeness. Beauty blends social justice

with a holistic lens. Social justice weaves a crucial thread through beauty. As one well-known writer asked me, “Dawn, why should I care about beauty in light of climate change?”

“Good point,” I responded. “Let me muse and run on how to articulate this, and I’ll get back to you.” And that is what I did. “Because climate change is the physical expression of a lack of beauty as experienced through a lens *hózhó,* a lack of balance, harmony, and integration” (Wink, 2021, p. 55). With each language lost, so too goes a unique collective experience, molded over hundreds or thousands of years, of what it means to be human. Indigenous languages often hold sustainable practices, ways of being, medicines within the language (Cámara-Leret & Bascompte, 2021; Lyall, 2016; Maffi, 2001; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Wall Kimmerer, 2013). Scarry (1999) explores beauty as social justice and addresses how beauty, far from “contributing to social injustice … or even remaining neutral to injustice as an innocent bystander, actually assists us in the work of addressing injustice, not only by requiring of us constant perceptual acuity” (p. 62). Decolonizing multilingualism falls within the realm of global social justice. Silko (1997) contemplates the beauty of language in Native American heritage and the interlacing between landscape and language for Native American people. Diné Poet Laureate Luci Tapahonso (2021) speaks of the spiritual and foundational nature of Diné language: “’*Saad*’ is the Diné word for the language which was given to us by the Holy Ones; *saad* contains the wisdom of stories, history, songs, prayers and teachings that were meant to guide us into the future.”

Without an acknowledgement of the innate beauty of each language, how is a consciousness of the specific and unique beauty of each culture possible? Celtic poet and theologian O’Donohue (2008), born in Ireland within a native Gaelic-speaking family, speaks of how beauty is not all about just nice loveliness: “Beauty is about more rounded, substantial becoming. Beauty is about an emerging fullness, a greater sense of grace and elegance, a deeper sense of depth, and also a kind of homecoming for the enriched memory of your unfolding life.”

Language revivalist Ghil’ad Zuckermann (2020) invokes the beauty of languages through Aboriginal language reclamation and revitalization. Languages on the brink of extinction are referred to in terms that express their deficit. Zuckermann uses the term “sleeping beauty” as a poetic expression to celebrate and champion dormant tongues (p. xxii). This intentional use of language avoids negative terms such as “dead” or “extinct.” Zuckermann refers to an *Australian Aboriginal* sleeping beauty as a “dreaming beauty” with

connotations of poetry and affirmation, because "the reason is the Australian Aboriginal concept known in English as 'Dreaming' or 'Dreamtime'" (p. xxii).

Zuckermann believes endangered animals are more well-known than endangered languages. "The reason is that animals are tangible," he says. "You can touch a koala, even though in the wild you'd be crazy to do so because she can kill you with her claws. But koalas are cute. Languages, however, are not tangible. They are abstract" (Rawlings, 2019). Zuckermann's work focuses on *revivalististics*, a transdisciplinary field focusing on:

> language reclamation (of a no-longer spoken language such as Hebrew or the Barngarla Aboriginal language of South Australia), revitalization (of a severely endangered language such as Adnyamthanha) and re-invigoration (of an endangered language that still has a high percentage of children speaking it, for example Welsh or Irish). (p. xxi).

Much of Zuckermann's work in Australia focuses on the Aboriginal language of Barngarla, a "sleeping beauty" Aboriginal language of Australia. Australia shares the same history of removing Indigenous children by force from their families and sending these children to boarding schools hundreds of miles away. Children were prohibited from speaking their mother tongue, forced to use English. The last mother tongue speaker of Bangarla died in 1960. Zuckermann started with a Bangarla dictionary by a Lutheran missionary from 1844.

Together with the community, Zuckermann built upon what the elder generations remembered of the language of their parents and grandparents. The outcome is a contemporary Bangarla as close as possible to the original language. While other language revival programs had been launched in Australia, few have enjoyed success. Effective and successful programs integrate sound theoretical understandings of second language acquisition (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2001; Hammine, 2020; Krashen, 2003; Meighan, 2022).

Zuckermann emphasizes four principles of successful language revival and revitalization:

> (a) if your language is endangered—Do not allow it to die! (b) If your language died—Stop, revive, survive! (c) If you revive your language—Embrace the hybridity of the emergent language! (d) If your language is safe (e.g., you are a speaker of American English or Modern Standard Chinese)—Consider helping others in linguistic needs! (p. 186).

Ghil'ad Zuckermann's work highlights how language embeds with every aspect of our identity. Through his work, Zuckermann embodies the activism necessary for language revival and revitalization. Beauty, *hózhó*, expresses harmony, balance, and wholeness. To experience multilingualism through beauty explores and interprets linguistic landscapes for these qualities.

Disharmony, a lack of balance, and brokenness result in language loss and linguistic colonization. Let us focus on beauty in our efforts to decolonize multilingualism.

Imagination

> "Imagination is about breaking the shell of the status quo, summoning up objects that do not yet exist, actions that no one has yet performed, and wiser ways of living that have yet to be realized" (Sanders, 2020, p. 6).

Imagination presumes action to bring the imagined into reality. In keeping with the transdisciplinary and textural spirit of languages and nature, Mary Oliver (2017) brings the essence of imagination to life in the closing lines of her poem "Wild Geese":

> Whoever you are, no matter how lonely
> The world offers itself to your imagination,
> Calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
> Over and over announcing your place
> In the family of things. (p. 347)

Imagination encourages reflection on the way in which we walk through the linguistic world. Imagination ushers in change. To bring to life what is conceived in the imagination requires active involvement and action. Imagination invites us to experience language as a portal to multiple ways of seeing, understanding, and thinking. How to spark and increase a love of languages? How does the vast absence of a love of languages invite and encourage waves of xenophobia that threaten individually and collectively? How can we instill pride in the cultural uniqueness and historical knowledge embedded within each language, unique in the world?

Imagination calls in creative expressions, as described by Russell Sanders, "However we acquired our capacities for reason and imagination—by natural selection or divine gift—surely, they are our most distinctive features," (2020, p. 40).

> We also need the Bible, the Koran, Beethoven's symphonies, Rembrandt's self-portraits, Lao Tzu's aphorisms, the Aborigines' dream songs, Hopi mythology, *King Lear*, *Walden*, *Leaves of Grass*, Chartres Cathedral, Shaker furniture, Zen gardens, linear algebra, quilts, blues, comic books, cuisine, and the whole panoply of human responses to the universe … Immersed in mystery, we should welcome every insight into the vast, ancient, elegant cosmos and our own fleeting existence. (pp. 39–40)

Weaving of imagination with language as elements of landscape expands our potential and possibilities for decolonizing multilingualism. We find ourselves in this unprecedented era of linguistic colonization and ecolinguistic loss. How we address this in effective ways

requires imagination, creative expression, and implementation. As we explore this terrain, it is vital to keep in mind that, "however we acquired our capacities for reason and imagination—by natural selection or divine gift—surely, they are our most distinctive features," writes Russell Sanders (2020, p. 18).

Imagination holds the possibility for a collective shift about language loss, as reflected in Barfield's ideas that language emerged because of 'original participation' that diminished over time and language became "a contraction of meaning" and "did not appear at some point in a world already given; language and 'the world' that we know emerged simultaneously as two separate phenomena as a result of the loss of original participation, that is of a prior unity encompassing both" (as presented in Lachman, 2017, p. 48). The complexity of imagination:

> gives rise to stories that have never been told before, melodies that have never been heard, dances and designs that have never been seen; these creations may, in turn, give rise to pleasures and yearnings, many of them unprecedented, within anyone who reads or listens or watches. In scientists, imagination generates hunches about how some portion of nature might work, yielding hypotheses that can be tested and a vision of processes unfolding through time and space. In all of us, imagination can give rise to compassion, by providing insight into the feelings and thoughts of other people. (Sanders, 2020, p. 26)

Imagination allows the understanding of the role of language for global sustainability and vibrancy to reach an increased number of people who might embrace this knowledge and work toward decolonizing multilingualism. Imagination holds the potential to stem ecolinguistic decline and lift awareness that will lead to actions of language preservation and revitalization.

EXAMPLE OF CONSTELLATION OF LILYOGY, SCHOLARLY PERSONAL NARRATIVE, WILDNESS, BEAUTY, AND IMAGINATION

BALDH3AD! (lyrics)

I cannot breathe, please step off of my chest
Loosen the noose tightening 'round my neck
I wish for freedom and to sing my song
We're prisoners on the very land we're from!

BALDH3AD!, you're so well-fed on my destruction
Fetishize our women, silence our children
Plunder my motherland, pollute the sea
But still I survive, though you clip my wings
BALDH3AD!, you tricked us with your treaty

BALDH3AD!, your king sits high on his throne

He listens to his people, not to my own
Framed as a savage, I'm burned at the stake
A woman's a witch, yes, it's her that you hate
How dare you put shame upon my skin!

You are a cannibal, you brought the plague!
Curse us with churches, and teach us your ways!

BALDH3AD!, you made your bed!
Ka whawhai tonu maatou, ake ake!
Ka whawhai tonu maatou, ake ake!
(We will fight on, forever and ever!)

Theia, a Maaori artist and proud descendant of the Waikato-Tainui, Ngaati Tiipa, and Ngaati Theia, brings this constellation to life through her work (Theia, 2025). She begins, "*E ngaku nui, e ngaku rahi puta noa i te ao—nei raa te mihi ki a koutou katoa mai i teenei uri noo Waikato, noo Ngaati Tiipa, noo Ngaati Aamaru*. (Greetings, esteemed relatives throughout the world. I, a descendant of the Waikato, Ngaati Tiipa, and Ngaati Aamaru people, acknowledge you.)" Theia writes of her song BALDH3AD!:

> "BALDH3AD!" is my musical assault on the plague of colonisation, which has impacted our people since the 1800s and continues to threaten our language and culture under the current right-wing government. This song arose from the absolute disgust I feel toward the national coalition government, which is inciting anti-Maaori sentiment and actively carrying out its oppressive colonial agenda by trying to pass a bill (The Treaty Principles Bill) that undermines Te Tiriti o Waitangi ("The Treaty of Waitangi," 1840) and parent document He Whakaputanga (Declaration of Independence, 1835) and therefore would remove our status and protections to exist on our own land as the Indigenous Peoples of Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Theia weaves medieval-style accordions along with *puutaratara,* a Maaori conch instrument, traditionally used to signal war. Theia expresses her work through translanguaging (Cummins, 2022; Garcia, 2016), another form of linguistic decolonization, "This waiata, of course, is a *wero* (challenge) and *tohu* (sign) that we will fight to the death and mobilize for the betterment of our *uri whakaheke* (future descendants) (2025). Theia expressly addresses colonization, "In the music video, I wear a Victorian-era dress for 'white-face' Queen Victoria, who was in power when Aotearoa was colonized. It's also my way to remind people that, in the veritable genocide of colonization, it is in fact the colonizers who are the savages." Theia concludes this piece with:

> I'll end with the final lyric in "BALDH3AD!"—a direct quote from revered Tainui chief Rewi Maniapoto, who led Kiingitanga forces against the invasion of Waikato in the 1860s: "*Ka whawhai tonu*

> *maatou, ake ake!*" meaning, "We will fight on, forever and ever!" As such, we, the new generation, are *here*. We will not bow down. We resist. We stand together across the oceans.

Theia decolonizes multilingualism through her work that draws from the land (Lilyology), shares her life story (Scholarly Personal Narrative: Pre-Search, Me-Search, Re-Search, We-Search), expressed creatively and authentically (Wildness), seeks harmony and balance (Beauty), and acts through art and music to protest colonial laws and reclaim power for Indigenous people (Imagination).

RECOMMENDATIONS

As we create a collaborative constellation to decolonize multilingualism, some recommendations to muse, ponder, and act are provided. How might Lilyology inform your pedagogic practices? Where could you create those connective spiderwebs through your work? What unique stories, as represented by the individual petals of each waterlily, compose your work? How might you lift those into previously colonized spaces?

What unique gifts do you bring to this work that you might structure through SPN? *Pre-search*: How do you get started? What are your passions? What connective threads run through your life? *Me-Search:* What is your personal narrative around these guiding threads? For example, in my own life, the connecting threads include multilingualism, linguistic human rights, a love of landscape and language, a passion for integrating wildness, beauty, and imagination into the greater ecosystem of languages. What are yours? *Re-search:* Which scholars and researchers inform your world and work? Who do you follow? What about those currently writing who inflame you with your disagreement? Whose ideas do you read and find yourself energized, impassioned? Follow this energy. This is the work that you are meant to do. *We-search:* Now, bring this into the world.

What wildness lives within you and your work? What creative, authentic is uniquely yours? Is this the work you are meant to bring into the world? Sink within yourself and listen. What do you do, and time flows by without your realizing? Where are you your most authentic self? Beauty represents wholeness, balance in motion. What pieces of wholeness can you bring into a world filled with brokenness? We can each contribute our tiny piece into the vastness of our world. Each tiny piece matters. We are meant to create beauty in the world. What beauty do you create?

Imagination is about *action*. Now, bring the inner into the outer. Above, you've created your own constellation map to decolonize multilingualism. What concrete action can you take toward bringing your ideas and work into the world?

What is your constellation? Draw it. Write it. Paint it. Sketch it. Bring it into the world.

CONCLUSION CONSTELLATION

> I know that this point of view is not terribly fashionable these days, but I think we *do* have a responsibility, not only to ourselves and our own time, but also to those who are coming after us. (I refuse to believe that no one is coming after us.) And I suppose that this responsibility can only be discharged by dealing as truthfully as we know how with our present fortunes, these present days. (Baldwin quoted in Sanders, 2020, p. 1)

My dad called last night from our family ranch on the Great Plains of western South Dakota.

> "Have you looked at the sky tonight?" he asked.
> "Not yet."
> "You can see Venus right beside the moon," he said.

Still on the phone, I stood from my desk where I sat writing this piece, put on warm shoes, and walked outside into the cold January night air. I looked up to see a glowing moon. A steady bright pinpoint of light shone beside it. Venus.

> "I see it," I said.

Hundreds of miles apart, we looked at the moon and planet together. Connection spanned the miles, much like the spiderweb of Lilyology. I do not know that a moon, a single planet, and a shared moment create a constellation, but it did for me at that moment—a constellation of connection. The thousand-plus miles separating us physically dissolved in that moment. It takes 14 hours to drive door-to-door from our home in New Mexico to the South Dakota ranch. This time reflects stopping only to refill the gas and bathroom breaks. The miles and hours disappeared in the moment. Thus is the power of connection…

My dad stood on the porch the wraps around the ranch house, a section originally built by my great-grandparents in 1910 as an upgrade from the sod house where they lived. I stood outside our house in the high desert of Santa Fe. We created our own connected constellation. Written and spoken words form to create constellations of hope. Our words, our actions create these living constellations. Mystery still shrouds what we see in the night sky. There is so much out there that we do not yet know or understand. The vastness of the space feels overwhelming. Somehow, this, too, informs our work. Absence, the ineffable, subtle and overt violences shape

our linguistic and epistemological landscapes. Our constellations embrace all. Childs (2025) describes the night sky not as an absence of light; it is the presence of the universe. As we move forward into the future, it is up to us to create constellations of connection, of hope, of decolonization, of vibrant multilingualism—our presence in the universe.

Create your constellation!

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