This short literary essay lets you demonstrate your skills in literary analysis, and will integrate concepts from the first half of class. In addition to the novels, use a minimum of three reputable secondary sources from class readings, including at least two scholarly sources such as the articles on land discussed in class. The emphasis of your essay is on close reading and literary interpretation of the texts; social, political, and cultural context should support rather than supplant a detailed literary analysis. The articles you cite to support your paper should ground rather than replace your own argument, so use quotations carefully, explicate fully, and cite all sources used (direct or indirect). Additional sources from reputable publications are allowed but are not required. Use MLA format, print and staple your essay, and hand in in hard copy.

Choose one of the following topics:

“Namu, Ma-ma-oo explained later, means whirlwind. The area is famous for whirlwinds” (Robinson 161). “Mom pointed out some indentations in the rock on the beach that she said were the footsteps of the Stone Man” (Robinson 113). Using close reading and textual details, explore the significance of placed-based story, names and naming in Monkey Beach and The Innocent Traveller, with attention to the discussion of the role of names discussed in “Without Treaty, Without Conquest” and “The Paradox of Boundaries in Coast Salish Territories.” What are the two competing visions of the same place in these two books? When Haisla and British cultures meet, whose names and stories are typically assigned social legitimacy in dominant Canadian culture? What is the significance of this encounter for legal conversations about land ownership and repatriation?

“Here we are, this little group stuck in the middle of all our mortal enemies” (Robinson 221). Using close reading and textual details, compare concepts of “nation” in Monkey Beach and The Innocent Traveller, discussing the nuanced and multiple understandings of “nation” in each work. Be careful to complicate teleological assumptions. Your argument should engage with the discussion of the role of totem poles and place-based names and stories discussed in “Without Treaty, Without Conquest” and “The Paradox of Boundaries in Coast Salish Territories.” Within what concept of ‘nation’ do each of these novels situate the reader? Which of these notions of nation have been hegemonic in this place, and in what ways does Monkey Beach offer a counter-hegemonic narrative?

“When we got back to Kitimaat, I told Ma-ma-oo about the footsteps on the beach. She raised an eyebrow at me. ‘You don’t have to be scared of things you don’t understand. They’re just ghosts’” (Robinson 264). “Wasn’t there really a god Pan in those days […] before they had the benefit of the Christian religion[?]” (Wilson 193). Using close reading and textual details, compare the significance of ghosts and spirit beings in Monkey Beach and The Innocent Traveller. When comparing settler and Indigenous spiritual traditions, who determines what is understood to be ‘real’? How does Monkey Beach play on and perhaps challenge hegemonic notions about the relative validity of settler and Haisla spirituality?