

Charlesons use of description in hesquiaht a people, a place and a language essay...

[Experience](#), [Peace](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Karen Charleson's "Hesquiaht – A People, a Place and a Language," a stylized, incredibly descriptive and vivid portrayal of the Hesquiaht people is provided. In this unique work, the Hesquiaht are described as an entity "where people, place and language are a single whole," illustrating the Hesquiaht people's dedication to their culture and home. Charleson's use of language helps to support this point, showcasing the mysterious, interconnected and ephemeral nature of the Hesquiaht people, depicting this First Nations tribe as almost mystical.

Charleson writes the story from the perspective of the Hesquiaht, though not as any one member of the tribe – the entirety of the work is from the collective 'we.' While the work is ostensibly from the author's perspective – mention is made of "my husband's father" – she still feels as though she is one part of a collective whole, and that is the only instance in which a singular person is described. Otherwise, the whole world seems to revolve around the relationship the Hesquiaht as a collective have with their land. Charleson uses greatly descriptive language to showcase the Hesquiaht's obsession with nature as a part of themselves. Much of the environment these people reside in is described in relation to the plant and animal life, which is given vibrant character through Charleson's words.

The Hesquiaht's fluid command of time is conveyed through Charleson's language as well. The beginning of the second paragraph notes that they are "no longer needing to hurry" once they get to the Vancouver Island harbor they call home – this is because the Hesquiaht are connected to this place, where time stands still, but speed is necessary in order to get there. Home brings the Hesquiaht the utmost peace – when arriving, it is "always fresh

and new, as if we were arriving for the first time.” Time seems to have little meaning, as the “ past is tangible enough to taste in the salt air, to blend inside our lungs with the present” – there is little difference between past and present, and a strong connection the Hesquiaht can have to both. Much is made of the Hesquiaht’s ability to coexist with nature without harming it. In the final paragraph, the Hesquiaht leave a “ quiet” in that harbor: “ not silence, but an absence of human noise.” Here, Charleson differentiates the Hesquiaht from other human civilizations in that they are much more concerned with the peace and serenity of nature, untarnished by human interaction. These people understand the limits of what nature can tolerate of human behavior and activity, and leave occasionally to allow their home to grow back, “ serene and eternal.” The Hesquiaht value this above all else – they take care of their home so their home can take care of them. It is with this language that Charleson notes the enlightened qualities of these people and their spirituality.

In conclusion, Charleson’s use of language highlights the positive and spiritual qualities of the Hesquiaht people. As a people, they are tied to one place and one people, connected together as a whole and disconnected from the normal flow of time. While in their home, they work peacefully with the nature around them, and leave it on occasion to be at peace with itself, providing the “ absence of human noise” that the harbor desperately needs.