

**Xexa:ls and the Power of Transformation:
The *Stó:lō*,
Good Governance and Self-Determination**

by

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Abstract

I began my PhD studies in 2005 knowing I wanted to study concepts of Indigenous governance and self-determination. I knew my journey would not be easy; we live after all in harsh colonial times. The *Indian Act* is still in effect and by its very nature subjugates and oppresses Indigenous governance and empowerment. In abiding by an Indigenous Research methodology, I was able to come to understand and begin to document what it takes to be self-determining and shed light on true Indigenous governing principles while living under a colonial regime.

Abiding by an Indigenous Research methodology meant I had to “live” my research, tell my story from a decolonized mind, body and spirit, learn from *Stó:lō* epistemologies and above all make sure my research could lend its voice to change and Indigenous empowerment. My research therefore is as much about my journey in decolonization and empowerment as it is about understanding Indigenous governing principles. My journey was guided by the teachings of *Xexá:ls* and therefore is inextricably linked to *Stó:lō* territory, ontology and epistemology. Behind the colonial barricade, I discovered *Stó:lō* governing principles provided within our cultural teachings and transformations throughout our territory that speak to the power of place, the importance of women, the laws of our ancestors and the title to territory embedded within our *sxwōxwiyám* and ancestral names.

It is now 2012 and the timing is right to begin to change, to transform colonial relations of Indigenous disempowerment, disease and disconnection. The time is right to return to our teachings of *Xexá:ls* and our governing principle of “all our relations.”

Keywords: Indigenous Governance; Self-Determination; *Stó:lō* epistemology; Indigenous Research Methodology; De-colonization; Indigenous Empowerment

*This dissertation is dedicated to my own
personal Xexá:ls, who knowingly and
unknowingly led to my personal
transformation of empowerment:
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Kw'í:tseł Tatel (Patricia Kelly) and
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Glossary of *Halq'eméylem* Terms and Ancestral Names

Halq'eméylem Terms

Áthelets, anglicised as Aitchelitz – *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

ĆELÁNEN, SENĆOFEN for WSÁNEĆ (Sannich) laws and teachings which form the basis for governance (*t̥esalaq* (Tom Sampson) see also Claxton 2008:52).

cexwte'n, a *Hun'qumi'num* term for a ceremony, a gift to be used in a certain way at certain times to help the people (*θɛ'ɫəctən* as cited in Jenness 1955:71).

Ch'iyáqtel, direct translation is “fish weir” is name of *Ts'elxwéyeqw* village anglicised as Tzeachten.

Halq'eméylem, dialect of Halkomelem spoken by the upriver *Stó:lō*, from Matsqui to Yale – this actual term is associated with *Leq'á:mel* now known as Nicomen Island near Deroche – was a place “where lots of people used to gather” (Galloway 2009:223).

Hul'qumi'num, the island dialect of Halkomelem spoken from Malahat to Nanoose.

Hun'qumi'num, the downriver dialect of Halkomelem spoken from Katzie to Musqueam.

Kluh Ch ihl ihs ehm, a dialect of the Nooksack language spoken by the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* (Carlson 2010:120).

Kwelxá:lxw, *Kwél*, Mount Baker.

Lets'emót, one kind (Galloway, 2009:210); also often used for “to be of one heart and one mind” a term used to describe a *Stó:lō* *Siyá:m*'s ability to get all people working together toward a common goal/vision; also *Lets'emót lets'e th'á:lá*.

Lets'ó:lmexw, different tribe, different people, strangers (Galloway 2009:1437).

Lets'ô:mexw, different person, stranger (Galloway 2009:210).

Lexexéq, anglicised as Luckakuck Creek.

Lexwsá:q, Nooksack People.

Lexws'í:ts'el, person who is always lazy (Galloway 2009:1440).

Lhéchelesem, Nooksack language.

Lhewá:Imel, the river that flowed from Chilliwack Lake to Sumas Lake – meaning of name is “left its course” as this river did on several occasions.

Mestíyexw, person (Galloway 2009:1439).

Méxweya, belly-button (Galloway 2009:1101).

Mílha, *smílha*, a spirit-dance, a winter-dance (Galloway 2009:1560).

NE,HIMET, SENĆOŦEN for “mine to protect” and is the oldest form of land tenure, includes all the resources and responsibilities that come with one’s ancestral name (*ŧesalaq* Tom Sampson 02-08-2011:3-4). See also Claxton (2008:56) who describes NE,HIMET as family history and teachings which included things the family owned and rights to certain locations.

Ó:wqw’elmexw or *Ó:kwk’elmexw*, a tribe of people/several tribes (Galloway 2009:1437).

Óyó:lwethet, be totally independent, doing the best one can (Galloway 2009:1104).

Ptá:kwem, Braken Fern, shoots are fiddle heads, inside of the stems can be ground into flour (Coqualeetza 1981).

Peló:lhxw, Pilalt.

Qoqolaxel, “Watery Eaves” – longhouse and settlement of *Williléq* the 5th and the *Ts’elxwéyeqw* – built around 1800 (Carlson 2010:125).

Q’óxel, Round Fish – would come up the Sumas River and the old Chilliwack River – by the thousands – shiny silver and green on top (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:117).

qwemchó:ls, Cranberries that grew in *Stó:lō* territory (Coqualeetza 1981).

Qweqwe’ópelhp, anglicised as KwawKwawpilt – *Ts’elxwéyeqw* village.

Qw’esíts, trout (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:116).

Qw’eyílex, dance of spirit dancer (Galloway 2009:1560).

Qwí:qwélstom, is the *Halq’eméylem* word that best describes justice according to a *Stó:lō* worldview, has to do with speaking, teaching, restoring balance and harmony. We don’t name programs so I was chosen along with elder *Siyámlálexw* (Joe Alec) to carry the name for the *Stó:lō* people.

Qw’ó:tl’el, Kwantlen people – downriver dialect of Halkomelem.

Qwǒ:lqwel, speaking to a lot of people/at a gathering (Galloway 2009:1557).

Semá:th, one of the seven upriver *Stó:lō* Tribes – in English is Sumas or sometimes referred to as Kilgard – this tribe was home to *Xéyteleq* a great warrior; current name carrier is Ray Silver Sr. a highly respected *Siyólexwe* (Elder).

Semelá:lh, plural – high class people (Galloway 2009:1440); worthy people, people who know their history and where they are from.

SENĆOŦEN, 1 of the 5 dialects spoken by WSÀNEĆ (Saanich) People – main language used by *ŧesalaq* (Tom Sampson).

s’ep’ó:s, non-dancers, non-painted people (Galloway 2009:1560).

Shxwhá:y, anglicised as Skway – *Ts’elxwéyeqw*.

Shxwlám, a healer usually with special spiritual power to assist with the healing, can be man or woman.

Shxweli, *Naxaxalhts'i* asked Yómalot (Rosaleen George) what this is: she put her hand on her chest and she said “*Shxweli* is inside us here.” And she put her hand in front of her and she said “*Shxweli* is in your parents.” She raised her hand higher and said “and then your grandparents, your great-grandparents, it’s in your great great grandparents. It’s in the rocks, it’s in the trees, it’s in the grass, it’s in the ground. *Shxweli* is everywhere (McHalsie 2007:104).

Shxwtelís te syewálelh, “where the past ancestors came from” (Galloway 2009:1042).

Shxwexwó:s, Thunderbird – the bird of *Xexá:ls*.

Sia:teleq, the family member in charge of looking after family fishing site, person knew who all relatives were up and down river (Rosaleen George as cited in McHalsie 2007:97).

Sí:le, Grandparent *the Sí:le* Grandmother and *te Sí:le* for Grandfather.

Siyá:ye, word used to describe a loved one, although not able to identify direct blood or ancestral tie.

Siyá:m, respected leader (singular).

Sí:yá:m, respected leaders (plural).

Siyólexwe, an Elder, old person – plural is *Sí:yólexwe*.

Sí:yólexwe, Elders.

Siyelyólexwa, Elders (many collective).

Siyolexwálh, deceased Elders.

Skw'iyéth, pitiful person, helpless person, person unable to do anything for him/herself (Galloway 2009:1440) often translated into English as “slave” but neither an entirely appropriate nor accurate word for this term.

Skwó:wech, sturgeon – Bob Joe (as cited in Wells 1987:117).

Sihílhexas, the painted people, dancers (Galloway 2009:1560).

Smelá:lh, high class person, respected person (Galloway 2009:1440); plural is *Semelá:lh*; means worthy person as in person knows his/her history and where s/he is from *Smilha'áwtxw* winter dance building (Galloway 2009:1560).

Sq'ewqéyl, anglicised as Skowkale – *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

Sqwélqwel, personal family stories used to teach.

Sth'ó:qwi, salmon.

Sts'a'í:les, anglicised as Chehalis – means beating heart.

Sqáyéx, Mink (Boas uses K·ā'iq).

Sqémél, pit house.

S'ólh Téméxw, an encompassing term used to describe “Our World” that incorporates all life found therein, includes past, present and future, includes territory, spiritual realm and all our relations.

S'téxem, word Old Pierre used to describe some of *θε'łəctən*'s people who were so stupid he made them serfs (Suttles 1955:12); today used to describe “worthless people” ones who do not know their history or where they come from.

Stó:lō, river.

Stó:méx, Warrior/War Leader.

Stít-sós or *Stítesós*, low class person (Galloway 2009:626).

sts'eláxwem, experienced spirit dancer (Galloway 2009:1560). Also from Rena Peter “power we call it” (Rena Peter) – experienced dancer from root *ts'éłéxw* “go into quieter water” (see Gardner dissertation 2002:201).

Stswelt, “that's the Douglas people” (Yómalot as cited in Gardner 2002:279).

S'ú:met, be always lazy, stupid, be a good for nothing (Galloway 2009:1582).

Swí:lhcha, a tribe at head of Cultus Lake, now often referred to as the “forgotten tribe”.

Swíwe, oolichans (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:116).

Swóqw'elh, a handwoven blanket, made from mountain goat wool which is rare and difficult to get, is therefore a status symbol; the family crest or family story is woven into the *swóqw'elh* which then tells a story.

Sxá:s/s, the ones who keep track of everything - “keepers and communicators of sacred histories” (Carlson 2010:62).

Sxóchaqel, the main *Ts'elxwéyeqw* Village located on the northern shore of Chilliwack Lake.

Sxwolexwiyám, ‘ancient people over a hundred years old’- ‘they can't move, just lay there in the pithouse, they take liquids, in spring the family digs out the roof to get them out into the sun’ (Galloway 2009:1015).

Sxwoyehá:lá, anglicised as Squiala – *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

Sxwó:yxwela, village where *Willéq* the 5th and his sister die and are buried – was not made into a “reserve”.

Sxwsiyá:m, “prominent family leaders who owned and controlled” family resources (Carlson 2010:48).

Sxelá:wtxw, village at *Pelólhtxw* with smoke house that had painted house-post – they scattered that tribe after they had a fight (Albert Louie b. 1884 as cited in Wells 1987:159).

Sxexo:mes, gifts from the creator; gifts from our ancestors.

Sxwōxwiyám, ancient stories of importance to the *Stó:lō*, include transformations performed by *Xexá:ls* and speak to “teachings,” and *Stó:lō* laws.

Sxwó:yxwey, Mask Ceremony – an ancient beginning of time *sxexo:mes* belonging to certain *Stó:lō* families; although masks are carried by men who also perform the dance, the songs and the very masks themselves belong to the female members of the family who decide which men will carry the masks.

Sxwsiyá:m, “recognised owners” of valuable sites (Carlson 2010:123).

Syesyewálelh, all one’s ancestors.

Syewá:l, ancestors.

Syuwá:lelh, “words of your ancestors” (Galloway 2009:1042).

Syúwél, one’s spirit song (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:119).

Tel Swayel, Sky born people.

Téméxw, earth, ground, land, the earth, the world (Galloway 2009:1342).

Tháthem:als, *Ts’elxwéyeqw* village where *Wililéq* the 5th was born.

the Sí:le, Grandmother.

th’éxth’ex, Stinging Nettle, or *Stó:lō* spinach (Coqualeetza 1981).

Th’ewá:lí, anglicised as Soowhalie.

Tómiyeqw, great great great great grandparent or great great great great grandchild who also happens to be the 7th generation.

Tómiyeqw, great great great great grandparent or great great great great grandchild who also happens to be the 7th generation.

Ts’éqw’, be overcome with pleasurable feelings after eating great salmon or a great meal (Galloway 2009:1234).

Ts’elxwéyeqw, Chilliwack Indian people (Galloway 2009:1437).

Xá:ls, the youngest of the *Xexá:ls* siblings – Agnes Kelly as told to Sonny McHalsie (see Carlson 2007:156).

Xepá:y, a *Stó:lō* man who was transformed by *Xexá:ls* into the cedar tree (Carlson with Sonny McHalsie 1998:8).

Xexá:ls, the four offspring of Red Headed Woodpecker and Black Bear who travelled *S’ólh Téméxw* making the world right.

Xéyles, means “sidehill” – an early *Ts’elxwéyeqw* settlement.

Xéylxelemós, one of the two rocks of Lady Franklin rock (Galloway 2009:1339).

Xawsó:lh, new dancer.

Xwélmexw, “us” so to speak - people who are the same.

Xwelmexwáwtxw, longhouse, plank house, smokehouse (for spirit dancing) (Galloway 2009:1560).

Xwelítem, White person, translated into English literally as starving person (Galloway 2009:925).

Xwexwó:stel, mountain shaped like a Thunderbird (*Shxwexwó:s*) across the Fraser river from Q’ów (the “howl”) mountain.

Xwōqw’ó:ls, Wild potato – camas and wapato (Coqualeetza 1981).

Yeqwyeqwi:ws, proper *Halq’eméylem* spelling for Yakwekwioose – means “burnt out”.

Yéqwelhtax, southern Kwakiutl people from Cape Mudge who raided (Galloway 2009:1438).

Yewá:l, first (Galloway 2009:1240).

Ancestral Names

Eyteleq, Darwin Douglas Jr.

Hielamacha, (1810-1867) – was Chief of Cheam in 1863 when baptised by Roman Catholics at St. Marys. His father was chief when Simon Fraser arrived. He was father to Chief Alexsis (*Sru-ets-lan-ough*) (Pilalt Chiefs unpublished paper on file with Cheam Band by Gordon Mohs June 2000).

Hiyolemtel, Clarence Pennier (Grand Chief).

Koyále, Harry Stewart “it means Peacemaker, he was a leader of five reserves, the people gave him that name. He was called to different reserves to settle disputes” (*Koyálemót*, Mary Stewart as cited in *Stelómethet* (Ethel Gardner 2002:167).

Koyálemót, female version of late Harry Stewart, carried by Mary Stewart his great granddaughter (*Stelómethet* (Ethel Gardner) 2002:167).

k^wata’sia, male version is *k^watc’s*, Mrs. E.L. - Mrs. Edmond Lorenzetto – Duff informant (1972:9) - Mrs. Lorenzetto a few years younger than Edmond (who was about 55 years old during Duff’s work of summer of 1949 and 1950 when Duff spent total of 9 weeks in field) was also a good informant on some subjects, especially on the attitudes of people of high rank. Her father (Chief Pierre of Hope) had come from what had for generations been regarded as the highest-ranking family of the Hope area. Her mother was from a high-ranking Langley family ; her maternal grandmother had come from Lummi. She is aware that despite her parents teaching of an attitude of outward humility, she still receives from others the deference and respect due her high social position (Duff 1972:9). Her name from father’s side of family is *k^wata’sia* – the name belonged to her grandfather’s sister, a surviving sister of this owner passed it to Mrs. E.L. from her death bed but according to Duff the meaning of the name had been lost (1972:77).

Lhó:kw'eláléxw, *Siyolexwálh* Dan Milo.

Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie – name is from his paternal grandfather Antoine who was a grizzly bear hunter (McHalsie 2007:83).

θɛ'łæctən, Old Pierre – spelled *Thelhatsstan* in Carlson 2010:135.

Q'um Q'um Xiiem, Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald.

Qw'atíseltel, Chief Louie – of *Yeqwyeqwi:ws* – dictionary says late 1800s early 1900s (Galloway 2009:1033) – but this is actually Albert Louie's (born 1884) dad is *Qw'atíseltel* – Albert Louie's (born 1884) grandfather was *T'ixwelátsa* (Wells 1987:156).

Qw'óselwet, sister to James and Fred Wealick, married to Jack Uslick and mother to Harry Uslick (Albert Louie as cited in Wells 1987:163).

Selthelmetheqw, Peter Denis Peters (McHalsie 2007:83).

sie'miya, most highly respected name of the Hope area – during Duff – name was held by Chief Pierre of Hope's uncle – he passed without naming successor, the family met and one of Pierre's cousins claimed it and Pierre in "his modesty assented" (Duff 1972:77).

Sí:le Qwet'óselwet, *Siyolexwálh* Nancy Phillips.

Siyámátel, old Michell, Albert Louie's (b.1884) Uncle "that's another kind of high name. All these names I've given you, they are for high people that throw things away in early days. That's the ones had a lot of money. They'd give someone a gun and blankets, and everything" (Albert Louie as cited in Wells 1987:163).

Siya:mia, late Herman Peters, late Denise S. Peters *Naxaxalhts'i* thinks he was number 3, the original *Siya:mia* was from *Í:yem* (McHalsie 2007:92).

Siyámlálexw, *Siyólexwe* Joe Alec.

Siyámiyatéliyot, *Siyólexwe* Elizabeth Phillips.

Siya:mteleq, Charles (Corky) Douglas.

Siyémches, Julius Malloways ancestral name (Richard Malloways Dad) – Frank Malloway is current name carrier (Albert Louie as cited in Wells 1987:163).

Siyolia, June Quipp (nee Douglas) from Cheam Band.

Skwelselem, earth born – first leader of the Kwantlen people (Carlson 2010:86).

Sru-ets-lan-ough, (1843-1888) Chief Alexis of Cheam from 1867-1888, son of *Hielamacha*, baptised Dec 4 1863.

Stelómethet, Dr. Ethel Gardner.

Swaneset

Syexwáln, Dominic Charlie born 1885, half brother to August Jack Khahtsahlano.

T'á:ts', *Pelólhtxw* - brother to *Teméxwetel* - *T'á:ts'* who got his power from the raven. The raven could jump from canoe to canoe, that is what he would do when warring with my grandfather. Means when you bbq a fish on three sticks and put it on the fire they call that *T'á:ts'* (as told to Wells in 1965 by Albert Louie b. 1884, see Wells 1987:159).

Teméxwetel, *Pelólhtxw* chief living at Chilliwack Landing (as told to Wells in 1965 by Albert Louie b. 1884 see Wells 1987:159). He was a warrior, a fighter who had his power from "the dirt" (*Téméxw*) who got his power from thunder. He had a brother named *T'á:ts'* who got his power from the raven. The raven could jump from canoe to canoe, that is what he would do when warring with my grandfather. Means when you bbq a fish on three sticks and put it on the fire they call that *T'á:ts'*.

T'émq'ethelmoť, Jade Victor, first generation name carrier.

Th'esemia, Daughter of *Xéyteleq*, Matriarch of S'emá:th, current name carrier is Wendy Ritchie (nee Point and granddaughter of Dan Milo).

Th'eláchiyatel, *Siyolexwálh* Ritchie Malloway Sr.

Thelhatsstan, Old Pierre (born approximately 1860) (spelling used by Carlson 2010:135).

Ts'ats'elexwót, *Siyolexwálh* Elizabeth Herrling.

Tseloyóthelwet, *Siyolexwálh* Shirley Julian Norris.

Tsimalanoxw, Cheam - Ernie Victor.

ťesalaq, Tom Sampson (SENĆOŦEN).

T'xwelátse, First Ancestor of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*, current name carrier is Herb Joe and Simon Roberts).

Xéyteleq, a great warrior from S'emá:th , current name carrier is Ray Silver Sr.

Xwelixweltel, Steven Point.

Xwelíxwiya, Rena Peter (nee Point) – her mother is the hereditary carrier and is from Sumas, married Roy and moved to Skowkale – see Gardner dissertation 2002:199).

Xwelxwé:yleq, *Siyolexwálh* Bob Joe.

Yexwéylem, *Siyolexwálh* Vincent Malloway.

Yómalot, *Siyolexwálh* Rosaleen George.

Chapter 1.

“It Is Good to Remember the Teachings of Our Ancestors”

Introduction

Indigenous empowerment is one of the most exciting movements of this century. Having survived centuries of exploitation, brutal acts of violence, and the denigrating and dehumanizing effects of colonialism perpetrated under the guise of pursuing modernity, advancement and civilization, Indigenous peoples are reclaiming our responsibilities and rightful places. For centuries Indigenous people have been denied basic fundamental human rights such as freedom, voice, participation in governing structures and access to meaningful livelihoods. Yet these fundamental basic human freedoms are often heralded as the cornerstone of humane, just and civilized societies. That Indigenous peoples have been denied basic fundamental human rights calls into question the civility, the justice and the humanity of nation-states built upon the colonial process.

It is estimated that over 90% of Indigenous people died as a result of contact with Europeans and colonial policies of ethnic cleansing and genocide.¹ Add to this the annihilation of water, trees, fish, animals and even clean air to breathe and it is easy to see that life as we know it – founded upon the genocide of millions, the theft of land and exploitation of natural resources – is not sustainable. As I write this, Indigenous peoples continue to suffer horrendous atrocities at the hands of foreign powers that have invaded their homelands. These atrocities are often “legalized” by colonial governments

¹ It is difficult to obtain accurate population figures for North, South and Central America prior to contact because of what is at stake. From those without a colonial claim, it is estimated that there were between 90 and 112 million people living in the Americas, making it more densely populated than Europe prior to 1491 (see Mann 2006:104).

determined to access at any and all costs land, water, and resources to be exploited and depleted. The colonial rape of the earth continues today in full force with little or no consideration for the health and well-being of future generations.

The entire impact and devastation upon Indigenous peoples is still to be recorded, let alone understood; the brutality of the colonial process has been denied and kept from the general population. It remains largely unknown and has yet to be fully written let alone acknowledged. The writing of this history is important work. That the truth be told is crucial to the future and to our ability to develop respectful relations with the settler society. The “truth-telling” of decolonizing and liberating discourses is vital and requires full participation from Indigenous peoples. The telling of our stories is a part of Indigenous empowerment.

Indigenous peoples are beginning to wake up from our colonial-induced slumber and amnesia; we are beginning to reclaim our rightful places within our societies and are once again remembering the teachings of our ancestors which tell us with no uncertainty how best to live on this earth. Our Elders are urging us to “wake up”² and take our rightful places within our Indigenous nations; to remember who we are and why we are here; to not look to settler societies and settler authority to do this for us; to take the longest journey ever, the one from our mind to our heart; and to remember our teachings and all our relations.

Indigenous empowerment as a movement has existed since contact but with varying strength. At contact we were much stronger than what we see today. The effects of disease and colonial policies of residential school, reserves, and the *Indian Act*, which severely limits and regulates our ability to participate in any type of meaningful livelihood, have taken their toll. Yet surviving colonization is testament to how strong Indigenous peoples really are; I think others who are not meaningfully connected to territory would not have survived. Even while dealing with these atrocities directed at our person, at our spirit, and having to watch, often helplessly, as our precious relatives such as the water, trees, mountains, and salmon are being exploited and depleted, we continued to resist and defend ourselves, not once giving up.

² See for example Rose Auger as cited in Voyageur 2000.

Indigenous empowerment can take many forms, it can be about revitalizing culture and Indigenous languages, it can be about reclaiming territory and all my relations, it can be about living life in a good way, it can be about building meaningful places of learning, and about acquiring an education in one's chosen field of study. It is also about leadership and the ways in which leadership is practiced within any given society; it is in many ways about governance and self-determination.

The Indigenous empowerment movement is one I am proud to be a part of and it is my intention that my doctoral research contribute to this movement in a "good way." My dissertation is different. It follows a path barely visible. It is just as much about me as it is the *Stó:lō*, as I have come to see how they are inseparable. While the actual "research" portion of my PhD program took place over the last six years, this dissertation is a culmination of a lifetime of events and experiences. As such this journey has been just as much about my own personal empowerment as it is about the collective movement of Indigenous self-determination and good governance. In fact, I attribute my perseverance in completing this doctoral program against what often seemed like all odds to the survival skills I acquired while living on some of B.C.'s most destitute and desperate "Indian reserves."³

You Can Take the Girl Off the "Rez" but...

As a little girl I spent my childhood living back and forth between two entirely different worlds; one was the world of White middle class foster homes, and I mean no disrespect to these well-intentioned homes, but it was unbearable. In these homes I suffered terribly. Sure I had food, rode in a car, had a bathtub and other amenities, but I

³ I use this term as a pure creation of the colonial process as it is more often than not in complete contradiction to the ways in which Indigenous peoples lived prior to being confined to "reserves" and denied access to our territory, resources and way of life which had sustained us for thousands of years.

was completely miserable ALL the time. I was not living. I did as I was told each day. I had no self-agency, no motivation, no desires, no wants, no me.⁴

My other world was living on several different reserves in B.C., most of which were destitute and stricken with poverty. Here I thrived, as bizarre as this seems, and I remember living. Sure we didn't always eat three squares a day, had no means of transportation other than our feet, but at least I was living. I got myself up each and every day, and every day I wanted, meaning I asked for things. I acted upon my environment with purpose. And it is within these environments of destitution that I actually had the audacity to dream of becoming a doctor to help myself out of these terrible living conditions and to help my people (even though at this time I had no clue who "my people" were exactly).

I recall one reserve in particular. It has since seen much improvement, but when I lived there as a child it was accessible only via a dirt road, and was two hours away from a hospital and police services. I lived in a shack (literally) with my mom (who is White)⁵ and two of my sisters. We cooked on a wood stove, used candles and lanterns for night reading, and hand-washed our clothes in the creek. Our house was heated by a single wood stove; in the winter we dressed while still in bed to avoid freezing to death. We did our business in an outhouse in which one could sit and look across the creek and watch grizzly bears romping around in the meadow. There was no television or phone let alone cell phones or computers. To this day I still have a great appreciation for toilets that flush, and doing laundry in an electric washer and dryer can hardly be considered a chore.

⁴ During what is now referred to as the "60s scoop," thousands of Indigenous children were removed from their homes to be placed predominately in White homes. I share my personal experience of this and do not speak for other victims of this scoop who may have experienced it differently.

⁵ It was not easy living with a White mother on these "Indian reserves" and still today many White mothers of First Nations children are not treated with the respect they deserve for raising our future Indigenous generations. I say this because there is the option for White mothers to raise their children off reserve and even assimilate their children into white society. However my experience has been with white mothers choosing to raise their children on-reserve despite the hostility they often face because they want their children to live in an Indigenous culture(s).

Living on these reserves had an enormous impact upon me and without these experiences I honestly do not think I would have graduated, let alone be completing a doctoral degree. If I was raised solely among White middle class people I would have felt lost my whole life, I would have remained dead inside, which is the feeling (or lack thereof) I had every time I was placed in these foreign homes. Like a puppet without a puppet master, completely lifeless and still, coming alive only when returned to my family on the “rez.”

I am sure many would attribute my academic success to my time spent with the White middle class families and not with my time spent living, yes in poverty, but with people to whom I could relate. But to succeed academically one needs self-motivation and self-motivation requires a sense of “self,” something I completely lacked while placed in homes that knew nothing about me. Motivation, especially for Indigenous people, requires a sense of belonging. My sense of “self” is inextricably linked to my sense of “others like me.” As the UBUNTU of Africa (Xhosa culture) say, “I am because we are.”

This research journey is thus just as much about my own personal empowerment as it is about collective Indigenous governance and independence. It may seem odd and even out of place that I share some of my personal story within my academic study, but I have learned that this is what gives my research credibility. It is not easy, but has become easier as I become more familiar with Indigenous research methodologies and the reasons we do what we do. The location of self within one’s research is important for many reasons and I discuss these in my methodology chapter. For me, the location of self within my research has been life-altering in many ways as I have had to “live” my research every step of the way.

And the Journey Begins...

My father Bob Hall Sr. followed in the footsteps of both his father and his grandfather by spending the majority of his adult life fighting for and protecting “Indian

rights.” He was a tremendous presence in the Red Power⁶ movement and as a result was arrested on more than one occasion. It was during one of these arrests that my siblings and I were removed to be placed in foster care. This made an indelible imprint upon me that made me acutely aware that there are things worth fighting for that are larger than “me.”⁷ As a result of this imprint I never resented my father for the time I spent in foster care, and have always been proud of the things he stood up for, which often came at great personal expense. Later on as a young adult, I became intrigued with concepts of sovereignty, self-government, autonomy and more recently self-determination, after coming across two life-altering books I found in the basement of his house: Harold Cardinal’s (1969) *Unjust Society* and *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* by Peter Matthiessen (1983). Once I began my undergraduate work I also came across a chapter of *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*, published by George Manuel in 1974. I remember not being able to put these books down; as I read them all kinds of thoughts and feelings were being stirred within me. I could not explain it then, but I knew what I was learning was going to change me forever.

These books and the concepts and reality found within them were not at that time a part of mainstream western academia. During this time First Nation study courses were few and far between and tended to be of the “how to” variety, taught from within a colonial framework that justified the colonial relationship of Indigenous displacement, disempowerment and inferiority. One could take courses to learn how to make a drum or a button blanket, and even learn these skills from a non-Indigenous person, or learn how we were decimated by disease and contributed to the demise of the buffalo. But it was

⁶ Red Power was an Indian Rights group that began in the 1960s and worked closely with its American counterpart, the American Indian Movement or A.I.M as it came to be known. Red Power was known for its use of direct action and if necessary violence in asserting rights and title to various buildings, lands, resources and even children. For example, my father along with others from Red Power entered a Residential School on Vancouver Island while armed with guns and demanded the return of the children that were being held there.

⁷ I realize this can be misinterpreted to mean that I came to see myself as less important, when in fact it actually had the opposite effect in that I came to see my “Indian” (term we used back then) identity as something that was extremely important. I also need to be clear that I am not in any way suggesting my father necessarily put fighting for our rights before his children, if that is even possible. While in Red Power, he had a plan in place for our care in the event (which was likely) he would be arrested. Sadly, due to unforeseeable circumstances this plan fell apart while he was incarcerated and unable to do anything about it. As a result my brother, my sister and I were placed into foster care.

virtually impossible to learn about concepts such as Indigenous sovereignty, independence, strength and empowerment from an Indigenous worldview, let alone about anti-colonial, anti-racist ideologies. But I was determined to learn more about relevant Indigenous content and I especially wanted to learn it from people who had experienced it.

The period from the late 1960s to the late 1990s was very much an awakening period for Indigenous peoples across the country. It was a direct result of what is now referred to as the infamous White Paper of 1969, which sought to repeal the *Indian Act* and accomplish the policy of assimilation in one major swoop. For the first time during the colonial era, Indigenous peoples from across the country united and spoke out strongly against it. The message was loud and clear: maintaining our unique Indigenous identity was extremely important to us, so important we would rather be subject to Canada's most oppressive legislation than lose our unique identity as Indigenous peoples.⁸ Trudeau's White Paper did accomplish a very important feat, and that was to wake the Indigenous peoples up from our colonial slumber.

Learning about Canada's colonial regime from an Indigenous perspective is not easy, but is necessary if we are to move forward in a good way.

Canada's Colonial Regime

Under Canada's colonial regime all Canadians suffer, but none more than the Indigenous peoples. Canada's colonial legislation and policy regarding Indigenous peoples has failed miserably, to put it politely. But bluntness is in order: Canada's policy and treatment of Indigenous peoples is an atrocity and a crime against humanity (MacDonald 2007:1001). Canada's colonial policies are nothing short of government-sanctioned attempts at cultural genocide (which include any and all forms of assimilation) of Indigenous peoples and the "legalized" theft of our land and resources (including our children) (see for example Alfred 2005; Bennett, Blackstock and De La

⁸ I have always been anti-*Indian Act*, even before reading it, and when I learned about Trudeau's White Paper which would have abolished it, I was confused as to why we would fight to keep it. Thank you to my father, Bob Hall Sr., a lifelong political activist and leader who helped me understand.

Ronde 2005; Deloria 1999; Harris 2001; LaDuke 2005; Simpson 2008; Valandra 2006; Waziyatawin 2008).

Although Canada is ranked by the United Nations as a first world country with one of the highest standards of living for its citizens, its ranking of seventh would drop to 48th if based on the social and economic well-being of the Indigenous population (Helin 2006:103). A 1996 study found that when the United Nations Human Development Index was applied to First Nations living on reserve they would rank 79th and 80th while Canadians were ranked number one (Bennett, Blackstock and De LaRonde 2005:7). Seventy percent of Indigenous students are still being pushed out of the high school education system (SSCAP 2003 as cited in McPherson 2004:5); Indigenous people experience an unemployment rate higher than the national average; and over 50% of Indigenous families live below the poverty line (RCAP 1996:93). Indigenous life includes excessive levels of violence, drug and alcohol addictions, disease and poverty. Colonial governments continue to apprehend Indigenous children at an alarming rate and continue to place them primarily in white homes.⁹ This level of human suffering is firmly rooted in Canada's colonial regime and is nothing short of government sanctioned oppression.

Colonial Governments' Responses

The colonial governments' responses are pitiful and painful, none of which have shown any improvement since the dismal 1969 White Paper. The governments' responses continue to result in either further colonial harm and/or solidifying colonial relations of Indigenous disempowerment and assumed Crown sovereignty. Such responses are less than satisfactory and more often than not put forward without meaningful input from Indigenous peoples. Such responses are either all words with no action or action that serves only to entrench colonial relations and assumed Crown jurisdiction. For example, the former Federal government's action plan regarding Indigenous peoples states:

⁹ According to United Nations definition this is a form of cultural genocide (see Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by UN resolution December 9 1948, signed by Canada November 28 1949) (http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-1&chapter=4&lang=en).

For thousands of years before this country was founded, they enjoyed their own forms of government. Diverse, vibrant Aboriginal nations had ways of life rooted in fundamental values concerning their relationships to the Creator, the environment, and each other, in the role of Elders as the living memory of their ancestors, and in their responsibilities as custodians of the lands, waters and resources of their homelands... The Government of Canada recognizes that policies that sought to assimilate Aboriginal people, women and men, were not the way to build a strong country.

(Federal government 1997 *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* as cited in Dalton 2005:16)

However, a colonial government that refuses to decolonize can only make statements that protect and entrench a colonial regime. Canada's failure to make decolonization an official policy and its initial refusal to sign the 2007 United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* supports this claim. While the Federal government eventually endorsed the *Declaration* in 2010, it continues to hide behind the so-called "Blue Water" thesis to avoid officially decolonizing (see Chapter 2).

In 2008 the Prime Minister of Canada issued a formal statement of apology to residential school survivors:

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history.

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child."

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.¹⁰

Yet the federal government has done next to nothing to meaningfully and sincerely right these colonial wrongs.¹¹ The Prime Minister could very well have gone on

¹⁰ <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/pm-statement.html> Retrieved October 11, 2008.

to say, "Now that we have officially apologized, onward with our colonial regime free of guilt and responsibility." In fact, on September 25 2009 at a G20 news conference in Pittsburgh, Harper went on to deny Canada's colonial history, barely a year after apologizing for it, with his statement, "we [Canada] have no history of colonialism."¹² To add insult to injury the provincial government under Gordon Campbell tried to force recognition of Crown title to Indigenous lands and resources via the proposed *Recognition and Reconciliation Act*.¹³ Thankfully, the majority of Indigenous peoples are not fooled by these overused and outdated tricks.¹⁴

"Self-Government" and Treaties: More Red Herrings

In 1982 under section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act* existing Aboriginal rights were recognized and affirmed. In 1995 the Federal government issued its policy on Inherent Rights which outlined authorities available under self-government agreements and in response to the 440 recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the Federal government issued its 1998 Policy on Gathering Strength (Irlbacher-Fox 2009:32). In 2000 the Supreme Court of British Columbia found that Aboriginal self-government rights are constitutionally protected and have not been extinguished.¹⁵ In September of 2007 the United Nations adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which affirmed Indigenous peoples' right to be self-determining and self-governing under articles 3 and 4. The right, therefore, of Aboriginal peoples to be self-governing is firmly protected by legislation both domestically and internationally.

¹¹ For an understanding of the complex issues regarding Canada's abysmal response to the atrocities of residential school see Regan 2010.

¹² <http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Prime%20minister%20needs%20apologize%20colonialism%20denial%20Native%20groups/2051980/story.html>

¹³ Arthur Manuel <http://www.straight.com/article-241616/beware-reconciliation-act> - retrieved July 24 2009.

¹⁴ For an interesting and insightful explanation of why this *Act* failed see Mandell (2009).

¹⁵ See *Campbell v. British Columbia* [2000] paras. 135,137 and 180 as cited in Morellato (2008).

Yet over a twenty-five year period, fewer than twenty self-governing agreements have been negotiated across Canada.¹⁶ Three of these are municipal forms of government (Cree-Naskapi 1984; Sechelt 1986; Westbank 2004). Thirteen are treaty self-government agreements, of which 11 are in the Yukon. The slow pace of establishing these types of agreements speaks volumes to the fact there may be unresolved issues here. The most important is the inability to properly and satisfactorily define what exactly “self-government” means to Indigenous peoples and how it is to be realized.

In 2007, although the United Nations adopted the *Declaration* by an overwhelming 144 yes votes, four countries voted no, of which Canada was one. The other three – New Zealand, Australia and the United States – are also colonizing countries who refused to recognize their illegitimate claim to territories and assumed Crown authority, let alone the right of Indigenous peoples to live with dignity.¹⁷ The *Declaration* took an unprecedented 22 years of consultation and development to be approved by the Human Rights Council in 2006. Twenty-two years is an entire generation; this is far too long to acknowledge that Indigenous peoples have the same human rights as members of colonizing countries.

Although the BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) has been in operation since April 1993, in a fifteen year period and despite 1.5 billion dollars being spent, it managed to finalize two small treaties.¹⁸ In fact, BCTC may be under so much pressure to justify this

¹⁶ Nunavut (1993); Alberta Metis Settlements (1989); three delegated self-government agreements (*Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* (1984), *Sechelt Indian Band Self Government Act* (1986) and *Westbank First Nation Self Government Act* (2004) and 13 Treaty Self Government agreements (11 Self governing agreements in the Yukon (1995 to 2006); the *Nisga'a Final Agreement* (1998) and the *Tlilcho Agreement* (2002).

¹⁷ Australia endorsed the declaration in April 2009, New Zealand in April 2010, Canada followed suit in November 2010 and the United States in December 2010.

¹⁸ The Tsawwassen treaty came into effect April 3, 2009; the Maa-Nulth treaty was given royal assent on June 18, 2009 and came into effect April 1 2011. The Nisga'a treaty was signed in 1998 but began prior to BCTC being established. As of October 2008, of the 59 First Nations currently engaged with the BC Treaty process, there are eight First Nations in Stage five of a six stage process (<http://www.bctreaty.net/files/updates.php>). As of April 2012 there were 60 First Nations engaged with BCTC representing two-thirds of all First Nations in B.C. Two First Nations are in Stage 6; six First Nations are in Stage Five; 44 in Stage 4; two in Stage 3 and six in Stage 2 (<http://www.bctreaty.net/files/updates.php>, retrieved May 17 2012).

huge expenditure it is now bypassing its own rules and guidelines and pushing treaties through that call the integrity of the entire process into question. For example, BCTC is about to finalize the Yale Treaty despite unresolved jurisdictional issues around the river and the fact that this treaty will sign a significant portion of the canyon over to one small group currently known as the Yale Band as it was established by Department of Indian Affairs.¹⁹ This is reminiscent of why colonial governments established “bands” in the first place as the complexity of *Stó:lō* organization made colonial objectives of land theft and assimilation difficult. The portion of the canyon currently being claimed within the Yale treaty has been used by several different Coast Salish groups for at least several hundred, if not thousands of years.

However, many argued that this process was flawed even before the Yale treaty fiasco. The BCTC process, much like current self-governing agreements represents far too many compromises on the part of the First Nations, while colonial governments continue to gain. For example an August 2009 Lawyers’ Caucus Report cited some of the main concerns and issues with the current provincial and federal treaty negotiation mandates as:

1. Requiring a “modification and release”²⁰ model, where once a Treaty is concluded, First Nations can only rely on the rights included in the Treaty;
2. Unwillingness to negotiate a meaningful reconciliation between Aboriginal title and Crown title, by limiting land offers to a range from 2% to 5% of a First Nations’ territory, and insisting that this “Treaty Settlement Land” must be held as fee simple land rather than under the constitutional status of s. 91(24) or s. 35;
3. Refusing to recognize First Nation ownership of foreshore and submerged lands;
4. Refusing to negotiate with respect to private lands;
5. Refusing to include method, location and timing and other aspects of Aboriginal harvesting rights in Treaty harvesting rights;
6. Forcing First Nations to accept that Crown-granted extraction activities and tenures can limit Treaty harvesting rights without having to meet requirements for justified infringements;

¹⁹ More on this issue in Chapter 4 and self-determination in action.

²⁰ This can be read as the “extinguishment” requirement.

7. Refusing to negotiate compensation for past infringements of Aboriginal Title and Rights;
8. Refusing to recognize the implications of First Nations' inherent governance rights and laws, including insisting on a concurrent law model which means that First Nations lose their constitutional protection against the application of provincial laws, harvesting rights are subjected to provincial regulations, and there is no exclusive First Nations jurisdiction;
9. Excluding First Nations law making on their own lands in key areas such as some aspects of mining regulation;
10. Unwillingness to negotiate secure revenue streams or economic generating capacity in Treaties and insisting that taxation and other fiscal matters be dealt with principally in non-constitutionally protected side agreements;
11. Insisting that Canada be allowed to claw back transfer dollars if First Nations generate their own sources of revenue beyond a certain level.

(as cited in Mandell 2009:22-23)

Most Treaty mandates are out of line with Court decisions and the aspirations of First Nations (Mandell 2009:23). Even the Nisga'a treaty which was signed pre-BCTC was inherently flawed, described as follows by renowned political scientist James Tully:

As far as I am aware, this is the first time in the history of Great Turtle Island that an indigenous people, or at least 61 percent of its eligible voters, has voluntarily surrendered their rights as indigenous peoples, not to mention surrendering over 90 percent of their territory, and accepted their status as a distinctive minority with group rights within Canada. This appears to be the first success of strategies of extinguishment (release) and incorporation by agreement. (as cited in Corntassel et. al. 2008:110)

Ultimately the BCTC process is not about Indigenous empowerment or recognition, let alone protection of our Indigenous rights and title. It is about the legalization of occupation and the theft of Indigenous lands and territories that will see Indigenous title being surrendered to the Crown and vested in the province, as well as establishing provincial and federal legal supremacy over Indigenous governments (Alfred as cited in Alfred and Corntassel 2005:603).

To date neither the constitutionally protected right of self-government nor the flawed treaty-making process has done anything of true significance to improve the health, well-being and status of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Povinelli describes this failure to be reflective of Fanon's day whereby colonial powers will recognize the

identities and collective rights of Indigenous peoples only if they do not interfere with imperatives of capital and state (as cited in Coulthard 2008:196). Irlbacher-Fox (2009) cites several authors who place “solutions” such as contemporary land claims, self-government agreements, and co-management within a paradigm of indigenization/assimilation and therefore not surprisingly fail (p. 4). She elaborates further on the ways in which the misidentification of the problem leads to policy development that has continually failed to substantively address the issues.

Irlbacher-Fox describes this failure as a colonial phenomenon she calls “the dysfunction of theodicy” whereby the focus is placed upon the failure(s) being a result of Indigenous peoples’ own inabilities and incapability, as opposed to the real cause which is oppressive colonial policies (2009:31). Therefore the policies (which are still oppressive) developed to address these failures do nothing to challenge the colonial relationship which is the root of the problem. Instead the policies and ensuing social programs and project funding make the government look like the “benevolent helper” and oh-so-generous in their willingness to step forward and assist Indians who are incapable of advancing and adjusting to “modern” colonial society, even though this failure on the part of First Nations is no fault of the governments (Irlbacher 2009). Leading scholars such as Irlbacher-Fox call for an entire re-focus:

Is it Indigenous peoples who need to change? Or might something else need to change? This book represents a different perspective on change...namely that Aboriginal policy itself should change to provide a far more effective route to improving the lives and life chances of Indigenous peoples. This refocusing would result in changing oppressive circumstances rather than requiring people to change to better cope with oppressive circumstances. Change would substantively (rather than symbolically) redress injustice and accommodate indigeneity instead of requiring change of Indigenous peoples in terms of their cultures, lifeways, and rights. (2009:1-2)

Irlbacher-Fox identifies two key assumptions which explain the failures of Canada’s Aboriginal policies to date. One is the assumption that injustice is historical (2009:34). Canada refuses to acknowledge current injustices and the fact that what they are referring to as “historical” are in fact recent events that continue to adversely impact present day Indigenous generations. Colonial harms and injustices are very contemporary. Second is the assumption that indigeneity is historical. For example when we refer to Indigenous knowledge we refer to it as “traditional” knowledge rather than as

Dene knowledge for example (2009:34). This then leads to a notion of “Indians” being in the past, and if Indians are something of the past, onward with our colonial regime (for further discussion on the politics of identity and misrecognition see Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Coulthard 2008). As succinctly put by Irlbacher-Fox “the repair required is not so much modernization of the colonial relationship as decolonization. To simply modernize an unjust relationship creates a disabling environment...” (2009:34).

In fact the “modernization of an unjust relationship” aptly describes the failure and sure-to-fail agreements being reached under the guise of Canada’s “recognition” policy.

The “Politics of Recognition”

Over the last thirty years there has been some movement on the part of Indigenous peoples to be recognized by the colonial governments as self-governing, self-determining nations (Coulthard 2008). However a deconstruction of this recognition movement has shown that the actions of the colonial governments in recognizing Indigenous sovereignty really only amount to ways in which the assimilation policy is hidden within a discourse of mutual recognition:

Indeed, one need not expend much effort at all to elicit the countless ways in which the liberal discourse of recognition has been limited and constrained by the state, politicians, corporations and the courts in ways that pose no fundamental challenge to the colonial relationship.
(Coulthard 2008:195)

Drawing upon the work of Fanon, Coulthard shows that recognition endeavors that do not challenge and disrupt the colonial relationship will actually work to “reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that Indigenous Peoples’ demand for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (2008:189). This issue is further complicated as when struggle and conflict are not central features of decolonization:

...not only will the terms of recognition tend to remain the property of those in power to grant to their inferiors in ways that they deem appropriate, but also under these conditions, the Indigenous population will often come to see the limited and structurally constrained terms of recognition granted to them *as their own*.
(Coulthard 2008:195)

Whether or not the international recognition of self-determination in the UN *Declaration* will fare any better than modern day “treaty” making, limited “self”-governing agreements and recognition agreements that enforce the status quo is yet to be seen, but I remain skeptical.

I prefer to try and move forward even though colonial governments seem to be holding all the power and jurisdiction. What exactly is self-determination and is it even achievable while living under a colonial regime? What does true Indigenous governance – that is governance according to Indigenous values, traditions, customs, culture and worldviews within a contemporary society so withered by colonialism -- look like? These are the questions my dissertation will try and answer. Naturally I will not be looking to colonial regimes for these answers, from the above and the results of my research journey I see modern day “treaty” making and colonial notions of “self-government” as nothing more than colonial tools designed to contribute to the politics of distraction. While some of our best leaders are distracted by these colonial games, the colonial government continues to appropriate, extract and in many cases deplete *Stó:lō* land and resources.

Rather, I will be looking to my own *Stó:lō* culture and worldview for the answers to my research questions. I know absolutely and unequivocally this is where the answers lie. It has been within my personal identity as a *Stó:lō* woman that I have experienced transformation and empowerment. In the spirit of *Xexá:ls* and transformation, the purpose of this study is not only to try and make sense of these chaotic colonial times, but to also pave a path for change.

A Time for Change

Xexá:ls

In the beginning the world was not quite right. Animals and people could speak to one another and change forms. The mountain goats could shed their coats and assume human form. Humans, animals and birds could all speak to each other. The world was not as we know it

today and was very chaotic. Through the travels of *Xexá:ls*²¹ and their powers to transform, the world was made as we know it today.²²

The creation stories of *Xexá:ls*²³ along with their teachings are present throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*;²⁴ there to guide, advise and teach the *Stó:lō* people. *Xexá:ls* *sxwōxwiyám*²⁵ speak to place, space, relationships and provide guidance on how things can be done as everything is inter-connected and inter-related. Their applicability is perhaps even greater today than ever before. As the *Stó:lō* move painfully through processes of decolonization, identity reclamation and the building and re-building of a Nation, attention to *sxwōxwiyám* can pave the way and provide much needed guidance to avoid harmful mistakes and ensure the safety and well-being of future generations.

Sxwōxwiyám, therefore, are still relevant in contemporary times, perhaps even more so. When I thought about the transformations provided through the work of *Xexá:ls* when the world was not right, I came to realize if it could happen once could it not happen again? We are still living in chaos, could *Xexá:ls* not set the world right a second time? I conceptualize our current situation like this:

Today the world is still not right. The colonizing process has had a devastating impact upon the people. People no longer care about the animals, plants, trees, water, air and mother earth is viewed as inherently rapable.²⁶ Many Indigenous people no longer speak their own language, or know where they belong and from whom they come. Indigenous teachings and values are being ignored. The world today is not as we knew it and is very chaotic. Through *Xexá:ls* and the power of transformation the world will be returned to all my relations.

This framework of contemporary reality affirms that the transformational power of *Xexá:ls* is still relevant; if they could transform our chaotic world thousands of years ago, they can again.

²¹ Halq'eméylem translated into English as "Transformers".

²² *Stó:lō* oral tradition. See for example the *Stó:lō Atlas* edited by Keith Thor Carlson (2001:6).

²³ Pronounced "hahells" (with the "a" sound ending in the back of the throat).

²⁴ Halq'eméylem for Our World or Our Land. Pronounced "Sawth Tumuck").

²⁵ Oral histories of the *Stó:lō*. Pronounced "shwox qwee am".

²⁶ A term used by Andrea Smith (2008).

Our *sx̄wōx̄wiyám* show that transformation is possible; *X̄ex̄á:ls* teaches us valuable life lessons that are present among us and throughout our territory. These teachings not only tell us life is in constant flux, they also provide an understanding of time immemorial. Given the current colonial status of disempowerment, disease, disconnection and alienation (Alfred 2005), the need to transform is crucial. Political, social, economical, cultural and spiritual transformations are a must and in these transformations colonial ideologies and relations will finally come to a long overdue end.

Such powerful transformations may be met with resistance from both the colonizers and the assimilated and/or disconnected Indigenous people. Change requires courage. Some Canadians may even deem it unnecessary. After all, a life of disempowerment, disease, disconnection and alienation is all we have ever known (this includes non-Indigenous people who now call Canada home). Colonialism is tricky business. For example, the majority of Canadians (mostly non-Indigenous) are living well in terms of employment and access to education, health services and housing. In fact most Canadians are benefactors of the colonial regime. But these benefits are short term; colonial security is a false and fragile sense of security maintained by short sightedness.²⁷

Within Indigenous worldviews, the ability to transform and change is a fundamental teaching. It is facilitated by a decision making process that is strongly influenced by generational thinking. This means thinking of seven generations, including ancestry (backward thinking) and future generations (forward thinking). Life is always in motion and therefore forever changing. Change and transformation are fundamental tenets of Indigenous worldviews. Therefore, the transformations needed to change a colonial regime are not so impossible after all; tricky and difficult, perhaps, but not impossible.

The more difficult question is how? My dissertation research begins the exploration of how we can transform the current colonial regime by closely examining the *Stó:lō* and our governing principles. I begin here for several reasons. First, not only

²⁷ For example, colonial security is based upon false and racist assumptions, a free market economy which is inherently unsustainable, and short-sighted decision making that means resources are being depleted.

am I *Stó:lō*, I reside within *Stó:lō* territory and I am closely connected to my own Tribe (the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*) as well as to a second *Stó:lō* Tribe through marriage (the *Peló:lxw*). Such close and intimate relations and ties ensure I am in a decent position not only to understand, but to also have access to pertinent and relevant information. I realize this also puts me in a position of having to work twice as hard, as not only do I have to meet the standards of my university for research conduct and content, I also have to meet my own cultural protocols and responsibilities. I am willing to take on twice as much work as I am that confident that the answers lie within my own culture and traditions.

Second, I already know without any doubt that the answers do not lie with the people or governing structures that created the colonial problem in the first place! To date their responses of a flawed and biased treaty making process, forced assimilation, delegated “self-governing” agreements and hollow apologies have done nothing of true significance for Indigenous well-being. In fact when we rely on colonial governments and its policies and/or legislations to fix the “colonial” problem, the situation worsens for Indigenous peoples:

Indigenous peoples remain on the margins of society: they are poorer, less educated, die at a younger age, are much more likely to commit suicide, and are generally in worse health than the rest of the population".
(The Indigenous World 2006, International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), ECOSOC Consultative Status)

In relation to the continued forced removal of Indigenous children to be raised in foreign homes,

Overall we estimate that there may be as many as three times more Aboriginal children in the care of child welfare authorities now than were placed in residential schools at the height of those operations in the 1940s. (Blackstock as cited in Blackstock and Trocme 2005:13)

But it isn't just the colonial governments' failures that have led to me looking to my own culture and traditions for answers. And although I am *Stó:lō* and have access to pertinent information, these are not the only reasons either.

I “know” the answers lie within my *Stó:lō* culture, traditions and ways of knowing because this type of “knowing” is based upon a relationship that is thousands of years old. As such it is not a premise, it is a fact. I realize such a strong statement may leave

me open to criticisms of nostalgia, being a traditionalist, a dinosaur, or even of cultural bias and assumptions. These types of arguments are rooted in colonial thought and eurocentrism. For example, when westerners preserve knowledge from previous generations it is seen as brilliant and clever; yet when Indigenous peoples do it we often are accused of not wanting to move into the 21st century.

The only difference is most *Stó:lō* ancient knowledge is still relevant and necessary as it comes directly from the very land and environment we still live on. Therefore, “following the ways of our ancestors” is actually a science, an art form and a “way of knowing” that ensures survival. I also realize the importance of including what my daughter calls the “updated version.” In other words as my daughter learns the ways of her ancestry she will naturally “update” this information as did the generation before her and the generations before that. I also realize that some things (as the Elders put it) “cannot be changed” and I am confident that with a little thought we can distinguish between the two and won’t need a consultant to do so.

I am also confident about “knowing” where to look for answers for other reasons. First, it does not take a genius let alone a consultant to see that the *Stó:lō*, much like Indigenous peoples worldwide, are different. Different from what? Different from all the people who now call *S’ólh Téméxw* home, but whose original ancestors are not from here. In other words the *Stó:lō* are different from the non-Indigenous people currently residing in our territory. That is not to say there are no similarities, or that by acknowledging difference we are making value judgments. On some levels we are the same: we all cry, hurt, laugh, and love; we are all humans after all. But our cultures embedded within our worldviews are distinctly different and often times even diametrically opposed. I believe there are answers within these differences, and that these answers will guide us out of this colonial existence of disempowerment, disconnection, alienation and disease (Alfred 2005).

Second, *Stó:lō* origin stories tell me we have lived in *S’ólh Téméxw* since time immemorial (i.e., time out of memory) and that we have survived glaciers, floods, famines and diseases. This ability to survive is not by chance; only a fool would think so. Our ability to survive is due to our inalienable and ancient connection to *S’ólh Téméxw*. This physical, mental, emotional and deeply and profoundly spiritual connection allowed us to live and learn from our natural environment through observations and knowledge that is passed from generation to generation and is thousands and thousands of years

old. If our relationship with *S'ólh Téméxw* taught us how to survive glaciers, floods and famines, might it not also teach us how to survive colonization?

In fact the placement of my research within the teachings of *Xexá:ls* is a true act of self-government. I did not know this when I began my research journey six years ago. But affirming and validating my relationship to *S'ólh Téméxw* is in and of itself an act of self-government, and the belief and desire to transform individually and collectively is an act of self-determination. I thought framing my research within the teachings of *Xexá:ls* would ensure the legitimacy, reliability and validity of my research findings. I did not expect it to result in being an example of the very thing I was researching; that is, I did not expect it to provide me the opportunity to personally experience what true “self-government” and true “self-determination” is all about.

Six years ago I was extremely disheartened by the current living conditions of my people and what I perceived to be futile attempts by *Stó:lō* leaders to do anything about it. Our contemporary and personal lives are filled with all the colonial trappings experienced by Indigenous peoples the world over. Our daily lives are filled with violence, poverty, disempowerment, disconnection, memory loss, alienation, low sense of self and collective-worth, addictions, disease, anger, dissatisfaction, learned helplessness and spiritual neglect and/or confusion, to name but a few real life outcomes of the colonial process. I knew that to expect the very colonial governments who created these outcomes to take responsibility and fix this deplorable situation would be an act of “self-termination” in every sense of the word.

Rather, I knew the answers would lie within me; meaning within my culture and traditions: “I am because we are.” When I look to *S'ólh Téméxw* I see power of the authentic kind. I see a sense of time that defies the Roman calendar and corporate clock.

Through this dissertation I want to share my journey of self-government and self-determination. This journey is very much like a canoe trip, it was often bumpy, uncertain, scary and very humbling. But this journey was also empowering, fulfilling in every sense of the word, respectful, sustaining, balanced and even at times peaceful. This journey was guided by the teachings of *sxwōxwiyám* and fueled by the *Stó:lō* (i.e., the river of rivers), lakes, creeks and mountains of *S'ólh Téméxw*.

Journey Overview

In Chapter 2 my literature review includes both oral and written literature that has helped to clarify and define terms such as self-government, self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, and independence from an Indigenous worldview. The written literature is that which has been written from an Indigenous perspective and/or has been written to empower Indigenous voices and ways of knowing. It includes the history of the concept self-determination and its place within the United Nation's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. As well this chapter aims to eliminate confusion between governing terms and to highlight differences between these concepts.

Most importantly this chapter suggests that Indigenous peoples begin to look beyond the colonial definitions and limitations placed upon the concepts of self-government, sovereignty and self-determination and to begin to dream a bigger dream. By redefining and reclaiming governing terms and principles we can achieve true independence and Indigenous empowerment, completely free of colonial definitions and limitations.

To help dream a bigger dream I have included *Stó:lō* oral literature in the form of *sxwōxwiyám* as important pieces of my literature review. *Sxwōxwiyám* are an oral form of *Stó:lō* epistemology and include, for example, the travels of *Xexá:ls*, or Transformers who traveled *S'ólh Téméxw* settings things right. The *sxwōxwiyám* of *Xexá:ls* encapsulates the ontology of the *Stó:lō* people so is key to understanding my research findings. This ontological understanding also brings life and authentic meaning to *Stó:lō* oral traditions. The travels and *sxwōxwiyám* of *Xexá:ls* are like the Bible and the Canadian Constitution rolled into one, so must be given careful and timely consideration. My dissertation is grounded in *sxwōxwiyám* for what I hope are obvious reasons; knowing how to learn from them is vital.

For my literature review on governance and self-determination I use the *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lílheqi*,²⁸ the woman who was transformed into a mountain so she could forever watch over the *Stó:lō* people, the river, and one of our most precious

²⁸ Pronounced “Eeath La Kay” – with the “th” coming from both sides of back of the tongue while front is on roof of mouth.

sxexo:mes,²⁹ the salmon. I also tell the *sqwélqwel*³⁰ of the ancestor of the *Th'ewá:li* people, whom I have named "Minnow Girl."³¹ I use these oral histories as part of my literature review because they highlight the place and the power of women and their prominent role in both governance and survival.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to explaining and understanding an Indigenous research methodology (IRM). As a "methodology" to be used within academe, IRM is relatively new and may not be easy to understand. This chapter explains the characteristics and guidelines for an IRM and defines Indigenous epistemologies and the ways in which an IRM must honor and abide by Indigenous ways of knowing. Adhering to an IRM was a challenge, requiring much more patience, time, thought and hard work than adhering to other research methods would have. For example, as I "lived" my research I explored ways in which I could achieve self-determination such as learning how to fish, make fish head soup (the ultimate *Stó:lō* delicacy), sing (not that well mind you), speak and pray in my own language, attend longhouse gatherings and reconnect with my *Stó:lō* identity and territory. These accomplishments must be understood within the colonial context that attempted to disconnect me and alienate me from my own culture and ways of understanding the world. After enduring over a 100 years of harsh colonial impacts, learning to fish, to sing, pray and speak in *Halq'eméylem* is a HUGE accomplishment that unfortunately is not adequately reflected in the written portion of my PhD requirements.

There were times I wished I had stuck to a qualitative research method as "living" my research – that is "living" self-determination within the confines of colonization and among its many evil outcomes – was at times heart-breaking. Not to mention darn right scary. I won't forget the fear I felt while learning how to set a 60 foot net in a river I do not know how to read, or my pitiful attempts to learn to sing "wordless" songs that require spirit and heart. But it was only by abiding by an IRM that transformation was

²⁹ Pronounced "sha home is".

³⁰ Pronounced "skwell qwell".

³¹ At the time of writing I still do not know the name of this woman, that she has one is obvious and that it will be reclaimed and brought back into people's memories is an important part of our reclamation and revival process. It is also indicative of the biases and ethnocentrism of early ethnographers who often failed to record names of the *Stó:lō* women.

truly possible. It ensured a reclamation process was part of my methodology which included the need to research and “use” my own culture and language.

Abiding by an IRM meant learning from *Stó:lō* ways of knowing and reclaiming identity, space and place through the revitalization of the *Halq'eméylem* language. Both of these requirements were extremely difficult to adhere to as identified in my research challenges. The biggest challenge being of course the colonial process aimed at eradicating *Stó:lō* ways of knowing and languages. The assault on both our languages and ways of knowing was brutal and thorough; to then learn from them was not easy. It meant seeing through the bruises and sorting out what was real and what was the result of colonial pressure and influence.

In Chapter 4 I frame my Indigenous research methodology within the concept of weaving a *swóqw'elh*.³² A *swóqw'elh* is a hand woven blanket made of wool, preferably mountain goat wool. A *swóqw'elh* is a form of cultural property that belongs to the family and not just the person wearing it. It is a symbol of both prestige and status among the *Stó:lō*; the designs woven into it tell the history, status and ancestry of the family. By framing my research in terms of weaving a *swóqw'elh* kept me mindful of its importance and to remember to keep it personal. It also reminds me that I am the designer, while what I design is informed by the people around me and the knowledge I acquire, the end result is ultimately something I and only I have designed. Any bumps, mistakes, missing pieces are my sole responsibility.

I participated in many different experiences before I sat down to weave my *swóqw'elh*, meaning there were many experiences along the way that indirectly influenced my *swóqw'elh* design and end result. The influence was in large part because of the ways in which these experiences changed me, the weaver. A substantial portion of this chapter, therefore is dedicated to sharing what I experienced as I practiced what is referred to as red pedagogy or research conducted by putting ideas in motion. Putting ideas in motion was also a way for me to fully experience the acquisition of knowledge as this process was just as much about my physical, emotional and spiritual experiences as it was about my thought processes. I became more and more holistically engaged as

³² Pronounced “swa qwith”.

I went and found my ability to fully engage with what I was learning to become easier and easier as I became more familiar with Indigenous knowledge acquisition. These experiences were then influential in the way I designed my *swóqw'elh*, that is in how I identified what is important.

Chapter 5 explores my journey in coming to understand who I am both individually and collectively. This of course is only required of Indigenous peoples who have suffered as a result of the colonial process that has worked to sever us from our families and our territory. Decolonizing my “being” became very important work to my dissertation before I could really begin to understand Indigenous empowerment, self-government and self-determination. In this chapter I explain my personal experience of decolonizing mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually before I could really know who I was and before I could truly understand self-determination. It explains why decolonization is essential to Indigenous empowerment but is by no means the end result. While we cannot have self-determination without first decolonizing, decolonization by itself is by no means the equivalent to self-determination.

In Chapter 5, in an act of complete reclamation I explore my tribal identity as a member of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* tribe. By exploring the history of my tribe (or what I now know to be *Ó:wqw'elmexw*), I came to understand myself better. For example I now know where my warrior-spirit and affinity for mountains comes from. I also came to understand the *Stó:lō* better and our complex system of organization. I came to see that just as colonial society tries to conflate the diversity of Indigenous peoples across Canada into one umbrella term – Aboriginal – that the diversity of the *Stó:lō* can also be lost if we do not reclaim our tribal identities. While I have no idea what being “Aboriginal” means, I do know what it means to be *Stó:lō*. I came to understand the uniqueness of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* and our unique contributions to the *Stó:lō* as a “supra-tribal” identity.

In this chapter I trace my lineage to my *Tómiyeqw*³³ *T'xwelátse*³⁴ (great great great great grandfather) who was a direct descendant of the first *T'xwelátse*. I share the *sxwōxwiyám T'xwelátse*, who was the first ancestor to the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people. I also

³³ Pronounced “Ta mee uck”.

³⁴ Pronounced “Took wha lattsa” with a pop after the T.

share the *sxwōxwiyám* of Stone T'ixwelátsa one of my ancestors who was turned to stone by *Xexá:ls* for mistreating his wife. Sharing this *sxwōxwiyám* not only teaches us valuable lessons in how to live together in a good way, it also teaches us about the importance of women and the role we play in the well-being of our people.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the *Stó:lō*, our territory and who we are as a collective identity. My research acknowledges the fluidity and flexibility of the *Stó:lō* identity over time, and yet how rigid and steadfast it has been in protecting territory and defining who belongs and who does not. Exploring the *Stó:lō* as a collective identity has been a great lesson in coming to understand cultural norms, laws, social organization, traditions, customs and kinship ties deeply rooted in an ancient belief in place and belonging. This chapter explores *Stó:lō* origin stories of ancestors from the land on the other side of the sky, the first people to this land, their travels and connections to the first animals, all of which places the *Stó:lō* here from the beginning of time.

The exploration of *Stó:lō* identity also required a deconstruction process in order to shed the colonial identities imposed upon us via the colonial process. This chapter ends by looking at Ancestral names as title and deeds to the land and the resources. I hope that it will encourage the *Stó:lō* to continue to re-centre our own laws (*syuwá:lelh*)³⁵ in particular the importance of ancestral names. It will be revitalizing and empowering to continue to learn what these “high names” mean, who carries them, and re-centre their importance and responsibilities; in essence to “wake them up.”

In Chapter 7 I examine *syuwá:lelh* in relation to *Sth'ó:qwi* (salmon) and *sxexo:mes* (gifts from the creator). This part of my journey represented many challenges as this “gift” has been almost entirely stolen in order to become an “industry.” It shares our salmon origin stories and our *syuwá:lelh* which teach us how to care for and relate to our relative, the salmon. By following our own laws in relation to our salmon, there was plenty and the *Stó:lō* lived a good life. That is until colonial policy took over.

This chapter explores the history of conflict between the *Stó:lō* and the colonial agencies responsible for Fisheries and Oceans. This historical look helps us understand how a sacred ancestor and the responsibility we have toward it becomes a commodity to

³⁵ Pronounced “sa why uth”.

be exploited and sold on the black market for below fair market value. It shows us clearly how under the ancient *Stó:lō* values and beliefs there was more than enough salmon for everyone and the *Stó:lō* were among the wealthiest Nations of its time, coveted and raided upon by many.

In comparison, the infant Department of Fisheries and Ocean (DFO) management regime has managed to jeopardize all the salmon runs after a mere 123 years with several runs already extinct. The *Stó:lō* are now among the poorest of all Indigenous peoples on this continent and in many ways are now complicit in the annihilation of our salmon, one of our most precious *sx̣ex̣o:mes*. This chapter explores *syuwá:lelh* in relation to *Sth'ó:qwi* as well as encouraging the *Stó:lō* to use our own language in relation to the salmon, as the use of English only encourages us to distance ourselves from our relatives and exploit for monetary gain.

In Chapter 8 I expose the futility of a rights-based argument in pursuit of self-determination by exploring the dynamics that occur when we exercise what the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) refers to as “an Aboriginal right to fish,” which is supposedly constitutionally protected. Yet when this “right” is exercised according to our own *Stó:lō* laws and customs, which are often in contradiction to colonial laws and regulations, we are criminally charged. It is in this chapter that our diametrically opposed worldviews are the most evident and the most detrimental. Where the *Stó:lō* see the salmon as a relative and therefore have a responsibility to care for it, the colonizers see a “commodity” and assign colonial “rights” to it in order to justify its commoditization and exploitation. The history of *Stó:lō*-settler relations with our ancestor (what settlers refer to as the Salmon Industry) is highlighted.

These opposing worldviews have been highlighted through court cases that at first glance appear to be victories but in many regards simply entrench a colonial worldview. Such case analysis completed by several legal scholars is important work.³⁶ However, I am not a legal scholar and therefore use this chapter to tell a story. I share my observations and experiences with one court case I participated in during a segment of my dissertation journey, *Kelly v. Regina*, file number 47476. Kelly is *Kw'itsetl Tatel*,

³⁶ See for example Kent McNeil, Patricia Monture, Sakej Henderson, Louise Mandell and John Borrows.

her English name is Patricia E. Kelly. This story in its entirety is not mine alone to share; what I do share are portions of my experiences with *Kw'ítseł Tatel*, knowing that the full story is hers and hers alone.

In July of 2004 *Kw'ítseł Tatel* was charged with the “illegal possession of fish” in contravention of the *Federal Fisheries Act*. This chapter will summarize two years of court proceedings (June 2009 to June 2011), which are now entering their seventh year and upon the writing of this dissertation was still being processed through the criminal justice system. This summary will highlight the inability of a colonial court to deal adequately let alone fairly with *Kw'ítseł Tatel's* relationship to salmon. It is during this chapter that many may want to jump out of the canoe; I certainly wanted to. This was an exhausting part of my research journey. It was very much like pulling against the current for a very, very long time only to find that not only will we NEVER arrive at our destination; we went the wrong way.

In Chapter 9 things begin to lighten and the journey begins to be less uncertain and scary. First, I explore traditional leadership roles and qualities. I share the *sqwélqwel* of another of my ancestors, *Willéq* the 5th who to me exemplifies *Stó:lō* leadership abilities and skills to show just how much power a good leader can have to effect change and move people to a better place. I highlight the leadership skills of *Willéq* the fifth in this chapter and *T'xwelátse's* leadership skills in Chapter 5, so to examine these skills with an eye to determining if they are still applicable to contemporary times. I realize these *Stó:lō Sí:yám* were leaders before we were colonized and subject to oppression and subjugation, but perhaps some of their skills built up over centuries of relating to the land could help us in contemporary colonial times.

In Chapter 10 I analyze contemporary *Stó:lō* leadership against a backdrop of colonial impacts and challenges. Through my discussions with my dissertation teachers and research conducted, I highlight five colonial impacts and four contemporary challenges that present day leaders are contending with as they lead within the boundaries of colonialism. The five colonial impacts are (1) the displacement and dispossession of *Stó:lō the Sí:le*; (2) the division and “creation” of chiefs; (3) land appropriation via maps and the creation of “reserves;” (4) residential school and (5) the anti-potlatch laws. The four contemporary challenges are (1) dependency and dysfunction caused by the *Indian Act* and manifesting through acts of internal colonialism; (2) undefined roles and responsibilities resulting in overload, confusion and

in some cases diffusion of responsibility; (3) economic racism couched in a discourse of poverty and (4) the diversity of the *Stó:lō* being conflated in two important areas: (i) the conflation of multiple *Siyá:m* roles into the singular and male-dominated role of chief and ii) tribal affiliations based upon intricate kinship ties and connection to territory being conflated into “bands” run by “membership lists” based upon paternity and “status.”

With these impacts and challenges as a framework, I then analyze the realities of contemporary leadership. These realities are shared with me via a series of interviews I conducted with those I have come to refer to as my dissertation teachers.

Chapter 11 is dedicated to identifying forms of *Stó:lō* governance. I used what I learned from both traditional and contemporary leaders, as well as teachings from *syuwá:lelh* and *sxwōxwiyám* to begin a preliminary identification of truly *Stó:lō* governing principles freed from colonial influences. To dream a bigger dream is highlighted when the futility of a “state-based” argument for self-government is placed against the complexity of *Stó:lō* social organization. Nation states are the most simplistic form of governance with little to no relevance for the *Stó:lō*. This chapter reveals the complexity of real *Stó:lō* governance which is complicated further by its intriguing yet effective use of anarchistic qualities and heavy reliance upon spiritual qualities to ensure good governance.

This chapter begins the exploration of *syuwá:lelh*, that is *Stó:lō* laws and *Halq'eméylem* concepts that teach us how to be in this world, how to relate to our environment, to ourselves and to each other. *Syuwá:lelh* are ancient teachings that I believe are more applicable today than ever before. They speak to place and respect, they teach us how to survive and how to live in a good way. The laws and concepts chosen for this chapter are the ones I think can guide *Stó:lō* governance and self-determination the best. The chapter ends with a discussion on *Stó:lō* governing structures found in our *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse) Gatherings and sacred ceremonies. The *Stó:lō* have many sacred ceremonies that reify our governing structures, for this chapter I use the Naming Ceremony as an example.

The final chapter metaphorically represent my *Swóqw'elh*. In this chapter I tie all my *sxexo:mes* into one symbolic representation of high status, a *Swóqw'elh*. It symbolizes the beginning of my journey from *s'téxem* (not knowing, low status) to *smelá:lh* (carrying knowledge and therefore of high status). Although my dissertation journey will be over, my *smelá:lh* teachings are just beginning.

Chapter 2.

***Lilheqi* and “The Power of Place”**

There is much confusion around the terms self-government, self-determination and sovereignty, which are often used interchangeably. This confusion is often fueled by the current colonial relationship that serves to keep Indigenous peoples displaced and disempowered. This displacement and disempowerment has been so firmly rooted within contemporary Canadian socio-political structures that most, if not all, current endeavors aimed at including Indigenous peoples within the decision making processes and/or somehow affording Indigenous peoples some semblance of “self-governance” are actually endeavors that further entrench Indigenous disempowerment, further the colonial project and move us further away from who we are as the original people of this land.

This literature review focuses on literature that assists with moving beyond the colonial regime by clarifying what Indigenous governance looks like, how nations are built (or in some cases re-built), and ways in which decolonizing processes can assist with defining and realizing Indigenous governance. There are three areas of interest to my research: (1) Indigenous sovereignty and governance, including the role of Indigenous legal traditions and to some degree but to a much lesser extent, literature on self-government (e.g., Alfred 1999, 2005; Borrows 2007, 2010; Henderson 2000; Kennedy 2007; Monture 1995; Turner 2006; Yazzie 2005); (2) Aboriginal rights and title by way of case analysis and treaty process (e.g., Borrows 1999; Henderson 2006; Mandell 2009; McNeil 2004; Monture 1999; Pinikett 2006; Tennant 1990; Wilkins 2004); and (3) International law, especially in relation to self-determination (e.g., Alfonso Martinez 1999; Anaya 2004; Battiste and Henderson 2000; Dorough 2002; Henderson 2008; Trask 1995; Venne 1998). For my current research interests I have focused on the first area and draw upon literature from the other two areas that speak to Indigenous governance and self-determination.

Indigenous literature is powerful in both its resistance against the colonial regime and in its ability to acknowledge Indigenous governance. This literature is clearing a path toward post colonial relations and self-determination for Indigenous people. For example, Yazzie (2000, 2005), Kennedy (2007), Venne (1998), Alfonso Martinez (1999) and Borrows (2010) clearly state that Indigenous peoples are here, have always been here and have, despite the onslaught of colonial processes, maintained their connection to Indigenous legal traditions. This literature displays the perseverance and strength of Indigenous peoples in our fight to maintain independence even against all odds. Both domestically and internationally, Indigenous peoples have been relentless in our quest against colonization and asserting our nation(s) status.

Alfred (1999; 2005) and Monture (1995; 1999) discuss issues of sovereignty and current colonial challenges at length. Both authors clearly resist the *Indian Act* and anything and everything that flows from it, viewing it as colonial legislation that disempowers Indigenous people. For example, they challenge *Indian Act* Chiefs to be critical of where their power is derived and how easy it is to abuse this power. Even more than this, they encourage individual Indigenous people to decolonize our minds, body and spirit and to remember our Indigenous culture, teachings, ancestry and connection to territory. They resist the colonial regime with both dignity and certainty.

Alfred (2005) purposefully discusses the colonial regime and the hold it has on *Onkwehonwe* (original people). However, Alfred does more than simply challenge the legitimacy of a colonial regime, he exposes the ways in which Indigenous peoples themselves contribute to our continued disempowerment:

Consider the futility of our present politics and the perversity of what I will call "aboriginalism," the ideology and identity of assimilation, in which Onkwehonwe are manipulated by colonial myths into a submissive position and are told that by emulating white people they can gain acceptance and possibly even fulfillment within mainstream society. Many Onkwehonwe today embrace the label of "aboriginal," but this identity is a legal and social construction of the state, and it is disciplined by racialized violence and economic oppression to serve an agenda of silent surrender. The acceptance of being aboriginal is as powerful an assault on Onkwehonwe existences as any force of arms brought upon us by the Settler society. The integrationist and unchallenging aboriginal vision is designed to lead us to oblivion... (Alfred 2005:23)

By exposing “aboriginalism” as the ideology of assimilation, Alfred exposes the ways in which colonialism is tricky business and has the ability to shape-shift in order to continue being oppressive. There are many Indigenous people who refer to themselves as “Aboriginal” thinking, my experience has been, this is much more acceptable than the term “Indian.” But how so? How is it really any different? I am sure many do not realize that by referring to themselves as such they are contributing to our disempowerment. Do we feel any more empowered now that the Department of Indian Affairs is now called the Department of Aboriginal Affairs?

According to Alfred, the colonial regime has resulted in the disconnection, dependence and dispossession of *Onkwehonwe*. Most *Onkwehonwe* remain complacent and lazy, doing next to nothing to change our colonial existence: “Many people are paralyzed by fear or idled by complacency and will sit passively and watch destruction consume our people. But the words in this book are for those of us who prefer a dangerous dignity to safe self-preservation” (2005:24).

In deconstructing Canada’s colonial regime and exposing Indigenous complacency, Alfred draws from a series of texts and works on worldwide experiences of colonization and decolonizing tactics as well as a series of interviews with *Onkwehonwe*. He exposes the many ways in which *Onkwehonwe* have become aiders and abettors in our own colonial misery, including the many and often subtle ways we continue to assimilate and colonize ourselves socially, culturally, economically, politically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. In so doing we continue to deny our *Onkwehonwe* existence and responsibilities. He demands transformation and calls for a Spiritual Revolution to end our colonial existence.

Self-Government

Self-governing agreements seem to be more along the lines of “govern like us (i.e., like a colonial government)” and we will “allow” you some semblance of self-governing powers. Irlbacher-Fox makes the valid point that self-government is about the authorities available for negotiation as identified by the Canadian state and thus self-government is something that exists because Canada exists (2009:7). Her book *Finding Dahshaa* exposes the ways in which “self-government negotiations marginalize and exclude Indigenous peoples’ experiences and aspirations, to the point that agreements

reached do not represent a form of self-determination but rather another iteration of colonization and forced dependence” (2009:5). To Mohawk Mother and Scholar Patricia Monture, the goal of self-government is too much like admitting defeat; it is tantamount to accepting Aboriginal misery and agreeing that the solution is to self-administer our own poverty and oppression (1999). Destructive colonial relations are simply being embedded by accepting self-government that is really only half the power, half the authority to truly govern: “accepting such a limited form of governance continues into the future the false belief of Aboriginal inferiority, and through such solutions the confinement of Aboriginal nations continues” (Monture 1999:29).

Penikett’s (2006) review of current self-governing agreements supports Monture’s 1999 conclusion that self-governing agreements as currently being defined are flawed, and serve to continue the confinement of Indigenous nations. Whether these agreements are being negotiated as part of the land claims process, as with the Nisga’a, Tsawwassen and the Yukon, or as municipal style agreements such as Westbank, Seechelt and Cree-Naskapi, they are failing to bring true Indigenous governance to these peoples. There are many reasons for this, one being the inability to agree on a workable definition for self-government, while a second is the diversity found among and often even within Indigenous nations. As noted by Penikett “each First Nation approaches governance negotiations with a view to meeting the specific needs of its community” (2006:189). This issue alone could forever stagnate progress among the *Stó:lō* who are comprised of up to fourteen different tribal affiliations, further complicated by the development of up to at least 25 *Indian Act* “bands” who often view themselves as individual “nations” each with its own specific community needs and varying levels of capacity, land, and access to resources.

Part of the difficulty in achieving a workable definition of self-government is the colonial governments’ failure to acknowledge an Indigenous definition of what governance entails. Rather colonial governments prefer to curtail the limits of self-government so to keep Indigenous peoples forever dependent. For example, there were three options being put forward for which even Myles Richardson, who was then head of the treaty commission, did not have the answer. In 2003 Richardson outlined the question as:

That is the crucial question for us, especially in B.C., where we have this seemingly intractable difference over source of authority. Is it totally

delegated, is it totally stand-alone, and what is the threshold in between those that would enable good governance? Is it the Yukon example, is it Sechelt, is it Nisga'a or is it something else?

(as cited in Penikett 2006:191)

I am opting for the "something else" option. Not only because the others have failed to bring good governance to its people, but because the something else lies within our connection to territory, our responsibilities to *S'ólh Téméxw* and the teachings of our ancestors. These imperative clauses have yet to be written into contemporary governing agreements. Such an omission is not the fault of most First Nation governments. The negotiating of contemporary self-governing agreements does not leave room for these types of clauses that recognize and assert Indigenous independence. This is due in large part because Canada controls the "rules of the game" and First Nation governments are forced to the table at a distinct disadvantage compared to the colonial government in terms of resources, infrastructure, money, staff and power (Irlbacher-Fox 2009:61).

This may also be why the second issue arising from contemporary self-governing agreements are plaguing these nations – the issue of implementation. This issue goes beyond simply financing implementation (Penikett 2006). However, this alone is of course monumental as neither the federal nor provincial governments wants to finance the implementation of these agreements. I think many would agree that while the Federal government may be slightly more liable due to a longer relationship of oppression and discrimination, that the provincial governments are now equally responsible and were quick to contribute to the continued dependence of Indigenous people. It is interesting to note that neither really want anything to do with financing all the good work now needed to move Indigenous nations out of the trap of colonial dependency; yet strong independent Indigenous nations could in turn assist in strengthening Canada.

Self-Determination

The concept of self-determination seems much more promising in its ability to challenge and transform current colonial relations. Until the passing of the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2007, the term self-

determination was not as widely analyzed domestically and was often used interchangeably for self-government. Over two decades, it seems to be garnering more attention and thus more analytical scrutiny, and in its conceptualization is much broader than self-government. Monture (1999) prefers the term self-determination as it better encapsulates “the wealth of concepts and relationships” that are easily excluded in terms such as self-government.

Irlbacher-Fox (2009) recommends that the concept of self-determination not be confused with the limiting concept of self-government that in practice is almost entirely dependent upon how it is defined by the colonial government with little to no input from Indigenous governments. In contrast, visions of self-determination among Indigenous peoples she has worked with so far exceed the limitations of self-government (2009:9). Indigenous visions of self-determination:

Encompass natural resource management and economic capacities gained through land claims; seek sectoral or other agreements with governments and private industry; and have social, political, psychological, and spiritual dimensions resulting from the importance placed upon fostering Indigenous cultural identity, rights, and practices. Indigenous peoples therefore combine what requires change, namely the interference and control of government, and the negative consequences of that, with a collective sense of self-realization originating in Indigenous culture. (2009:9)

According to Anaya, self-government is one of five fundamental elements of self-determination: (1) freedom from discrimination; (2) respect for cultural integrity; (3) social welfare and development; (4) lands and natural resources; and (5) self-government (Anaya 2004). Anaya’s definition thus extends the concept to a whole segment of people overlooked by the international arena which is where the term gained popularity after WW I and President Wilson “linked the principle of self-determination with Western liberal democratic ideals and the aspirations of European nationalists” (2004:98). After WW II the United Nations passed its charter, which included “self-determination of peoples” (Anaya 2004:99). The right of self-determination was also confirmed in 1966 by Article 1 of both the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* provide for the inalienable right to self-determination as follows:

All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

It thus is seen within the international arena as a principle of the highest order (Anaya 2004:97), but not yet a rule of international law (Coulter as cited in Dalton 2005:5).

United Nations' Liberating Discourse?

In fact self-determination was first enshrined in 1960 when the General Assembly adopted the UN *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*. In this document, the UN clearly condemns the act of colonialism and all its manifestations. It was clearly stated by the General Assembly in its fifteenth session that “the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism **in all its manifestations** (emphasis added, Fifteenth Session 1514 (XV)) and was convinced that “all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory” (Fifteenth Session, 1514{XV}). As a result we see acts of decolonization and the recognition of self-determination occurring in all the colonies of Asia, Africa and Oceania (Henderson 2008:27).

That the right of self-determination and the end of colonialism are linked within the discourse of the United Nations is promising. Despite, believe it or not, the fact that Indigenous peoples were not recognized as having the right to self-determination during these decolonizing efforts because we were viewed as “Indigenous populations” and not “peoples” (Henderson 2008:27). Further complicating the matter was an earlier issue of defining “non-self-governing territories” when in resolution 637 (VII) of 1952, the General Assembly clearly recommended that:

States Members of the United Nations shall recognize and promote the realization of the right of self-determination of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories who are under their administration and that States Members of the UN shall uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations.

(GA Resolution 637 (VII) 16 December 1952 as cited in Roy 2001:13)

At this time Indigenous peoples were not included within the definition of “non-self-governing” territories and therefore not granted the right to self-determination.

As well the 1960 granting of independence and self-determination were being applied to only those colonies that were geographically separated from the country administering it (i.e., colonizing it). In these cases independence could be granted without threatening territorial integrity as the colonizing country and those asserting independence were not sharing territory. However in 1952 Belgium had put forward the argument that:

would have 'extended the concept of 'Non-Self-Governing Territories' to include disenfranchised indigenous peoples living within the borders of independent states, especially if the race, language, and culture of these peoples differed from those of the dominant population.'

(Pomerance as cited in Roy 2001:14)

As noted by Roy, Belgium was attempting to bring back 23(b) of the League of Nations Covenant "which bound members to 'secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control'" (Sureda as cited in Roy 2001:14). The argument used to reject this proposal epitomizes the socially acceptable racist ideology used to promote the act of colonization in the first place:

Quoting an article written by Belgium F. Van Langenhove, El-Ayouty argues that the Afro-Asian block reminded delegates that the 'sacred trust' Belgium spoke of implied paternal control; it was exercised by "states which enjoy a superior civilization" in relation to "populations of inferior civilization which they administer, whether these populations lie within or without the frontiers of the state."

(Van Langenhove as cited in Roy 2001:15)

The proposal by Belgium became known as the Belgium thesis and was ultimately rejected by the United Nations in favor of what scholars would come to identify as the "Salt Water" or "Blue Water" thesis (Roy 2001:13).

The "Salt Water" Thesis

It should come as no surprise that the rejection of the Belgium thesis in favor of the Salt Water thesis was led by the Western countries still colonizing their Indigenous populations (Roy 2001:15). These countries believe that self-determination and independence apply to external colonies only, that is to colonies whose administering power (colonizer) is geographically separated (for example by an ocean or sea) from those asserting independence. Such a distinction does not call into question territorial

integrity when those claiming self-determination are not sharing territory with the colonizing power.

The fact that Canada was able to exempt itself via what would become known as the Salt Water Thesis because it was not “geographically” separated from the peoples it was colonizing, does not detract from the potentially liberating discourse within the international arena. I believe this discourse will continue to expand and ultimately include Indigenous peoples. For example the reasoning used back in 1952 to exclude Indigenous peoples from being recognized as “non-self-governing” territories is no longer legally let alone morally and ethically acceptable.

Many debates and scholarly perusal must continue. For example, are Indigenous peoples indeed “peoples” and therefore entitled to the right of self-determination? How long will the Salt Water Thesis enable nation states such as Canada to continue to colonize the Indigenous people? Do Indigenous peoples of Canada have not only a right to internal self-determination, but a right to external self-determination? Do the Indigenous peoples of Canada have a right to the restoration of our “territorial integrity” that has been destroyed via colonial processes? Do Indigenous peoples have the right to secession according to international law? These debates will continue and by their very nature empower Indigenous peoples through the recognition of our “human” right to freedom and independence.

Indigenous Peoples and Self-Determination

In the 1920s *Deskaheh* (Levi General) leader of the Haudenosaunee/Cayuga and Maori leader W.T. Ratana sought to bring the treaty status of Indigenous nations to the attention of the countries of the then League of Nations. In 1923 *Deskaheh* petitioned to have the Haudenosaunee recognized as a member of the League of Nations and the Maori petitioned for the same in 1925 (Henderson 2008:24). They were denied as the then League classified (wrongly I and others would add) their petitions as “domestic” and therefore outside of their competency (Henderson 2008:24). While this effectively halted the Indigenous movement to be recognized as having some degree of autonomy and independence, it did send the correct message and one that surely fueled the efforts that resulted eighty years later in the passing of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

The 1923 Haudenosaunee petition is inspirational as it represents a sovereign Indigenous nation actually “acting” sovereign. Due mostly to the direct intervention of the British (Venne 1998:30) and a misguided belief that Indigenous issues fell under domestic jurisdiction (Wilmer 1993 as cited in Venne 1998:56) the petition never made it to the floor.³⁷ As stated by Venne (1998:30), the message was loud and clear; if an Indigenous issue was brought to the table member states would take measures to ensure it would not even have an opportunity to be addressed. In relation to international law Indigenous peoples were to be treated as “objects” not “subjects” (Venne1998:30). Nevertheless the petition will continue to inspire and remind us that we as Indigenous people *know* we are sovereign and *know* we are subjects; the willful and self-serving blindness of colonizing states does not change this fact.

Since at least the 1923 Haudenosaunee petition, Indigenous peoples have been appealing to the international arena via the League of Nations and later the United Nations, to have their grievances heard, past injustices corrected and their human rights acknowledged and protected.³⁸ These appeals, like the Haudenosaunee petition have been largely unsuccessful. That the international arena has continued to attempt to deny the application of its covenants and instruments to Indigenous peoples does not mean Indigenous people have stopped knocking on the door. The right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples is no exception. As noted above, although the UN passed a resolution for the speedy end to colonialism in 1960, within the Canadian context there has been no end to colonialism, let alone a speedy end. It is fifty two years later and Canada is still hiding behind the Salt Water Thesis. In 1949 Canada signed the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, yet in the province of British Columbia 52% of the children in the care of a foreign government are Indigenous.

³⁷ The term “domestic dependent nations” was coined by the United States Chief Justice John Marshall in 1831 (Martinez 1992:20).

³⁸ Indigenous nations have been grieving colonial injustices long before this, for example the Stó:lō have been urging England to take responsibility for several injustices via written petitions and demonstrations since the mid-1800s when thousands and thousands of Xwelitem entered our territory in search of gold.

In 1982 the United Nations finally responded by establishing the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. This group comprised five human rights experts from Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Eastern Europe and the West. Dr. Erica-Irene Daes of Greece was its chair (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000:2). The purpose of the group was to “review developments promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples, giving special attention to the development of new international agreements” (Battiste and Youngblood Henderson 2000:2).

Unlike other international mechanisms the Working Group actually sought and obtained input from Indigenous peoples worldwide. This “first” for the United Nations meant Indigenous peoples were finally being treated as “subjects” and not “objects” of an international process with over 700 delegates participating over the eight year period (Palys 2001). The journey that culminated with the draft *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and its eventual passing in 2007 was long and arduous. As shared by Battiste and Youngblood Henderson:

Our first talks at the working group in the summer of 1982 were as fragile as clay pots. We had to learn to trust each other, but our experience did not allow such trust. It was a time of listening. It was a time of understanding our teachings and experiences. In all the languages of the earth, we discussed our suffering and our dreams. Across countless generations, we were comforted by the safety of Indigenous languages, elders, and storytellers as they revealed Indigenous teachings. In different languages, at greater length and with more details than we can ever hope to grasp, these teachings gave form to an ecologically based vision of humanity. (2000:3)

Article 3 of the now passed *Declaration* states:

Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination, By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

While it took over twenty years the *Declaration* was finalized and passed by the United Nations in September of 2007 with 144 countries voting yes and four voting no: Canada, United States, New Zealand and Australia. Not surprisingly these nation states are the ones that continue to hide behind the “Salt Water” thesis, are continuing the colonial project and therefore, recognize the right of self-determination for non-

Indigenous peoples but still attempt to deny, or in Canada's case limit, this right for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Peoples?

The concept of self-determination is often linked to a rights-based discourse as in all peoples having the right to be self-determining. The term "peoples" means it has been interpreted as a collective right, one belonging to a "people" (Anaya 2004:100). Self-determination is not just concerned with human beings and their autonomy, therefore, but also with their desire to constitute and function within communities (Anaya 2004:100). This desire is aptly captured in a definition provided by Dalton (2005:2):

Aboriginal self-determination is the right of Aboriginal peoples to choose how they live their shared lives and structure their communities based upon their own norms, laws, and cultures. It includes the freedom and equal human right to control one's destiny, usually in the context of communities.

All seems well enough except for one small problem: there came the debate among nation-states as to whether or not Indigenous peoples constitute "peoples" according to the international definition. Nation states did not want to view us as "peoples" and thus entitled to self-determination so were insisting we were people without the "s." The Indigenous groups being consulted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations insisted we were and refused to compromise on such an important distinction (Henderson 2008:53). The Working Group was told by State representatives that they were being "impossible" for wanting such a high standard for Indigenous people (Henderson 2008:53). While this must have been an extremely frustrating debate for the Working Group,³⁹ the debate did help to increase awareness "among the human rights communities of the tensions nation-states felt about recognizing the human rights of Indigenous peoples" (Henderson 2008:53).

³⁹ Actually this may have been one of the more easier debates believe it or not, for insight into some of the experiences of the working group in having the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* passed see Henderson (2008).

Self-Determination and Territorial Integrity

Another reason colonizing states are resistant to recognizing the right of Indigenous Peoples to be self-determining is their concern that such a recognition may threaten the territorial integrity of the state. For example, The United Nations Charter states in Article 2 paragraph 4:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

From the point of view of sovereign Indigenous peoples, there are at least three issues with this argument. First Canada has shown time and time again that when Indigenous peoples assert our independence by way of protecting our territorial integrity, Canada will in fact use brute force and violence against us including military force (for example Oka in 1990, Gustafsen Lake in 1995, Ipperwash in 1995 and Burnt Church in 1999). In fact the argument becomes circular and even a bit ridiculous as Canada has knowingly threatened the territorial integrity of the First Peoples and is now asserting their right to territorial integrity in order to deny Indigenous peoples the right to self-determination.

A second issue arises when we look at the concept of "territorial integrity" from an Indigenous worldview which may take on an entirely different meaning from that of current nation-states. For example a eurocentric view of the world considers people to be separate from their environment and to exist independent of the natural world (Battiste and Younglood Henderson 2000:23). It is only in this view of the world that one could possibly be self-determining **and** simultaneously threaten the integrity of the territory. Meaning if we threaten territorial integrity we will remain relatively unaffected because we, as humans, exist independently from our land. However, from an Indigenous perspective this is near impossible as an inherent characteristic of self-determination is the recognition and acknowledgement of our inter-dependent relationship with *S'ólh Téméxw*. In fact, as far as I have come to understand my world, there would seem to be a universal Indigenous belief that we are, first and foremost, the care takers of this Earth, which dictates a certain inalienable relationship to our respective territories. To somehow threaten the integrity of our territory would be in direct contradiction to the practice of self-determination.

“Integrity” therefore is something that exists within *S’ólh Téméxw* regardless of me; I do not give my territory integrity, it is already there. It is up to me to respect it. History firmly tells us that Indigenous Peoples have been and still are the caretakers of their respective territories; the protection of territorial integrity has and always will be foremost in the minds of Indigenous People (see for example the Western Shoshone litigation cases to protect their territorial integrity; also the James Bay Cree litigation case which it is argued did more to protect territorial integrity than the government of Canada itself has done, Dorrough 2002:47). From an Indigenous understanding, therefore, perhaps territorial integrity could become something more than a “this is mine, you cannot have it.” That is something more than simply defining boundaries to which we may or may not respect depending on things such as the presence of oil or if the peoples are Indigenous or not. Perhaps we have something to learn from the Indigenous understanding that Peoples are intimately connected to their territories and by respecting territorial integrity we can accept that we are literally dependent upon our ability to do so.

Self-Determination and Secession

A third issue is the eurocentric belief that the integrity of the territory is threatened by the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples because self-determination could lead to secession, i.e., Indigenous peoples could choose to formally withdraw from Canada. First, I am not clear on when and how the *Stó:lō* joined the federation of Canada. I know that we are the objects of federal legislation; legislation we did not design, develop or implement. I know our territory has been falsely claimed by the province of British Columbia and that this province joined federation in 1871.⁴⁰ But the *Stó:lō* have never formally extinguished our “title” to the land or our ancestral right to be self-determining. How can we secede from something we never formally joined? The proper focus, therefore becomes whether or not as autonomous nations, Indigenous peoples will choose to join Canada or not.

According to United Nations discourse, secession is one option of three in determining political status. The 1970 *Declaration on Friendly Relations*, identifies at

⁴⁰ For a detailed historic account of how unjustly British Columbia was “settled” and “claimed” by Xwelitem government officials and newcomers see Tennant 1990.

minimum three different modes of political status that were also stated in the 1960 *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*: “the establishment of a sovereign and independent State, the free association or integration with an independent State or the emergence into any other political status freely determined by a people constitute modes of implementing the right to self-determination by that people” (as cited in Leger 2002:5).

This situation is not much different from that found in certain parts of the world such as Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania, where the Indigenous Peoples went on to form independent postcolonial states. In these third world countries the Indigenous people chose “separation” which was referred to as “independence” and not “secession” as they had not consented to union with the metropolitan States to begin with (Lam 2002:18). As noted above, this could also apply to the *Stó:lō* who have never consented to union with Canada. However, according to Lam (2002:19) most Indigenous peoples are seeking, not independence, but a form of free association with the colonizing state as guided by international law and society. In these cases an argument can be made that those deciding against independence in favor of free association are not in fact Indigenous peoples, but the descendants of the colonizers and assimilated Indigenous people (Henderson 2008:27). For the *Stó:lō* this is also a possible outcome.

Furthermore Dr. Erica-Irene Daes, the former chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations has explained:

With few exceptions, indigenous peoples were never a part of State-building. They did not have an opportunity to participate in designing the modern constitutions of the States in which they live, or to share, in any meaningful way, in national decision-making. In some countries they have been excluded by law or by force, but in many countries...they have been separated by language, poverty, misery, and the prejudices of their non-indigenous neighbors. Whatever the reason, indigenous peoples in most countries have never been, and are not now, full partners in the political process and lack others' ability to use democratic means to defend their fundamental rights and freedoms. (as cited in Henderson 2008:fn 55)

The lack of participation by Indigenous nations in the formation of the Canadian state was also noted by Roy (2001:61) during her extensive research for her Master's thesis titled *Sovereignty and Decolonization: Realizing Indigenous Self-Determination at the United Nations and in Canada*. This coupled with the argument that Indigenous peoples

are being denied our ability to exercise internal self-determination could result in secession via the expression, or the right to external self-determination.

Upon ruling on the secession case of Quebec,⁴¹ the court made note of three cases that could result in secession and be supported by international law (as cited in Roy 2001:114). One case would be when internal self-determination is being denied, although the court did not clearly lay out what this looks like or what would qualify (Roy 2001). Two other cases outlined by the Canadian court and as supported in international law were:

The right to external self-determination, which entails the possibility of choosing (or restoring) independence, has only been bestowed upon two classes of peoples (those under colonial rule or foreign occupation), based on the assumption that both classes make up entities that are inherently distinct from the colonialist power and the occupant power and that their 'territorial integrity,' all but destroyed by the colonialist or occupying power, should be fully restored.

(Cassese as cited in Roy 2001:114)

Thus the outcome of self-determination and the issue of secession is a complicated matter and demands further exploration within the Canadian context. I would even suggest this exploration cannot begin as long as Canada is hiding behind the Salt Water thesis. Only when Canada and its Indigenous Peoples are full participants in the decolonizing endeavors supported by the United Nations, can such issues be honestly and thoroughly explored.

In the interim the practice of self-determination is not to be confused with the practices regulating secession or threats to territorial integrity (Leger 2002:5). Within the Indigenous Peoples and the right to self-determination debate, this distinction is important. Colonizing states tend to fuse the two together and conveniently forget that there is international law to which Indigenous Peoples would be required to adhere with respect to relations between member states (for example the aforementioned *Declaration Concerning Friendly Relations*). The right to self-determination, many would agree, is not an absolute right without limitations (McCorquodale 1996 as cited in

⁴¹ Reference re Secession of Quebec, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217.

Dorough 2002:44). As Dorough and most Indigenous thinkers would probably agree: “it [self-determination] does not confer on any one people the right to deny other peoples the same right on equal footing. It does not include any right to oppress other peoples” (2002:46).

Sustainable Self-Determination

Corntassel (2008) offers solutions to these international and colonial arguments by suggesting we not confine the definition of self-determination to the rights based arena. He argues instead for sustainable self-determination (2008:107):

[A]s with the Nisga’a agreement, states tend to narrowly frame self-determination by focusing on state political/legal recognition of indigenous peoples as self-governing entities while diverting energies away from more substantive discussions regarding the reclamation of indigenous territories, livelihoods, natural resources, and the regeneration of community languages and culturally based practices.

He realizes that self-determination defined within the rights-based discourse can only take Indigenous peoples so far.

He also clarifies four ways in which self-determination as framed by states and international organizations actually jeopardize the future of Indigenous communities (Corntassel 2008:108):

1. Rights-based discourse compartmentalizes Indigenous powers of self-determination by separating jurisdiction of lands and resources from the political/legal recognition of limited Indigenous jurisdiction within the confines of current colonial state authorities;
2. Rights discourse has enabled states to deny the identity of and in some cases the very existence of Indigenous peoples residing within their borders (for example referring to them instead as minority groups, or races, or tribes);
3. The framing of rights within the political/legal arena has resulted in the de-emphasizing of cultural responsibilities and relationships that Indigenous peoples have with families and the natural world which are crucial to well-being of future generations;
4. Rights based discourse has resulted in limitations being put on decolonization and restoration processes (e.g., the Blue Water Thesis).

Corntassel is thus arguing we move beyond the limitations of framing self-determination within a rights discourse and instead opt for definitions that are “economically, environmentally, and culturally viable and inextricably linked to indigenous (sic) relationships to the natural world (2008:108). Framing self-determination within parameters such as this would result in an expansion of the scope of self-determination to what Corntassel refers to as a sustainable self-determination.

Sustainable self-determination would require the recognition of Indigenous natural laws on Indigenous homelands and would therefore allow for the renewal ceremonies that are so integral to the health and well-being of both Indigenous peoples and our environments (Corntassel 2008:119). This in turn would lead to a significant influence on the global political economy as local and regional Indigenous economies are strengthened and rebuilt and are inherently sustainable by definition (p. 119). Perhaps more important than the positive impact upon the global economy is that such regional and local Indigenous economies also ensure that the self-determination process begins with strengthening individuals, families and communities, which then means trade networks and alliances with each other and neighboring Indigenous nations can be re-established (p. 119).

Corntassel’s definition of sustainable self-determination also would ensure that territorial integrity, from an Indigenous definition, is firmly protected. If Indigenous natural laws are used to guide the ways in which we relate to each other, our environment, and our natural resources then territory and our relationship to it is mainstream, not an after-thought or disconnection. Embedded within Indigenous laws are values of respect, moderation, inter-dependency, and individual autonomy that strengthen the wellbeing of the collective, preserve ancestral teachings and protect future generations.

Alfred (2005:32) suggests the best place to start with self-determination is with the “self.” He argues a large part of self-determination is in our individual ability to reject the colonists’ power and control over us and to reject the colonialists’ definition of who we are as Indigenous people, and encourages us to remember our ancestry, our cultural teachings and our sacred relationship to our Indigenous territories. In so doing we will find the strength to reject the colonists’ attempts at assimilation and become a part of the spiritual revolution that is required to free our minds, hearts, and spirits of colonial indoctrination.

To begin with the self in terms of achieving self-determination does two things. First it strengthens individual citizens of Indigenous nations and encourages us to be and act independently. That is to be responsible for “self.” This is empowering as it moves us away from being passive and acquiescent in our own colonization; it affords us an opportunity to move away from being victimized and places us outside of the oppressor’s game of power and control. Second, empowered individuals means a stronger collective movement that is fueled by qualities of purpose, truth, balance, health and well-being. We can’t build and rebuild Indigenous nations with people who are angry, addicted, greedy and/or questing only for personal power and status. As guided by Micmaw Elder and Legal Scholar Sakej:

We must understand that the genuine core of empowerment is human responsibility and reconciliation. We must improve our people, ourselves, and our consciences. We must re-imagine and remake our traditional institutions and reconcile them with our vision of human rights.

(Henderson 2008:100)

Indigenous Governance and Nation-Building

Given Canada’s pervasive and intrusive colonial regime, identifying Indigenous governance is not easy and is complicated further by the diversity found among the Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. As Indigenous nations have been subjected to colonial imposition for over five hundred years, identifying Indigenous governance calls for an Indigenous movement in resurgence and reclamation that is guided by Indigenous vision and ability to dream. Indigenous resurgence in turn requires what Alfred refers to as “self-conscious traditionalism” which results in the “selective re-adoption of traditional values” and principles that are the foundation for Indigenous governance (1999:81). Without being self-reflective and conscious of our traditional values and philosophies we run the risk of defining our governance in terms of colonial mentality and imperialism (Alfred 1999).

In this movement of resurgence, it also becomes imperative that colonization not be the only story of our lives: “[i]t must be recognized that colonialism is a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective of that power” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005:601). To avoid replicating or

becoming complacent with the colonial regime and furthering assimilating, it becomes necessary to acknowledge that Indigenous governance is inextricably linked to Indigenous philosophies and values. Indigenous governance therefore is about respect, diversity, autonomy, balance and ultimately peaceful relationships that promote sustainability and movement of life (Alfred 1999; Qwul'sih'yah'maht 2011; Simpson 2011). Its very foundation is steeped in a profound sense of spirituality and the utmost respect and perseverance of individual autonomy (Simpson 2011). Result being, Indigenous governance is non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian and non-coercive (Simpson 2011).

Furthermore, abiding by Indigenous values and philosophies, will ensure our Indigenous governance is able to empower our communities to address contemporary realities. This will require an Indigenous resurgence that is facilitated by our ability and willingness to embrace both community cohesion and solidarity with other Indigenous nations (Alfred 1999). Alfred distinguishes between the two as follows:

Cohesion is the power that is created when a group of individuals come together as one to form a community that is self-conscious and secure in itself-when those people 'cohere' around a set of beliefs and institutions, and gain fulfillment and strength in their association with one another. Roles and responsibilities are clear, there is both a common good and an agreed-upon process of dissent, and people protect and benefit from each other. Those things that can divide are consciously rejected and those that bring people together and make them stronger are consciously embraced. This is unity-the prerequisite to peace and power in any community. (1999:87)

Equally important, but different is the need for solidarity which Alfred describes as a power that comes from "recognizing and respecting what all indigenous peoples have in common: the struggle for self-determination" (1999:87). However, before we can show solidarity with other Indigenous nations we must first have our own strong community cohesion and identity (Alfred 1999:87).

Both community cohesion and strong identity can be achieved through Indigenous governing principles, values and philosophies which in turn help build and rebuild strong Indigenous nations based upon the following characteristics:

- *Wholeness with diversity.* Community members are secure in knowing who and what they are; they have high levels of commitment to and solidarity with

the group, but also tolerance for differences that emerge on issues that are not central to the community's identity.

- *Shared culture.* Community members know their traditions, and the values and norms that form the basis of the society are clearly established and universally accepted
- *Communication.* There is an open and extensive network of communication among community members, and government institutions have clearly established channels by which information is made available to the people.
- *Respect and trust.* People care about and cooperate with each other and the government of the community, and they trust in one another's integrity.
- *Group maintenance.* People take pride in their community and seek to remain part of it; they collectively establish clear cultural boundaries and membership criteria, and look to the community's government to keep those boundaries from eroding.
- *Participatory and consensus-based government.* Community leaders are responsive and accountable to the other members; they consult thoroughly and extensively, and base all decisions on the principle of general consensus.
- *Youth empowerment.* The community is committed to mentoring and educating its young people, involving them in all decision-making processes, and respecting the unique challenges they face.
- *Strong links to the outside world.* The community has extensive positive social, political, and economic relations with people in other communities, and its leaders consistently seek to foster good relations and gain support among other indigenous peoples and in the international community

(Alfred 1999:82)

Using self-conscious traditionalism to guide this process means nation building is grounded upon Indigenous values and philosophies (i.e., Indigenous governance).

This will also act as a protective measure against complacency and cooptation, and ensures Indigenous leaders remain "Indigenous" even while working "within" a colonial regime. Alfred identifies Joan and Stewart Phillips (leaders in the organization now known as the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs) as examples of Indigenous leaders who continue to abide by Indigenous values despite several decades of working within, and fighting against, the colonial regime. Joan attributes her ability to do so by following the four sacred trusts: looking after the land, looking after the people, looking after the spirituality, and looking after the culture (as cited in Alfred 2005:181). Stewart added the need to have a clear mind, good heart and to be free of issues. He shared that both he and Joan did healing work to clear up personal issues in order to be a good leader with integrity and high moral character (as cited in Alfred 2005:182).

Indigenous nation building calls for an Indigenous resurgence (Alfred 1999; Coulthard 2008; Irlbacher-Fox 2009; Simpson 2011) and emergence (Simpson 2011) neither of which are easy undertakings. In fact contention and dissent are called for and necessary (Alfred 1999; Coulthard 2008; Simpson 2011). Luckily, our solidarity lies in what all Indigenous nations want and fight for:

[T]o restore balance, justice and good health to our lands and our peoples and to have good relations with settler governments and peoples based on respect for our sovereignty, independence and jurisdiction over our territories. This requires a disruption of the capitalist industrial complex and the colonial gender system (and a multitude of other institutions and systems) within settler nations by challenging the very foundation of the nation-state and its relationships to the land and Indigenous nations.
(Simpson 2011:87)

Thus the success of Indigenous governance will depend largely upon our ability to not equate good governance with state-based ideologies premised upon capitalism and economic exploitation. With this in mind I turn now to the findings of the Harvard Project which have been criticized as the project is based largely upon colonial definitions of economy steeped in ideologies of capitalism and domination.

In the mid-1980s three scholars/researchers underwent a project to better understand nation building within the Indigenous context. They began the Harvard Project,⁴² which looked at American tribes and tried to determine why some tribes were more economically successful despite having less land or natural resource base than other tribes (Calliou 2005:53). As mentioned, this project has since been criticized as the nation-building model it espouses is:

- Focused almost exclusively on a top down structure of political authority and legitimacy
- Application of this model privileges a centralized band council model of government
- The idea that culture matters is paid little more than lip service
- It prioritizes cash flow to secure economic and political power rather than revitalizing or regenerating cultural practices within communities

⁴² See <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/overview.htm> for complete listing of findings and publications on this American project.

- The nation building model it proposes is virtually indistinguishable from other state-building models in western and eastern Europe
- Lastly and most importantly it stands in stark contrast to Indigenous nation building.

(Corntassel and Witmer 2008:77)

However, I present some of the Harvard findings here that have potential to assist in nation building when done under the guidance of Indigenous governance as outlined in the previous paragraphs. As well I think these findings will help the *Stó:lō* identify reasons for continual economic failures within our territory especially if we are mindful in determining just how different is this approach from the “standard approach?”

According to the Harvard Project, tribes that fared more poorly tended to follow what they called the current “standard approach” to economic development, which for the most part is being directed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in the American context, and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in the Canadian context, rather than by the Indigenous communities themselves. They found this standard approach:

Does not focus on fundamental issues such as “What kind of a society are they trying to build?” Rather, its emphasis is on short-term strategies like starting more businesses, building more industrial parks, and creating more jobs. Long-term strategic thinking is discouraged and little or no concern is given to whether the new businesses are sustainable, whether there is a market for more industrial parks, and whether the jobs being created are jobs the tribal members are interested in or qualified to do.

(Calliou 2005:54)

The results of the standard approach that is directed by DIA and government funding agencies are failed businesses, continued poverty, high unemployment, low educational attainment and a perception that Indigenous communities are unreliable, chaotic and incompetent. Such public perceptions then work against Indigenous communities in our struggles to gain independence by undermining our claims to self-government (Calliou 2005:54).

According to the Harvard project, this “standard” approach can be contrasted with the “nation-building” approach that was more characteristic of tribes that had achieved greater success. This approach involved considering Indigenous economic development as first and foremost a political issue, not an economic one. The project summarized its key findings as follows: “successful Native Nations assert the right to

govern themselves and exercise that right effectively by building capable governing institutions that match their culture” (as cited in Calliou 2005:54). In particular, successful Indigenous communities:

- *exercise de facto sovereignty*. Tribes assert their autonomy by taking ownership and control over their local decision making and practicing self-government
- *establish effective institutions that match their culture*. Indigenous communities cannot establish de facto sovereignty without first establishing effective institutions that can provide the following:
 - stable institutions and policies
 - fair and effective dispute resolution
 - separation of politics from business management
 - a competent bureaucracy
 - a cultural match between their modern governance structure and their traditional forms of leaderships and values
- *set a strategic direction for the tribe*. This means setting a vision for the community and planning long term.
- *Take concrete action through strong leadership*. Setting goals and visions is not enough, they need to be put into action. Strong leaders do not wait for things to happen they make things happen. They remain proactive instead of reactive.

The Harvard Project found that the likelihood of having a profitable enterprise increased five-fold if Indigenous leaders were not serving as directors of the board for the enterprise (Calliou 2005:55). This separation increases likelihood of outside investment, as investors tend not to invest where those in positions of political power are likely the ones to gain in either personal power or wealth (Cornell and Kalt 1992). This is especially the case when the First Nation is without an independent tribal judiciary or other means of conflict resolution that is free of political interference:

In the long run, inserting politics into day-to-day business decisions invariably undermines efficiency and productivity, saps the resources of the organizations, and runs tribal enterprises into the ground. The primary economic task of a nation's government is not to make day-to-day business decisions, but to create and sustain an appropriate economic environment for that nation, to lay in place the rules of the game that economic players then follow, and to make *strategic decisions* about the overall direction development should take. This is true from the United States to Poland, or Japan, and from the Passamaquoddy Reservation to the Northern Cheyenne. (Cornell and Kalt 1992:25)

The Project also found that having effective institutions:

may not be enough to be successful if they are not culturally appropriate. There must be a match between the modern governance structures and the traditional beliefs and values. Imposing or copying institutions that are not culturally appropriate would likely be unsuccessful.

(as cited in Calliou 2005:55)

Other findings may be more difficult to apply within the Canadian context. For example, in Canada there are jurisdictional issues that may impede progress. According to Cornell (2002) jurisdiction matters and, while not sufficient, it is necessary. Jurisdiction not only affords Indigenous nations the ability to set our own agendas, it puts control of the resources in our hands (Cornell 2002:2). In *Stó:lō* territory we have neither of these abilities.

Cornell recognizes it is absurd to hold Indigenous communities accountable when decision making power remains with Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other non-Indigenous government agencies such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Children and Families Development and Ministry of Forests and Range. As it stands now, Canadian First Nations are often held accountable without the necessary decision making powers; this then allows colonial governments to continue making bad decisions as they do not suffer the consequences of these decisions. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples more often than not are blamed for the mismanagement of resources over which we have no control, such as the over-fishing of salmon and the over-representation of Indigenous children in care.

Corntassel (2008) has identified the “politics of perception” as a racist process that can be used to impede Indigenous progress. For example, while the *Stó:lō* do not have jurisdiction over the salmon fishery, we often are blamed for salmon shortages. We currently sit passively while the provincial government apprehends our children at an alarming rate, and due to politics of perception we are blamed thanks to the false perception that we are bad parents. Hand in hand with the need to manage the “politics of perception” is the increasing demand that we work out these jurisdictional issues with the province, very much like a process in the United States referred to by Tsalagi (Cherokee) scholar Jeff Corntassel as “forced federalism” (2008).

In the American experience, as a result of the 1988 Indian Gaming and Regulatory Act (IGRA), Indigenous nations are being forced to deal with states rather than the federal government, that is “forced federalism.” As a result of the IGRA

Indigenous nations are experiencing a curtailment and denigration of their self-determining rights as they are now forced to negotiate compact agreements with the states purportedly to resolve overlapping jurisdictional issues. The result is states are able to ignore federally negotiated treaties and assert increased “dominance over indigenous nations within their state boundaries” (Corntassel 2008:17). Added to this is Indigenous nations have to manage the “politics of perception” which have resulted in misrecognitions and stereotypes such as the “rich Indian” which are used to impede and in many cases curtail the economic endeavours of Indian nations (Corntassel 2008).

In B.C. jurisdictional issues are rampant and with the slow and cumbersome pace of the flawed BCTC process, not likely to be settled anytime soon. However, there does seem to be a Canadian experience of “forced federalism” in the “co-management” agreements, referral process and interim agreements. The same issues this brings in the American experience are an issue here in B.C. as well where the majority of the province is unceded, unsold Indigenous territory.

Along with jurisdictional issues, another impediment not specifically addressed by the Harvard project is the role of Indigenous women in governance. To be culturally appropriate more often than not means to be inclusive and in balance. Balance according to many Indigenous teachings occurs when the man and the woman are equally present and equally represented. However, the role Indigenous women play is often over-looked or under-valued. This is especially harmful for the *Stó:lō* who are/were matriarchal⁴³ with respect to cultural property and egalitarian with respect to decision-making and familial and communal contributions.

Indigenous Women and Governance

Indigenous women play powerful roles within their communities (visit any Indigenous community for an extended period and this is self-evident; see also Absolon et. al. 1996; Armstrong 1996; LaRocque 1996; Monture 1995; Sayers and MacDonald

⁴³ I use the term matriarch purposefully, not as a position of power but as a position of authority and responsibility that is central to *Stó:lō* organization, governance, cohesion and continuity in identity and cultural responsibilities.

2001; Voyageur 2000). Prior to the imposition of colonial policy and legislation, Indigenous women were viewed and treated much differently than the way we are viewed and treated within contemporary Canadian society. According to Indigenous worldviews, women are the centre of all life. As the givers of life they are held in the highest regard and treated with utmost dignity and respect (oral tradition).

Within Indigenous worldviews, Indigenous women play powerful roles within our communities: we pick and raise future leaders and are the property owners, especially of cultural property such as ancestral names, songs, ceremonies and customs. We are quite often the dispute resolvers. Women are the community organizers and overseers ensuring all communal and individual needs are being met. Most importantly, Indigenous women maintained ties and relationships both within the family and between families. This could be done directly or indirectly by providing the necessary guidance and support to the male leaders of the community.

While there is a fair amount of resistance literature written by Indigenous women speaking out against Canada's colonial regime (e.g., the level of violence directed at Indigenous women, Section 12(1)(b) of *Indian Act* and *Bill C-31*, Child welfare practices, feminism and self-government as defined by Canada) there is very little that speaks directly to Indigenous governance *vis-à-vis* Indigenous women. While resisting a colonial regime is a powerful expression of self-determination and reflective of Indigenous governance, I have expanded upon this by ensuring that throughout my research experience there was space and place for Indigenous women's voices and experiences. In particular, I have ensured our expressions of our roles and responsibilities within Indigenous governance are adequately captured.

With exception to the *Haudenosaunee* and the Great Law of Peace (see Arthurson 2010; Borrows 2010), there is very little published literature that speaks directly to the role of Indigenous women within Indigenous governance. Specific to *Stó:lō* women there is currently only one source. A recent dissertation completed by *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* (2011) who is Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw and *Stó:lō* explores both the displacement of *Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni* (Indigenous Women) and their vital roles within our communities and in relation to good governance. There are also two more PhD dissertations completed by *Stó:lō* women, the topics of which speak volumes to the roles and responsibilities of *Stó:lō* women. The first dissertation was completed by Dr. Jo-ann Archibald in 1997 and has since been published in 2008 as *Indigenous Storywork*:

Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit. The second *Stó:lō* woman to write a dissertation was *Stelómethet* (Ethel Gardner) in 2002 “*Tset Híkwstexw Te Sqwélteletset*, We Hold Our Language High: The Meaning of *Halq’eméylem* Language Renewal in the Everyday Lives of *Stó:lō* People.” From these two dissertations it is easy to see that an holistic education via storytelling and our Indigenous languages are central to the roles and responsibilities of *Stó:lō* women. This is not to say that these domains are exclusively the responsibility of women, but they do remind me of what is important as a *Stó:lō* woman.

I end this literature review with two *Stó:lō* oral histories, one is the *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lílheqi* (pronounced Heath la kay) which speaks directly to the roles and responsibilities of *Stó:lō* women and in particular to our place within “governance.” The second is a *sqwélqwel* of Minnow Girl which speaks to the power and strength of women and our ability to survive, flourish and thrive.

Lílheqi

Lílheqi was a *Stó:lō* woman who moved away from her people when she married *Kwelxá:lxw* and went to live with him and his people, in what is now Washington state. With this man she had at least two sons and three daughters. *Lílheqi* came to miss her people too much and was always worried about them. She eventually decided to move back home. When she moved back to her family’s territory her three daughters, her three sisters and her dog came with her. As she loved her people so much *Xexá:ls* transformed her into a mountain so she could always watch over the people, their river and their salmon.

Settlers renamed *Lílheqi*, Mount Cheam and her husband Mount Baker. Their sons are now known as Mount Rainer and Mount Hood. *Lílheqi*’s three daughters are the three peaks that sit in front of her. The youngest daughter is *Xomó:th’iya*, the second oldest is *Óyewot* and the oldest daughter is *Séyewót*. Behind *Lílheqi* sits her three sisters: the eldest sister is *Oló:xwelwet*, the other two sisters are *Xemothlyetel*⁴⁴ and *Ts’símteló:t*. Her *sqwmey* is with her as well and from a certain angle his head is very clearly sitting behind *Lílheqi*.

We are told that her youngest daughter *Xomó:th’iya* was crying as from her place she could not see as well as the older ones, her tears now form the waterfall at Anderson Creek. There is also a half sister to *Lílheqi*,

⁴⁴ See footnote 34.

named *Smimkw'* who it is said *Lilheqi* threw stones at when she tried to claim to be a full sister.

The *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lilheqi* speaks not only to *Stó:lō* social organization and family structure, but to ancestry and title as well. It places the *Stó:lō* people within our territory for millennia in that we were here before the formation of Mt. Cheam, and speaks to “ownership” and title to our territory. It is a form of Indigenous land title and assists in the defining of *Stó:lō* “boundaries.” It reifies important teachings and demonstrates self-governing principles according to a *Stó:lō* worldview that is based upon our relationship to our territory and *S'ólh Téméxw*. The *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lilheqi* is a means of Indigenous self-government in its truest form.

For example with respect to governance, it speaks to the power and position of women within *Stó:lō* society as the caretakers of not only the people, but of our *sx̣ex̣o:mes* as well. In particular it speaks to our responsibility to care for the river and the salmon. It clearly demonstrates the prevalence of women and more importantly the “presence” of women⁴⁵ in both governance (as in caring for the people and the salmon) and in self-determination (as in her ability to decide where and how to live and with whom). It also speaks to the importance of ancestry and knowing who you are, as in *Lilheqi's* disapproval of *Smimkw'* claiming to have the same mother and father.

Lilheqi was given the responsibility of watching over the river and the salmon. And herein lies an important aspect of *Stó:lō* governance and leadership that is largely lacking today: that is the crucial role of women in ensuring resources are properly looked after. *Lilheqi* coupled with the origin story of salmon that tells us the salmon came with a woman when she married a *Stó:lō* *Siyá:m* (see Chapter 7 for story) and this strongly suggests that if we are to restore our proper relation with the river and the salmon, women need to be playing a prominent role. Current care of the river and salmon is largely dominated by men and in particular by the male-dominated colonial legislation of DFO, perhaps explaining why both the river and the salmon are in danger.

⁴⁵ I have heard that one of the mountains may in fact be a brother, but have not come across any information on this.

It thus becomes crucial to both Indigenous governance and self-determination that *Stó:lō* women reclaim our roles, responsibilities and place within the decision-making process. That this will be key to our survival as a People is highlighted by the *sqwéłqwel* shared by Elder Amy Cooper of the *Th'ewá:li* people about an ancestor I have come to call "Minnow Girl."

Minnow Girl

There was a famine that everything there-well I suppose like in India and other places there – that they couldn't save anything. And they couldn't dig anything to put away, like these wild potatoes and other things that they used to dig, roots and that. All that there was died off, and what didn't die off the bugs got. They didn't say it was grasshoppers. And they said the worms ate it; and all the berries there, they were all worm-eaten. And the fish never came up". So bad was the drought, she continued that: "according to the Soowahlies, everyone died but a woman; and she saw them all just doubling over; she says when they were getting too weak. There was nothing to eat; so she went and got cedar bark, and made herself a pair of corsets, like, and bound that up, and she was able to stand and breathe. And then she went down to a little creek down at South Sumas [road]...And what did she get? Minnows! So the only thing she could do to catch them was to weave a little net and make a little scoop-net out of grass there. And she got minnows. And that's how she lived.

Then, when she got stronger, and the spring came and the roots came back and the other stuff there that they eat, you know, she went back home and gathered up all the bones, skin and bones, and cleaned out the big longhouse that she lived in. She got that clean... she didn't have a dog or she didn't have a man, woman or child to talk to. And she was all by herself till one day a man showed up. And he came from Lake Whatcom [via the Nooksack Tribe just south of the Canadian border]. He was the only one that survived over at Lake Whatcom. And they say that's where the Soowahlie people come from, from the man from Lake Whatcom and this woman from Soowahlie.

(Amy Cooper as cited in Carlson 2010:88)

Chapter 3.

Defining an Indigenous Research Methodology

“Start with self, Indigenous knowledges are reflective.
Reflect on who you are and your place in the world, this is methodology.”
(Patricia Monture, Invisible Histories Conference, UBC, March 21, 2007)

There came a point in my PhD studies that I felt distant and even somewhat alienated from my research. This troubled me deeply as the subject of my research is one I am not only very passionate about, but one that I had been studying for years. I knew I needed to draw my research back to me, meaning I had come to see it as something “out there” separated from me and as such something I could not relate to or feel I had a right to discuss. Adding to this was my realization that “governance” within many *Stó:lō* communities was appearing to be an almost completely male-dominated domain. As a woman I was therefore, questioning my choice in topic, my ability to effect change or to even learn enough to have anything of importance to share.

I knew that in order to get it back on track I had to “personalize” it; that is I had to find a way to center myself within my research. The path to do so was by taking the road less traveled and abiding by an Indigenous research methodology (IRM). Stepping away from my topic matter, that is stepping away from “governance” in order to learn more about IRM was probably the most important year of my PhD studies. Abiding by an IRM meant I came to see “governance” very differently, which then enabled me to “see” and begin to understand true Indigenous governance. In coming to understand IRM, I fully immersed myself in what it means to “live” my research and abide by *Stó:lō* epistemologies and ontology. I came to see that I had been viewing “governance” from a colonial lens (which surprised me as I pride myself in my ability to decolonize everything and anything) which also explained why I began to feel disconnected from it. Abiding by an IRM “personalized” it and therefore enabled me to view “governance” from within a *Stó:lō* worldview.

I immediately became re-intrigued and re-interested; my research took on a spirit and an energy that I could relate to and connect with. It also meant I had to let go and

trust, not easy things to do. In some ways it was like stepping out onto the edge of a cliff. Learning of “old” ways of knowing was completely “new” to me. It took me out of my comfort zone of books, writing, and academe, a world in which I felt comfortable, confident and capable, into a world of spirit, relationships, ancestry, territory and to be quite honest an entirely different worldview. A world in which I spent days and even at times months in a state of “not knowing” and having to trust in order to keep moving forward.

In so doing I came to know myself better in real and authentic ways. *Stó:lō* epistemology is often grounded in the tenet that the only things you can ever really know for sure are things you personally think, feel and experience; everything else is open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Other people’s understandings and experiences are things you can never really know for sure. Abiding by an IRM meant I not only had to decolonize my mind, body, and emotions, I had to personally experience self-governance and self-determination. In so doing I came to trust myself in my ability to survive and think situations through with a clear mind and good heart. Most importantly I came to “feel” the strength of my ancestry, or what I now know to be *syuwá:lelh*. *Syuwá:lelh* is the *Halq'eméylem* term that speaks to our *Stó:lō* laws and ancestral teachings.⁴⁶

Abiding by an IRM authenticated my research journey and findings. It required a thorough decolonizing process, this alone is a massive undertaking (see Chapter 5). It then required that I re-center *Stó:lō* ways of knowing and being in this world. A world that has been devastatingly impacted by colonial processes aimed at its very eradication, marginalization and devaluation. As a result re-centering *Stó:lō* ways of knowing was yet another massive undertaking fraught with many challenges. For example the fact that as a result of abiding by an IRM means I can now tell you who I am in both English and *Halq'eméylem*, can trace my ancestry to the beginning of time and I can feel an inalienable connection to my territory cannot be taken lightly or thought of in terms of “isn’t that nice.” When placed within the colonial context of Canada’s treatment, colonial

⁴⁶ I was able to recognize the importance of this word after speaking with Mr. Tom Sampson (ṭesalaq) a fluent SENĆOᖅEN and Hul’qumi’num speaker who taught me what *snuwa:elh means* (phonetic spelling and is the Hun’qumi’num, or downriver spelling for *Syuwá:lelh* which is *Halq'eméylem* or upriver, visit March 30 2010).

policies and legislation aimed at eradicating, disconnecting and alienating Indigenous peoples from who we are as the original habitants of this country, this desire and ability becomes monumental and absolutely imperative to our aspirations to be self-determining.

For example, finding the proper words to describe certain aspects of my research journey became an important component of my research. In finding the proper words, I realized most only reside within *Stó:lō* languages. However, our Indigenous languages have been violently attacked by the colonial process so are not easy to find let alone learn. Yet using our own words is part of the “re-naming research” which Absolon and Willet (2005) identify as a key component to IRM: “re-naming research in our language in order to exemplify that the Indigenous process for gathering and sharing knowledge is a completely unique paradigm.” Thus researching the *Halq'eméylem* language became an essential research step both in terms of methodology and in terms of research findings. Not only following in *Stelómethel's* (Dr. Ethel Gardner) footsteps, but to also abide by some of the last advice given to me by my dear friend Professor Monture: “if you really want to know what governance looks like to the *Stó:lō* look to your own language” (telephone conversation February 2009).

In this way I re-centered myself, I re-claimed personal space within research to counter objectivity and neutrality with subjectivity, credibility, accountability and humanity (Absolon and Willet, 2005). Adhering to an Indigenous research methodology brought my research back to me and moved me in a path that brought sincerity, clarity and integrity that honours *syuwá:lelh* and *Stó:lō* ways of knowing.

Defining an Indigenous Research Methodology

An Indigenous methodology is defined as “research by and for Indigenous people using techniques and methods from the traditions and knowledges of those people” (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, and Sookraj 2008). Indigenous methodologies require “situational appropriateness” (Absolon 2011) which makes their use by non-Indigenous (and even some Indigenous for that matter) near impossible. To achieve situational appropriateness required of an Indigenous methodology, the Indigenous methodology researcher must “have an Indigenous worldview, history and experiences” and be able

to position the process within an “Indigenous worldview and framework” (Absolon 2011:162).

In turn, Indigenous knowledge embodies the cosmologies, values, cultural beliefs and webs of relationships (Denzin et al. 2008: xiv). Indigenous epistemology is fluid (Little Bear 2000), experiential and passed from generation to generation via stories and storytelling (Kovach 2005:27), it emerges from verb driven languages (Cajete 1999 as cited in Kovach 2005), and involves a knowing within the subconscious that is accessed via dreams and vision (Castellano 2000 as cited in Kovach 2005). Indigenous ways of knowing:

...encompass the spirit of collectivity, reciprocity, and respect (Wilson 2001). It is born of the land and locality of the tribe. Indigenous knowledge ought to be purposeful and practical. It is born of the necessity to feed, clothe, and transmit values. As such the method of knowing must be practical and purposeful. Indigenous ways of knowing are organic with emphasis on reciprocity and humour. These ways of knowing are both cerebral and heartfelt. As the Elders say, “If you have important things to say, speak from the heart.” (Kovach 2005:28)

Indigenous Knowledge Being Born of the Land

Indigenous ways of knowing come from the land which means it is territorial, or tied to the territory of the Indigenous peoples from which it comes. We see this in the universal Indigenous protocol of following the ways of the people in whose territory you reside. That is, the Nlakapamux, the Stl’at’imc, the Secwepemc, Chilcotin, Cree, Blackfoot or any other Indigenous nations do not come into *Stó:lō* territory and expect us to abide by their culture or traditions. Rather, they know to respect ours, and this is an Indigenous protocol that is followed all over North America.

The importance of Indigenous ways of knowing being born of the land is a key characteristic of Indigenous epistemologies and ontology. For the *Stó:lō* this includes waterways, rivers and mountains. Thus the study of my territory became an important part of my research: “getting out on the river” took on a whole new meaning. I am still in complete awe of how much of what we know has been taught to us by the river and I am acutely aware of how much knowledge is embedded in our mountains that I have yet to tap into. As noted by Carlson (2010:62): “the land itself was, and is, the *Stó:lō* archive.” Thus, paying attention to place names, the *Halq’eméylem* language and especially *sxwōxwiyám* that tell the stories of the landscape becomes vital. In this way I came to

see how *Stó:lō* knowledge, including knowledge of *Stó:lō* governance is embedded within *Stó:lō* concepts such as *S'ólh Téméxw*, which translates literally as “Our World,” but encompasses past, present, future and includes tangible elements of the environment but also the intangible, the immaterial and the spiritual.

Indigenous knowledge, therefore, encompasses much more than mere intellect; it incorporates knowledge that is often dismissed or ignored by Western academia such as knowledge that comes from ones dreams and visions. Indigenous knowledge is holistic and does not separate some ways of knowing as better than other ways of knowing, it includes knowledge that comes from spirit and feeling. As noted by Wilson (2008), much Indigenous knowledge is based upon culture, collectivity, intuition and feelings.

Indigenous Knowledge Is Personal

For Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson (2011), Indigenous knowledge is limitless, highly personal, and requires the engagement of the entire being. Indigenous knowledge requires embodiment and must, therefore, be experienced mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually (Simpson 2011:42). The integration of these four parts of our being into a whole is our “research methodologies,” our ways of knowing and ways for living in this world (2011:42). While Indigenous thought is learned through the personal as “our greatest influence is on ourselves, and because living in a good way is an incredible disruption of the colonial metanarrative in and of itself,” Simpson also highlights the ways in which Indigenous knowledge is “created” collectively through our interactions, our story telling, our “wearing” of our teachings, dances, song, dreams and visions (2011). All of which must be anchored within Nishnaabeg Creation stories as it is they that provide the ontological and epistemological framework for interpretation of Aandisokaanan (Nishnaabeg sacred stories) and Dibaajimoisinan (Nishnaabeg personal stories) (Simpson 2011:40).

An Indigenous research method will naturally accommodate Indigenous ways of knowing. Kovach (2005) recommends several assertions to guide Indigenous research:

- (a) experience as a legitimate way of knowing;
- (b) Indigenous methods, such as storytelling, as a legitimate way of sharing knowledge;
- (c) receptivity and relationship between researcher and participants as a natural part of the research “methodology”; and

- (d) collectivity as a way of knowing that assumes reciprocity to the community

Thus Indigenous research:

- (a) is fluid;
- (b) benefits the Indigenous community;
- (c) leads to some change “out there,” i.e., it makes a difference;
- (d) trust is crucial to an Indigenous method, the researcher must have a deep sense of responsibility in order to uphold this trust and
- (e) Indigenous research has the capability of breaking the silence and to “bring forth the powerful songs of long-imprisoned Indigenous voices using their own languages.” (Weber-Pillwax 2001:174)

Abiding by these assertions was challenging, but also empowering. Some were easy because I am *Stó:lō*, married to a *Stó:lō* man and raising *Stó:lō* children which means I have a vested interest in ensuring my research leads to some change. Reciprocity, deep sense of responsibility and trust were also easy as I have too many ties, connections and relatives who constantly hold me accountable to my community.

Experience as a legitimate way of knowing was probably the most challenging for me. Learning how to fish for example was invigorating, but also downright scary. I was not raised “on” the river like most *Stó:lō* who fish today. So while I admired it from afar and drew strength from its presence and spirit, being “on” it brought this relationship to a whole new level. It will probably take the rest of my life to begin to learn how to “read” the river and listen to what it teaches us while fishing. However, from anecdotal but personal experience I can tell you that singing in *Halq'eméylem* while drifting does in fact result in catching more fish.

Red Pedagogy

Sandy Grande (2008) uses what she refers to as “red pedagogy” to guide her Indigenous research. According to Grande (2008) research is about ideas in motion and her method is the social engagement of ideas. Her research is conducted as “ideas come alive within and through people(s), communities, events, texts, practices, policies, institutions, artistic expression, ceremonies, and rituals” (p. 233). I found this concept to be helpful in abiding by the assertions of IRM, not only because of its practicality, but also because it respects an Indigenous understanding that knowledge is collective:

As I engage in this process...and filter the gathered data through an indigenous perspective. When I say “indigenous perspective,” what I meant is my perspective as an indigenous scholar. And when I say “my perspective,” I mean from a consciousness shaped not only by my own experiences but also those of my peoples and ancestors. It is through this process that Red pedagogy – my indigenous methodology- emerged.

(Grande 2008:233)

Ultimately, to Grande red pedagogy is about development of “community-based power” in the interest of a “responsible political, economic, and spiritual society” (2008:250). To me red pedagogy encourages a realism that by deconstructing (colonialism, imperialism, capitalism), and rebuilding (Indigenous sovereignty, identity, ways of being) we create spaces within which self-determining struggles over identity, land, resources, intellectual property, rights, treaty rights, inter-tribal and inter-Indigenous nation relationships can be adequately and fairly negotiated. These spaces are created mostly, but not solely, via dialogue, debate, and thought processes that are more than okay with being anti-discursive, but also via contention, struggle and transformation.

My own interpretation of red pedagogy, therefore, is that it is practical and gives me confidence to “talk” to people about what I am learning even and especially when I do not feel like an “expert.” In so doing ideas are given opportunity to “come alive” and are added to, edited even when others incorporate my thoughts with their own and add to the experience we are currently sharing (e.g., meetings, workshops, ceremony, curriculum development, agenda setting, memo writing, gathering and so on). My interpretation of red pedagogy has the ability to take thoughts, emotions, spirit and even “the moment” and transform them into something to be experienced. In a way taking on a life of its own if you will that then influences the manner in which we think about things and talk about them.

It would be virtually impossible to ever predict the outcome of these engagements or to know ahead of time all the factors that will be influencing it. Weber-Pillwax (2001) also upholds one's personal experiences and relationships as valid sources of information: “I talk to people all the time, purposefully and with as much awareness as I possess” (p. 170). As well Simpson speaks of “full presence of being” in coming to understand and in order to listen to the sound of our voice (2011:61). I also found that red pedagogy actually worked as a natural selection process. My experience was that not a whole lot of people want to talk about Indigenous governance and self-

determination, let alone have such an in-depth and personal engagement with me, but those who did had great things to say that informed my research and enriched my process.

Lastly a most important part of my use of red pedagogy was that it be guided by the teachings of Xexá:ls. In the beginning this was something I did instinctively, almost as though Xexá:ls represented an adult version of a security blanket. I have since been able to put words to why grounding my research in the teachings of Xexá:ls is so important to me thanks to Leanne Simpson and her text *Dancing on our Turtle's Back* (2011). While her text is steeped in Nishnaabeg teachings and culture, I found so many similarities with my own *Stó:lō* teachings and culture it was often eerie. For example, the Nishnaabeg use Biskaabiiyang which means “returning to ourselves” as a research methodology (Simpson 2011:50). Simpson’s description of why Biskaabiiyang is so important to the understanding process describes many of the same reasons I chose to ground my research in the teachings of Xexá:ls:

Within Nishnaabeg theoretical foundations, Biskaabiiyang does not literally mean returning to the past, but rather re-creating the cultural and political flourishing of the past to support the well-being of our contemporary citizens. It means reclaiming the fluidity around our traditions, not the rigidity of colonialism, it means encouraging the self-determination of individuals within our national and community-based contexts; and it means re-creating an artistic and intellectual renaissance within a larger political and cultural resurgence. (2011:51)

Simpson also explains how the process of Biskaabiiyang is a way to ground resurgence and the necessary decolonization, acting as a reminder of sorts in the continual evaluation of colonialism both within communities and within individuals (p. 52). Such an evaluation is constantly required given our occupied state (p. 50) and ubiquity of colonial values, mentalities and acts.

It is not just then how we conduct our research, it also about how we live our lives. It is not just about conversations, it is about “creating” and “emergence.” It is not just about envisioning, it is about acting upon those visions to “create new and just realities in which our ways of being can flourish” (Simpson 2011:52). Within a *Stó:lō* context the process of Biskaabiiyang describes a way in which we can once again be what the *Stó:lō* refer to as *Xwélmexw* people.

In this manner I lived my research, meaning it came with me everywhere I went. It was not something I “conducted” on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The more passionate and personally engaged I became the better. According to Absolon and Willett (2005:107), research conducted from a “neutral” or “objective” position is eurocentric. Rather, as mentioned earlier they recommend Indigenous researchers re-claim personal space within research to counter objectivity and neutrality with subjectivity, credibility, accountability and humanity (Absolon and Willett 2005). This is in keeping with the *Stó:lō* tenet that if you have never personally experienced something you can never really know no matter how many degrees one may have or how many books one has read. In the *Stó:lō* world, studying something does not make one an expert.

By claiming our location we transform our place within research from “object” studied by others to “subjects” of our own knowledge creation (Absolon and Willett 2005:113). Thus locating self within one’s research paradigm becomes a crucial step and large part of an Indigenous methodology. It is through the location of self and the use of red pedagogy grounded in *Stó:lō* cultural teachings that I came to “live” my research and therefore experience self-determination and “feel” self-governing.

Transformative Power of Indigenous Research

According to Absolon and Willett (2005), the following are key components to Indigenous research:

- (a) locating self
- (b) “re-vising” – “colonialism means we must always rethink everything” (Sembene as cited in Absolon et al. 2005:111)
- (c) “re-claiming” and avoiding extraction of knowledge
- (d) re-naming research in our own language in order to exemplify that the Indigenous process for gathering and sharing knowledge is a completely unique paradigm
- (e) “re-membling” – through memory and reconnection – can be accomplished through use of research as a learning circle which generates information sharing, connections, builds capacity, and seeks balance and healing.
- (f) Re-connecting – colonization has disconnected Indigenous peoples from their natural contexts - contextual validation makes our reality, experiences, and existence as Aboriginal people visible
- (g) “Re-covering” – we have to know our historical truth

These components ensure the transformative power of Indigenous research as they acknowledge colonial impacts and encourage Indigenous researchers to not only acknowledge these impacts but to transform them and use them to empower Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Indigenous Research Is Relationships

Coming to understand Indigenous methodologies and paradigms and incorporating and abiding by all the above guidelines and principles was integral to my research. Gaining an understanding of this methodology meant it took over a year to write my research prospectus. I now see this year as one extremely well spent year as it ensured my findings are reliable, valid and most importantly of relevance to the *Stó:lō* people. It also meant I personally benefitted as this time spent learning, and re-learning Indigenous ways of knowing and research methodology has enriched not only my academic career, my research findings, but my personal life has also been empowered through this process.

According to Absolon and Willett (2005), in recovering Indigenous paradigms and methods, the amount of knowledge expected of an Indigenous researcher by far exceeds what has been expected of non-Indigenous researchers. We are expected to be masters of both our own worldviews and Western worldviews, have the ability to critically examine Western research methods and to develop methods that will respect Indigenous paradigms. Finally, we must have knowledge of the issues, cultural context, and protocols within which we are researching (2005:120). As Indigenous worldviews, ways of knowing and protocol have been subjugated, oppressed, deemed inferior, of little value and ultimately marginalized and rendered near invisible, adhering to an Indigenous research methodology is difficult work that requires extra effort, time and patience, all of which is then added to all ordinary pressures of conducting doctoral research.

Absolon (2011:159) shares how employing Indigenous methodologies within the confines of academia can leave us at times in agony and conflict. We find ourselves doing “odd forms of emotional and mental gymnastics to compensate and cope” in a world that rejects our identity and humanity (p. 159). However, reconciling the “dualities of our realities cultivates an ambidextrous consciousness (Little Bear 2000 as cited in Absolon 2011:159) which means we eventually can productively negotiate two realities

at once (Absolon 2011:159). Indigenous re-researchers are therefore bi-cultural in our ability to understand two different knowledge sets from two different worldviews (p. 159). Absolon (2011) describes this ability as being able to have each foot in a separate canoe but still able to maintain our balance.

While the acquisition of such a great skill will ultimately benefit us, unfortunately, the additional work load and extra effort required of Indigenous scholars choosing to halt the assimilation process seems to be becoming an accepted norm. As a result of my own research journey and the sacrifices required of me, above and beyond those of a PhD program, have been painfully humbling. Indigenous research is a “humble and humbling activity” (Smith 1999:5). The requirements of personal engagement, integrity, trust and relationship-building are neither easy nor passive events. To gather knowledge from within the cultural paradigm to which it belongs quite often meant setting aside years of Western academic training and accomplishments and sitting for hours to re-learn, re-train and re-acquaint my mind, body and spirit with *Stó:lō* ways of knowing and reality. The building of trusting relationships takes time and careful, respectful attention. Many times I had to stop my “work” to honor my emotions and work through difficult situations before moving forward. These experiences are as much a part of my methodology as the relationships I have built with those pursuing self-determination for themselves, their families, communities and Nations.

Research Challenges

The impacts of colonization both personally and collectively are by far one of the most invasive research challenges that I faced throughout this research project. Abiding by Absolon and Willett (2005) ensured I actively “de-colonized” my research journey by ensuring I was “reclaiming” my own *Stó:lō* knowledge; “re-vising” *Stó:lō* knowledge gathered by outsiders that had been altered or subject to ethnocentrism; “re-remembering” not only lost knowledge but reasserting my place within my community; “re-naming” by replacing all the English names now used to describe my territory with their proper *Halq'eméylem* names; and “re-covering” by actively de-colonizing my mind body spirit and emotions. In fact my journey in personal de-colonization is a key element of my research methodology, without which I may have missed key research findings.

Reclaiming Territory through Language

Another challenge as a direct result of the colonial processes is the loss of language and the current colonial habit of replacing Indigenous languages, even when available, with English ones. It thus became important for me to use, and where not back in use yet, to research and find the proper names for important places and people of *S'ólh Téméxw*. As mentioned earlier this is not an easy undertaking by any stretch of the imagination. In the 1970s almost all the elders spoke one if not several *Stó:lō* languages, by the 1990s there were only a handful of fluent speakers left (Galloway 2007). The marginalization, eradication and devaluation of our Indigenous languages have taken their toll. Being an English speaking *Stó:lō* trying to research *Stó:lō* languages with only a rudimentary understanding of linguistics was difficult. The complexities and differences in dialects added to the challenge. The spelling, changing dialects and use of accents added to the challenge. Trust me, typing Mount Cheam is much easier than typing *Lílheqi* with a computer that uses English. I persisted. Doing so not only de-colonizes the landscape, it reclaims our territory and empowers us as *Stó:lō* people past, present and future.

Issues of Translation

The translation of *Halq'eméylem* concepts into English is another research challenge, not only because these two languages couldn't be more different if we wanted them to be, but also because Indigenous languages were to be eradicated via the colonial process and have been strongly influenced by Western worldviews. In terms of difference, for example, linguist Alford (n.d.) identifies at least four imperative ways in which Indigenous languages differ from Indo-European languages. Indo-European languages are "nouny," whereas Indigenous languages are "verby" and were mostly devoid of nouns until contact with non-Indigenous languages. Thus Indigenous languages tend to be more descriptive and in constant motion, more about the "dancing" than the "dancers" (Alford) more about the sounds and activities of an experience than about a person, place or thing. Alford explains it as Indigenous languages creating a feeling or of a kinesthetic experience, whereas in English the experience is the "picture created in one's mind" (Alford).

Within Indigenous languages almost everything is considered to be alive and with spirit, that is animate, whereas Indo-European languages are more influenced by the

inanimate. Indigenous languages tend not to distinguish between gender and tend not to use pronouns such as “he” and “she.” And lastly Indigenous languages differ in terms of use of tense, as Indigenous worldviews experience “time” differently than Europeans. A simple example would be when referring to deceased relatives. In English they would be referred to in past tense, as in my parents “were” whereas for the *Stó:lō* it would be acceptable to still use present tense as in my parents “are” even though they have passed. Another example is if time is experienced as cyclical as opposed to linear this would be reflected in our verbal expressions of our experiences. What we would now express as the past would be seen as the future and even vice versa making the use of past and future tense something much more than a grammatical representation.⁴⁷

It isn't just differences in how we express our reality and our position in “time” or rather the ways in which we express our relation to time, if that is even something our language requires of us. Indigenous languages also have suffered due to the lack of understanding of linguists and ethnographers who often missed important knowledge on and about the language under study due to western worldview training and limitations.

For example, the Upriver Halkomelem dictionary compiled by linguist Brent Galloway translates *sxwōxwiyám* as “child's fable, story, fairy tale, child's story” (Galloway 2009:646) which would be like defining Canada's Constitution as “a neat little children's story.” The *Halq'eméylem* concept “*sxwōxwiyám*” cannot be explained in English with a single line; it would take an entire book of English to fully explain this one *Halq'eméylem* concept. Explaining the culture of the *Stó:lō* using the English language is like trying to describe how thunder and lightning feels and sounds to someone who cannot hear. You do your best but you know the other person is being cheated of the full experience. Yet if *Halq'eméylem* were my first language I probably would not appreciate it as much as someone like me who speaks English as my first language and struggles constantly in trying to express myself using what to me is a very limiting English language.

⁴⁷ See Alford (n.d.).

Limitations of a Trader's Language

I liken the English language, or at the very least my grasp of the English language to the Chinook Jargon. The original Chinook language was spoken by the First Nations people living at the mouth of the Columbia River on the Washington state coast but a "jargon" of this language was developed to facilitate trade with other language speakers.⁴⁸ The Chinook speakers did not want to teach others their Chinook language and so developed a "jargon" of it which could be shared among traders. The fact that the Chinook speakers did not want to share their language is very telling and an important part of how Indigenous languages are viewed among Indigenous peoples who see their language as a part of their culture, as something that belongs to them, a gift.

The Chinook jargon, on the other hand was a simple language and easy to learn. It is a rather crude language comprised mostly of words needed to exchange goods. Like English it is not specific to anyone's territory (the original Chinook language was, of course, but the jargon was taught to anyone and everyone) does not tell you anything about the person speaking it (while certain English "accents" can tell you where the person was raised it does not tell you anything beyond that), and is an entirely "man-made" language. The "English" language belongs to no one and anyone can teach it to anyone else around the world.

Information pertaining to one's relationships with territory and resources is perhaps one of the most important elements of Indigenous languages, which tend to be extremely descriptive, fluid and in constant motion AND tied to the territory from which they come. The Indigenous language therefore becomes integral to our ability to relate to and live with our environment in a harmonious, balanced and sustainable way. As *ṭ'esalaq*⁴⁹ explains:

It was once said when creator gave us our homeland at the beginning of time the creator also gave us our language so we would be able to relate with all other creations of life, like the land and all that is in it. The creator gave us a word to relate to all, the water, ocean, lakes, rivers and also

⁴⁸ See for example <http://www.native-languages.org/cjargon.htm>

⁴⁹ *ṭ'esalaq* is one of my dissertation teachers who I will introduce more thoroughly in the next chapter.

sacred air we breathe. The sacred belief of our people is every creation must be treated very sacred so it will always remain here on mother earth for our use. (t'esalaq 03-30-2011:1)

In this sense language is seen as a “gift” from the creator, as part of *sxexo:mes*. It would therefore be protected, carefully preserved and respected.

It has been a source of much frustration and sadness for me in trying to come to understand my *Stó:lō* worldview from within a foreign language. I have found the English language to be very limiting and at times irrelevant, but this is not surprising as English is not a language from this territory. Therefore despite the challenges of translation and the complexity of the many different Indigenous *Stó:lō* languages and dialects, I have tried to use *Halq'eméylem* concepts as much as possible.

Oral Teachings from Secondary Sources

Abiding by an IRM meant I could locate *Stó:lō* oral ways of knowing centrally within my research. Some challenges I faced in finding accurate information are:

1. the limited number of Elders left who have been taught by *Halq'eméylem* speakers and retained oral teachings to pass on;
2. the devaluation and outright degradation of *Stó:lō* epistemologies means some pertinent information has been altered due to the ethnocentrism and eurocentrism inherent to the colonial process;
3. early colonial researchers were not held to present day standards of research conduct, so much of their research is fraught with bias and methodological flaws;
4. translation issues;
5. early researchers did not have enough understanding of *Stó:lō* social structures, let alone the many different languages, to know who best to talk to and on which topics.

Despite these challenges I am grateful for all the *Stó:lō* history and knowledge that has been recorded by early ethnographers. Such recordings include transcribed interviews conducted for a variety of different purposes and by a variety of different people and are kept on file with Coqualeetza Cultural and Education Centre. There are also a few published books from field work and visits with *Stó:lō* Elders by Oliver Wells, Wilson Duff, Wayne Suttles, Franz Boas and Diamond Jenness. Reading through these recordings I was able to experience a “teacher/student” relationship with all the *Stó:lō*

Elders who had the foresight to share their teachings and knowledge with these ethnographers. At times the ethnographer did get in my way, but I felt confident in my ability to push him/her aside and read through their ethnocentricity so I could learn from the original source.

“If this Is Your Land then where Are Your Stories?”⁵⁰

By filtering all of my relevant pieces through a *Stó:lō* worldview, in particular through the lens of *sxwōxwiyám*, acted as a glue, that is a way of ensuring validity and reliability. *Sxwōxwiyám* are a form of *Stó:lō* oral tradition that dates back to the beginning of time. *Sxwōxwiyám* are just as much an art form as they are a history book, “the” archaeological dig of a career; *sxwōxwiyám* also encapsulate *Stó:lō* laws and justice, that is they speak to legal traditions as well as providing guidance on how to live together in a good way.

They also speak to place and boundaries that are fluid, flexible yet predictable. They validate *Stó:lō* rights and title to *S’ólh Téméxw* and our responsibilities to *sxexo:mes*. As noted by Thom (1995:7) in his PhD dissertation, “senses of place such as those described in this study are the foundations of Aboriginal customary laws and practices which give rise to the existence of Aboriginal title.” Therefore in terms of *Stó:lō* governance and our right to self-determination *sxwōxwiyám* are vital, but only if we as *Stó:lō* people re-center them as legitimate and valid ways of knowing.

The use of *sxwōxwiyám* absolutely requires that they be used and viewed as they were intended and from within the importance of *Stó:lō* ways of knowing. I want to say that they are more than “just” stories, but that does not seem right because they are stories. What I prefer is that we come to see the importance of “stories” and “storytelling” as vital ways of coming to understand and make sense of our world (Archibald 2008; *Qwul’sih’yah’maht* 2005; Simpson 2011). It thus becomes important that they not be categorized or relegated to certain types of knowledge. For example, thinking that they apply only when providing moral guidance to children or that they be

⁵⁰ Gitksan Elder as cited by J. Edward Chamberlin (2004).

categorized as a single subject that stands alone. *Sxwōxwiyám* apply and are relevant to all subjects and disciplines.

That is *sxwōxwiyám* are equally scientific as they are ethical, historical, political, economical, legal and so on. In fact there would be much more *Stó:lō* knowledge recorded and therefore preserved if early “amateur” ethnographers had understood the importance of “stories” not only to *Stó:lō* ontology but to *Stó:lō* epistemology as well. You can understand the frustration felt by contemporary *Stó:lō* researchers who, like me, often look to early recordings to fill in puzzle pieces only to find the recorder failed to record the “important stuff.”

...the other example is amateur ethnographer Oliver Wells. I just get so frustrated reading his transcripts because he was only interested in the language. So every single time he writes in his book, “oh, okay. That’s very...that’s very nice! I’ll come back and talk to you about that.” Every time, you know the elder’s just going to tell him something, wants to tell him something that’s just *so important!* And then Wells cuts him off and says, “What’s the word for this?” That’s all he was collecting, the language. He didn’t realize that what these elders were trying to do was to provide him with a context that would enable him to understand... If he had of been more interested in those stories and realized their importance he would have said “Yeah! Tell me that story...” But quite often you go through those interviews and you come to where he says “Oh that’s a nice story, I’ll come back to you” and of course he never does.

(McHalsie 2007:109)

Thus another vital step of my methodology is the re-centering of *sxwōxwiyám* as important sources of knowledge, as a science and an ontological basis of utmost relevancy.

Sxwōxwiyám

Perhaps one of the most enriching aspects of adhering to an Indigenous research methodology is the requirement that *Stó:lō* ways of knowing be central and honored. And *Stó:lō* ways of knowing are embedded within ancient cultural traditions such as oral teachings and *sxwōxwiyám*. To honor *Stó:lō* epistemologies I had to come to better understand the *Stó:lō*. This is no easy feat as “*Stó:lō*” as an individual and collective identity is in and of itself fluid and transformational, sometimes at the same time and inter-related to time, era, colonial impacts, threats real and perceived, internal and external (see Chapter 6 for an explanation of the *Stó:lō* identity as transformational).

Sxwōxwiyám as Stó:lō Science

My first exposure to *sxwōxwiyám* as a *Stó:lō* epistemology came during my research studies for my master's degree on Traditional forms of *Stó:lō* Justice.⁵¹ What I learned then assisted me greatly during this phase of my education. I discovered then the importance of honoring these sacred forms of knowledge. Much of what I learned on "how" to learn from *sxwōxwiyám* came from Dr. Archibald's (*Stó:lō*) dissertation:

The old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors. In the very telling of the stories, the spirits of our beloved ancestors and family become present with us. The ancestors love us and care for us though we may not know this.

(Silko 1996 as cited in Archibald 1997:35)

She has since published her dissertation and shares her journey in learning how to become a story teller "learning to become a beginning storyteller, which, I have come to realize, began long before I undertook my own storywork research with Elders. Much earlier I was already being taught the significance of stories as a source of education and as a means to achieve emotional wellness" (*Q'um Q'um Xiiem* 2008:84).

The role of storyteller is an area of expertise and one of importance just as the stories are themselves. As Edmund Lorenzetto shared with Wilson Duff "the role of storyteller was a coveted position, usually Old People" (as told to Duff 1972:94). Based upon information gathered from *Stó:lō* informants, Duff (1972:94) wrote:

Old People were in great demand as story-tellers, and they took turns in the evenings telling folk tales and stories about specific people, and pointing moral lessons. Some old men traveled around, staying in a house one or a few nights and telling stories for their board and lodging. Sleeping during the day, they would often tell stories all night; war stories if they had been warriors, and stories of the transformer and other mythological characters. The listeners constantly responded with the meaningless word "pay" (?), the more responses the story-teller heard, the louder he spoke; when he heard no more, he slept.

As shared by the late *Ts'ats'elxwot* for my master's research:

⁵¹ A full version of my thesis is available online at <http://www.sfu.ca/cfrj/fulltext/victor.pdf>

Well, just like the storybooks that White people have. But it is all remembered, You don't have it in books , you just have it remembered by heart. The Old People used to tell, used to have lots of it. There used to be this one old guy, his name was Georgie Cane, he used to go around to different reserves in the winter time. We were always glad when we would see him coming. We would all run out there and meet him. He'd come along and stay for two or three days and he would go to another house and stay there and just tell stories to the kids. Get all the kids, because we had wood stoves, put a blanket on the floor and we would all sit around and he would start telling us stories until we fell asleep at night.

(as cited in Victor 2001:57)

I have come to have a new found respect for those gifted with being story-tellers. I have come to see the vital role that it plays in *Stó:lō* continuity, perseverance, collectivity, connectivity, sense of belonging, place and overall well-being. Although I covet this position in our society I do not aspire to be an oral story-teller as I do not find this to be one of my gifts. I do however, as do most people, have a good grasp on the identification and recounting of *Sqwéłqwel*.

Sqwéłqwel

Sqwéłqwel are personal stories, news and events that belong to one's family and are used to transmit important family history to future generations, to teach life lessons, to affirm kinship ties and connection to territory. They differ from *sxwōxwiyám* in a variety of ways yet maintain the importance of oral tradition. *Sqwéłqwel* tend to be family and/or community orientated, whereas *sxwōxwiyám* tend to belong to all people and are not necessarily specific to families or communities. For example the *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lílheqi* applies to all *Stó:lō* people, that is to all the people you can see from her viewpoint and not just to those whose territory she currently sits. The *sxwōxwiyám* of Stone *T'xwelátse* (told in Chapter 5) also belongs to all the *Stó:lō* people, not just the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* or his direct descendants.

Sqwéłqwel on the other hand belong to specific families/communities as they recount an event or happening from within the family or community. It is not however that others cannot learn from the *sqwéłqwel* of another family. It is not even that we can say *sqwéłqwel* are real events and *sxwōxwiyám* are not as they both recount real events. They both have transformative qualities and capabilities. As part of my research I do share a few of my family *sqwéłqwel* that relay pertinent teachings and

understandings that relate to my research (see chapters five and eleven). They are also stories that I hope are still being told seven generations from now.

Xexá:ls

Other *sxwōxwiyám* that belong to all *Stó:lō* people are the stories of *Xexá:ls*. *Xexá:ls* were three brothers and one sister, the offspring of Red-Headed wood pecker and Black Bear. Red Headed wood pecker also had a second wife, Grizzly Bear who was jealous and killed Black Bear. The four siblings ran away to escape Grizzly Bear and they together became known as *Xexá:ls*. *Xexá:ls* is often translated as “transformers” as in their journeys through *S’ólh Téméxw* they met many people and animals and transformed many of them to stone and other elements that are now “storied” throughout our landscape. *Xexá:ls* began their journey at the head of Harrison Lake, they traveled down the lake to where it meets what we now call the Fraser River, here they traveled east upriver to the sunrise where they ascended to the sky and traveled westward through the land on the other side of the sky. When reaching the sunset they descended back to earth and began traveling westward again until they reached the sunrise a second time, at which point they again disappeared and have not been seen since. Oral tradition suggests that *Xexá:ls* will sleep in wait, seeing what humans will do with their time on earth, but that one day they may awaken and return (see for example teachings from K’HHalserten in *Sepass Tales*, 1974).

Time in the “Time of *Xexá:ls*”

While *sxwōxwiyám* defy western concepts of linear time, I found it interesting that western science tells us the cedar tree first appeared here 5000 years ago. The *Stó:lō* know cedar as *Xepá:y* who was a very generous *Stó:lō* man who always provided for the people. Because of his generosity he was transformed by *Xexá:ls* into the cedar tree so he could always provide for the *Stó:lō* people.⁵² To think of the time of *Xexá:ls* as being

⁵² I was at an event at SRRMC in July 2011 and after Sonny McHalsie shared the *sxwōxwiyám* of *Xepay* he was asked by someone in attendance how “old” is that story? He explained they do not operate on western concepts of time but did share western science claims the cedar tree first appeared here 5000 years ago.

from the beginning of time and up to as recent as a few hundred years ago would not be too far off. However, I hesitate and am cautious in doing so as we know from *sxwōxwiyám* that the marking of time differs whereby a day in the time of *Xexá:ls* can mark generations in passing. For example, one *sxwōxwiyám* recounts the story of a hunter who while out hunting enters the time of *Xexá:ls* and upon returning to his people finds his daughter had become an ‘old lady.’

***Sxwōlexwiyám* and Ancient People**

Although *sxwōlexwiyám* are often described as “myth-like legends of the long ago past” (Carlson 1997:182), I have come to see that the *sxwōlexwiyám* of *Xexá:ls* are in fact “real” events that really did happen. They are as real to me as my own *Syewá:l* (ancestors) although I have never met either. I also believe that not only are *sxwōxwiyám* “real” they are alive. My language verifies this for me through the *Halq’eméylem* word *Sxwōlexwiyám* which is closely related to the word *sxwōxwiyám*. *Sxwōlexwiyám* are “ancient people over a hundred years old; they can’t move, just lay there in the pithouse, they take liquids, in spring the family digs out the roof to get them out into the sun” (Galloway 2009:1015). Exactly how old *Sxwōlexwiyám* are is difficult to determine.

There is much written and oral evidence that pre-colonized *Stó:lō* people commonly lived to be 100 years and older and that, at this age, they were referred to as the Old People, many of whom were still traveling and doing their “work” among the people. If we also take into consideration the healthy and nutritious diet of salmon (that had not yet been exposed to toxins of the oceans and waterways), wild game (again free from toxins and contaminants), wild potato, camas, roots, plants and wild berries, add to this a life cycle dictated by the natural environment, and a virtually stress-free lifestyle (we now know stress is a leading contributor to all kinds of present day illnesses), an active lifestyle with plenty of exercise and fresh air and *Sxwōlexwiyám*, therefore being described as “ancient people” could easily be 120 years old or more.

That *sxwōxwiyám* and *Sxwōlexwiyám* are both ancient and real is evident. Just how old in terms of BC or AD we may never know and in any event is probably insignificant in comparison to the meanings, teachings and reasons for being.

In the next chapter I share the *sxwōxwiyám* of Stone *T’xwelátse*, who was an ancestor of my *Tómiyeqw* (great great great great grandfather) who also carried the

name *T'xwelátse*. One of the earliest name carriers of *T'xwelátse* was transformed to stone by *Xexá:ls* for mistreating his wife. The teachings of Stone *T'xwelátse* and the journey of his return to *S'ólh Téméxw* through the efforts of my Uncle Herb, the current name carrier of *T'xwelátse*, form a substantial part of the next chapter. As well I used the teachings of *Xexá:ls* in my first chapter to ground me and keep me mindful that change is necessary and more than possible. As part of my literature review and to highlight the role *Stó:lō* women play in *Stó:lō* governance I used the *sxwōxwiyám* of *Lílheqi* and the story of what I have come to call Minnow Girl.

***Qwóqwel* and the Gift of Leadership**

Abiding by an Indigenous research methodology requires that the ways of knowing of Indigenous peoples be respected and placed within their proper positions of influence and power. *Stó:lō* ways of knowing have a heavy reliance on oral traditions and transmissions such as through storytelling, *sxwōxwiyám*, song, dance, prayer and formal speech through special moments of oration. These moments of oration are always done unscripted and are words spoken directly from one's heart. The *Halq'eméylem* word *Qwóqwel*⁵³ has to do with speaking, and the speaker. When I add my understanding of oration within a *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse), I would suggest that *Qwóqwel* (which becomes *Qwō:lqwel* when speaking to a lot of people/at a gathering), (Galloway 2009:1557) describes a well-trained and respected *Stó:lō* orator whose gift is to speak publicly to the people. *Qwóqwel* speaks from his/her heart and speaks with such clarity and direction that it must be a gift. These times of oration, these times that I have listened to gifted *Qwóqwel* are in and of themselves transformative.

Teachings from *Mílha*

When I was beginning my third year of my PhD studies, my husband *Tsimalanoxw*, whose name can be traced to one of the five original First People to this

⁵³ Pronounced "Kwa Kwel".

land (see Chapter 6) began his *milha*⁵⁴ training and was initiated into the Cheam *Xwelmexwáwtw* (Longhouse). I remember at the time thinking his timing could not be worse. To accept this degree of dedication and spirituality into our lives while I was working on my PhD seemed impossible. I remember thinking if only he could wait until I was finished my studies.

His first year as a *xawsó:lh* (new dancer) - *our* first year as it is very much a family experience - sent me on such a steep learning curve of *Stó:lō* ways and ontology, I didn't think I would ever recover. Yet, somehow I knew this experience superseded my studies, I was smart enough to know that respecting our ways as *Stó:lō* people was more important than obtaining a university degree. I knew through my years working with *Qwí:qwélstom*⁵⁵ that *Stó:lō* degrees were obtained through years of *milha* teachings. By coming to understand just a little bit of this spiritual way of life I was able to witness how, even while the *Indian Act* is still in place, the *Stó:lō* have retained at least a remnant of our own *Stó:lō* spirituality and do in fact follow to some degree Indigenous governing principles. Within our Longhouse teachings there is no *Indian Act* and it has absolutely no place or say within this *Stó:lō* spiritual understanding of the world. *Indian Act* "Chiefs" may or may not be recognized as leaders within the *Xwelmexwáwtw* and when they are recognized as one with status, it certainly has nothing to do with their status under the *Indian Act*.

Every winter now *milha* holds a central place within our lives. My job was and still is to learn about being *s'ep'ó:s* (ones who do not wear paint). While I was taught my role and how important it is by older *s'ep'ó:s* and *sts'eláxwem* (experienced dancers) of the *Smilha'áwtw* (winter dance longhouse), I also came to respect the individual journey my husband was on. While his *syúwel* (his spirit song) is his and his alone, it healed me too. Every winter spent listening to the songs and watching the dancers I came to better understand why individual autonomy is so important to collective well-being.

⁵⁴ Pronounced "me th la" – with the "th" being in back of tongue on the sides – becomes *smilha* if actually dancing.

⁵⁵ Pronounced "Kwee Kwel Stomm".

Chapter 4.

Weaving My *Swóqw'elh*

Weaving is a coveted skill among the *Stó:lō*. Those who know how are held in high regard. I personally do not know how to weave, yet. Contemplating this I felt badly that I have not taken the time to learn to weave. Up to this point my time has been invested in academia and learning skills such as writing, not weaving. While writing will never replace weaving, I have found that writing has done for me what weaving does for weavers. Writing, like weaving is a form of artistic expression; it, too, is a form of healing and therapy; it, too, can connect past, present and future; it, too, can tell the most beautiful story; it, too, requires a certain level of calmness and serenity; and it, too, can tell family history and be passed from generation to generation. While the final products are different (one is a weaving, the other a written paper), the process in terms of time, thought and feeling that go into making the final product are the same.

Thinking of my dissertation in terms of weaving a *swóqw'elh* ensured I remained connected to my research; it could no longer remain as something “out there.” Once I began to think of my research within the framework of *swóqw'elh*, my whole journey changed; my energy was revitalized. My relationship with my research project changed. First it made it personal and therefore connected to me; this increases the level of responsibility I feel toward it and the sincerity I put into my work. Second, it kept me mindful that my *swóqw'elh* is collectively owned and it will connect past, present and future ancestors. It acknowledges reality especially in terms of colonial impacts. For example, if my family had not endured colonization, in all likelihood I would not only be speaking my own language, I would be sitting here weaving right now with wool, not with English words and a computer. Lastly, it reifies transformation in the taking of ideas, thoughts, experiences and weaving them all together to tell a story that can assist, guide, learn and teach.

A *swóqw'elh* is a symbol of status and tells the history of the person wearing it; it is equally a personal possession as much as a collective one. It is a hand woven blanket designed with the family crest. The story within the *swóqw'elh* places the wearer within *Stó:lō* society; it tells the family story, family history and/or family origin. Thus the family must have not only retained this information from generation to generation since time immemorial, they also have taken the time to have the story woven in order to own a *swóqw'elh*. It is therefore a symbol of prestige and status.

Aside from prestige and status, to me a *swóqw'elh* also represents warmth, comfort, security and safety. I attribute these exact same qualities to good governance, and the fact that *swóqw'elh* are often worn by family leaders and the connection to my research became clear. If *swóqw'elh* tell a story, connect past ancestors with present family and future generations, tie family together and remind us what is important, then so, too, should my dissertation.

Wool Gathering

Deciding where to gather my information was guided by the map provided by adhering to an Indigenous methodology. I knew that: (1) my gathering process must be tied to community and have the ability to contribute to change in a positive way for Indigenous people; (2) that I must be personally involved in the gathering process to ensure subjectivity, accountability, credibility and humanity are integral qualities; (3) that my process incorporate the techniques, methods, traditions and ways of knowing from the *Stó:lō* people; (4) that receptivity, reciprocity, collectivity and relationship building be incorporated into this process; and finally (5) that the decolonizing work I accomplish through this process be used to transform and empower Indigenous/Settler relations.

With this in mind, I actively pursued information from three specific areas: (1) my personal experiences in coming to understand self-determination for myself and my family; (2) people and events including ceremony, dance and song that I engage with in purposeful dialogue and experience regarding self-determination and the “social engagement of ideas” and finally (3) from *sxwōxwiyám* of *Xexá:ls* and other oral teachings and traditions from the *Stó:lō* regarding the transformers and/or Indigenous governance.

I gathered my wool in a variety of different ways: (1) I tape recorded and transcribed my sessions with the *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* I met with, whom I have come to refer to as my dissertation teachers; (2) I kept a log of all the activities I participated in from the beginning of my PhD studies until the summer of 2011; (3) I took handwritten notes at meetings and gatherings that I did not have my tape recorder with me or was unable to record; (4) When able I tape recorded and transcribed meeting notes where appropriate; (5) I kept a fishing journal in which I wrote about my own fishing experiences and time on the river as well as my experiences and reflections during the court process and fish trial #47476; (6) I kept a journal of my experiences and reflections which were related to issues of self-governance and/or self-determination; and lastly, (7) I poured over material that has already been gathered that is related to my topic area and the *Stó:lō*. This included five PhD dissertations related to or on the *Stó:lō* (Ethel Gardner (2001) on language; David Schaepe (2009) on pit houses and social organization, Brian Thom (1995) on *Hul'qumi'num* connection to territory; David Angelbeck (2010) on warfare among the Coast Salish and most recently *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* (2011) and the role of Indigenous women in community and governance. As well as two published dissertations, one written by Dr. Jo-Anne Archibald (2008) on Indigenous storywork and the other by Dr. Keith Carlson (2010) on *Stó:lō* identities and landscape; and one anthology edited by Dr. Bruce Miller (2007) with ten different authors. I also used older information that had been gathered by early ethnographers such as Wilson Duff (1972), Diamond Jenness (1955) and Wayne Suttles (1955) and Oliver Wells (1987).

Red Pedagogy: Ideas in Motion

Throughout the “wool” gathering process of my research I remained opened to all forms of Indigenous ways of knowing. I engaged in everything I did with as much consciousness as possible and always with purpose and intent to better understand the *Stó:lō* and the ways in which we govern ourselves and experience self-determination. I followed Grande's (2008) concept of red pedagogy as it acts as a crossroad between Western theory (i.e., critical pedagogy) and Indigenous knowledge. It allowed me to bridge these epistemological worlds with the intention of transforming ideas and relations. I put governing ideas in motion as I went, living and breathing what I was learning. This concept guided my ability to look to my own community to examine our policies and practices, and to do so in ways that were in constant motion and reflective

of my overall desire to transform. As noted by Grande to know myself as a revolutionary agent is much more than an act of understanding who I am; it is an “act of reinventing,” and validating our “overlapping cultural identifications and relating them to the materiality of social life and power relations” (McLaren as cited in Grande 2008:234).

Over a six year span I was able to experience the following, all of which led me to a better understanding of self-determination and Indigenous governance: attendance at fourteen different leadership gatherings; two visits with the Maori in New Zealand; one visit with the Champagne-Aishihik Nation in the Yukon; participation on the Skowkale Governance Committee; two years and twenty court appearances for a fish trial; four winters of *Milha* spiritual teachings; nine weeks of *Halq'eméylem* classes with my children; attendance at numerous cultural gatherings and learning how to sing two *Stó:lō* songs (albeit not very well and still a work in progress) and how to pray in my own language; teachings from three *sxwōxwiyám*; and learning from ten leaders on Indigenous governance.

Also included in my use of a red pedagogy are my personal efforts in decolonizing my mind, body, emotions and spirit as a crucial step toward self-determination and good governance. There is a risk that as I engage in research I may, even if unintentionally, further the colonial project by supporting and perpetuating Western discourse(s). While abiding by an Indigenous research methodology helps substantially to alleviate this threat, the question remains: “Is it possible to engage in grammar of empire without replicating its effects?” (Grande 2008:234). Even with best intentions and full consciousness I am not immune to the pervasiveness of colonialism: “Institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” support the Western discourse (Said as cited in Grande 2008:234). As an Indigenous scholar I live within, against, and outside of colonialism’s constant company as it shape-shifts its way into almost every aspect of my life including my research (Grande 2008). Red pedagogy affords me an opportunity to consciously engage in decolonizing discourses as a part of my methodology. This includes my ability to decolonize spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally which in turn insulates me against the threat of perpetuating colonial ideologies.

Through all of this I am by no means an expert on Indigenous governance, but I am a better student.

Leadership Gatherings

This phase of my journey covered a five year period in which I was invited to fourteen different meetings/gatherings that were related to governance and self-determination. These gatherings begin with my attendance at a national gathering for Indigenous Women and Self-government in April 2006, held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and end with my attendance and participation at a Skowkale Band meeting in April 2011, held in my home community. Following the ideology of red pedagogy and the putting of ideas in motion resulted in the gatherings from 2006 to end of May 2010 assisting me in the defining of an Indigenous research methodology, while the gatherings from April 2010 to April 2011 helped me define and better understand self-determination and Indigenous governance.

These gatherings ranged from ones that dealt with my community only (i.e., Skowkale), some dealt with my tribe, the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*, some dealt with all the *Stó:lō*, some all the Coast Salish and some dealt with Indigenous nations from across the country. Some were *Indian Act* driven, some were community driven, some were completely women-centered and others were completely male-dominated. During these meetings and gatherings I mostly listened and absorbed the words of the leaders and Elders speaking, sharing, leading, and willing a new future through strength and perseverance. At others, I tested my own voice and began sharing things I was learning, sometimes well received, sometimes not; either way I began to learn more about oration and what I am beginning to see as the gift of *Qwóqwe!* and leadership. At most of these gatherings I took notes for my dissertation journal; this journal and my notes were then reviewed when I finally sat down to write my dissertation.

Each of these meetings/gatherings had varying levels of effect upon me and my understanding of self-determination and our ability to govern ourselves as Indigenous peoples. What I experienced at these gatherings, what I heard, what I felt, what I shared and what I learned have all contributed to my present day understanding of these concepts. It is also during these experiences I came to respect present day leadership in a way I had not before. In observing the many challenges faced by present day leadership, I often felt my position of "privilege" in being an academic as opposed to being a leader of the people. I witnessed first-hand many of the difficulties in leading our

people during these colonial times and having to do so under the oppressive and racist regime of the *Indian Act*.

Below I share some of the experiences by highlighting those in which I came to see things in a way that allowed me to begin my own paradigm shift in coming to understand Indigenous governance and self-determination.

National Women's Association of Canada

March 31-Apr 1 2006

National Women's Association of Canada National Meeting
Self Governance, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Early in the year 2006, my mentor and dear friend Patricia (Trisha) Monture, who has since moved on to the spirit world, hosted a national Indigenous Women's gathering on Self-government in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She invited Indigenous women from across the country who were active in governance in their communities, within universities and/or within various woman-centered organizations. She also invited a few of her graduate students working in this field; I was honored to be one of them.

First I had to overcome my star-struck numbness. Many of the women, like our host, were leading visionaries with strong powerful voices. Second I had to fight exhaustion, something I did not even realize I was experiencing until I got there and entered a safe place. I was a year into my PhD studies, had completed four courses and was working full time for a residential treatment program for at-risk Indigenous youth. This on top of being a mother of three young children, and of course I was exhausted.

Trisha had brought us all together and oddly enough it was very much like being home. Although I had not met any of these women before, it was like I knew them; they were familiar to me. Many things could go unsaid and be immediately understood. We could speak freely and not fear judgment or having our words twisted or misunderstood. It was not that we all thought alike, far from it. In fact there were many different perspectives, opinions and thoughts on what self-government could and could not do for Indigenous people; as well there were just as many diverse ways of expressing self-government. It was liberating, a space I had NEVER experienced before.

This may seem odd, but what really stands out for me from this experience was the message to "look after yourself." Odd, as given the company I was in there was a ton of academic talk that as an academic, I thrive on. But it was not the intelligence of

these women that stood out for me, or even all the powerful tears that were shared. What stands out for me was going to the beauty salon with these women. As we paid attention to our hands, or our feet, or our hair, or facials, we were completely relaxed and we laughed and laughed and laughed. This was the best medicine. It took me another year or two to fully get it, but eventually I did and today I take great pride in looking after myself.

Theytus Publications: Fraser Salmon Watershed

January 29 2009

First Nation Relationship to Fraser Salmon
Watershed Theytus Publications, Seabird Island

This gathering I believe I was tricked into attending, as I was told Jeannette Armstrong⁵⁶ would be there, so I went if only to have opportunity to meet her. It turns out she was unable to attend, but her daughter was there. What this gathering taught me in terms of governance and self-determination was priceless. First I was forced to acknowledge dreams as an important epistemology for the *Stó:lō*. Although I am not directly using dreams and visions as sources of knowledge for my dissertation, by abiding by an IRM I was able to acknowledge that dreams and visions are essential ways of knowing for the *Stó:lō*.

There was something magical about the small group in attendance at this gathering. I know now that it is because the relationship that the *Stó:lō* have with our waterways is sacred, ancient and extremely intimate, though I had not come to realize the depth of it at the time. I did, however, catch on to the intimacy of the group as, for the first time outside of my immediate family, I shared my salmon dream. I remember feeling vulnerable sharing something so personal to me in a public space. But I was not alone. Several others shared personal and intimate details of what the waterways mean to them; some even shed tears, their connection to the water was so strong. I came away from this gathering feeling a bit overwhelmed with the feeling, the strength, the integrity and the sincerity. I am now able to put words to this experience.

⁵⁶ Jeanette Armstrong is Okanagan and one of the first Indigenous female authors I had read who inspired and empowered me when I found myself reflected in her writings and thoughts.

Our relationship to water is an intimate one; our rivers are healing, including the ability to heal colonial impacts of alienation and disconnection. Being on and “of” the water reminds us of who we are and what is ours. That even those who may have been removed from this sacred relationship via colonial policies of residential schools, the foster care system and disenfranchisement via the *Indian Act*, can be immediately reconnected to this relationship. That our “*Stó:lō* -ness” can never be taken. It is who we are. It is inherent and therefore inalienable. As I write this almost three years later I now know that our inherent connection to territory and *S’ólh Téméxw* forms the basis for self-determination and taking care of our responsibilities and what is ours is an act of self-government.

Indigenous Leadership Forum: University of Victoria

May 11-15 2009

Indigenous Leadership Forum
Indigenous Governance Program
University of Victoria

This five day forum began each day with a lecture from one of the five professors present: Professor Taiaiake Alfred, Professor Jeff Corntassel, Professor Richard Day, Professor Leroy Little Bear and Professor Waziyatawin. Each day we participated in group work and small presentations from those in attendance. This included graduate students from the University of Victoria’s (UVic) Master’s program in Indigenous governance and students, such as myself, from other institutions. There were also several community members who could attend tuition free. I found the lecture for each day to be in some way challenging our current mindsets and in subtle and even sometimes not so subtle ways challenging us to re-think the status quo and colonial project.

I learned that if we continue to feel victimized then we can only tell victim stories. We need to move past this and begin telling stories of who we are as Indigenous peoples. We need to think from within what Leroy Little Bear referred to as a “Native paradigm.” According to Little Bear this paradigm encapsulates the two key components to our well-being: culture and land. He challenged us not to be culturally fickle or (heaven forbid) acculturated as we see with most Europeans who after having been colonized six times are acculturated and completely removed from any sense or remembrance of indigeneity. Culture and connection to our land, he shared, is essential

to our survival as our customs are located within each and our renewal ceremonies – without which we can't survive – are taught to us.

Waziyatawin startled me the most. When she first asked if we would be willing to resort to violence to protect mother earth I was a resounding no and to be honest a bit offended that she would even consider such a thing let alone ask us to. But then an important paradigm shift happened for me – she asked if I would be willing to resort to violence to protect my children? This of course was a loud and immediate, yes!

A second all-important paradigm shift happened for me during one of the discussions we all shared in. I remember someone from the audience standing up and expressing her dissatisfaction with how we ended up in such a state of disempowerment and if only our ancestors had fought harder, been more persistent, less passive and more aggressive maybe we would not be suffering so much today. “How could they let this happen?” was basically the question being asked and is a question I, too, often had. I always felt a bit bad about having this question, and others like “how could they give up our own language?” Then a young man stood up and said “do you speak your language? If not then you have given it up too, and the more important question becomes: why are we still letting it happen?”

Regional Meeting: Recognition and Reconciliation

July 15 2009

Recognition & Reconciliation – Regional Meeting
Tzeachten First Nation

My attendance at this gathering was during my methodology phase and I had not yet come to understand Indigenous governance from a de-colonized, let alone empowered mind. I realize that in March of 2005 the province of British Columbia and First Nations (as defined largely by *Indian Act* “bands”) entered into a “New Relationship” at the heart of which we were told was “a commitment to recognize Aboriginal title and rights, to respect each other’s laws and responsibilities, and to reconcile Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions” (update issued by BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC). In February 2009 “A Discussion Paper on Instructions for Implementing the New Relationship” was released by the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), the First Nations Summit (FNS), the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the Province of B.C. Some elements of this paper were either outright rejected or asked to be reconsidered by some First Nations. As a result, the First Nation political organizations decided to visit First Nations

throughout the province in the form of Regional Sessions in order to obtain feedback, direction and input.

I attended the *Stó:lō* regional session that took place July 15, 2009 at Tzeachten, a local *Stó:lō* community. I wish I knew then what I know now. What I did know then was I do not trust colonial governments. What surprised me at this meeting however, was how much distrust there was for Indigenous political organizations and, in essence, for each other. The overall message in the room was “don’t come here pretending to be interested in what we have to say, we think you are going to do what you are going to do regardless of what we say” and this was being said to UBCIC, FNS, and BCAFN. I guess they deserved this as they did write the Discussion paper first, and it was only after First Nations complained that they then decided to begin a more collaborative approach. Nevertheless, it was a bit disheartening to see that because of the internal distrust layered within the distrust for the province, there was very little dialogue if any on identifying ways to ensure the heart of the New Relationship was felt and honored.

On July 23 2009 I received the following email via a list serve I am on, from Art Manuel:⁵⁷

Premier Gordon Campbell is trying to use the proposed British Columbia Recognition and Reconciliation Act to overcome economic uncertainty that B.C. has been experiencing since the Supreme Court of Canada recognized aboriginal [sic] title. Aboriginal title is an exclusive property right of indigenous [sic] peoples. This is the Achilles’ heel of B.C., as the provincially created property rights, like fee simple or forestry tenures and mining leases, are put in question because they fail to take into account aboriginal [sic] title. Aboriginal title could even operate to oust provincial control over lands and resources, so what the province is really seeking through the proposed act is recognition of Crown title by indigenous [sic] peoples.

⁵⁷ See the entire commentary at <http://www.straight.com/article-241616/beware-reconciliation-act>

Dreaming Sovereignty

September 2 2009

Ernie Victor

Sovereignty & ability to dream

Ernie Victor is *Tsimalanoxw* from Cheam and the *Peló:lhxw* tribe. He is also my husband and father of my three children. We have been married for 14 years and so he has been with me through my Master's degree, which I began a month after we were married and now through my PhD studies. Our marriage has survived many hardships and many mistakes. One thing we share that strengthens us and keeps us close, aside from our beautiful children of course, is our love of our territory. Our tribes are neighboring tribes and so we share much of the landscape, stories and place names; yet have many differences as well and so are always learning from one another. We both come from families with strong male leadership and even stronger matriarchs.

I couldn't possibly record every discussion he and I have had about self-determination or self-governance, or about my research in general; there are too many of them. The reason I write about this one in particular is because as we were talking we began to dream together about what a post-colonial *Stó:lō* Nation would look like. How would we define our territory? How would we protect it? Who would belong? How would we relate to other Indigenous nations, to Canada and the provinces? What would our values be? What would we want to achieve as a Nation? What would we contribute to the world? As we were talking in this way, I began to cry. I still can't totally explain why. But it is the fact that I began to cry which makes this particular discussion, out of hundreds, stand out for me. Today I can begin to understand why thanks to the words and wisdom of Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson. By dreaming *Stó:lō* sovereignty through such a candid and fear-free dialogue with my husband it was for me "an individual and collective experience" that did "lift the burden of colonialism by visioning" a new reality (Simpson 2011:34). It was a beautiful decolonized empowering space, even if only for an hour or two.

Consultation and Accommodation Symposium

September 29 2009

Aboriginal Consultation & Accommodation Symposium
Stó:lō Tribal Council (STC) – Harrison Hot Springs
June Quipp & Tom Sampson

In 1998 Indigenous title was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Delgamuukw*.⁵⁸ Soon after the duty to consult came with the *Haida*⁵⁹ and *Taku*⁶⁰ cases resulting in a “consultation” process that would include a “referral” process whereby Crown corporations are required to “consult” with First Nations regarding mining, forestry, hydro, infrastructure or other projects and initiatives that impact our land. The province of BC responded by trying to force recognition of Crown title via the proposed *Recognition and Reconciliation Act*.

From this symposium I learned that the word “consult” had very different meanings for First Nations than it did for Crown corporations. For First Nations it was about having legal recognition via a mechanism that recognized our title and addressed the “economic racism”⁶¹ so ingrained within the colonizing process and exploitations. For colonial governments and agencies it was about sending a letter to the “band” office (often the wrong band office), already swamped in DIA bureaucracy and, upon receiving no reply, proceeding with exploitation confident they had met their duty to consult.

I heard Cheam leader and matriarch June Quipp sum up these very important issues very succinctly and matter of factly when she shared:

We have not come a long way and we have not advanced (referencing a comment made by INAC and ILMB earlier in the day). We still have Moms stealing to feed their children. Government referrals and consultation is another addition to the divide-and-conquer strategy the government has in place. They consult with the wrong community and say they consulted when they have not even consulted with the community whose traditional territory it is on. In a meeting the other day a DFO lady argued that

⁵⁸ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010.

⁵⁹ *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*, [2004] 3 S.C.R. 511.

⁶⁰ *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (Project Assessment Director)*, [2004] 3 S.C.R. 550.

⁶¹ A term used by Art Manuel who founded The Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade (INET).

consultation is an administrative duty not a political one. If it involves giving away my peoples' rights, I don't have the authority to sign that. You can't talk to a STC rep or to technical staff, this is not consultation."
(June Quipp, speech shared at symposium, September 29 2009)⁶²

We then heard from Tom Sampson from Tsartlip First Nation and Malahat, fluent SENĆOŦEN and *Hul'qumi'num* speaker:

Most critical today is the language, we can elaborate in English but not in our own language. Consultation, what does this mean in our own language? Sqwahnilyuqw (phonetic) is to speak to each other. They (government) don't understand their own language let alone ours. As soon as you switch to dependency you lose your independence. We crisis manage now. We are managing their mismanagement. When you speak your own language ancestors will come and stand beside you and tell you what to say. I don't use paper when I speak... Referrals are just meant to keep you busy and are not meant to be for us. When you develop policies in English then English speaking people will define it in their language, we need to define it in our own language.⁶³

Mr. Sampson went on and shared several words in our languages that speak to autonomy, birth rites, governance and law. I was to hear Mr. Sampson speak again in October 2010 and in March 2011. I would have the honor of sitting with him personally to review these words and hear more about Indigenous governance from within our own language. His teachings are found throughout this dissertation. The message I highlight here is his caution when we engage in policy making and legislation that comes from a language other than our own:

We always have right to autonomy to govern ourselves. When agreements come out of governments it breaks our relationship to language, to territory, to our ancestors and we can't do that.

What is this relationship to our ancestors? *Sxexo:mes* – gifts handed down from our ancestors, sqwaha:m (phonetic)... so when we negotiate with government and define it the way federal government defines it, we

⁶² This is not verbatim as it is taken from the notes I took while June was talking.

⁶³ This is not verbatim as it is taken from the notes I took while Mr. Sampson was speaking.

break our relationship to our ancestors.”
(Tom Sampson, Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. September 29, 2009)⁶⁴

Yale Treaty Protest

February 5 2010

Squeam Rally - Yale Treaty Protest

On February 5, 2010 a gathering was called at a location near Hope to protest the signing of the Yale treaty via the British Columbia Treaty process, which would in effect give the Yale “band” and essentially one *Stó:lō* family control over a significant portion of the river in the Yale canyon. This portion of the canyon and river has been a part of the *Stó:lō* people since time immemorial, a place where all the tribes would gather and dry fish. I have always been anti-BCTC and probably always will be. I find the entire process to be extremely offensive. That Canada and British Columbia think they have the authority to sign away something that isn’t even theirs to sign away in the first place is absurd. I was and still am upset with the entire process and this nonsense we call “modern day treating making.” I rode to this gathering with my husband Ernie Victor who was a newly elected council member for his community, Cheam. His thoughts on what was happening surprised me in a way, but I have now come to appreciate his words. At the time I remember I couldn’t understand how he could remain so calm.

Ernie Victor, Cheam Councilor.⁶⁵

Ernie: Heading to a rally organized by the *Stó:lō*, I believe there is more than one tribal council involved here. I know Tzeachten and Squiala are very active in protecting what is ours. Heading to Camp Skweah, where everyone is gathering. Trying to all work together for same purpose there will be a number of other leaders and communities involved. My particular community there has been a number of families that has been very active, this generation and past generations going way back and relationship with Fraser canyon, not only for fish but for whole variety of reasons. Spiritual, ceremonial, social, a place of fast, mediation, place of making tools, celebration. The importance of region and area is more than what society has bestowed upon us with current colonial regime. We are forced to look at it like it’s a

⁶⁴ Taken from the notes I took while Mr. Sampson was speaking.

⁶⁵ This is verbatim, transcribed from a tape recording made on our drive to the rally on February 5 2010.

canyon fishery, in past was way more than that. From my standpoint as community leader where I see the vision of it is coming from the past. Looking at it as place of mediation, place to teach our history, place to practice testing our spirit, place to carry social history to teach our young people our old people, place where we can gather medicines, the medicines' abundance is phenomenal because of dry climate.

When we start looking at a trigger like what BCTC has placed on our people by signing a treaty with federal, provincial governments and Yale it just shows weakness of our society in not understanding how this kind of a treaty affects a core people who have a relationship with the area and have a history. When I think about this, I don't really want to attack the treaty or the governments. I don't see that as my role, we have people that are fit for that. My role is to enhance relationships of our people at wide variety of levels. I talk about understanding what evidence do we have in our hands what do we have in our hearts that we know is true, makes us who we are, that can be used to exemplify our relationship to the canyon. Whether economical, social, spiritual, even environmental how can we use what we know that makes us who we are now to build relationship in holistic way. That is where I see my thoughts and mentality coming to some sort of importance to this whole process.

Wenona: Do you think it is possible to sign a treaty that would not have an adverse or negative impact on this relationship, is it possible to even sign a treaty with an area that has such a profound relationship to the people?

Ernie: I think a treaty can be signed and respect of relationship that I describe or future relationship or existing relationship or historical relationship for that matter can be signed with powers that be so long as treaty itself respects all the evidence that is in our hearts as *Xwélmexw* people and accepts that whole heartedly. Just as it accepts its own taxation processes that regional district collects, as real as that is to society, the relationship that I envision needs to be accepted as real. When that's accepted as whole heartedly and real and uncontested, or needs to be brought out in certain way because court says so, when all that stuff goes away then I think treaty can be signed. When I am looked at whole heartedly and I can look at them whole heartedly. Then come to more mutual understanding like Nation to Nation; I am not a ward of this society.

***Hul'qumi'num* Treaty Group:
SFU, Crim 429 (Indigenous Peoples and International Law)**

March 26 2010

Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (HTC)

Case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)
in Washington DC

SFU – Crim 429 – HTC presentation made to class

In March of 2010 I was invited to a SFU criminology class to hear the guest speakers from the *Hul'qumi'num* Treaty Group (HTG). The HTG represents over 6,200 members in six First Nations: Chemainus First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, and Penelakut Tribe.⁶⁶ Eighty-five per cent of the traditional territory of these nations was not on the table for negotiation; nor was co-management considered (Robert Morales, HTG Treaty Negotiator, presentation to Crim 429 class, March 26, 2010). The Chief Negotiator for HTG, Robert Morales explained that two million acres of land on Victoria Island went to a private developer for the railway plus \$750,000 dollars and all tree, mineral and land rights. The BCTC was unwilling to resolve these past injustices and sought to move ahead with treaty negotiations. As proof of Crown title had not been established, BCTC was therefore assuming that 85% of the HTG's land had been properly acquired by the Crown.

Without having exhausted all domestic remedies, the HTG took their case to Washington D.C to file a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The IACHR is mandated to deal with Human Rights in America via two organizations: the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Courts. Canada is subject to the former, but not the latter as it is not a signatory to Human Rights instrument (Morales, March 26,2010). The HTG was successful:

In a ruling approved by the IACHR on October 30,2009 the IACHR has found on an examination of *prima facie* evidence and legal arguments put forward by HTG, that it will examine and comment on alleged violation of Articles II (right to equality before the law), III (right to profess, manifest and practice a religious faith). XII (right to culture), and XXIII (right to property) of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man by Canada against the *Hul'qumi'num* peoples.

(HTG pamphlet handed out in class)

The HTG was successful in demonstrating that domestic remedies were futile. They provided evidence to the IACHR of the 1911 delegation of Coast Salish leaders who journeyed to England to petition King Edward to resolve the land question because Canada and the province were refusing to do so. Although, the land question still

⁶⁶ <http://www.hulquminum.bc.ca/news>, retrieved November 17 2011.

remained unresolved, this 1911 petition is undeniable evidence of the failure of local governments to deal fairly with Indigenous peoples. As far as domestic remedies of litigation, the HTG successfully argued that “the court system and policies in Canada have not been effective” (Morales March 26 2010). The IACHR found that:

If a First Nation does not wish to accept its terms negotiating, that it can litigate, the IACHR found that “there is no due process of law to protect the property rights of the HTG to its ancestral lands.”

The IACHR observed that the Canadian court cases on Aboriginal title do not seem to provide any reasonable expectations of success, because Canadian jurisprudence has not obligated the State to set boundaries, demarcate, and record title deeds to lands of indigenous peoples, and, therefore, in the case of HTG, those remedies would not be effective under recognized general principles of international laws” (HTG pamphlet).

Canada, on the other hand, put forward the Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth treaties signed under the BCTC process as proof that domestic negotiation was working. The Commission agreed with HTG and waived the requirement that they must exhaust all domestic remedies first.

Self-Determination in Action?

The Cohen Commission

June 3 2010

Cheam Cohen Meeting Bridal Falls Nicole Schabus
Art Manuel, June Quipp, Ernie Victor, Lincoln Douglas

On November 5th 2009 the Cohen Commission was established to investigate and report on the decline of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River. The terms of reference for the Commission include:⁶⁷

⁶⁷ This is a portion of the terms of reference, for complete reference see <http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/TermsOfReference.php>

Whereas the decline in sockeye salmon stocks in the Fraser River in British Columbia has necessitated the closure of the fishery for a third consecutive year, despite favourable pre-season estimates of the number of sockeye salmon expected to return to the Fraser River;

Whereas that decline has been attributed to the interplay of a wide range of factors, including environmental changes along the Fraser River, marine environmental conditions and fisheries management;

Whereas the Government of Canada wishes to take all feasible steps to identify the reasons for the decline and the long term prospects for Fraser River sockeye salmon stocks and to determine whether changes need to be made to fisheries management policies, practices and procedures – including establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate the matter;

And whereas the Government of Canada has committed to full cooperation with an inquiry;

Therefore, Her Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, hereby

directs that a Commission do issue under Part I of the *Inquiries Act* and under the Great Seal of Canada appointing the Honourable Bruce Cohen as Commissioner to conduct an inquiry into the decline of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River (the “Inquiry”), which Commission shall

- i. direct the Commissioner
 - A. to conduct the Inquiry without seeking to find fault on the part of any individual, community or organization, and with the overall aim of respecting conservation of the sockeye salmon stock and encouraging broad cooperation among stakeholders,
 - B. to consider the policies and practices of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (the “Department”) with respect to the sockeye salmon fishery in the Fraser River – including the Department’s scientific advice, its fisheries policies and programs, its risk management strategies, its allocation of Departmental resources and its fisheries management practices and procedures, including monitoring, counting of stocks, forecasting and enforcement,
 - C. to investigate and make independent findings of fact regarding
 - I. the causes for the decline of Fraser River sockeye salmon including, but not limited to, the impact of environmental changes along the Fraser River, marine environmental conditions, aquaculture, predators, diseases, water temperature and other factors that may have affected the ability of sockeye salmon to reach traditional spawning grounds or reach the ocean, and
 - II. the current state of Fraser River sockeye salmon stocks and the long term projections for those stocks, and

- D. to develop recommendations for improving the future sustainability of the sockeye salmon fishery in the Fraser River including, as required, any changes to the policies, practices and procedures of the Department in relation to the management of the Fraser River sockeye salmon fishery

The *Stó:lō* Tribal Council (STC) and the Cheam First Nation together were granted standing⁶⁸ and therefore eligible to submit evidence to the Commission. On June 3 2010 I attended a meeting with the Cheam Chief and Council and their lawyer Nicole Schabus and her husband Arthur Manuel to begin discussions on the stance Cheam would be presenting to the Commission. Below is a portion of the draft position paper prepared by Nicole Schabus based upon this initial discussion and others that followed.⁶⁹

A. Inherent Rights

1. At the outset we want to point out the difference between the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and Aboriginal Title and Rights at common law. Aboriginal Title and Rights crystallize at the time of contact and are subject to limitation, as set out in the case law. Inherent Rights exist independent of recognition by any other legal systems and are informed by indigenous laws. Indigenous Peoples had and have their own legal systems, land tenure systems and management systems for water, natural resources and wildlife. The inherent rights and powers of Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous legal systems, are inalienable. These rights cannot be transferred or taken away.
2. Indigenous Peoples and nations are the original peoples of their territories and waters. They govern and own their territories based on their deep-rooted connection to their territories and waters. In their own languages they often call themselves “the People” of the respective territories – their names tell them where they come from. In the case of the *Stó:lō*, their name means the People of the River; this is how deeply they are connected to the Fraser River. Indigenous Peoples and nations have established relationships with other Indigenous Peoples through trade and commerce, the issuance of declarations, and the creation of protocols.

⁶⁸ They were one of 20 participants with standing, for complete list see <http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/NewsReleases/CommissionGrantsStanding.php>

⁶⁹ Cheam made their oral submissions to the Commission on November 9 2011 which can be found at <http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/Schedule/Transcripts/CohenCommission-HearingTranscript-2011-11-09.pdf#zoom=100>

3. Indigenous Peoples have sustainably managed sockeye salmon throughout the Fraser Watershed since time immemorial. Indigenous knowledge is key to returning to sustainable management of the salmon.
4. Sockeye have always been part of Indigenous Economies along the Fraser, perhaps particularly for the *Stó:lō*. The sockeye have always been at the centre of their economy and culture. Indigenous laws and knowledge ensure that salmon is taken and used in a manner that is economical and environmental and culturally sustainable. Western economic models and management systems aiming at linear growth and profit maximization have led to the depletion of the salmon. These are different from indigenous economies, which are more circular and focus on the reproduction of the resource, the maintenance of stocks and the sustaining of communities.
5. As set out in early position papers, the distinction between “food fishing” and “commercial fishing” is a distortion:⁷⁰

In the traditional social systems of the Indians in British Columbia there was no distinction between food fishing and commercial fishing. In the Indian economies that existed during the fur trade era (1780s to 1850s) there was no such distinction... This distinction has been imposed by the white governments... Indians throughout British Columbia have always caught, sold or traded their fish and from the Indian position, changes in technology and equipment or the development of non-Indian exploitation of the fishing resource could not alter the fundamental fact of Indian sovereignty, Aboriginal Rights and the unity of “food” and “commercial” fishing.

6. To impose a test through common law, that requires proof of an extensive pre-contact practice of trading in salmon and engaging in a Western-style economy to artificially distinguish between a right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes and for commercial purposes is the ultimate contradiction. The end result is often the limitation of the Aboriginal right to fish, so as to allow ongoing further commercial fishery that has led to the depletion of the salmon stocks in the first place. The proper test would be to look at overall indigenous economies and recognize the Aboriginal right to have an economy and independent economic base built on salmon, as they have had since time immemorial.
7. The *Stó:lō* have never extinguished or ceded their inherent rights and jurisdiction and therefore maintain the position that they have the right to fully participate in all management decisions regarding the sockeye salmon fishery as equal partners.

⁷⁰ Ware, Reuben (1983) Five Issues—Five Battlegrounds, Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, p. 7.

August 12 2010

Cohen Commission – First community visit Cheam Beach – Commissioner Cohen, June Quipp, Clarence (Kat) Pennier, Ernie Crey, Elanour Douglas, and Elder Joe Alec

On August 12 2010 Commissioner Cohen and a few of his staff met with several concerned *Stó:lō* members on the bank of the Fraser River at Cheam First Nation. I tape recorded and transcribed the speeches made on this day. The day's itinerary was led by Darwin Douglas (*Eyteleq*, Cheam member) and included speeches from June Quipp (*Siyolia* Cheam Matriarch), Clarence (Kat) Pennier (*Hiyolemtel* Scowlitz and President of the *Stó:lō* Tribal Council), Ernie Crey (Cheam member and long standing *Stó:lō* politician and spokesperson on fishing-related issues), Eleanor Douglas (Cheam Elder) and Joe Alec (*Siyámlálexw*, Cheam Elder). I use specific quotes from several of these speeches in Chapter 7 as they highlight and verify many of my research findings in relation to the *Stó:lō* and our relationship with *Sth'ó:qwi* and the river. In terms of my experience of the day I would like to share what I wrote in my fishing journal:⁷¹

I could not help but feel worried we were all wasting our time. Why would we have anything to say to the Commissioner about the decline of the sockeye salmon except that when we managed the fishery you could walk on the backs of the salmon there were so many. I guess I am so jaded now about the whole thing.

I couldn't help but remember the time we met with the Minister of Justice. We met at the Friendship Centre in Vancouver and did the meeting in circle format. I recall the Minister getting up and leaving before the circle was complete, I remember knowing right then and there we had completely wasted, not only our thoughts, but our hearts. I knew nothing would be changing that everything would remain the same despite all the effort we put into trying to get this white man to understand. Just like Cohen this minister had all the power, we had none and although we were all speaking English there was a huge translation problem.

With Cohen's visit, they also did this in circle format and held it on the river bank under the Sam Douglas Memorial. Almost immediately upon arrival at the beach the DFO helicopters started circulating above us – what a colossal waste of tax payers money. I mean really. For today I guess a special three hour permit was issued so we could take Cohen out on a boat and have him experience our drift net fishing technique. I

⁷¹ This is actually a tamed down version of what I had originally written which, in original form, contained many expletives.

guess DFO had it on their mind to make sure we took one net out as specified on the special license. Am I the only one who sees how absolutely absurd this whole thing is? How are we supposed to live like this? I bet you anything Cohen left this "visit" and felt absolutely nothing about the (expletive removed) helicopters and the sport fishermen speeding up and down the river completely undisturbed and unmonitored by the DFO helicopter. No that helicopter was especially for us, of course. I wondered what he made of the (expletive removed) trains that kept interrupting our speakers as they tried to teach and educate Cohen on what our fish mean to us.

Seriously, it's like he came to visit a third world country and sat there with a smile on his face the whole time, while almost every form of oppression occurred right before us. You see he doesn't live like this every day of his life. No he will go home tonight to his beautiful home and almost guaranteed not a single train will disturb him, he won't be followed by a menacing helicopter and he certainly won't be taunted by people who have stolen what is his.

His speech pretty much solidified this as he spoke about how "good" he felt, how the beautiful setting and this experience brought back great memories of his childhood summers spent in Cultus Lake. All this feel good (expletive removed) sat wrong with me, it almost literally made me sick. In fact sitting here writing this I feel nauseous. I am pretty sure I would have felt better if he cried and wept, if he stood there and apologized for what it is worth, if he promised that he would use his position of privileged power to do what he can to right this extremely wrong situation.

That night Ernie and I had dinner with another couple who had also attended the day's events. We spoke a little bit about the Cohen visit, but I could tell that it was too political of a subject for us to have. It made me sad that we could not debate the situation with even some of our closest friends. I think that our silence and unwillingness to feel the discomfort of de-colonizing ourselves is partly why things don't change. Why we continue to be the have-nots and *S'ólh Téméxw* and *sxexo:mes* continue to be exploited and raped while we sit and pretend smile and do nothing!

I suggested that we could manage the entire river and fishery ourselves, like June had said earlier "co-management is just a buzz word, it doesn't really happen." I said we "own" the river, it is ours so why don't we manage it entirely. This is not such a far off thing, in fact this is something Cohen could recommend in his report." After I said it I felt like a crazed outcast or something. I am not sure why, in fact writing about this is helping me sort it out a bit. When I said it one member of the other couple had an odd smirk on her face, sort of like a "ya right, we don't have the ability to manage it properly" or something along those lines, like she doesn't believe in us as a people. Her husband just looked down at his plate. So I quickly withdrew. But it bothered me and I am not sure what bothered me more the fact that I stopped talking and withdrew or the fact that this type of dialogue was out of place. I can speak my mind

especially my warrior mind. I don't need all the answers, but I need to believe they will reveal themselves to us as we go and assert our determination. Yes, this is self-determination. Being clear on what I am determined to do.

Assembly of First Nations

July 2010

Assembly of First Nations Winnipeg BC

I will be the first to admit that when my husband Ernie decided to run for council of his community I was not thrilled about it. I am probably as much anti-*Indian Act* as I am anti-BCTC. I do however support how much his community means to him and his desire to take some leadership responsibility within his community. He ran for council in November 2009 and served a two year term; he ran again in the next election but was not re-elected for a second term. While he served his two year term as a councilor for his community he attended both community meetings as well as a few national meetings, the 31st annual Assembly of First Nations (AFN) held in Winnipeg July 2010 was one of them. I was not interested in attending, however when Ernie mentioned that Ovide Mercredi, a former National Chief for the AFN, lawyer and author would be there and that he could arrange for me to meet with him regarding my research, I agreed to go.

Ovide Mercredi is one of my dissertation teachers and I tape recorded and transcribed our meeting in Winnipeg which informs my chapter on leadership qualities and contemporary challenges. For this segment of my methodology on red pedagogy and ideas in motion, I will share my experience of listening to the assembly while I waited for my meeting with Mr. Mercredi. This is what I wrote when I returned:

July 19-22 2010 -This week I traveled to Winnipeg with Ernie for the 31st Annual Assembly of First Nations. This isn't something I would normally do as I am not a supporter of *Indian Act* politics; however Ernie lured me with the possibility of being able to interview Ovide Mercredi who would be in attendance. Ovide was the national Chief of the AFN from 1991 to 1997. It took quite a bit of persistence on my part, but I was able to secure an hour of his time on Wednesday July 21 2010. This interview is tape recorded so I won't repeat it here.

Ovide is a great speaker with a very gentle way about him. I watched him in action on Wednesday in the assembly as he worked to get his resolution concerning Treaties 1 to 11 passed. I believe the gist of the resolution is in asking the AFN for support in having these treaties adhered to and understood. The resistance seems to be coming from some of the individual treaty bands in that by acting collectively in this

way that somehow their individual voice will get lost as will the “spirit” of the treaty. One Leader spoke very passionately about how this treaty was a relative of hers. This sounded very odd to me. There were some who spoke as if their treaty had a life, a spirit of its own. This was a very different perspective on Treaty. Coming from the B.C. experience where a treaty is quite objectified and for most intents and purposes is just a piece of paper with foreign words on it. To see some cry when talking about treaty promises not being upheld as they dishonor the treaty itself was yet another paradigm shift for me.

Much of the resistance to the resolution seemed to be coming from mistrust – that is not trusting other treaty bands to speak for them or act in their best interest – not wanting to act collectively. An Elder spoke and said that “national” means to act collectively and not as individual *Indian Act* bands.”

Several others spoke out against it because of procedural issues, as in proper procedure had not been followed in getting this particular resolution to the floor. Many responded to the contrary, saying that proper procedure had been followed including proper cultural protocol as the assembly is opened each morning with a pipe ceremony.

I could tell from observing Ovide that he was becoming concerned with the way the debate was going and the tone it had taken on. He waited his turn at the mike and when it was his turn the first thing he said, and I will never forget this is “I am not a spiritual man” he then proceeded to speak very passionately about this issue, clarifying several misunderstandings including the fact that this resolution was about support and would in no way take the voice of each treaty away. As for the procedural issues, he asked that we move ahead and do what is right for the heart and not so much the mind – do what is right for your heart. I took this to mean to do what feels right and not what is dictated by Roberts rules of order. This I liked, this made sense to me – this is self-determination in action.

I honestly cannot say for sure that within the British Columbia context we will ever come to view a Treaty as a relative; perhaps if we did I might be more prone to support the process. The other issue that stood out for me is why do we continue to make Treaties with Canada when Canada has failed to uphold its obligations and promises made in previous treaties? Are we so naïve as to think that for some reason Canada will do a complete about face and decide to uphold our treaty, even though they have failed to do so with all other treaties?

A second issue that I was struck by was the diversity of issues being addressed by the assembly. The content of the resolutions being brought to the floor ranged from the repeal of section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, to education, health, Bio-

monitoring, some were national issues, some international while others were community specific. The quality of leadership in the room was just as diverse; some were very engaged and participating whole-heartedly, others were more passive, some simply sat in the back and said nothing, others were wandering in and out of the assembly. While I was impressed with the range and importance of the resolutions being drafted, I do question how effective can the assembly really be?

For example, it seems like a great forum, but what if half the people in the room change every two years when their communities go to election under the *Indian Act*? Under the current system the AFN represents over 600 First Nations across Canada, some of which are not necessarily a nation on their own but a “band” created by the *Indian Act*. So there are over 600 potential voters on any give issue all of whom are extremely diverse in personal education, skill level, area of expertise, knowledge in leadership and bureaucracy, not to mention what can be diverse community issues that they each represent. Can a community in the remote parts of Canada really be expected to put their minds to “First Nations Sovereignty over Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge” (Resolution 36-2010) when half their community is unemployed, with over-crowded living conditions and contaminated drinking water?

Reclamation of the Salish Sea

September 26 & 27 2010
Coast Salish Gathering 2010
Co-Management of Salish Sea
Swinomish, Washington D.C.

In September 2010 Ernie, as a Councilor for Cheam was scheduled to attend a meeting in Swinomish to discuss the co-management of the Salish Sea. All First Nations with a connection to the Salish Sea were invited and most were in attendance. The Salish Sea was a new name given in July 2010 to indicate the Puget Sound, the Juan de Fuca Strait and the Strait of Georgia area. While the name Salish Sea does not replace these “official” names, it does acknowledge the First Peoples of the area. While I would prefer to see our whole territory returned by being renamed in our original languages, I think this is a good start.

However, I do not think it quite goes far enough. First the term “Salish” was not explained or why this particular word was chosen. Does it mean “ocean” in one of our languages? As well in terms of “co-management” what exactly does that like look? Does

this mean First Nations will have equal say in what goes in or out of these waterways? In some respects the renaming of the sea “Salish” to indicate these waterways does demonstrate some level of respect until it is decided that it is not to replace the “old” names. That is, Salish Sea is not to replace the names Puget Sound, Juan de Fuca Strait and Strait of Georgia which of course to the Indigenous peoples are the “new” names. While I think it is a step in the right direction, I think it needs to go a bit farther.

At this gathering I did hear from several Coast Salish leaders who were making this very point. Several of them were adamant that simply renaming the sea was not enough, that it must also include equal say in the management of the waterways. Several spoke about their own laws in relation to the sea and that these laws need to be respected by everyone using the sea. One *Siyá:m* made the point that with this “new” name came “old” responsibilities, including laws that were thousands and thousands of years old. As an example, Elder Tom Sampson (*t̓esalaq*) then spoke about laws and teachings in relation to the sea.

The Power of Decolonization

October 24 & 25 2010

Sustainability Workshop, Xaytem & Cheam Hall

Cohosted by University of Portland & Cheam

For this gathering I was asked to give a presentation on processes of decolonization; in preparation for it I attended the first day sessions to listen and learn. I attended two sessions, one led by a young warrior I only know as Sa'ke'j who is married to a *Stó:lō* woman from Shxw'ōwhámél named Melody Andrews. Over the years I have had a few different conversations with each of them and have always had a great respect for their ability to maintain sovereign minds despite the onslaught of colonialism. Melody is in my opinion a strong *Stó:lō* matriarch-in-training who leads her community with an empowered voice that is true to her ancestry and her beliefs.⁷² I was not surprised therefore to hear her partner speak passionately about empowering our voices

⁷² I have interviewed Melody as a Shxw'ōwhámél *Siyá:m* on a few different occasions for various work-related research projects. One was for Coqualeetza and the impacts of B.C Hydro lines and another was for the University of the Fraser Valley for their Indigenizing Our Academy endeavours. Although the former was in 2007 and the latter was in 2009 they still stand out for me despite the fact that they were one of many interviews conducted and were several years ago as she is such a strong and sovereign mind.

and maintaining our sovereignty. I learned that he has literally put his life on the line to stand up for Indigenous life, twice, once with the Zapatista and another with Burnt Church. While this stood out for me, at the time I could not put words to why. I now know that because in the case of the Zapatista he was giving expression to solidarity and in the Burnt Church standoff, he explained that while he was out on a boat being chased by colonial authorities, he entered waters where the Canadian authorities had no jurisdiction he literally felt self-determination and freedom.

The second session that I attended was led by Mr. Tom Sampson (*ʔiesalaq*) from Tsartlip First Nation and Malahat, fluent SENĆOŦEN and *Hul'qumi'num* speaker who I had also heard speak back in September 2009 at the consultation symposium at Harrison Hot Springs and in September 2010 at the Salish Sea Co-management gathering in Swinomish. Mr. Sampson shared with us teachings of *ĆELÁNEN*⁷³ and *NE,HIMET*⁷⁴ which I discuss in further detail in Chapters Six through Nine. It was at this gathering that I heard Mr. Sampson speak for a third time and I finally mustered enough courage to ask if I might speak to him about my dissertation research.

My presentation was on day two and was held at the Cheam Community Hall. I did not journal this experience so I only speak of those things that stood out for me, even a year and a half later. One was that it was brought to my attention by someone in attendance that the *Stó:lō* people and our relatives had the technology to fish salmon to extinction, yet we never did. I had not thought about our skill as fisher people in terms of being superior, so this comment opened up my mind to concepts and ideas that helped me make important paradigm shifts.

Second, it was the first time I was talking to a mostly *Stó:lō* audience about decolonization. I used Poka Leanui's five step process: (1) recovery and discovery; (2) mourning; (3) dreaming; (4) commitment; and (5) action (2000). To be honest I am not sure how or if I was effective or even helpful. I remember feeling not entirely confident.

⁷³ SENĆOŦEN for *WSÁNEĆ* (Sannich) laws and teachings which form the basis for governance (Tom Sampson (*ʔiesalaq*), see also Claxton 2008:52).

⁷⁴ SENĆOŦEN for "mine to protect" and includes all one's responsibilities and resources as passed down from generation to generation (see Claxton 2008 and Mr. Sampson in Chapter 6 of dissertation).

What I do recall is being acknowledged by one of our most highly respected Elders who at the end of the session stood up and said my name. He said he remembered when I returned to *Stó:lō* territory⁷⁵ and is pleased with how far I have come. He said I had some good things to say. Being publicly acknowledged by this elder meant a lot to me, it made me feel good.

Disempowerment of BCTC Discourse

January 11 2011

SXTA – *Stó:lō* Nation Treaty meeting
Government House, Joe Hall, Jean Teillet

From the perspective of the Indigenous peoples of *S'ólh Téméxw*, most of whom have come to refer to themselves as the *Stó:lō*, all of our territory with the exception of the land involved in the 14 island treaties facilitated by Governor James Douglas from 1850 to 1854 is unceded, unsold and unconquered. That Indigenous title to the land has never been settled has come to be referred to as the “land question” and is the source of much debate and uncertainty in what is now called British Columbia.

In an attempt to settle the “land question” colonial governments and First Nations established the British Columbia Treaty Commission (BCTC) in 1992. The BCTC was established to facilitate the process of negotiations between the province, Canada and First Nations. Its main mandate is: facilitation, education and funding. Since its inception BCTC has finalized two small treaties, one with the Tsawwassen First Nation in 2009 and a second with the Maa-nulth who represent some of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations and whose Treaty was finalized in 2011.⁷⁶ The extremely slow pace and cumbersome process has been harshly criticized, not to mention the exorbitant cost to both tax-payers and Indigenous peoples with little benefit to either. I agree that the process itself is flawed and I have not found either the province or the federal

⁷⁵ As mentioned in my first chapter, from the time I was five until I turned 16 I was not raised in *Stó:lō* territory.

⁷⁶ The Lheidli T'enneh (Prince George) reached final agreement but in March 2007 it failed to be ratified by the Lheidli T'enneh membership; The Yale treaty has been ratified by its members and B.C. and is waiting on ratification by Canada; Tla'amin (Sliammon) has finalized its treaty but is waiting on ratification.

government to be sufficiently genuine in their desire to settle the land question with integrity.

In January 2011 I attended my first *Stó:lō* Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association (SXTA) meeting.⁷⁷ I am a member of Skowkale which is one of seven communities currently engaged in the British Columbia Treaty Commission treaty process. The seven communities (see Appendix A for map showing location) and their representatives are:⁷⁸

- Aitchelitz – Chief Angie Bailey
- Leq'á:mél – Chief Alice Thompson (*Mae'xe*)
- Popkum – Chief James Murphy
- Skawahlook – Chief Maureen Chapman
- Skowkale – Councillor Jeff Point (*A:yali:seleq'*)
- Tzeachten – Chief Glenda Campbell
- Yakweawkwoose – Chief Frank Malloway (*Siyémches*)

The negotiating team is:

- Senior Political Advisor – Grand Chief Joe Hall (*Skw'omkw'emexw*)
- Chief Negotiator – Jean Teillet
- Cultural Advisor – Albert (Sonny) McHalsie (*Naxaalhts'i*)
- Technical Advisor – Dr. David Schaepe

At the January SXTA meeting the chief treaty negotiator for the *Stó:lō* communities, Jean Teillet reported back to the *Stó:lō* treaty communities on what had occurred at the main table meeting of December 8 and 9th 2010. She let SXTA members know that at the meeting was the newly appointed B.C. Negotiator, Corinne Shepard who was replacing Margo Spence, whom quite honestly Jean was pleased had left. She let us know that most of the two day meeting was taken up with the Yale Treaty (see Appendix B for map) and its many implications.

⁷⁷ As noted I am anti-BCTC, not necessarily anti-Treaty but I do have several issues with the current process being used. I am also concerned with the withdrawal of the majority of the *Stó:lō* communities from the process. My preference would be to see all *Stó:lō* either engaged or agreeing to come up with a better process.

⁷⁸ <http://www.sxta.bc.ca/home.html> retrieved May 15 2012.

I tape-recorded this meeting and later transcribed it as well as taking notes during it. From my transcribed notes I have summarized her report as:

- Things are moving forward with the Yale treaty despite issues of access and overlapping claims
- Canada not as emphatic, but BC definitely pushing to finalize Yale treaty especially as they only have the Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth treaties to show for over 18 years of work
- In fact B.C. has told us they plan on moving forward with the Yale treaty “at all costs”
- Despite the Yale Chief being asked to engage in discussion with us to resolve conflict he has let us know that “not one word in his treaty is going to change” as a result of these discussions
- End result is that the *Stó:lō* will be treated like the Japanese, the Europeans or any group of people trying to access the Canyon
- Our position is that the Yale treaty not be finalized until there is a formal agreement between the Yale Band and other *Stó:lō* communities that have overlapping claims
- Despite several requests we have not seen any evidence put forward by the Chief of Yale band to show what he is basing his claim upon, despite the fact that we have put forward box after box, map after map of evidence backing our claim to the area

After Jean Teillet, Joe Hall⁷⁹, Tzeachten member and the Senior Political Advisor for SXTA also spoke about his concerns with the BCTC process and the implications of the Yale Treaty should it proceed as written. From my transcribed notes his main points relayed at the meeting were:

- That the Yale band was using the BCTC process to do what they failed to achieve via the court process, twice. That is the courts have already denied Yale the right to be the gatekeepers to the canyon, yet the BCTC process would be allowing it
- That should the Yale treaty proceed as written, it would result in increased conflict not only on the river but also in terms of court litigation which is costly and timely
- That both Canada and B.C treaty representatives have a difficult time understanding the complexity of how the canyon has historically been used by many different *Stó:lō* user groups, in fact Mr. Hall suggested that those at the

⁷⁹ Mr. Hall is also one of my dissertation teachers and is more thoroughly introduced at end of chapter.

table negotiating for Canada and B.C. are “over their heads” and are proving to be incapable of adequately dealing with the issues

- That Canada is interested in revitalizing treaty efforts so we continue to tell them that they can revitalize the treaty process by changing their mandate and “not coming to us with entrenched positions with respect to what can and cannot go into these treaties”
- That some Nations do seem to be giving up on the fight and accepting treaty terms that would be and are unacceptable to us
- Whether or not B.C. even has a right to share or manage resources is still an issue in court

Upon reflecting on this meeting there really were two things that stood out for me. One was the sophistication of the stance and argument being put forward by SXTA. The SXTA position, according to Mr. Hall is to go beyond what BCTC refers to as Treaty Settlement Lands (TSL) which to Mr. Hall is “just another reserve land but with less powers and more provincial interference” and develop a treaty that is unique to the *Stó:lō* and incorporates at some level all of our traditional territory. The difficulty with this position is BCTC seems to favor a cookie cutter approach whereby one size needs to fit all if BCTC is to finalize over 60 different treaties before the next millennium.

However, the second issue that stood out for me was how difficult a fight it was, both in terms of having the other parties understand us and what we expect from a treaty, but also in terms of the very process being used. For example, both Ms. Teillet and Mr. Hall spoke of the bias currently found at the negotiating tables with respect to the Yale treaty. BCTC claims to be the “protector of the process” yet is completely backing the Yale treaty, which not only calls portion of the process into question but completely ignores the position taken by several *Stó:lō* communities who also claim to have jurisdiction in the canyon. That especially British Columbia and for the most part Canada, are backing the Yale claim, and therefore disregarding the *Stó:lō* claim, without providing reasons or on what evidence they based this decision on has serious “negotiating” flaws that BCTC who is supposed to be the “protector of the process” is ignoring, and even, from the experiences of Ms. Teillet and Mr. Hall, supporting.

April 27 2011

Skowkale Band Meeting – SXTA & BCTC process
Skowkale Community Hall

Part of SXTA's mandate is to visit those communities still in the process and provide updates and field questions. They attended a Skowkale band meeting on April 27 2011 and our Chief at the time asked if I would attend. I reluctantly agreed as my experience at Treaty meetings thus far had been: (a) no one shows up; (b) people show up for dinner and door prizes but do not really want to be engaged in a dialogue concerning treaty; (c) meeting is not really about dialogue but more like an opportunity for Treaty staff to push Treaty propaganda; and (d) more often than not I leave the meeting feeling sad and sometimes even depressed. The Chief at the time was my brother so I agreed to go.

The only question I really had for them was “is now the best time to be negotiating a treaty?” I asked this question because there is a conservative government in power, negotiators still use racist ideologies like “nomadic” and we are still contending with uneducated questions like “does a treaty mean we will have to pay taxes?” Maybe we should wait, maybe we should educate our people first, maybe wait until those we are negotiating with are not the ones who were raised on racist ideologies. Unfortunately I do not think my questions were given adequate attention or even were taken seriously. Basically the response from the SXTA team was “look out your window” there is no land left, if you wait there will be no land with which to negotiate. I replied that the land isn't going anywhere, it has been here for thousands of years and in all likelihood is going to outlast us all.

But there was no space for my questions or even an adequate debate against them. The SXTA came across to me as very invested in perpetuating fear-based decision making, i.e., a “sign now or forever lose your land” mentality. It seemed like the discussion was really about the SXTA Chief Treaty negotiator, Jean Teillet convincing me that we have to sign our treaty tomorrow or lose it all. As I tried to make my points she kept interrupting me with an argument against it. I felt like I was in court. I felt somewhat bullied and even silenced in my own community band meeting. I retaliated by suggesting that maybe she was pushing Treaty because that is who is paying her salary. This did not go over very well at all. However, I still think it is something that needs to be taken into consideration when discussing such an important topic. Can we really have an honest discussion if some of us are in a conflict of interest? If you are *Stó:lō* living out on

the land and abiding by our *Stó:lō* laws and teachings, as opposed to working for the Treaty process and collecting a very generous salary for doing so, would your opinion of the current treaty making process be the same?

Cheam Governance and *Siyá:m* System: M.A. Thesis Defense

April 6 2011

Indigenous Governance MA program – John Swift
MA student defense Cheam Longhouse

On April 6 2011 I attended the Master's thesis defense for John Swift, a graduate student from the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria. Mr. Swift is Indigenous but not from Cheam or *Stó:lō*. I was invited to attend his defense by one of my dissertation teachers and Cheam *Siyá:m*, June Quipp. Mr. Swift's research was supervised by June; the focus and parameters were determined in consultation with June, the community, and the people he interviewed. He summarized it as:

Upon meeting with my community supervisor and the five participants in this research study, and explaining my research interests in Indigenous forms of governance and leadership development, there was a consensus that leadership and governance issues would be the focus of this project. This was due to participants voicing concerns that the Chief and Council governance system was detrimental to community affairs and was contributing to the creation of factions within Cheam—factions that were distorting the roles and responsibilities of community members as understood in relation to *Si:ya:m* governance. In addition, the participants wanted to have a research paper that reflected their experiences and understanding of *Si:ya:m* governance, contemporary governance challenges, and which could be used as a resource tool for future governance initiatives. (Swift 2011:7)

From an analysis of the interviews conducted, Mr. Swift (2011:5-6) identified the following four themes as pertinent issues to both contemporary leadership and *Si:ya:m* governance:

1. Disconnections between leadership and community members.
2. The distortion of Cheam governance roles and responsibilities.
3. Redefining the role and responsibility of Women.
4. Effects on Cheam Families.

Mr. Swift places both his methodology and his findings within the colonial context that continues to undermine effective Cheam governance. In other words, there is

difficulty in both looking at how things used to be and how they should be when we are currently, for all intents and purposes, still being colonized. For example he cites Tomkin's (2010) summation of the contemporary struggles that the Cheam, and I would argue that all band council systems, struggle with:

[B]and councils were, from their inception, structured to divide and disempower Indigenous communities. Within Cheam, this conflict manifests itself through palpable factionalism, between those that favor the protection of territories, and those that place greater value on the pursuit of economic development initiatives, as well as between those that have chosen to work within the system and those who reject it outright. (as cited in Swift 2011:11)

Cheam as with many *Stó:lō* communities is then burdened with the inevitable division that occurs within the community as families compete for political power (Tomkins as cited in Swift 2011:12). The internal colonialism, lateral violence, loss of voice and vision and smothering stagnation that then occurs is often mistaken as incompetency on the part of *Stó:lō* governance:

Essentially, the band council system works to make ongoing colonialism invisible by allowing the manipulation of band governance through levers embedded within a system created by the colonizers themselves. Provincial and federal governments appear distant from the functioning of band politics when in reality they continue to play a fundamental role in the governance of Indigenous communities. (Tomkins as cited in Swift 2011:12)

An important point implicitly made by Swift's research project with Cheam is that of: Do we really want to continue playing the singular and disempowering role of victim? Swift chose Cheam for his Master's project as he thought "it would be a great opportunity to work in a community that not only had a reputation for opposing the government with direct action, but that also had strong leaders who were grounded in their community" (Swift 2011:13).

Swift's project was helpful for me as it was grounded in reality, that is it does not deny the colonial context and implications, but also moves forward in having a look at how do we fix this? And the "we" is explicitly Indigenous people. The message I received and liked was "how long do we want to focus our efforts on blaming the government for

all our ails?” Rather, if we focus our attention on what would work better, might we be more fulfilled and content?

Another interesting dynamic that I experienced was the way in which Swift’s research, whether intentional or not, I am not sure, highlighted the divisions within the Cheam community. For example two of his participants chose to remain anonymous; one for undisclosed reasons the other “because the information provided in the interview might provoke certain community members to retaliate against his/her family” (Swift 2011:21). I really feel for this situation, as what it tells me is someone is being silenced and does not feel comfortable speaking his/her mind and worse he/she is probably not alone. To be able to voice what is on one’s mind is I think paramount to good governance. If our people cannot speak candidly or openly can we even begin to discuss good governance?

I also wondered about voices (i.e., Cheam families) that were entirely missing from this project on “Cheam governance.” For example, both of my husband’s families are from Cheam and their voices are not found in the report. His mother is from the Edwards family and his father is from the Victor family and neither of these families are represented by the findings of this research. This to me is extremely remiss as each of these families has an influential history pertaining to Cheam leadership and governance. If one of the two anonymous voices is from his family I will never know. How Mr. Swift chose who he decided to talk to is not entirely clear, but especially as he acknowledges the divisions created via the imposition of the band council election system, I am curious as to why he chose to speak to some families and not others?

When I returned home from Mr. Swift’s defense I asked my husband directly why he was not involved in this project. He simply replied that he was not asked.

Meeting other Independent Indigenous Nations

The Champagne and Aishihik signed their Self-Government agreement with the Government of Canada and the Government of the Yukon in 1993. In July of 2008 I was invited by the Yukon First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik to visit their community and share some of my understanding of justice issues. I accepted this invitation and was fortunate to take this journey with Professor John Borrows. At the time Professor Borrows taught at the University of Victoria law department and is Anishinabe, a member of the Chippewas.

It just so happened that a *Stó:lō* woman by the name of Margaret Commodore was also in the Yukon at this time so was able to join us during our visit. Ms. Commodore would become one of my dissertation teachers. It was here especially via Mr. Borrows that I became aware of the very many great accomplishments of Ms. Commodore while she resided in the Yukon, one of which that she served as the Minister of Justice (see Chapters Four and Ten for more on Ms. Commodore).

Over the course of this visit I also became aware of many of Mr. Borrow's accomplishments as well, which are several, e.g., he had obtained five different degrees and that his great great grandfather had signed the 1854 Treaty for the Chippewas. Despite the overwhelming company I was in, I did manage, without hesitation, to share several teachings from *Qwí:qwélstom* with the Champagne and Aishihik people, as was taught to me by many Elders. Nevertheless to say I was humbled by the company I was in would be an understatement.

This was the first time I have been to the Yukon and their territory is breathtakingly beautiful. As we traveled along the highway and visited several homes I could not help but notice the special and even intimate relationship the Champagne and Aishihik have with their territory. My visit was relatively short so I did not get to experience a much of their culture in terms of their Elders, Elders' knowledge, language, songs, customs and traditions. I did however get to see and experience a fair deal of their territory; their connection to their territory and their intimate knowledge of it was something that very noticeably played a central role in their lives and very rightfully was a great source of pride.

During my PhD studies I also was honored to make two separate visits to the Maori in New Zealand, my first in November 2008 and a second in April 2009. My first visit was to give a keynote address to a Maori Criminal Justice Forum. It was here I met many strong and vocal Maori women along with Moana Jackson, a Maori lawyer and leader in the justice field. I also was honored to meet Andrea Smith, an Indigenous activist and academic from the United States with several publications leading the field in the area of Indigenous women empowerment. I sat with two of New Zealand's leading Maori criminologists, Juan Tauri and Simone Bull, both of whom shared extensively with me in the challenges and successes of Maori justice.

What I came to appreciate during this visit was the strength of the Maori voice and their ability to unite and gather together to strengthen their position. Their hosting

ability is second to none and I will be forever grateful for the tremendous respect and high level of hospitality bestowed upon me during my entire visit. In my humble opinion the Maori are light years ahead of us here in Canada. They have already revitalized their language and New Zealanders and Maori alike can pursue an entire education completely in the Maori language. In fact the largest university in New Zealand is a Maori university offering a number of different degrees, all in the Maori language.

In terms of governance under the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) in 1867 the Maori were given four parliamentary seats in the House of Representatives under the Maori Representation Act (1867). In 2004 one such seat was held by Tariana Turia, a Maori member of the Labour Party. However, when her party supported the Foreshore Seabed Act introduced in 2004, which would give Crown complete jurisdiction and control over the foreshore and seabed without any recognition of the Indigenous rights and title of the Maori, Tariana quit the Labour Party and together with Pita Sharples formed the Maori Party.

Reserved seats for Maori in Parliament and the formation of a Maori Party are without parallel in the Canadian context. Of the fifteen or so treaties signed with Canada not one includes a reserved seat in Parliament or a Provincial Legislature. And while Indigenous people do become members of Parliament, it would do Canada well to have reserved seats for Indigenous members. It is long overdue for Elijah Harper to have some company and for others to go down in the history books with him.

Dissertation Teachers

While all of the previous experiences have in some way assisted me in coming to understand self-determination and its many challenges, I also wanted to speak with people who are currently engaged in leadership positions. One of the challenges I faced was in deciding with whom to talk. For example we have *Indian-Act* chiefs and councilors, we have cultural leaders, elders, spiritual workers, youth workers, matriarchs, name-carriers and educators all of whom are considered to be providing leadership to the *Stó:lō* people albeit in various capacities and intensities. Given this diversity, I struggled in how best to determine to whom I would speak. If I decided to speak only with *Indian Act* leaders I would not be given a complete picture, if I spoke only with cultural leaders my findings would be restricted, and if I were to pick one from each

category how would I pick which one? Ultimately, I decided to abide by a *Stó:lō* teaching that when you want to learn about something you make the request and then stay open to the teachers and teachings that will be put on your path to meet your request.

Dissertations Teachers

Over the years of my dissertation studies I had many many conversations with people along the way about self-government, self-determination, sovereignty and independence. In keeping with a *Stó:lō* teaching, many of the words shared with me are now my own and inform the ways in which I have come to make sense of the world. The following people are the ones who I have come to refer to as my dissertation teachers. They are the ones who ended up on my path on so many occasions, over an extended period of time and often in the oddest places (e.g., in the Yukon in the case of Margaret, in the Longhouse in the case of Corky, from a “simple” telephone call in the case of Patricia Kelly) that it was easy for me to decide they would be individuals I wanted to learn more from and include in the written portion of my dissertation.

My dissertation teachers are the ones I personally approached and requested a personal meeting time. In preparation for our meeting I provided them with the following conversation guide although I let them know that it was just a guide that they were welcome to follow or not:

1. How is self-determination defined and given expression by the *Stó:lō*?
2. In what ways is this being supported and/or hindered by Canada’s colonial regime?
3. What is Indigenous governance and what are Indigenous governing principles?
4. What is your vision or your dreams for your people?
5. What do you hope is different, if anything, for your great grandchildren?
6. As Indigenous peoples, what are the main challenges we have to overcome?
 - a. How do you suggest we overcome them?
7. What is self-determination to you?
8. What teachings from your ancestors reflect this understanding?

Some of my dissertation teachers used these questions while others did not. For some we met once, while for others we met on two separate occasions. Each session was a minimum of two hours long. I tape-recorded each meeting and in May and June of 2011 I transcribed each file myself. From my ten dissertation teachers I ended up with over 200 pages of single spaced notes on a broad range of leadership topics. I provide an analysis of what I learned in Chapter 9.

The ten leaders I spoke to, whom I have come to refer to as my Dissertation Teachers are:

Ovide Mercredi	Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Mr. Mercredi is Cree from Grand Rapids Manitoba. He received his law degree from University of Manitoba in 1977 and served two terms as the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations from 1991 to 1997. He co-authored <i>In The Rapids: Navigating the Future of First Nations</i> with Mary Ellen Turpel (1993). He has met with and assisted numerous <i>Stó:lō</i> leaders over the years. It was during one of these visits that I first met Mr. Mercredi in 2000.
Siyolia June Quipp	<i>Siyolia</i> , Cheam matriarch and former Councilor for Cheam. <i>Siyolia</i> whose name means "Great Spirit Protector" is one of twenty-one children born to Albert and Edna Douglas. Both her father Albert (Chief from 1952-1969) and her older brother Sam (Chief from 1969-1992) served as Cheam leaders for most of her life so "Indian" politics and governance have always been a part of her life and kitchen table discussions. She herself has served as the Chief of Cheam and a Councilor over the years. She is the community supervisor for the Indigenous Governance M.A. students from University of Victoria. She has been married to Freddie Quipp for 45 years and together they have three children, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. One of her grandchildren is my nephew. I have known June for over 15 years and have turned to her for advice and guidance on many issues under many different circumstances.
Siya:mteleq Corky Douglas	Cheam member working with National Centre for First Nations Governance. Charles (Corky) Douglas is one of June's younger brothers and is currently on Council at Cheam (he was not when we spoke about my dissertation but was elected onto Council in 2012). Over the years Corky and I have shared a similar interest in self-government and self-determination and often find ourselves discussing these topics when we see each other at various community gatherings and events. Corky was the first Cheam band member to obtain a law degree.
Margaret Commodore	<i>Th'ewá:lí</i> community member, past Justice Minister for Yukon Territory, first elected to Yukon Legislature in the general election of 1982. Margaret (Muggsy) Commodore was influenced by both her grandmothers Amy Cooper (<i>Stó:lō</i>) and May Prest (Kwakiutl). She is the eldest daughter of William Commodore and Theresa Jean Prest. She was born in the 1930s and attended Port Alberni Residential School from seven years of age to around 15 years of age. Muggsy spent many years living in the Yukon where she achieved tremendous success for herself and for Indigenous women through positions of power such as Justice of the Peace, four terms as a MLA and various women-centred organizations. She herself is very humble about her unbelievable accomplishments and achievements that she obtained often against tremendous odds. Thankfully part of her achievements and journey is chronicled in a text on Yukon's Women of Power (Hayden, 1999). I first met Margaret when she agreed to help with <i>Qwi:qwélstom</i> in 2001, since this time our paths continue to cross in several different ways and we have stayed in touch since.

Otis Jasper	Chief of <i>Th'ewá:li</i> , young <i>Stó:lō</i> <i>Siyá:m</i> and recent graduate from UBC. Otis is the youngest of my dissertation teachers and is currently heavily involved in the political arena as Chief of his community and political advisor for the <i>Stó:lō</i> Tribal Council. I first met Otis in 2004 when he began his academic studies at the Institute of Indigenous Governance in Vancouver, BC. He eventually transferred to UBC where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in First Nation studies. I have enjoyed numerous conversations with Otis over the years regarding Indigenous empowerment and self-government.
Dr. Dave Schaepe (<i>Tl'eq'telemexw</i>)	Sr. Archaeologist for the <i>Stó:lō</i> , Co-Director of <i>Stó:lō</i> Research and Resource Management Centre, recently completed dissertation on <i>Stó:lō</i> pithouse size and location as indicators of social organization and a <i>Siyá:m</i> class. While Dr. Schaepe may not be <i>Stó:lō</i> or Indigenous, he has lived in <i>Stó:lō</i> territory for many years and has worked with <i>Stó:lō</i> organizations for over 15 years. He has completed several <i>Stó:lō</i> projects that pertain to <i>Stó:lō</i> governance and it is our common interests in this area that has led to us working on several projects together and his eventual contributions to my dissertation studies. I have known "Dr. Dave" for over twelve years and have come to respect and honor the work he does for the <i>Stó:lō</i> people.
Ken Malloway	<i>Ts'elxwéyeqw</i> Hereditary <i>Siyá:m</i> and current name carrier of <i>Willilég</i> . Ken Malloway has been involved in <i>Stó:lō</i> politics and leadership for the duration of his adult life. He is an avid <i>Stó:lō</i> fisherman and is actively involved with negotiations with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I cannot remember when I first met Kenny, but feel I have known him my whole life. We are connected by both tribe (the <i>Ts'elxwéyeqw</i>) and ancestry through <i>Willilég</i> and <i>T'xwelátse</i> . Kenny is an avid and 'gifted' storyteller. His recollections and experiences are filled with valuable knowledge and teachings that validate and legitimate the <i>Stó:lō</i> people.
Joe Hall	Former Chief of Tzeachten and current Senior Political Advisor for six <i>Stó:lō</i> bands (Skowkale, Tzeachten, Squiala, Yakweakwioose, Skwahahlook, Aitchelitz) remaining in BCTC process. Mr. Hall has completed a continuity of service to the <i>Stó:lō</i> people that has been matched by very few. He has served for 25 consecutive years at <i>Stó:lō</i> Nation and 30 consecutive years as Chief or Councilor for his community Tzeachten. In <i>Stó:lō</i> ways he is my Dad's brother as their fathers are brothers. Aside from his long standing career in "Indian" politics, Joe is also an avid athlete who excelled at sports not only himself but as a coach of numerous teams in both soccer and fastball.
ʔesalaq Tom Sampson	<i>ʔesalaq</i> , fluent SENĆOŦEN and <i>Hul'qumi'num</i> speaker from Tsartlip First Nation and Malahat. I cannot recall when I first met Mr. Sampson but I knew I had to speak to him if I wanted to learn anything in an original language. As things tend to go he was put upon my path on four different occasions during my dissertation research which then gave me the courage to ask if he would speak with me directly regarding Indigenous governance. It is through his sharing of his own languages that I was better able to come to understand <i>Stó:lō</i> governance and leadership and identify <i>Halq'eméylem</i> terms that speak directly to this. I know he empowered me in ways I have yet to discover and want him to know I am being and always will be "care-full." <i>Yálh yuxw kw'as hó:y</i>
Kw'ítsetl Tatel Patricia E. Kelly	<i>Kwítsetl Tatel</i> , <i>Stó:lō</i> mother and fisherwoman. Ms. Kelly is a member of the <i>Leq'á:mel</i> community and is the mother of two children. Her parents are Renee Pennier and Patrick Walter Kelly. Her maternal ties are from Chehalis to <i>Th'ewá:li</i> and her paternal ties are with Nooksack, Lummi and LaConnor. I first met Patricia in 1997 when we engaged in our first of what would be endless discussions pertaining to self-government, identity and colonialism.

What has been shared with me by my dissertation teachers will stay with me for many years to come and assist me in a variety of different ways. I provide an analysis of their teachings in my Chapter on *Stó:lō* Leadership. But in keeping with *Stó:lō* teachings, I have and did internalize most of what was taught to me and have incorporated their words into my understanding of *Stó:lō* leadership and good governance.

Chapter 5.

The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* and Location of Self in an Indigenous Research Methodology

The location of self is an integral component to an Indigenous research methodology. My adherence to this component proved to be both an act of decolonization and an act of personal empowerment. It meant I discovered who I am and my ties and responsibilities to my people. It gave me credence and authority to do the work I do, it gave my voice strength. Locating myself within my research afforded the opportunity to reconnect with my community, to remember my ancestry and teachings, to revise those parts that may have been misunderstood due to colonial gazes, to reclaim that which belonged to me (the *Stó:lō*), to rename by exploring my Indigenous language and bringing this back into memory and use, and to recover what I knew to be my historical truth.

Processes of Decolonization

An equally important step to locating self and centering *Stó:lō* ways of knowing to an IRM is the need to decolonize my mind, body, emotions and spirit. Decolonization is a prerequisite to the Indigenous empowerment movement. It needs to occur on both an individual and a collective level. Without decolonizing our mind, body, emotions and spirits individually and collectively we run the risk of simply stepping into the roles, systems and infrastructure of the colonial society. A colonial society and its ideologies are never about Indigenous empowerment, even if Indigenous people are running that society.

While I benefitted personally by decolonizing, it also broadened my comprehension of the terms self-determination and *Stó:lō* governance in a way that truly honors and respects *syuwá:lelh* (my ancestral teachings and laws). I simply would not

be able to do so with a mind imprisoned by colonialism, in this way not only do I benefit personally from my journey in decolonization, but so too does my research and the collective to which I belong.

Physical Decolonization

I decolonized physically by reclaiming and respecting my physical being. I did this by paying attention to the food I ate and, when able, opting for foods directly from my ancestors, such as salmon, cranberries and blueberries, and avoiding processed foods, wheat and dairy. This was not easy as my access to salmon is harshly regulated by colonial governments and others now claim cranberries and blueberries as their own. Accessing Indigenous plants, berries and roots such as stinging nettles (*th'éxth'ex*), cranberries (*qwemchó:ls*), bracken fern (*ptá:kwem*) and camas (*xwōqw'ó:ls*) was nearly impossible due, not only to my own ignorance, but also to development and lack of access to where these foods naturally grow. The concept of “Indigenous food sovereignty” was first brought to my attention at an Indigenous Food Sovereignty gathering at one of our local Longhouses. Up until this point I had not considered my ability to eat traditional foods as a “right” so to speak.

I was careful not to deprive myself of physical activity and sleep. This required me to “listen” to my body, something I was not accustomed to doing. Sleeping when my body needed it was not easy. Being a mother I had come to see sleep deprivation as normal, not realizing I was robbing my body of the time it needs to re-energize and revitalize. By exercising, eating well, and getting enough sleep I promoted healthy living to those around me. My physical exercise included learning a new skill called Brazilian jiu jitsu. Especially as an Indigenous woman this was empowering. It was about “reclaiming” my own body and learning what it is capable of doing. Naturally, I knew it was sacred as it had provided life three times, but reclaiming my body was a huge step for me. I came to see it as important not only for my own self-esteem but for housing my spirit. Taking jiu jitsu lessons was challenging on several different levels; it was about being fit, healthy and comfortable in my own body. This is especially of importance to women, in particular Indigenous women whose physical being has been stolen by the colonial process that has objectified us and our bodies, until we were viewed as less than human and inherently rapable. Reclaiming my body was a powerful expression of self-determination.

Spiritual Decolonization

As mentioned in the previous chapter I began to decolonize myself spiritually by paying attention to *milha* the *Stó:lō* Winter Spirit Dance and the teachings of our *Smilha'áwtxw* (winter dance building) or Longhouse. I re-acquainted myself with many *Siyelyólexwa* (Elders) and *syuwá:lelh* (ancestral teachings). I found a new respect for old ways and a better understanding of my role and responsibilities as a *s'ep'ós* (ones who don't wear paint). This spiritual journey I know is a lifelong one and one afforded the most amount of respect, and I do not mean to devalue it by writing about it. In fact there is no point in writing about it as one cannot learn from *milha* through written words. It has to be experienced and teachings are shared orally and through *Qwóqwel*. I simply share here a bit of history regarding *milha* and the *Stó:lō*.

Milha has been a part of the *Stó:lō* for thousands of years and is considered one of our *sxexo:mes* (sacred gifts). The teachings of *milha* include *syuwá:lelh* which form the basis for *Stó:lō* laws, customs and traditions, including laws of governance and how to live together in a good way. It has been a part of *Stó:lō* custom and tradition to practice *milha* every winter since time immemorial. This means that for up to four months of the year the people are gathering together to affirm laws, culture, ceremonies and a way of life that ensure *Stó:lō* knowledge is being kept alive and passed from generation to generation. *Milha* is the “time for teaching” (Tom Sampson (*t'esalaq*) September 29, 2009, Harrison Hot Springs). Within *milha* are laws and teachings that respect and promote personal autonomy, which in turn strengthens the entire society.

During *milha* ancestral names are verified, kinship ties are strengthened, laws are reaffirmed and internalized, and people are afforded invaluable opportunities to visit the entire *Stó:lō* territory which is given its Indigenous (i.e., real) “boundaries” through shared languages and by those who practice *milha* and those who don't, or *lets'ó:lmexw* (different people). That is the “Nation” to which the *Stó:lō* belong can be defined by those who are *Xwélmexw* or “of the same people” and practice the ancient tradition of *milha*.

From the early 1900s until 1951, due to the anti-potlatch law⁸⁰ of the *Indian Act*, it was illegal for the *Stó:lō* to practice *milha*. The impact this had on *milha* is still being felt today. Thankfully there were several *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* who knew to defy this racist and colonial law and took our *milha* and its teachings underground. While I see the effects colonization has had on *milha*, I see them as more a result of us as individual people than on the ancient custom that is just as strong as it was before colonization. That is, I agree with Mr. Sampson that we lack discipline today, and that it is this deficiency that weakens us, not *milha*. Another strength of *milha* is in its ability to revitalize our own languages as more and more *Smilha'áwtxw* are using Indigenous languages and *Qwóqwel* are making efforts to learn their own language and the proper *Halq'eméylem* terms for all things *milha*.

Emotional Decolonization

"Alienation, the psychological effect of feeling/being disconnected, is a flagrant result of colonization. Condolence is very much a part of reconnecting. Reconnecting to a source of power – the natural world. It requires a decolonization of the heart, and connecting it to the two aspects of nationhood: people and place" An Elder's Reflection⁸¹

I decolonized emotionally by learning about trauma and trauma responses at a personal level as well as by noting how trauma is impacting our ability to govern. As Indigenous peoples we are still suffering the effects of both colonial and historical trauma and these effects can and do impact our ability to govern in a good way. Part of the difficulty is that the challenges we often face in our ability to govern ourselves are not placed within any historical socio-political context let alone a colonial one:

The past five hundred years have been devastating to our communities; the effects of this systematic genocide are currently felt by our people. The effects of the genocide are quickly personalized and pathologized by our profession via the diagnosing and labeling tools designed for this purpose. If the labeling and diagnosing process is to have any historical truth it should incorporate a diagnostic category that reflects the effects of

⁸⁰ This was *section 149* of the *Indian Act* and while it came into effect in 1884 it was not consistently enforced within *Stó:lō* territory until around 1915 see Chapter 10 for further information.

⁸¹ <http://taiaiake.posterous.com/> retrieved November 30 2011.

genocide. Such a diagnosis would be “acute and/or chronic reaction to colonialism.” (Duran and Duran 1995:6)

Learning about trauma is difficult. It is mentally challenging, emotionally draining, physically debilitating and overly reliant on spirit to cope and hopefully reach understanding. Learning how to respond to trauma is even more taxing. Part of the difficulty is that the very study of trauma exposes one to situations and events that are often beyond the “normal” realm of thought let alone within most people’s repertoire of human interaction. To study trauma means one must be willing to “come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature” (Herman 1997:7).

Indigenous Responses to Trauma

As Indigenous people we are exposed to two levels of trauma: personal trauma and collective trauma. Collective trauma is a result of being the targets of colonial policy, especially through the residential school system. Collective trauma is the result of having social fabrics (leadership, kinship, culture, relations) completely and violently destroyed. Exposure to collective trauma weakens the individual making him/her more susceptible to personal trauma. Personal trauma includes witnessing or experiencing violence, including sexual assaults. Being subjected to racism also induces trauma at both collective and personal levels. The fact that unresolved trauma is passed on to the next generation has huge implications for Indigenous people, as trauma is both intergenerational and cumulative (Duran 2006:16).

Symptoms of Chronic Trauma

Symptoms noted by Herman (1997) in relation to chronic or repeated trauma include: (1) a sense of helplessness; (2) inability to trust; (3) constant state of alertness; (4) overly reliant on nonverbal communication; (5) avoiding or placating abuser; (6) double thinking; (7) double self; (8) sleep disturbances, eating disorders, gastrointestinal complaints, and numerous other bodily distress symptoms after having endured years of inability to regulate biological functions in a safe, consistent and comforting environment; (9) self-destructive symptoms such as self-mutilation; (10) shut down (or dissociative or disconnect states of being); (11) chronic anxiety and depression; (12) ordinary interpersonal conflicts invoking intense anxiety, depression or rage; (13) dissociative

coping styles that put survivors at risk of further re-victimization; (14) in extreme cases, adult survivors failing to protect or neglect their own children, although the majority may be able to mobilize caring and protective capacities for their children even if unable to extend it to themselves (Herman 1997:96-114).

Residential School Trauma (RST) Symptoms

Symptoms of Residential School syndrome (RSS) are closely related to those of PTSD with three marked differences: (1) there is a significant cultural impact; (2) a persistent tendency to abuse alcohol and drugs, which may be associated with violent outbursts of anger; and (3) deficient parenting skills (Brasfield 2001 as cited in Corrado et al. 2003:23).

Trauma Recovery

Thus, a huge step in Indigenous empowerment is trauma recovery. There are two different processes of recovery for personal and collective trauma. According to Herman the social context required by the individual victim of trauma is a personal network of friends, lovers and family (1997:9). For collective trauma the social context needed is a political movement that will empower and lend voice to the disempowered (Herman 1997:9), something I hope this dissertation is doing. Thus, true healing for Indigenous people will require a multi-faceted response. Acknowledgement of Canada's colonial mistreatment and the desire to engage in "liberation discourse" that is historically honest and has a "critical eye to the processes of colonization that have had a deep impact on the identity of Original Peoples" (Duran 2006:1) is a productive first step.

A second step requires Indigenous people to stand up and take charge of the ways in which we are going to heal. This is no easy task by any stretch of the imagination; awareness of trauma and recovery from trauma is hard work and extremely painful. But to lay this responsibility aside will only add to the cumulative trauma to be passed on to future generations. We already see the effects of this in our youth. We also see their strengths. The work for future generations is definitely cut out for them; they will need to rebuild many things, they will have to help many people understand how to live in harmony with the natural world and take direction from it; they will have to re-teach many people how to be respectful, honest and how to treat one another humanely;

restoring human dignity is part of their work. But to continue weeping, crying, acting out violently and barely surviving is not the work of future generations.

Collective Response

Research undertaken by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation has resulted in the development of a healing from historical trauma model (Kishk Anaquot Health Research 2001, 2002, 2003; Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski 2004 as cited in Archibald 2006:26):

Phase 1	Creating a personally and culturally safe environment where the impacts of history, including the legacy of abuse in residential schools, can be safely explored. Reconnecting with culture plays a significant role in this process.
Phase 2	Remembering and mourning personal losses, as well as those of parents, grandparents and ancestors.
Phase 3	Dreaming, building and rebuilding healthy relationships and giving back to family and community in the spirit of self-determination.

Much of the Indigenous resiliency and ability to recover from trauma may be attributed to our strong sense of spirituality or in some cases religion. According to Boehnlein (2007), questions posed by the survivors of traumatic events quite often can only be answered by religious and spiritual realms as the very essence of life can be called into question. Connor, Davidson and Lee (2003) hypothesized that the effects of violent trauma may be buffered by spiritual affirmation (487). Rousseau and Measham (2007) looked at cultural responses that minimize the effects of exposure and the collective positive responses, or transformations that can come out of trauma. I personally witnessed this to be true with respect to *milha* and the *Stó:lō*.

Decolonizing Is Empowerment

I knew that decolonization is a beginning and is not the only constituent to self-determination; to simply equate self-determination with the act of decolonization is to dream half a dream, to provide half a vision. It meant I had to personally experience my research interests, that is to discover for myself what it means to be self-determining. My personal journey in coming to understand the concept of self-determination is one of release, empowerment and expansion of vision and personal agency. As such it was often painful and exhausting, freeing my “self” from colonial shackles was not easy. But as I released my being from them they came to be replaced with an energy, a state of

being that included excitement, joy and a “knowing” that is hard to put into words. I came to see things differently, feel things differently, I had a clarity of mind I had never had before. This was thrilling for me, I found I wanted to re-read everything I had ever read on the subject. I discovered new meaning in old words. I was seeing things I had missed, making connections and building with ease and grace. Self-determination for me was about self-empowerment. As a feeling, it meant a state of being that resided within me that could not be altered by others without my consent. My personal experiences in coming to understand self-determination meant I knew my truths, truths that could not be altered by frivolousness, ignorance or uncaring.

As I decolonized I was also becoming aware of who I am. For years I had defined myself by the things that I did, such as academic accomplishments and my career. After two years into my PhD program I knew I would not be able to continue working full time and complete a PhD and be a mom and wife. Something had to go. After having worked heart and soul for eight years, I quit my job as the Director for the Stó:lō Nation justice department. As I detoxed (that I had been a workaholic became painfully obvious), I wrote my first comprehensive exam in theory. Upon the advice of one of my personal Xá:ls, the late Dr. Liz Elliott, I studied Trauma theory and its relation to Indigenous people. In so doing I was forced to look at my own trauma and reasons for hiding in my work. I was forced to look at collective trauma and its inter-generational effects. This time spent learning and healing as I wrote my comprehensive exam was transformational. I give gratitude to Xepá:y,⁸² who took much of my pain and washed it away, without whom I am not sure I would have been able to complete my transformation. Alone I did not have enough strength to carry so much pain and trauma.

With pain and suffering such as this there also comes enlightenment. I now know who I am and how it differs from what I do. My willingness to face trauma in all its ugly forms also allowed me to begin exploring who I really am.

⁸² Xepá:y is the name of a Stó:lō man who was transformed into cedar by Xexá:ls. One Stó:lō sacred ceremony involves the “brushing off” with cedar, in so doing we can release negative energy to him. When I had completed my comprehensive exam (all together was a 28 day process) I took all the cedar boughs that carried my tears and sorrow to the water.

I Am *Ts'elxwéyeqw*

Éy Swáyel, *Siyá:m* tel *Siyólexwe* tel Si:yá:ya qas te tselh *Xwélmexw*.
Qwi:qwelstom tel skwíx. Te lítsel kw'a Skowkale qas te *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

Good day Respected Leaders, my Elders, my Friends and relatives. I
am Wenona; I am from Skowkale and the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* Tribe.⁸³

Over the years I have taken three *Halq'eméylem* classes that have enabled me to “read” *Halq'eméylem*, although not to necessarily understand what I am reading. To be able to see a *Halq'eméylem* word and know that I can come fairly close to pronouncing it properly is important to me. Learning to speak *Halq'eméylem* is even more empowering. This is not, however, an easy undertaking. It is not like learning to speak English, French, Mandarin or Spanish. The *Halq'eméylem* language, like most Indigenous languages, has been violently attacked by colonial policy aimed at its eradication. Access to this language is therefore difficult and requires effort and time that for most Indigenous peoples is required for mere survival. For me to learn to introduce myself in *Halq'eméylem* was a huge undertaking that actually started twelve years ago when I took my first *Halq'eméylem* language class.

Building upon my previous two classes, in April 2011 I submitted a proposal to my Band office to see if we could hire *Th'eseemia* (Skowkale member and *Halq'eméylem* teacher) to teach *Halq'eméylem* to interested community members. My proposal was accepted for ten classes during the months of May and June 2011. There was not a whole lot of interest from my community, over the ten week period we had several different people take a class here and there, the only consistent students were my three children, one of my nieces and myself.

I didn't mind, it was like the Band had hired a personal teacher for me and my children (I include my niece in this). We sang, danced and spoke in *Halq'eméylem*, it was a fantastic family experience. I was acutely aware that *Halq'eméylem* had not been spoken in my family since my great grandparents John and Nellie Hall. All my children now can greet people in *Halq'eméylem*, introduce themselves in *Halq'eméylem* and

⁸³ It is my understanding so far that if one is not from *Ts'elxwéyeqw* you pronounce it Ch'elxwéyeqw, but if you are from this tribe then you pronounce it *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

know where they are from. As a mother I couldn't be more proud (even if on occasion they tend to put Cheam before Skowkale).

***Sqwéiqwel* from the Hall Family**

On my Dad's side I am from the Hall family, my grandparents are the late Gordon and Blossom Hall. My Mother is *Xwelitem*, from the Kickbush family and *Lexexéq* (Luckakuck) corner. My paternal Grandmother Blossom is Chinese and is from Jamaica. My grandfather enrolled in the Army and was sent to train in Jamaica. While there he met my grandmother and fell in love. They had my Dad, Bob Hall Sr. who was born in Jamaica and spent the first two years of his life there. My grandmother came from a wealthy family who owned several bakeries in Jamaica. She and her family had servants to cook and clean and my father was raised by a nanny.

When my Dad was still an infant, my Grandfather returned to Canada and his home on the Skowkale reserve. Although he had joined the army he retained his status, unlike many others who had to relinquish their status in order to fight for their country. When my Dad was seven months old, my Grandmother made her first attempt to move to Canada to join my Grandfather on the Skowkale reserve. She shared with me that she made it as far as California but that while there she had gone out in the early evening in search of milk for my Dad. She was stopped by army personnel and admonished for being out in the street at this time. She called her mother in tears, terrified, alone and with a 7 month old baby. Her mother ordered her back on a plane to Jamaica.

When my Dad was two, she tried again, successfully this time, to join my grandfather in his home. I still chuckle when I think about my Grandmother leaving all her riches and comfortable life to come and live on the Skowkale rez with my Grandpa. With my grandfather her home became a two room shack with an outhouse. There was no electricity and no running water. This on top of the fact that my Grandmother had no idea how to cook or clean let alone look after my father; I can just imagine the strain they must have felt. I also can imagine the amount of love my Grandmother had for her husband. My Grandfather's Mom (Nellie) and Grandmother (*Ilhót*, Annie) came to live with her to help look after my Dad and teach my Grandmother how to survive without running water and electricity let alone without servants. In a strange twist of fate however, it was my grandmother's weaknesses that led to opportunities of strength for herself and her first born son. Both my Grandmother and my Dad (her first born son)

were taught by *semelá:lh Stó:lō* women as they came from a high status *Stó:lō* family (T'ixwelátsa). Both women spoke *Halq'eméylem* and passed many teachings on to my Grandmother and my Dad. My Grandmother would outlive my grandfather by over 30 years and came to be respected as a *Stó:lō* elder even though she was Chinese and born in Jamaica.

Until my Grandfather (Gordon), my family resided on what is now Tzeachten reserve. As was customary, my grandfather as a young boy was sent to live with an Uncle, known as Jack Skowkale and his wife Agnes (sister to Kate, my great,great grandmother and daughters of Old Joe) on Skowkale. His Uncle Jack was from *Qweqwe'ópelhp* (KwawKwawpilt), related to Pat Joe, but upon marrying Agnes moved to Skowkale. When my grandfather went to live with his Aunt and Uncle on Skowkale he cried and cried so was eventually sent back to his parents on Tzeachten. However, upon leaving, his Uncle and Auntie showed him a spot of land that would be his once he cleared it. When old enough he did return to clear the land and raise his family on the Skowkale reserve. He would eventually become Chief and raise his six children on Skowkale, the reserve of which I and two of my children are currently members.

I share this *sqwélqwel* of my family for many reasons. First to acknowledge my ties to several of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* communities both in terms of ancestry and spiritual ties and connection to the territory. Second, to acknowledge that one's "identity" is never as black and white as the *Indian Act* and registry system wants us to believe. My spirit and my intuition tell me without doubt who I am; but my mind has often questioned my identity as a member of the *Stó:lō* people. For years I would not acknowledge my *Xwelítem* ancestors; I was ashamed to be white. I have since come to see that my identity is mine alone, no one except me, can take it from me. Once I realized this I was able to accept all of me, including my *Xwelítem* family and ancestors. However, I have been claimed by my *Xwélmexw* ancestors, for this I am grateful.

In this journey of "identity" I have reclaimed and recovered; I have come to see how it is layered and inter-connected between my community Skowkale, to my tribe the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*, to a "supratribal" identity of *Stó:lō* (that unites up to 12 different tribes) and to a nation identity of *Xwélmexw* (to be of the same, same family as defined by our languages, cultures and traditions) that unites all Longhouse people who practice *Milha*.

***Ts'elxwéyeqw* Territory**

Ts'elxwéyeqw territory starts between Cheam and Elk Mountains, includes the Chilliwack Lake and Chilliwack River areas, and extends south to Nooksack and west to where Sumas Lake used to be. It includes all of what is now known as Chilliwack. Our northern boundary is marked by the Peló:lxw (Pilalt) and Tait tribes on the north eastern side of us, the *Semá:th* on the western, and the Nooksack tribe to the south. As shared with me by *Wililéq* (Ken Malloway):

My grandpa would take me outside and say *Ts'elxwéyeqw* tribal territory go over that way between elk mountain and mount Cheam and go that way and go in direct line back behind the mountains behind Chilliwack lake and go right to where Skagit is and come around border to Skagit territory below Chilliwack lake and come around all the way this way Chilliwack valley and come over where Sumas lake used to be and take line right there and go down to mouth of Sumas River, Devils run and that's part of our boundary.

Then go up middle of river and get to kwapilth slew and that boundary between Chilliwack and Pilalt tribes. The boundary kind of...they put Wellington road right on top of what used to be a trail and it was a boundary. So where Wellington road comes all the way down to slew that was part of the boundary and went right up to five corners and from there went over that way between Elk mountain and Mt Cheam. He used to always tell me this and tell me to remember this. If we ever get into Treaty talks, our people always wanted a treaty, so if we get into Treaty talks you have to remember it. (01-20-2011:2-3)

The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* traditional territory is vast, immensely beautiful and filled with rivers, creeks, lakes and magnificent mountains. The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people are just as magnificent as our mountains and just as dynamic as the rivers and creeks that flow through our territory. Currently we are divided into eight different *Indian Act* "bands." The first name is the *Halq'eméylem* and the one in parentheses is the name registered with the Department of "Aboriginal" Affairs: *Th'ewá:lí* (Soowhalie), *Ch'iyáqtel* (Tzeachten), *Yeqwyeqwi:ws* (Yakweakwioose), *Sq'ewqéyl* (Skowkale), *Áthelets* (Aitchelitz), *Sxwoyehá:lá* (Squiala), *Qweqwe'ópelhp* (KwawKwawpilt) and *Shxwhá:y* (Skway). While the *Lhewá:Imel* (now called Chilliwack River) ties us together so, too, does our *Ts'elxwéyeqw* history and shared ancestry. Each contemporary community as well as

some that did not get “registered”⁸⁴ can trace their lineage to one of four brothers *Williléq* the 5th the oldest brother, and *Siyamches*, *Th’eláchiyatel*, *Yexwéylem* or their Uncle, *T’xwelátse*.

Ts’elxwéyeqw History

The history of the *Ts’elxwéyeqw* people is a fascinating history if I do say so myself. A lot of our history was recorded by early ethnographers such as Marian Smith, Wilson Duff, Oliver Wells and Brent Galloway, who met with Bob Joe (*Xwelxwé:yleq*), a *Ts’elxwéyeqw* member with many memories of our tribe.⁸⁵ *Xwelxwé:yleq* (Robert (Bob) Joe) was born at *Ch’iyáqtel* on December 16, 1884 and died in the Chilliwack Hospital at the age of 86 on August 1, 1970 (Wells 1987:113). Over a twenty-five year period he was interviewed by Marian Smith, Wilson Duff, Oliver Wells and a host of linguists and journalists. He was well known to be the “expert” on the *Ts’elxwéyeqw* people and history, partly because he lived his entire life within *Ts’elxwéyeqw* territory, but more so because he was a descendent of *Williléq* and his three brothers *Siyamches*, *Th’eláchiyatel* and *Yexwéylem* who have been the hereditary leaders of the *Ts’elxwéyeqw* people since time immemorial.

Xwelxwé:yleq (Bob Joe) listed twenty two different village sites of the *Ts’elxwéyeqw* people located along banks of the Fraser, Luckakuck, Chilliwack and Vedder rivers, as well as at Sweltzer creek, the mouth of Lihumitson Creek, and at a junction between Chilliwack River and a small creek (t’aptu’p creek) that flows from Ryders Lake north of the river. Marian Smith called this village t’aPt’o’p and listed it as a large village (as cited in Duff 1972:38). Tamihí and Slesse Creeks also had village sites; one below Centre Creek was wiped out by a slide. Robert Joe also mentions a village site that is in the “old chilliwack language” səli’si (as cited in Duff 1972:39). From Centre Creek to Chilliwack Lake there were a few scattered houses as well a few around

⁸⁴ For example *Sxwó:yxwela* (eventually where *Williléq* the 5th and his sister died and were buried), *Ts’ets’altxw* tree burial place on the other side of river, and *Seqw’emá:y* (Birch Tree) are a few of what I think could be several that were not registered as “bands” by the Department of Indian Affairs.

⁸⁵ Other *Ch’elxwéyeqw* have also provided information such as Dan Milo, Albert Louie, Amy Cooper and Billy Sepass.

Chilliwack Lake itself. The history of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* is dynamic and at times forceful and is intimately linked to Lhewa:Imel.

Lhewá:Lmel: The River that Left Its Course

The Chilliwack River begins from Chilliwack Lake and over the years has changed its course several times as it made its way to Sumas Lake and the Fraser River. In 1877 the Chilliwack River still flowed through *Lexexéq* (Luckakuck river) to the Fraser, and Vedder Creek still flowed into the Sumas Lake and originated two miles west of Vedder crossing (Duff 1952:44). A log jam in the late 1880s in *Lexexéq* caused the Chilliwack River to flow westward into Vedder Creek and Sumas Lake. In the 1920s Sumas Lake was drained and the Vedder river was diverted into the Vedder Canal. The draining of Sumas Lake by the colonizers, along with the ensuing manmade dyking system would forever alter not only the characteristics of the Chilliwack River but the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people themselves.

Before it was drained, according to *Xwelxwé:yleq*, the Chilliwack River used to flow straight west from Chilliwack Lake into Sumas Lake. At that time the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people had several villages along its steep valley, with a main village located at *xe'las* (“the slide”) on the north bank of the river two miles above Vedder Crossing. Located at *xe'las* was a *Sqémél* (a pithouse) 40 feet in diameter (Duff 1952:43). I think there may be some confusion and *xe'las* is actually *Xéyles* which means “sidehill” (Albert Louie as cited in Oliver Wells 1987:162).

During this time the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* “spoke a language somewhat different from that of the Fraser Valley Indians” (Bob Joe as cited in Duff 1952:43). *Xwelxwé:yleq* told Wilson Duff that it was like the Nooksack language but different. This dialect of the Nooksack language spoken by the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* is *Kluh Ch ihl ihs ehm* (Billy Sepass and Bob Joe as cited in Carlson 2010:120 see footnote 14). The name of the tribe in this old language was *ce'lxwe'uk*⁸⁶ and meant “the head” in reference to head of the valley, or

⁸⁶ Which is currently spelled *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

head of the tribe (Duff 1952:43).⁸⁷ Oliver Wells records Harry Edwards (Pilalt), and Dan Milo (Ch'eleweyeqw) as "chihlkwayuhk," meaning to "go back upstream" (Wells 1987:18). Albert Louie (born 1884 Tixwelatsa's grandson interviewed by Oliver Wells July 28 1965, his father was Qw'otiseltel) described the name as "chihlahlqw," i.e., the place where a canoe can no longer paddle once reached (Wells 1987:17).

The River itself was called *θuwe'lmən* meaning "left its course" which this river was known to do many times (Duff 1952:43). Oliver Wells also records the same word but writes it as "Thoowehlmen" meaning "the river that changed its course" (Wells 1987:18). This river "that changed its course" was the route of the Chilliwack River from Vedder Crossing to Sumas Lake approximately 400 years ago (Bob Joe and Billy Sepass as cited in Wells 1987:18). *Xwelxwé:yleq* is recorded by Oliver Wells in referring to it as *Lhewá:lmel* and to be "maybe a thousand years ago" (Wells 1987:81). According to Billy Sepass it was "Cluelmen" and maybe 400 years ago (Wells 1987:81). The natural changing course of this river seemed not to bother the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* who seemed quick to adapt to the changing course of the river.

A river known for its power and strength changed its course several times due to high waters caused by Chinook winds melting vast amounts of snow from the mountains to flow into the river. During these times the river was known to rise at a rate of one foot an hour (Wells 1987:18) and would take with it huge trees that would become lodged, eventually creating a dam and diverting the flow of the river, forever changing its course. The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* did not seem to mind, and whether the river ran east or west made no difference as each time the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* would move in relation to the changing river. In fact when Oliver Wells asked Bob Joe for the *Halq'eméylem* words for "the east" or "the north" "NE or SW" *Xwelxwé:yleq* did not have any although he did have words for the north wind "sótets" and "schéxwem" for the West wind (Wells 1987:113).

⁸⁷ Dan Milo guessed that *Ts'elxwéyeqw* meant "as far as you can go in a canoe" however Bob Joe was confident in his translation of "head" headwaters of a river, or head of person, or head of group of people (see footnote 8 Keith Carlson 2010:309).

Ts'elxwéyeqw Villages

Xwelxwé:yleq identified one of the first *Ts'elxwéyeqw* settlements known as *Sxóchaqel* which was the main Village located on the northern shore of Chilliwack Lake (Carlson 2010:118). It was from here that *Willéq*, the hereditary *Ts'elxwéyeqw Siyá:m* and his brothers looked after the tribe and their nearby villages. I also would add that *T'xwelátse* would be a main leader especially as the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* make our way down river which at times may have turned hostile. Our successful and largely peaceful transition tells me *T'xwelátse* played a valuable role.

The history of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* according to *Xwelxwé:yleq* begins after a landslide decimated one of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* villages located at *Steyihaq* (Centre Creek):

One day a young hunter noticed a crack in the rocks and when he returned some time later the crack had grown wider. Fearing that there was 'going to be great trouble, or disaster,' he warned the people living in the settlement below the fissure that they were in imminent danger of a landslide. However, instead of thanking the hunter, the people 'started razzing and laughing at him,' saying "where did you ever hear of a mountain cracking in two?" The next morning, people living in the neighbouring settlements heard a rumble. As a result, as Joe explained, "when daylight came, the families that were warned were no more. They were all buried under half of the mountain-slide.'

(Bob Joe as cited in Carlson 2010:118)

After the devastating slide *Willéq* and his brothers began a series of moves downriver that would see the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* eventually coming into contact with other tribes. This would eventually result in the Nooksack dialect, *Kluh Ch ihl ihs ehm* giving way to a *Halq'eméylem* sub dialect which is distinctly *Ts'elxwéyeqw*.

From *Sxóchaqel* at the head of Chilliwack Lake, *Willéq* (probably the 3rd or 4th) and his brothers moved their people twenty four kilometres downriver to *Iy'othel* a settlement that straddled both sides of the Chilliwack River (Carlson 2010:118). When this settlement became over-crowded, *Willéq* moved his headquarters to *Xéyles*,⁸⁸ an open prairie twelve kilometres further downstream and just one kilometre upstream of

⁸⁸ Recorded by Albert Louie, born 1884, to mean "sidehill" see Wells 1987:162).

Vedder Crossing (118-120). At this time it would be safe to say that the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* would come into contact with the *Th'ewá:lí* (or *Swí:lhcha*) people already established to the south of *Xéyles*.

Tháthem:als* and Birth of *Wililéq* the 5th and *Lumlamelut

Not long after settling at *Xéyles*, *Wililéq* (I believe this is *Wililéq* the 4th) and his brothers again moved their tribe a couple of hundred metres downstream to *Tháthem:als*. Recorded by Duff as *θa'θəmals*, it is here they contacted people in the area and “slowly adopted the Halkomelem language” (Bob Joe as recorded by Duff 1972:43). It is here at *Tháthem:als* that one of the most notable leaders of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people was born. He would carry the name *Wililéq* the 5th but it was not just his hereditary leader's name and his birth into a long line of leaders that would make him notable (Carlson 2010:120). It was also the very rare circumstances of his birth along with his exceptional leadership qualities and exceptional architectural ability that ensured he would be remembered by the people (see Chapter 8 on *Wililéq* and Leadership).

A full month after *Wililéq* the 5th was born, his parents had moved out to the Fraser River to dry salmon (Duff 1972:44) and it was here his mother gave birth to his twin sister. The birth of *Wililéq*'s twin sister was marked by a thunderstorm and they named her *Lumlamelut*, ‘lightning’ (Carlson 2010:120). The separate births of *Wililéq* and his twin sister *Lumlamelut* is remarkable and it is easy to see why he (and I would add his sister) were viewed as special by the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people. Relatively speaking, there is a fair amount of information recorded about *Wililéq* but very little on *Lumlamelut*. I hope one day to learn more about her, her accomplishments, her legacy and her current name carrier, if there is one. If not, I hope this urges us to revive her name and find a carrier to bring her legacy back to life.

On the other hand, we know a fair deal about *Wililéq* as his legacy has already been recorded. After spending some time with his second wife and her people, the *Katzie*, *Wililéq* the 5th eventually returned to *Tháthem:als* and moved the headquarters of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* tribe to “a few hundred metres downriver to a small flat area immediately upstream from Vedder Crossing (Carlson 2010:123). It was here he would

build the most incredible *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse) which is known as *Qoqolaxel* or Watery Eaves (I expand on the significance of this feat in Chapter 8 on Leadership).

As an old man *Williléq* the 5th moved the majority of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people to *Sxwó:yxwela*. Here he constructed a "second, less distinctive house, with fewer carvings on the interior house posts" (Carlson 2010:125). It is here that *Williléq* and his twin sister *Lumlamelut* were buried and their high status again verified in the manner in which they were buried. In 1964 *Xwelxwé:yleq* told Oliver Wells about the burial of *Williléq* the 5th and his sister at *Sxwó:yxwela*:

Joe: You know that *Sxwó:yxwela* were one of the villages where at the time, well, just as it is now, people pass away, they die off. Well, about that time people were dying off, and one of the leaders and his sister died. That was before shovels, and they made a large box to put their dead in there; and it was just sat on the ground some place. Well, as time went on, a man by the name of Lapum was clearing land there...

Casey: Yeah

Joe: Pulling stumps out. Under a great big cedar or cottonwood he came across a bunch of bones piled up. Well, he left his team or whatever he had, went to the old chief called *T'ixwelátsa*, that's Chief Louie's father, and Chief Louie's mother was alive then. They told the chief about this bone. He says, "no I don't know." He says. But his wife says "Let's us go up here," she says, "and ask the old lady." Her name was Sally... She was very old, yeah. They went up there and they told her. They had to talk kind of loud. Her hearing was about weared out. She says, "Yes, I heard about that. And if it's the one," she said, "that was lost long ago, *lhíth* [long ago]; you'll find it's on the left arm; *sqw'ól* – that means copper or brass, six bracelets on the left arm. And the sister, if it's the one, you'll find her hair braided in two, two parts, and in the braids you'll find the *sqw'ól* – that's brass or copper." They went and they took these bones. Sure enough, they found that...

(Bob Joe as recorded by Wells 1987:120)

The *T'ixwelátsa* mentioned above is my *Tómiyeqw* (great great great great grandfather); the name *T'ixwelátsa* means "from the bottom reaches of the river" and the first *T'ixwelátsa* is believed to be the first ancestor of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*

Aside from *Sxwóyxweyla*, other *Ts'elxwéyeqw* settled at *Yeqwyeqwí:ws*, *Sq'ewqéyl* and *Athelets* (Carlson 2010:125). And eventually *Qweqwe'ópelhp*, *Ch'iyáqtel* and *Shxwhá:y* (see Appendix C for map).

T'xwelatse: First Ancestor to the Ts'elxwéyeqw

The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* trace our lineage to *Sqáyéx* (or *K·ā'iq*) (Mink) who is believed to be one of the five brothers of Grizzly Bear who traveled to Tsee-chilt-a-mukh (the land beyond the sky) to free Quait-tzal Spahtz (Grizzly Bear) from the Sky bird of *Xexá:ls*, Tsuh-Way-his (the Thunderbird). Upon freeing Quait-tzal Spahtz, he and his five brothers, Mink, Squirrel, Skunk, Raccoon and Grouse went to descend the ladder and rope made from Ho-pai (Cedar). When the rung of the ladder broke the five brothers were scattered across the earth. But where each fell there “sprang up a new tribe, and a new totem, the totem of a chief who had been to Tsee-chilt-a-mukh; who had been touched with the fire of Tsuh-Way-his, the Bird of K'HHalls (*Xexá:ls*), in the land on the other side of S-Way-Hil, the sky” (*Y-Ail-Mihth*, as told by Chief K'HHalserten Sepass in 1911-1915 to Eloise Street, translated by Eloise's mother Sophia White (Mrs. C.L. Street)).

Sxwōxwiyám tell us Sqayex fathered the first *T'xwelátse*.

The Birth of *T'xwelátse* Ancestor of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*

“In *Th'ewá:lí* on the lower Chilliwack River, there lived a *Siyá:m* who had a very beautiful daughter. *K·ā'iq* (Mink), wished to have her for himself. So he assumed the form of a handsome young man and walked upriver on the shore opposite the village. He carried a harpoon in his hand and fish on his back so that it appeared as if he had just caught them. At just this moment an old man had sent all the young girls to bathe, among them the *Siyá:m*'s daughter. The girls saw the young man who kept calling “PS! PS!” and when they noticed the fish that he was carrying, they asked him to throw one over to them. He fulfilled their wish; the fish fell into the water, swam into the *Siyá:m*'s daughter and made her ill.

Her father searched for a *Shxwólám* (Healer) to heal her. So *K·ā'iq* assumed the shape of a *Shxwólám*. In the evening he went to the village and when he was seen by an old woman, she said, “Surely he will be able to heal the girl.” They called him into the house and he promised to heal her. First, he sent all the people out of the house, leaving only an old woman sitting outside the door to accompany his song with the rhythmic beats of the dancing stick. To begin with, he sang, but then he slept with the girl and she gave birth to a child right away. So *K·ā'iq* leaped at once out of the house. The old woman heard the child's crying and called the people back. They became very angry, took the child and threw him out of the house. But *K·ā'iq* was standing outside with his mountain goat cape spread wide; he caught the child in it and went away with him.

After a while the girl's father became sad that he lost his grandson. So he went to K·ā'iq and begged him to send him back. K·ā'iq granted his wish and sent the boy back. He was named *T'xwelátse* (from the lower reaches of the river). He became the ancestor of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*." (as told by George Chehalis 1890)

My *Tómiyeqw* T'ixwelátsa

My *Tómiyeqw* (great great great great grandfather) was *T'xwelátse* (born approximately in the early 1800s) who was a direct descendent of the very first *T'xwelátse*. My *Tómiyeqw* is the father of Chief Louie, the same T'ixwelátsa mentioned above by Bob Joe and Albert Louie. Chief Louie had a sister named Lucy who was my great great great grandmother. One of the T'ixwelátsa was a "great warrior" and Uncle to the twins *Wililéq* (the 5th) and his twin sister *Lumlamelut*. I believe this *T'xwelátsa* is my *Tómiyeqw*'s grandfather.

Wililéq the 5th constructed *Qoqolaxel* in approximately 1800, and at this time already had two wives, the second of whose people he had already lived with for some time in Katzie. Based upon this I would guess *Wililéq* the 5th to be born between 1760 and 1770. My *Tómiyeqw* was probably born in the early 1800's (1800 to 1820s) as his daughter Lucy was born around the 1850s.⁸⁹ Therefore I would guess that it was my *Tómiyeqw*'s grandfather (6th T'ixwelátsa?) that would be recorded as the "great warrior" and Uncle to *Wililéq* the 5th. It is also recorded that one of the *T'xwelátse* also became a "leader" of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* (as well as a warrior) so this could be my *Tómiyeqw*, "the old chief" mentioned by Bob Joe in the above account of the burial at *Sxwóyɣweyla*. It is believed that he was the seventh T'ixwelátsa (Schaepe 2005:5). My lineage to T'ixwelátsa (the 6th):

- *Tómiyeqw*, T'ixwelátsa (b. early 1800s?)
- *Ékwiyeqw*, - Lucy (b. 1850s? sister to Old Mary and Chief Louie)
- *Th'ép'oyeqw*, Annie (b. 1874), *Ilhót*, Great, Great, Grandmother
- *Sts'ó:mqw*, Nellie Charles (b. 1897), Great Grandmother
- *Sísele*, Gord Hall (b. 1920), Grandfather

⁸⁹ Traditionally (i.e., pre-colonial) Stó:lō women were married and giving birth at what today would be considered young (approximately 15 to 20 years old) whereas for the men they would be bit older (approximately 20 to 30 years of age).

- *Má:l*, Bob Hall Sr. (b. 1944), Father
- *Mestíyeqw*, Wenona Victor (nee Hall) (b. 1967), *Qwí:qwélstom*
- *Méle*, Jade (b. 1999), *T'émq'ethelmo*, my first born daughter

Move over Geronimo: *Stó:méx* among the *Stó:lō*

There is no doubt that the name *T'xwelátse* has been carried by a long line of warriors and warriors were highly specialized, highly trained, highly disciplined *Siyá:m* of the *Stó:lō*. The highly specialized role they played was not the same as the family leader, or the head leader. My understanding so far is they relied heavily upon their spiritual gifts in war and that "warring" was kept as a separate speciality that was more often than not kept secret. What a warrior did was not talked about and was not something he would boast about or otherwise use to attempt to gain higher status among the people:

As he was dying he spoke to his people, telling them that he had not become a warrior simply to make himself "big among his own people" but had done so because he had been ashamed that the northern people had taken their children as slaves; he had become a warrior in order to protect his people. (Suttles 1951:324 as cited in Angelbeck 2009:109)⁹⁰

The work of the warrior and his ability to keep his people safe is of course something of great importance. That several warrior names have been retained speak to their important place within *Stó:lō* social structure, but why we know so little about them is equally important.

That the *Stó:lō*, including the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* had great warriors is a part of history still to be told. Why we know all about Geronimo, Poundmaker and Louis Riel but very little about *T'xwelátse*, *Teméxwetel* and *Xéyteleq* is due, I think, to two main things. First is the secret nature of the warrior role within *Stó:lō* society; their role and activities formed a type of secret society that retained its knowledge only among its members, that

⁹⁰ I look forward to obtaining the name of this warrior, it is telling that these western scientists record each other but not the name of the person to whom they are referring which, to me, is the most important part. This I believe is part of that "othering" and a reflection of methodologies that see us as "objects" and not "subjects" which is so detrimental to gaining a full understanding.

is, those who are or being trained to be warriors. Albert Louie (T'ixwelátsa's grandson), incidentally shared the secrecy of his grandfather's warring with Oliver Wells along with the fact that my *Tómiyeqw* had two *Skw'iyéth* (people to be pitied, or "slaves"), two women from Vancouver Island:

My grandfather had two of them you know, two womens from Vancouver Island, But they were treated right by the Chilliwack tribe there; they wasn't mean to any of them. They had everything they wanted... Course, my grandfather'd never tell anything what he used to do, you know. He wouldn't tell nobody. He was a warrior, and he wouldn't say anything, what he was doing, and what the other one was doing with him. Whatever he done on Vancouver Island, nobody knows "I'm going to tell nobody just keep it a secret." Just my father knows, you see. But my father told me that he's been there and there and there you know. He'd been one of the warriors." (1965 Albert Louie as told to Oliver Wells 1987:166)

A second reason we know so little about *Stó:lō Stó:méx* is the huge influence missionaries had among the *Stó:lō*, our leaders and our social organization. The push to be a "good Catholic Indian" was pervasive and still heavily influences *Stó:lō* identity today. Even I downplayed the role of *T'xwelátse* as a great warrior, preferring instead to focus on the great leadership and legacy of his nephew *Williléq*, and I am neither Christian nor Catholic. Now I can see that this is simply playing into the "good little Indian" stereotype or for the *Stó:lō* the "good Catholic Indian" versus the "savage and violent Indian" who won't convert. There is a need for good warriors and a place for them as I have learned we could not have defended such a great and vast territory without them. That their legacy be recorded and remembered is important to me.

In linear time it is difficult to determine exactly how long the name T'ixwelátsa has been in my family. By tracing the documented history of the name and assuming fifty years or so between carriers as it was generally passed from grandfather to grandson/grandnephew, Schaepe (2005:4) has estimated it to be traced to the 1400s. We know that the name means from "the lower reaches of the river" and that the name has been in our family since the beginning of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people. We also know that this name predates *Williléq* the 5th and his three brothers, *Síyamches*, *Th'eláchiyatel* and *Yexwéylem*.

We also know that the name is equated with great warrior status. Knowing I come from a long line of warriors does not surprise me and I am sure those who know me are not surprised either. To know that the first T'ixwelátsa was fathered by *Sqáyéx* is

a bit of a surprise as one of our trickster figures is Mink who is always getting himself into trouble. This coupled with the fact that he was a bit of a pervert is more difficult to accept. But then again nobody's family is perfect and with the Trickster comes valuable life lessons.⁹¹

History also tells me that prior to the 1800s the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* preferred to marry within our tribe, meaning we married our relatives. Oral teachings tell me that it was acceptable to marry one's fourth cousin and more recently it has been moved to seventh and in some families outlawed all together. Multiple spouses and arranged marriages were also common, largely to solidify kinship ties, access to resources and territory. This also ensured certain *sxexo:mes* remained within the tribe and ensured cohesiveness and collectivity remained strong.

Stone *T'ixwelatsa*

Another of my infamous ancestors is Stone *T'xwelátse*, one of the name carriers who was transformed to stone for mistreating his wife. As explained by my Uncle Herb and current name carrier of *T'xwelátse*:⁹²

The Stone *T'xwelátse* is a creation of, a transformation of one of the *T'xwelátse*(s). The story goes that *Xá:ls* [an alternate reference to *Xexá:ls*] the great transformer that was sent to our territory to make things right came upon a man and a woman by a river side. This man and woman were arguing with each other. *Xá:ls* being given the mandate or the responsibility for making things right as he traveled through our lands asked this man and woman if they would consider not arguing and that there was better ways of resolving conflict and resolving problems. As a result of his interference or intervention there ends up being a bit of conflict between the man, whose name happened to be *T'xwelátsa*, and *Xá:ls*. And because of our history, our people had devised other ways of resolving conflict other than violence, other than fighting each other. And one of the ways that they resolve conflict was through contests. *Xá:ls* being the great transformer and created by our God, *Chichelh Siyá:m*, to

⁹¹ The Upriver Halkomelem Dictionary lists *chichi:q'el* as mink and explains "Mink is known for many stories in which he tries to marry or have sex with all manner of creatures (and plants etc.) before and during the time of *Xexá:ls*; he usually fails for comic reasons" (Galloway 2009:28).

⁹² This name is also currently carried by Simon Roberts.

make things right in our land. And T'íxwelátsa, who was a medicine man, a shaman, they decided to have a contest and they tried to transform each other into various things salmon, mink, a twig, or tree. Finally, Xá:ls was successful into transforming T'íxwelátsa into a stone statue.

(*T'xwelátse* Herb Joe as told to Schaepe 2005)

T'xwelatsa's wife and family were given the responsibility of caring for and looking after Stone *T'xwelátse* who weighed over 600lbs in granite form. He was placed in front of their home as a reminder that we "have to learn to live together in a good way" (*T'xwelátse* 2003). In the early to mid-1800s, one of the women from this family married into the S'emá:th tribe and she brought Stone *T'xwelátse* to live with her and her husband's family on the Sumas Prairie. This marriage was to help resolve the conflict that had existed between *T'xwelátse* (probably the 7th) and Xéyteleq (a S'emá:th warrior). In 1858-9 the Canada and U.S boundary was established that cut across *S'ólh Téméxw* and divided many *Stó:lō* communities, including the Nooksack from the *S'emá:th*.

In 1884 a young *S'emá:th* boy named Louie Sam was hung by a lynch mob from the United States which set in motion movement of the *S'emá:th* from the Sumas Prairie. It is probably during this time of extreme settler violence that Stone *T'xwelátse* was left behind as the family moved to safety. In 1892 Stone *T'xwelátse* was found by some settlers, moved into Washington state and eventually sold to a dime store museum. A 1892 Chilliwack Progress newspaper reported:

"A curiously carved Indian image found by Mssrs Ward Bros, on the Sumas Prarie [sic]. The image is about four feet high, and weighs about 600lbs. It is evidently very ancient; and is quite intact, every detail being clearly defined." (as cited in Schaepe 2005:6, fn 5)

In 1899 Stone *T'xwelátse* was acquired by what is now called the Burke Museum of Washington State. He would remain there for 107 years, until 2006 when he was returned to the Nooksack *T'xwelátse* family. In the early 1970s my Uncle Herb was given the name T'íxwelátsa and the responsibility to see that Stone *T'xwelátse* was returned to us. In October 2006, after 114 years of separation Stone *T'xwelátse* was returned to the

Stó:lō and currently lives at the *Stó:lō* Research and Resource Management Centre, located on the Coqualeetza grounds in Chilliwack, B.C.⁹³

Teachings from Stone *T'xwelátse*

It is said that Stone *T'xwelátse* brings with him seven teachings for the *Stó:lō* people and each teaching is represented by a mark on his back. One of them is that “we have to learn to live together in a good way.” I had a hard time re-acquainting myself with him for several reasons. I had thought of him as a terrible woman beater and consequently was having a hard time accepting him. Thankfully, I am slowly getting to know him and accept the teachings he brings. In April 2011 I was asked to sit on a panel at a local museum where Stone *T'xwelátse* was visiting. It was the first time I agreed to attend a gathering in relation to him. I did not prepare anything ahead of time for my panel presentation, preferring instead to talk from my heart. Oddly, the night before my presentation I did not sleep at all and I don't remember what I said during the session. But I do remember four thoughts that were in my mind and were so crystal clear it was like Stone *T'xwelátse* was speaking directly to me. They are, I believe, teachings from Stone *T'xwelátse* in relation to governance. First, you cannot govern someone or something with whom you do not have a relationship. Second, life is about meaning, and looking for and bringing meaning to things is very much a spiritual process, which suggests that spirituality is thus a vital component of governance. Thirdly I believe that the return of Stone *T'xwelátse* marks a new era of remembering the value and roles of women to our society and our governing structures. The fourth thought ringing through my mind has been the one most difficult for me and it is: acceptance. In fact it was not until my last draft of my dissertation that I had enough courage to add it to my dissertation.

⁹³ For a complete telling of the Repatriation journey in bringing Stone *T'xwelátse* home see Repatriation Report completed by Dr. Dave Schaepe.

Chapter 6.

The *Stó:lō* and Identity Transformations

"*S'ólh Téméxw* te ikw'elo. Xolhmet te mekw'stam it kwelat."

This is our land and we have to take care of everything that belongs to us.

In the Beginning Songs of *Y-Ail-Mihth*

The Beginning of the World

Long, long ago,
Before anything was,
Saving only the heavens,
From the seat of his golden throne
The Sun God looked out on the Moon Goddess
And found her beautiful.

Hour after hour,
With hopeless love,
He watched the spot where, at evening,
She would sometimes come out to wander
Through her silver garden
In the cool of the dusk.

Far he sent his gaze across the heavens
Until the time came, one day,
When she returned his look of love
And she, too, sat lonely,
Turning eyes of wistful longing
Toward her distant lover.

Then their thoughts of love and longing
Seeking each other,
Met halfway,
Mingled,
Hung suspended in space...
Thus: the beginning of the world.

Sat they long in loneliness
The great void of eternal space
Closing in upon them.
Despair hung heavy in their hearts
Gone was the splendour of the golden throne
Gone was the beauty of the silver garden
Their souls burned with a white flame of longing.

Up leaped the Sun God,
Chanting his love song,
The words of his love thoughts:

“My heart wings its way to you,
O daughter of the Moon!
My heart wings its way to you
Where you stand
In your silver garden,
Your white face turned toward me.

You will receive a gift,
O daughter of the Moon!
A gift of my great love
For you only;
You will receive a gift of my love
This day, ere the dusk falls.”

He seized his knife,
And with swift slashes,
Tore a strip of bark
From a great tree
Still he chanted his songs
Of love and longing,
As he wrote on the birch bark
In the speech of springtime,
The language of lovers.

Then,
From his place at the gate of the Sun,
He, the Sun God
Raised his arm high
And cast his message
Far into the sky.

Swift it flew,
Following an unerring course
Toward the distant garden
Where sat the Moon Goddess.

But what of the message?
Alas! It wavers in its flight;
Drops;

Falls on the embryo world;
Thus: the land.

Far across the heavens,
In her silver garden,
The Moon Goddess wept bitterly.
A tear was borne by the wind
Fell on the half-formed world;
Thus: the water.

There from the love thoughts,
Longing and love words
Sprang beautiful trees and flowers
Little streams gurgled through the forests
Leaping waterfalls foamed
Great rivers flowed to the sea

Fish abounded
Buffalo roamed the plains
And through the wood paths
Sped all the wild things
Of a new world

The Sun God left the seat of his golden throne
Swung wide the gate of the sun!
A ringing shout cleft the heavens
The Moon Goddess
From her silver garden
Heard the cry
Stood
And answered

He of the Sun
She of the Moon
Stood they
With arms outstretched
A moment,
Silent
Then, in the first shadow of evenfall,
They leaped into space
Came to rest
On the new world of their love
Thus: the first man and woman

This song is one of fifteen songs from *Y-Ail-Mihth* (Ancient Singer) that were a part of the "Sacred Knowledge" to be passed from generation to generation by a chosen few, often translated into English as the High Priests. I for one cannot decolonize my mind enough to get beyond the English definition for "priest" so I prefer High Ones.

Those chosen to learn sacred knowledge were identified by carrying high names and titles and learning a special language to retain the Sacred Knowledge, a feat that required an exceptional memory and years of training (Eloise Street 1963:11). K'HHalserten (Chief Sepass from the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*) was one of those charged with this gift of responsibility. From 1911 to 1915 K'HHalserten sang these songs to Eloise Street so they could be translated so “future generations of Indians would always remember the greatness of their people” (front flap of Sepass Tales 1963). K'HHalserten passed away in 1943 at probably a little over 100 years old. His grandson Gerald Sepass is now an Elder in our community, *Sq'ewqéyl* (Skowkale). I for one am grateful Gerald's grandfather, K'HHalserten, had the foresight to have his ancient knowledge translated and recorded. Although Eloise Street completed this task, this knowledge does not belong to her; the ancient knowledge of K'HHalserten still belongs to his family and his ancestors. I in turn use this information to honor K'HHalserten's vision that we remember the greatness of our people.

Sacred Knowledge held by the very few charged with retaining the memories of the beginning of time is by its very nature rare and defined by most as mythical. In comparison to Western knowledge, it is ancient and more credible as it is derived from the very epistemologies and ontology it describes. For example, archeological data has so far only been able to trace the beginning of *Xwélmexw* people in *S'ólh Téméxw* to 10,000 years ago. Even then to do so means they must rely on theories of land or coastal migrations from Southeast Asia. In contrast, the Sacred Knowledge of *Shxwlám* and certain carriers of high ancestral names can trace our beginnings to Father Sun and Mother Moon and ancestors from the “land beyond the sky” or *Tel Swayel* (Sky People).

That the land was born of love – a letter of love written by Father Sun to Mother Moon –explains why many *Stó:lō* treat *S'ólh Téméxw* (our land) with such care, love and attention. Our belief in how the world came to be explains why our vitality comes from the Sun and women still today are intimately linked to the Moon and her cycles. We understand our place within the universe and why it is alive and has spirit.

The Migration Myth(s)

It is not just Sacred Knowledge that exposes the inadequacies of Western theories and their relative “newness” in comparison to ancient knowledge of High Ones.

It is challenging for *Xwélmexw* to believe we migrated here from Asia for many reasons, the most important being we have no *sxwōxwiyám* of this monumental feat. We have *sxwōxwiyám* for all other major events and occurrences in our history, and the feat of traveling here from another country so very different from this one and at all odds would be considered a major monumental occurrence. If we came here from another land where are the oral histories documenting this? We have oral histories for transformations and oral histories for a “land on the other side of the sky” would we not have oral histories for a land next door?

Lack of *sxwōxwiyám* is probably the most damning of all, although there are other reasons both land and coastal migrations are difficult to believe. Both theories are fraught with major physical challenges, never mind the challenge of simple common sense. Although Western scientists cannot agree on whether it was by land or by boat, until about the late 1990s they were adamant that it had to be one way or the other despite several factors that called into question whether these migration theories were true. In any event both theories have been scientifically proven to be untrue (see Arthurson 2010; Deloria 1997, 1999; Mann 2005).

In terms of just common sense alone, land migration theories are absurd as this would require the combination of at least five monumental events to all not only occur, but to occur at just the right moment to support the Bering Land Bridge “theory.” Vine Deloria Jr. (1999) explains it very thoroughly and points out all the scientific evidence that contradicts the Land Bridge theory in both *Red Earth, White Lies* (1997) and *Spirit and Reason* (1999). Here are five reasons in summary: (1) that the paleo-Indians in Siberia for unknown reasons decide to leave their good hunting grounds to migrate to Alaska where; (2) they must traverse several mountain ranges in unbearable conditions to reach a bridge that they don’t even know is there; (3) that water levels dropped enough to create a bridge; (4) that an ice corridor opens up (western science has recorded this happening only twice - once 20,000 years ago and a second time approximately 10 to 12 thousand years ago (Mann 2005:18) and that this corridor opens up; (5) just when the paleo-Indians who managed to survive the treacherous trek stood poised at its opening ready to run at least fifty-five miles across it into a land they knew nothing about. Although the land bridge theory defies common sense, has never been proven or even shown to be the result of scientific evidence, it has been disseminated

throughout the educational systems of the colonizers. We “think,” “probably” and “likely” hardly count as scientific evidence under any standards.⁹⁴

This unproven but broadly disseminated theory would finally come crashing down in 1997 when an archeological dig in Chile uncovered remains of human habitation that were older than 12,000 years and possible as old as 30,000 years. The fact that this group of people lived here long before the so-called ice corridor opened up does not surprise Indigenous peoples; it also calls the Bering Land Bridge theory into question because this group of people living in Chile are some 7000 miles away from the bridge; they could hardly have trekked this distance in such a short time (Mann 2005:18). There is now evidence of habitation in Chile as early as 30,000 years ago as well as a host of other undeniable evidence that the “New” World was not so new and was surpassing its counterpart in Europe in terms of population, productivity, advancement and knowledge (see Arthurson 2010; Mann 2005).⁹⁵

It is not just because in comparison to *sxwōxwiyám*, the science of archaeology is relatively new, that I adhere to the understanding that we have always been here. It is because *sxwōxwiyám* is the science, the epistemology derived from the very people we are talking about. We know we have been here since the beginning of time. So why don't we act like it?

⁹⁴ Deloria (1999) cites Laughlin: “Conditions in the interior [of Alaska] were severe, and likely only a few inhabitants found their way into North America; these wanderers probably became the ancestors of American Indians” (82) as one example of many.

⁹⁵ Studies of language also contradict migration theories. For example research by linguist Johanna Nicholas “has shown that language diversity is so great in the Americas that the approximately 150 distinct Native American language families would have required at least 35,000 years to develop” (as cited in McBoom (1998). However, Washington linguist Vajda (2010) is making a suspect claim to a connection between Yeniseic languages in Siberia and NaDene languages in the Americas based upon grammatical similarities and “several dozen” cognates (Greengaard 2008). Roach remains critical as “several dozen” cognates is well below the 50 required to make anything but a weak connection and there is no way to date the proposed connection (as cited in Greengaard 2008).

Being “Othered” by “Others”

Before I began this research journey I thought of the *Stó:lō* as simple earth people. I blamed part of our current struggles and issues of poverty and lack of direction on the fact that as a people we were too passive, too simple and thereby too easily overtaken by the more aggressive and complicated systems of the Europeans. This research journey has shown me that I could not have been more wrong. Many of the people I spoke to looked at me incredulously that I would even think, let alone say that the *Stó:lō* are simple people. In fact I am sure I offended a few when I commented that *Stó:lō* governing structures were anything but intricate:

Look at the territory that the coast Salish controlled, pretty big both north and south of border. Look at the communities that we have, we are one quarter of the communities. In a province of 202 communities, we have 56 of them and that is just north of 49th, that territory extends south of the border. When it comes to best actual living conditions, who controls that?

The coast Salish have the lower mainland's most moderate temperatures anywhere in the province. Look at the actual territory that we controlled – just able to move back and forth that way to gain access to resources, by marrying in, having communities work together closely.

People always talk about Haida being strong warrior, but they never took our territory, the Kwakiutl never took our territory. I think our winter spirit culture is stronger than anywhere else, you know that part of our ceremony that goes with culture is stronger than anywhere else.

(Corky Douglas 12-30-2010:7)

Corky's words helped me make an important paradigm shift in how I was thinking about the *Stó:lō*. I stood corrected and have since come to realize just how off base I was and where my thinking had gone off track.

This research journey made me realize how influenced my views were by “other” people. By listening to non-*Stó:lō* academics and researchers I had come to view the *Stó:lō* through their biased and ethnocentric eyes. In fact many of these researchers had drawn their mistaken conclusions by comparing the *Stó:lō* to “others,” such as the Haida and the Kwakwaka'wakw. Most non-Indigenous peoples do fall prey to the colonial identity of “Indian” where all “Indians” are the same and so can be compared against one another. But these early researchers could not have been more wrong. Such

comparisons are like comparing the Germans to the French, i.e., two very different people.

Terms such as “Salish” fair no better as non-*Stó:lō* researchers and academics again failed to see the diversity among this group who consist of very different peoples and cultures. For example the Coast Salish and the Interior Salish share only the fact that they were categorized together under an umbrella term “Salish” by the simplistic views of early recorders. In reality, they are two entirely different nations of people being lumped together “to be managed” by the colonizers. As explained to me by *ʔtesalaq*:

Coast Salish they call us that now. That word belongs to anthropologists and linguists, they ones divided up tribes in B.C., they use this word Coast Salish because we live by edge of water and also have this Interior Salish. I don't know anything about those people. A lot of time we were described by English with terms of convenience to be managed I guess and define what language or what cultures we of course find out later not right, was wrong. Because trying to say to us we know who you are and we will tell you who you are, but we never listened to them. We never forgot it. We know we are SENĆOŦEN and know we have ÓELÁNEN and know we have *sa pa nxw* which is the teaching.

(*ʔtesalaq* 3-30-2011:4)

When we come to see these externally imposed labels of identity as “terms of convenience” in order to be better “managed” by colonial policy, it becomes important work to deconstruct these labels and replace them with our own. To know who we are and our teachings becomes critical.

Reclaiming one's Indigenous identity is not an easy task, especially for those of us who have been “studied to death” by non-Indigenous researchers. Our “story” has been inaccurately recorded and told by “others” for so long now, it often dictates the starting points and may influence our sense of identity in subtle but harmful ways, as in my own example of seeing the *Stó:lō* through colonial eyes based upon what “others” had told me. As noted by Fanon “imposition of the settler's gaze can inflict damage on the Indigenous society at both the individual and collective levels” (as cited in Coulthard 2008:192). The “internalization” of the colonizer's misrecognition and alienation of Indigenous peoples is necessary for the colonial process to be successful (Coulthard 2008:191).

There are two other contributors to the challenge in reclaiming identity and deconstructing the colonial terms of convenience. One is our disconnect from language

and culture, which translates into a disconnect from territory. This disconnect from territory, language and culture is the main reason *Stó:lō* identity becomes confused with colonial identity. The other confusing contributor is the influence of Christianity and other organized religions on past and contemporary identity formations.

Deconstructing the “Good Little Indian” Identity

That the *Stó:lō* have been heavily influenced by the colonial policy of “conversion” has been widely documented (Carlson 2010; Miller 2007). In fact the influence was so thorough that many researchers quit researching us as we were seen to be completely acculturated via the successful work of the missionaries and were labelled a “cultural wasteland” as everything that needed to be studied had already been done (Boas; see Miller 2007). The influence that organized religions have had on *Stó:lō* identity and in particular in identity transformations cannot be ignored; however, to conclude that this transformation equates to acculturation would be incorrect.

I do however see quite clearly the ways in which the colonial construction of the “good Catholic Indian” has an adverse impact upon *Stó:lō* identity and our ability to sustain our relationship to territory. The “good Catholic Indian” identity was perpetuated by a Bishop named Paul Durieu who followed the “reduction model”⁹⁶ of civilization that aimed to keep the “good Indians” from the “bad” (Bishop D’Herbomez as cited in Carlson 2010:182). The “bad Indian” (i.e., pagan) was the one who still abided by his/her *Stó:lō* beliefs and teachings. The “Durieu system” as it came to be called also aimed to keep “the good Indian” from the drunkenness that had been introduced by the gold miners who by 1858 had infiltrated our territory by the thousands, bringing with them the vices of a gold-seeker’s life, namely disrespect for the environment and violent and drunken behaviors (Carlson 2010:182). As noted by Carlson (2010:182) the Durieu system created a new category of *Stó:lō* identity: the “good Native Catholic.”

⁹⁶ Historian Keith Thor Carlson shared the origin of this model “Jesuit missionaries in Paraguay originally pioneered the Reduction Model in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. While the South American experiment ultimately failed, D’Herbomez, and his successor, the flamboyant Bishop Paul Durieu, were convinced of the system’s potential” (2007:15). The divisions this “model” created among the *Stó:lō* are still evident today.

Although the missionaries are long gone, the *Stó:lō* as the “good Catholic Indian” needs to be thoroughly examined for the ways in which it still contributes to *Stó:lō* identity and continues to divide the *Stó:lō* people. As long as we continue to divide ourselves based upon the “good little Indian” stereotype we will continue to oppress, suppress and ignore who we really are as a people. For example, as mentioned in the previous chapter we will continue to devalue the role and contributions of our great warriors in protecting our true identity as well as many other of our most respected leaders who do not fit the religious stereotype.

It also explains why we continue to abide by the *Indian Act* election system even though this system has done nothing but divide our communities, displace our real *Sí:yá:m* and keep us distracted and fighting internally while our territory is being exploited and depleted. In comparison to our intricate systems of relationships and relating, of the rigorous training and discipline required to be a good leader, and the retention and understanding of sacred knowledge, the *Indian Act* is self-defeating and overly simplistic. But abiding by it means we get to retain our “good Indian” status. I have a bigger dream than that. I want to know what it means to be a “good *Stó:lō* person.”

A Jack of All Trades: A Master of None

To understand *Stó:lō* identity I had to understand how the *Stó:lō* related to each other, their environment, the world, other people, even the early colonizers and settlers of our territory as an extremely complex history of interactions, teachings, stories and transformations that can go as far back as the beginning of time.⁹⁷ Intertwined with this challenge is the fact that I am trying to understand a time when English was not even spoken let alone the primary language. In order to try and understand this complex world I have had to be a bit of a genealogist, historian, geographer, linguist, singer, story-teller, academic, philosopher, politician, relationship expert, conflict resolver, psychologist, criminologist, archaeologist and spiritual guru. Learning of and about these trades is no

⁹⁷ Understanding the complexities of *Stó:lō* identity transformations is a dissertation in and of itself, gratefully already undertaken by Keith Carlson and now published as a text (see Carlson 2010).

easy task, but it was necessary for me to learn them well enough to make sense of pertinent pieces of information that were coming from all these schools of thought.⁹⁸

As my Uncle Herb (*T'xwelátse*) explains it, “life is like a jigsaw puzzle, but for us colonization has shattered our puzzle and scattered our pieces, it is up to you to find your pieces and put your puzzle back to together.” I have found pieces in several different areas; some pertinent pieces were found in areas I would not have even considered looking if I had not been following an Indigenous research methodology. For example, I would not have thought that within our spiritual beliefs and within *milha*, I would find information and guidance on “governance” and self-determination.

Locating Puzzle Pieces

There are many challenges in obtaining relevant and reliable information from earlier research pertaining to the *Stó:lō*. There are methodological flaws and biases that can make sorting through this material difficult. As well there were varying levels of skill among the researchers/recorders who visited *S'ólh Téméxw* to gather information from their *Stó:lō* informants. Some like Franz Boas and Wilson Duff for example, conducted the basis of their research in a matter of weeks so did not necessarily speak to all the people required in order to provide a complete and accurate picture of the *Stó:lō*. Others like Oliver Wells spent a fair deal of time with his informants but his own agenda of what he wanted or thought was important often meant some of the good stuff was missed. In the case of Eloise Street, the songs of *Y-Ail-Mihth* read surprisingly (or not) like old English poetry. Biases are present as eurocentrism and ethnocentrism were quite prevalent and at this time virtually unquestioned as the filters through which most academic writing in relation to Indigenous peoples was done.

The result of methodological flaws and biases makes some of this research offensive and even morally and ethically wrong. This was a time before informed consent was necessary and well before we came to see Indigenous knowledge as something that belongs to Indigenous people. As well “salvage” studies of a “dying race”

⁹⁸ Astronomy, visions, prophecies, dance and artwork are all examples of fields of thought with pertinent information that I did not use in my research.

and studies conducted to “prove” or even implicitly infer the inferiority of *Stó:lō* epistemologies and ways of knowing are by their very nature offensive.

However, I also found that there is much to be learned from these studies. While a complete decolonizing analysis of it all has yet to be conducted, this is work that will contribute substantially to our understanding of not only the *Stó:lō*, but of the researchers, settlers and colonial relations of the time. Perhaps most importantly, decolonizing these earlier works will, I believe, honor and respect the very *Stó:lō* people who took the time to have their information recorded. It is with this in mind that I was able to look past the offensive eurocentrism of some of the researcher/recorders and learn from those who wanted their knowledge recorded and preserved. It even seems as though the *Stó:lō* “informants” were aware that having their knowledge recorded would actually preserve it and might be the only way to ensure their knowledge would survive the colonial process and be available for future generations.

They Call it a “Woman’s Intuition”

Being *Stó:lō* helped me greatly with these challenges; that is, I believe in the guidance that my *Stó:lō* ancestors provide. Some refer to this as intuition; I believe intuition is our ability to listen to spirit and spirit is connected to *Syesyewáleh* (all one’s ancestors). This gave me confidence in my ability to distinguish between real information and that which may have been somewhat altered, or even changed due to the person sharing information, with whom it was being shared, the time period, the length of time spent with those sharing the information and issues of translation and bias. Quite often it would be my intuition that would signal to me something was amiss, or not quite right. It was also my intuition that helped me fill in gaps and connect sources that otherwise would be read separately.

Naturally the information that has been left in its original form is the most useful; unfortunately, there is more altered information than not. By altered I mean that: (1) words have been changed due to issues of translation which then may affect meaning (i.e., settling for the closest English word even though it is not quite correct); (2) words have been changed due to stringent religious outlooks on topics such as sex, sexuality and natural cycles in life such as death and puberty; (3) information has been filtered through the scientific lens of a western way of knowing such as anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and history. As well there is no doubt that the *Stó:lō* have been

heavily influenced by colonizing religions and that this in many ways affected what was shared and how it was shared. Again I relied on my ancestral teachings to help me restore as closely as possible this altered information to its original form so I could then ensure my own interpretations are as accurate as possible.

Figuring it Out

I was pleasantly surprised when I ended up finding several important puzzle pieces within the dissertations of Western scientists especially in the area of archaeology, a field of study I have found to be the most challenged in “getting it right” when it comes to understanding the non-material world of the *Stó:lō* and the ways in which we related with and to our World. That the early findings of Boas, Duff, Wells, Smith, Jenness and Suttles are now being corrected, added to, and even in some cases challenged, is part of the decolonizing process so integral to contemporary understanding.

Vine DeLoria, Jr., for example, does just this in many of his writings in particular *Red Earth, White Lies* and *Spirit and Reason*. In his telling of a true history, he exposes the many fallacies, half-truths and even outright lies that have been put forward by archaeological and anthropological studies. He urges Indigenous peoples to continue our training so we can be the ones to sort through past records and research to begin putting puzzle pieces together and begin telling the truth of these findings. This does not mean throwing the baby out with the bath water; Deloria acknowledges that some of this past history is useful and in fact needed today and can be beneficial to our Indigenous empowerment movement. He is, however urging Indigenous peoples to do this work as only we will be able to tell when something needs to be corrected.

Specific to the *Stó:lō* I have found it interesting that a few Western academics have been willing to take risks and begin calling into question findings from their own disciplines. This I believe happens only when such Western academics are willing to look to “other ways of knowing” to supplement their own discipline. For example Dr. Dave Schaepe acknowledges this in reference to his own work with the *Stó:lō* and the work he has done with Dr. Keith Thor Carlson, historian of the *Stó:lō* and author of *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time* (2010). A key difference is that both Carlson and Schaepe lived with the *Stó:lō* for at least a decade if not longer, and both scholars were able to understand epistemologies other than their own:

...governance I am fascinated by it. Keith and I have some common interests there and when we started working together fed off each other quite nicely. Looking at core interests, core questions, common questions and looking at different approaches, different sets of information, and what do you get out of it? What conclusion can you come to? How does that compare to historical approach, archaeological approach, oral historical approach? Working here [referring to with the *Stó:lō*] is what I found incredibly fascinating was *looking at these relationships of different ways of looking at things, these different ways of knowing all operating together.* (emphasis added; Schaepe transcript 01-07-2011:1)

By doing so Schaepe came to realize that some of the earlier conclusions drawn by early social scientists, or “amateur ethnographers,” as *Naxaxalhts’i* refers to them, were not making sense: “it just doesn’t match, doesn’t match what I hear, what I’ve seen elsewhere, what I see in archaeological sense and those remains of the past don’t match” (Schaepe transcript 01-07-2011:1).

In Schaepe’s research findings he actually contradicts earlier conclusions drawn by Suttles and Duff. While some conclusions are still based upon Western values, I find Schaepe’s study to be much more reflective of *Stó:lō* complexity. Interestingly, his study is based largely upon quantitative and material evidence such as pithouse measurements and the size of pithouse settlements as they change over time, as opposed to ethnography or oral teachings. Schaepe concludes that changes in pithouse and settlement size over time is concrete evidence of a *Sí:yá:m* class, or an upper echelon of worthy people or high status *Stó:lō* distinct from *smelá:lh* and that this *Sí:yá:m* class could be distinguished from other *smelá:lh*.

While Schaepe’s study is to be respected on its own, I found I was better able to trust his work for two main reasons. One is the length of time he has not only been working with the *Stó:lō* but living within our territory. But second, and in my view the biggest reason, is the relationship that he has developed over the years with *Naxaxalhts’i* (Sonny McHalsie). The partnership that has developed between *Naxaxalhts’i* (*Stó:lō* historian) and Dr. Dave (archeologist) is exactly the type of partnership Vine Deloria Jr. recommends:

One project that might be considered in the decades ahead would be a cooperative effort between archaeologists and interested Indians to rework and restate the findings of major importance in terms and language that eliminate cultural bias and attempt to give an accurate summary of what is known. (Deloria 1999:77)

Undertaking such partnerships can lead to relationships of respect and reciprocity.

I personally witnessed this unique relationship between Dr. Dave and Sonny when I was invited on one of their visits to *Xelhálh* (an old *Stó:lō* village site). Watching them work together did many things for me both personally and as an up-and-coming *Stó:lō* academic. Observing them work together was like watching the right hand help the left hand. And this working together was not just “work” it was also a caring “for” and “about” one another as well as the “land.” Each in their own way displayed a high level of respect and awe for *S’ólh Téméxw*. Such an ability done with such ease can only result from a relationship founded in respect. Respect for each other’s work, but also for each other as fellow human beings. What I observed was two friends, *Siyá:ye*, each of whom was learning from and respecting each other’s different ways of knowing and understanding.

Perhaps as a result of this relationship along with the relationship and respect Dr. Dave so obviously has for *S’ólh Téméxw* is what enabled him to step outside of the box, outside of the confines of traditional archaeology and include insights that I am sure some of his academic colleagues will shake their heads at. But I agree with Vine DeLoria (1999) on this one, that real academics are out there to transform what is already known, to take our level of understanding to a better place even without the support of academic comrades who refuse to look beyond the confines of their own box.

Correcting Colonial Interpretations

I do hope that the days of non-*Stó:lō* people telling the *Stó:lō* who we are are over. There can be no doubt that we are different and we will never fit into a eurocentric view of the world. When attempts are made by non-*Stó:lō* researchers to “study” the social structures of the *Stó:lō*, or our leadership styles, or how we organized ourselves we often end up being stuffed into boxes we don’t fit and so we, as a people, begin to adjust ourselves so we do. This is profoundly wrong on so many levels and does no one any good.

It also doubles the work for those of us trying to get to the heart of the matter. For example, the current social organization model used to describe the *Stó:lō* has been based largely upon the incomplete work of Wilson Duff and Wayne Suttles:

Basically Wayne Suttles is saying all the villages are essentially the same and that they all have same basic structure. His model, and Keith uses it in *You are Asked to Witness*, in the chapter on leadership and social organization, is based on Suttle's model with three levels of people. One being the High class of people, and the *Siyá:m* are a part of this class, and then Worthy people and then worthless people who have forgotten their history and then slaves. So really four parts that they identify. Slaves are not title or rights-holding people. This essentially creates a ball. What Suttles is saying is everyone is essentially the same. Not much leadership and all households are essentially independent and act for themselves so very minimal level of leadership and organization on an anthropological scale. (Dave Schaepe 01-07-2011:3)

No matter what Duff, Suttles, Smith, Boas or any others say, the *Stó:lō* never organized themselves according to a "class system." They were however, correct in concluding the *Stó:lō* organized themselves differently than the Haida or the Kwakwaka'wakw. Why they got it wrong could be due in small part to translation issues as in being told about *skw'iyéth* and settling upon the closest English word, which is slave. While this may be the case, the differences between a "slave" and a "*skw'iyéth*" (a person to be pitied, helpless one) far outnumber their similarities.

However, there is another telling reason as to why they got it wrong and it has to do with the colonial process grounded in a singular and eurocentric view of the world. If researchers come into a study with pre-conceived notions and cultural assumptions, their findings will be biased. In order for colonialism to occur, colonizers must have a firm belief in their superiority in order to feel justified in oppressing, subjugating, dislocating, alienating, dispossessing and even exterminating the "inferior" Indigenous peoples. The dehumanization, objectification and "thingification" of Indigenous peoples (Cesaire 1972; Fanon 1963) is all part of the colonial mentality that was and in some cases, still supported by Western research findings (Smith 1999). This is not to be thought of in only historical terms. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) identify the contemporary process as Settlers try to eradicate Indigenous "existence as *peoples* through the erasure of the histories and geographies that provide the foundation for Indigenous cultural identities and sense of self" (p.598).

Going hand in hand with the colonial drive to erase Indigenous identities is the belief that the colonizer has the right to define and describe the colonized: "the colonial encounter ...requires a reinvention of the colonized, the deliberate destruction of the past" (Cesaire 1972:9). Sadly, the defining and describing was undertaken by Western

scientists immersed in eurocentrism and ethnocentrism. Colonizers believed in a hierarchy of civilizations and via the handy use of ethnocentrism, Western societies were placed at the top of the civilization hierarchy and Indigenous peoples were placed at the bottom and deemed to be “savage” “inferior” “uncivilized” “dirty” “childlike” “lawless” and so on when judged according to European standards. Yet in another example of colonial mayhem, most of the standards used by the colonizers were in many cases actually inferior to those used by the Indigenous people (see Arthurson 2010; Mann 2005). How then could these “scientists” explain the complex, sophisticated and in many ways superior social organization of the *Stó:lō*? It would appear they just either simply ignored it or continued citing each other without being supported by an original source:

...basic starting point has been brought here, anthropological perspectives and stereotypes. Always starts with these concepts of civilization and these ladders and everyone is pigeon-holed into their spot. Therefore impossible for anyone down here to have an order equivalent to someone up here, how can that possibly be? Even though can't cite a reference. Yes this person was influenced by that. It lowered standards of what people expected to see so can't see what is out there in a sense and even literally with certain expectations in front of you. *Xelhálh* is like that, people have been there before and people have been up and down the canyon, all kinds of surveys like for twin tracking, yet no one recognized these massive stone features.

(Dave Schaepe 01-07-2011:5)

Xelhálh: The New York City of S'ólh Téméxw

On February 15, 2010, I was invited by Dr. Dave to join his team on a visit to *Xelhálh*, a pre-contact *Stó:lō* settlement located at the entrance to the Fraser Canyon, just west of Yale and east of Mike Victor's fishing rock. It is one of four settlements in the canyon with fortified rock structures. The fortified rock structures of *Xelhálh*, *Q'alelíktel*, *Í:yem*, and *Lexwts'ó:kw'em* – all *Stó:lō* pre-contact settlements – are being examined by archeologists for a number of reasons, a main one being to better understand *Stó:lō* participation in warfare (Schaepe 2006). These rock fortifications are located in a line along the river and correspond with the area of the river known for best salmon catches and its ability to produce the much sought after wind-dried salmon. That raids would occur by Yuculet, and other *Lets'ó:Imexw* seeking *Stó:lō* women and resources such as wind-dried salmon is well-documented in both written and oral histories.

Schaepe categorizes the rock features found in the canyon into four basic construction types: Type I constructions are “free standing, loose masonry, coursed rock walls;” Type II are loose masonry, coursed rock retaining walls/terrace facing and are set against some sort of backing such as a hillside; Type III are loose masonry, boulder-piled platforms built as extensions to Type II features (*Xelhálh* being only known example); and Type IV constructions are freestanding, positioned boulder alignments, not piled but set as a row of individual large boulders (2006:681-682). Although the rock features at *Xelhálh* have suffered some loss due to time they still “represent a monumental scale of construction” (Schaepe 2006:685).

What these rock features have to tell us about *Stó:lō* social organization, especially in terms of leadership and governance is still to be determined. The fact that they were completely overlooked by early ethnographers, archeologists, anthropologists and historians is a direct result of their own biases and cultural assumptions that the *Stó:lō* were simple people with very little centralized leadership, let alone any form of governance. These rock features are physical representations of a high level of social organization. That we came together to build things would surprise only colonial mindsets. To coordinate and accomplish these feats would require some type of leadership:

So *Xelhálh*, in canyon at Lady Franklin Rock,⁹⁹ major point, best fishing grounds in the entire northwest coast and point of connection for villages above, so major point there. Most amazing place, it's a blow you away kind of place that is incredibly powerful. Some of the design of the building is taken from that, use of big rock features. After looking at it can't say there wasn't a lot of organization and leadership involved in making the place, complete contradiction to what Wilson Duff said about this low level of leadership or social order.

(Dave Schaepe 01-07-2011:4)

The significance of this village to the *Peló:lhxw* and *Tait* is undeniable; I also believe that understanding *Xelhálh* will bring valuable teachings for all *Stó:lō*. Aside from the railway that runs on the south side of it, the site has somehow escaped White settlement and encroachment. As a result, it was very much like walking through a ghost

⁹⁹ *Xéylxelemós* (Galloway 2009:1339).

town. There were spiritual and physical remnants of a very busy life. To reach it we boarded a river raft just before Yale, which took us up and across the river to a river bank where we disembarked. From there we walked up the hillside (using “steps”) and entered *Xelhálh*, which I have renamed the “New York city of *S’ólh Téméxw*.” I stood in the remains of a large *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse) as well as several surrounding *sqémél* (pit houses). There was a burial site, a rock quarry where a lot of stone had been chipped off the side of a steep cliff and used to build the massive rock walls, an area of healing, and a mystery indentation which I like to believe was especially for women or some sort of spiritual work. The lookout areas were breathtaking, when standing on one of the human-made plateaus I could see several miles downriver. At another I could look straight across the river to a mountain side with a massive cave.

I do not doubt that *Xelhálh* is a powerful place and holds many teachings for us. One that stays in the forefront for me is the meaning of the word *Xelhálh*. The meaning of *Xelhálh* is “hurt people” because according to *Stó:lō* elders, this is where *Xá:ls* turned many people to stone (Galloway 2009:684). I also recall Tillie Gutterrez (*Siyolexwálh*) explaining the word *Xelhálh* to me when sharing the *sxwōxwiyám* of a young girl who did not want to share her catch of salmon, went running away from the people, and was turned to stone by *Xá:ls* (visit 03-28-1999). Tillie explained this word to mean “hurt through the whole body, through the self” (Tillie Gutterrez personal communication 03-28-1999). I recall taking from this teaching that to not share would cause one a lot of pain and so would not be worth it. In fact, the teaching of sharing is found throughout *S’ólh Téméxw*.

Shedding Colonial Identities

Using English words and concepts to describe the *Stó:lō* is problematic for many reasons, the main one being we are different Peoples. English concepts and understandings of the world come from another territory with very different histories and so cannot be applied to the *Stó:lō*. When they are we reach false conclusions fraught with cultural assumptions. An example is the imposition of a “class system” as it is extremely simple and easy to describe, and besides, the Europeans had one and thus so, too, must everyone else.

The most popular model is the one mentioned above by Suttles which describes basically three classes of people: *smelá:lh* who are the worthy people, the ones who

know their history, the *s'téxem* who are the worthless people and the *skw'iyéth* who are the slaves. Although he and others such as Duff and Smith acknowledge the *Halq'eméylem* term *Sí:yá:m* as "respected ones" they were categorized with the *smelá:lh* people and the general consensus was we were basically leaderless people, or at the most had family heads. This stratified system is too simplistic to fully explain the complexity of *Stó:lō* social organization and leadership. That these researchers failed to properly record the ways in which we organized ourselves is frustrating, but then again, it may be best that a *Stó:lō* person do it. I cannot help but wonder how perplexing it must have been for these researchers to realize that the answers to their questions were never simple. You get the sense they were not looking to document how best to live in this territory, but rather wanted to document a sense of superiority. To paint the *Stó:lō* as simple people, with very little social cohesion and virtually no leadership must have done wonders in justifying the colonial social order.

That the *Stó:lō* retained their identity through famines, natural disasters, and even trips to the land beyond the sky, that they maintained a vast and wealthy territory and did so with very little conflict tells me we had a strong sense of "place," identity and cohesion. Words in our language such as *smelá:lh*, for example, tell us that maintaining one's identity even in the face of adversity and natural disasters is important; that remembering your history and where you come from makes you a worthy person. That some did not retain this knowledge makes them *s'téxem*, or "stupid." If one thinks of this type of knowledge as vital for survival then it is easy to agree that putting this knowledge down would make one not so bright, and less worthy than those who retain it. Thus the maintenance of "identity" has always been a key to survival and I believe our ability to maintain our identity is second to none. I attribute this to: (1) our relationship with our territory and the teachings that go with it that tell us how to be in this world and how to survive; and (2) great leadership. Both these things came under attack by the colonial process and have been since contact.

My dissertation teachers have taught me that it is imperative that we shed the colonial identity and "terms of convenience" such as "Aboriginal" "Indian" "a Bill-C-31" a "6-2" "off-reserve" "on-reserve" "status" "non-status" "bands" "Chief" "Councilor" "tribal council" and even "Canadian" and "American" as these terms are designed so we can be "managed" and eventually erased. There is absolutely no self-governance and certainly no self-determination in being "managed" by colonial governments especially as the end

result will be we will no longer exist as a People. Instead it is imperative that we re-claim our true Indigenous identities; doing so is an act of self-determination. In the process we will reconnect with our territories and our relationships as our very identity, our Indigenous identity is inseparable from our land.

I Am River

The *Halq'eméylem* word "Stó:lō" translates into English literally as "river." That the river figures prominently in the lives of the people who use this word to identify themselves collectively is so obvious as to be often over-looked. Stó:lō as a collective identity ties the Stó:lō people to the river, in particular to the river of all rivers now known in English as the Fraser. To identify oneself as "I am Stó:lō" is the same as saying "I am River," just more acceptable and more readily understood by settlers and colonial governments. To see the river as an extension of oneself is easy within a Stó:lō worldview and ontology that sees all of life as a relation. Unfortunately, the fact that the river and its contents are vital to the survival of the Stó:lō people is not given nearly enough attention, let alone credibility.

As children we are taught to "respect" the river and everything in it. As shared by *Siyámíalexw* (Elder Joe Alec) to Commissioner Cohen:

We honor the river, respect it, give thanks to it, pray to it, for the salmon especially for coming up the river. We offer the river, the salmon every time we go out we give offerings to the river to the salmon – most of our people do that even to this day, carry a bag of tobacco give honor give thanks.

Once our people can our salmon, like last night I was up to midnight to can and bring all the remains of our salmon back to the river to dispose of it, you don't throw it away. Give thanks to the mother of all salmon we call *th'sockweah* (9:35) – the mother of all salmon looks after ones that come up the river.

(Joe Alec Cohen Commission Cheam Beach visit 08-12-2010:2)

We are taught to never go against the current of the river as "this is one battle you will never win." Most Stó:lō children grow up "on" the river and know nothing different. Generation after generation for at least 12,000 years (approximately when according to western time the Stó:lō [Fraser river] appeared) has passed river teachings and the importance of the river on to the next generation. It is this "connection" to river

and its contents that drives many of our contemporary *Stó:lō* fishers to continue fishing even when to do so may result in years of persecution through the court system (see Chapter 8 for example). I witnessed such persecution with *Kw'í:tseł Tatel* (Patricia Kelly) so had to ask her why? Meaning I needed to know what “fishing” meant to her:

Wenona: How do you feel when you are fishing?

Kw'í:tseł Tatel (Patricia Kelly): I know how to do it, clear, no wavering, no doubts, I am happy. Put me in an office, sure I have a Bachelor of Arts degree but I struggled largely to stay in a classroom. I believe my generation is last that lived by the river, we actually only left river to go get more clean clothes or more food to supplement our fish. That's what I remember growing up with.
(10-07-2010:10)

Even early colonizers recognized the importance of the river to the *Stó:lō* and used it as an excuse to drastically reduce “reserve” size (Boxberger 2007; Harris 2008; Tenant 1990).

The *Stó:lō* Worldview as a Riverworldview

Stelómethet (Ethel Gardner) refers to the *Stó:lō* worldview as a Riverworldview and shows through our language just how ingrained the river culture is to the *Stó:lō* (Gardner 2002:104). For example, *Stelómethet* identifies within the *Halq'eméylem* language names for sixteen different types of salmon with eighteen names (2002:104). In the next chapter I explore this further by continuing to identify the very many words, terms, and concepts within our language that center around the river and the salmon in it.

Stelómethet also explores just how central the river culture is to the *Stó:lō* people as identified through the very many *Halq'eméylem* terms used as a means to provide directions. For example, she identified twelve such terms which provide directions based upon the river: *tó:l* is toward the river (on land); *chó:leqw* is toward the backwoods, away from the river; *lhós* is drift downriver and so on. She also notes the ways we described our location within our homes using the river as the focal point:

Chuchuwaxel, ‘front end of house (inside or out)’ is literally ‘side toward the river.’ *Stselqwáxel* ‘back end of house (inside or out) refers to the ‘side away from the river...’ *Stiytáxel* ‘up end of house (inside or out)’ is literally ‘upriver side,’ and *sewqw'áxel*, ‘lower end of the house’ literally translates as ‘downriver side.’
(Gardner 2002:108)

That the *Stó:lō* figures prominently within the lives and worldview of the people who have sustained a relationship with it for twelve thousand years cannot be minimized. For the *Stó:lō* people our River Worldview needs to be re-centered and re-claimed. I am not in any way suggesting that by doing so in any way minimizes other *S'ólh Téméxw* relationships such as my own *Ts'elxwéyeqw* relation to mountains or my *Ts'elxwéyeqw* history of being “mountain” people. I am, however, promoting Carlson’s conclusion that if “*Stó:lō*” is the “river of rivers” (see Carlson 2010:40) then our identity as *Stó:lō* people can be seen as “the tribe of tribes” (Carlson 2010:40), meaning “the” tribe of *Xwélméxw* people, not “the” tribe of all Indigenous people.

As a Collective Identity

Without first deconstructing colonial-imposed identities, what it means to “be” *Stó:lō* will have as many different definitions as there are *Stó:lō* people. It has been described as a “supra-tribal” collective identity that is called upon and even strengthened in times of external threats (Carlson 2010:213). The *Stó:lō* people view it as an ancient identity if only for the simple reason that the “river” itself is thousands of years old, and the ancestors of the *Stó:lō* were present before the river appeared. This is further complicated as the collective identity may not be called upon when external threats are not apparent and/or are subtle.

One of the most obvious examples of this is in the hiring of *Stó:lō* people, especially within positions of authority, who have the ability to improve our position(s) within a colonial country. There are more times than not when *Stó:lō* people were not hired for choice positions even though they were qualified, the employer (often, but not always, a *Stó:lō* employer) opting instead for a non-*Stó:lō* and even at times a non-Indigenous applicant. After witnessing and even experiencing this on several occasions over a fifteen year period it no longer surprises me. What does surprise me is the lack of organized protest from the *Stó:lō* communities.

Employment is not the only area the *Stó:lō* often fail to call upon their supra-tribal identity. Treaty negotiations, health, and education are also areas in which this collective identity is not called upon when it could have enough influence to change things. My experience with education while working on my dissertation has been that too much focus is put on individual “bands” when it would be more beneficial to look at aggregate statistics and to collaborate to improve the delivery of education to our children and

youth. One “band” might have a small ripple effect whereas a united *Stó:lō* front might actually effect major changes. For example we could insist that not one single *Stó:lō* child be excluded from receiving an education. That 70% of *Stó:lō* children are being pushed out of the education system before graduating high school is alarming to me; what makes me ill is the lack of protest from the *Stó:lō* people.

While still being subjected to Canada’s colonial regime, it would be best for the *Stó:lō* to unite as a supra-tribal identity at all times, with direction and respect given to individual tribes working on initiatives that are tribal and/or community-specific such as certain business ventures, local language programs, daycares, strengthening families and so on.

What Is a Tribe?

In the same way I don’t know what “Aboriginal” means I don’t know what “tribe” means either. The *Halq’eméylem* term for tribe is *Ó:wqw’elmexw* or *Ó:wkw’elmexw* – a tribe of people/several tribes (Galloway 2009:1437). This I can begin to understand because *Téméxw* is land and *méxweya* is belly-button. So *Ó:wqw’elmexw* speaks to one’s place both in terms of ancestry and in terms of territory, this I can understand.

I am *Ts’elxwéyeqw* and my husband is *Peló:lhxw*, which means there are two *Ó:wqw’elmexw* that I know a little bit about. I know very little about the others, although I can easily identify how I am related and/or somehow connected to them all. While *Ó:wqw’elmexw* can be identified through ancestry and territory, another important identifier is shared language.

Using Language to Identify *Ó:wqw’elmexw*

They wanted me to stop speaking my own language and speak English but I wouldn’t be able to speak to my grandmother, so I wouldn’t do it.
Ts’ats’elxwót (Elizabeth Herrling)

The importance of language cannot be understated. For Indigenous peoples language is *sxexo:mes* (a gift) from the creator, given to us so we could survive and learn from our environment:

My honorable brothers and sisters and friends, it was once said when creator gave us our homeland at the beginning of time the creator also gave us our language so we would be able to relate with all other

creations of life, like the land and all that is in it. The creator gave us a word to relate to all, the water, ocean, lakes, rivers and also sacred air we breathe. The sacred belief of our people is every creation must be treated very sacred so it will always remain here on mother earth for our use. (ʔesalaq 03-30-2010:1)

How did we get this language?" We were born with it...We always had our language. *Halq'eméylem* is us. (Yómalot as cited in *Stelómethet* 2002:278)

Halkomelem is an umbrella term used to describe three different dialects of the *Stó:lō*: *Halq'eméylem*, *Hun'qumi'num* and *Hul'qumi'num*. The upriver dialect *Halq'eméylem* is spoken from Yale to Matsqui. The downriver *Hun'qumi'num* is spoken from Kwantlen to Musqueam, and the third is the island dialect *Hul'qumi'num* which is spoken from Malahat to Nanoose. As well there are many sister languages, sub-dialects and micro-dialects making the study of Indigenous languages throughout *S'ólh Téméxw* a complicated matter. For example, SENĆOŦEN, one of the languages spoken by my dissertation teacher, ʔesalaq is one of five dialects spoken by the WSÀNEĆ (Saanich People), a sister nation located south of the *Hul'qumi'num* speakers on Vancouver Island.

Within the upriver and downriver dialects of Halkomelem there were at least 18 different sub-dialects. The dialect and words used told others about the speaker, where s/he is from, his/her family, status within the *Ó:wq'w'elmexw* and level of knowledge. For example within the *Stó:lō Ó:wq'w'elmexw* the *Yewá:l Siyá:m* (First Leaders) and *Hi'weq'w Siyá:m* (Leader of Leaders) could be distinguished from others because of the "high words in the language" they used (see for example Mrs. E.L. explained to Duff 1972:76). As ʔesalaq explained:

...sapunnuk (phonetic) is SENĆOŦEN and snowhyeth (phonetic) is *Hun'qumi'num*. Try to correct a person, one says lalem, another says laylem, well can't change accent of family because it becomes their identity. They talk that way whether *Stó:lō* or on island it's the same. (03-30-2011:15)

As shared by Yómalot:

That's our identity, our language. When other people hear you talking, they know where you come from. "Oh she comes from that place. She comes from Upriver." That's how we identify ourselves. (as cited in *Stelómethet* 2002:279)

If language is used it can help identify the various *Ó:wqʷ'elmexw* throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*. For example Wilson Duff identified the following as Upriver “tribes” or *Halq'eméylem* speakers:

1. Tait
2. Peló:lhxw
3. *Ts'elxwéyeqʷ*
4. Scowlitz
5. *Sts'a'i:les* (Chehalis)
6. *Leq'á:mel*
7. S'emá:th

Galloway identified the following sub-dialects: Chilliwack, Pilalt, Tait, Chehalis and Sumas (2009:xviii). I would conclude that *Leq'á:mel* would not be considered a sub-dialect for obvious reasons (i.e., *Halq'eméylem* originates as the language of the *Leq'á:mel*) and Scowlitz would probably speak the same dialect as the Chehalis.

The Downriver tribes, or *Hun'qumi'num* speakers, were identified as:

8. Matsqui
9. Whannock
10. Kwantlen (of which the Qeqa'yt and Kwikwetlem belong)
11. Katzie
12. Musqueam

Although there is no sharp division between the Upper and Lower river *Stó:lō* *Ó:wqʷ'elmexw* even Duff knew they were too different to be included under one description (Duff 1972:12). In fact each *Ó:wqʷ'elmexw* is best treated as unique and different, yet still *Xwélmexw* meaning although each *Ó:wqʷ'elmexw* is different we are of the same people.

***Xwélmexw* and *Lets'ó:lmexw*: Who Belongs?**

Prior to our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual colonial imprisonment we knew our territory; we knew what was ours and knew how to care for it. We knew who was *Xwélmexw* (same people) and who was *Lets'ó:lmexw* (different Indigenous people)

and that both these terms refer to the Indigenous peoples of this land. Non-Indigenous people are referred to as *Xwelitem*, or hungry people.

As far as I have come to understand it *Xwélmexw* are people who share culture, traditions, and a lifestyle based upon common laws embedded within our *syuwá:lelh*. We are bound together by landscape and the travels of *Xexá:ls* and kinship ties through shared origin and ancestors. *Xwélmexw* are spiritually bound together through the teachings of *milha*.

***S'ólh Téméxw:* Defining Boundaries and Identifying Territory**

The Old People recall meetings of their Elders and Leaders, many of which would take place in the canyon and Yale area. There is no doubt that this area represented a certain type of “boundary” between Halkomelem speakers (i.e., those we now call *Stó:lō* people, Musqueam people, and Islanders) or what anthropologists label as West Coast Salish people and the Nlaka'pamux people, but there is no distinct gate or fence or even line to distinguish this “boundary.” As explained by Thom (2005:336):

Western constructs of boundaries and territories create dilemmas as Coast Salish people claim territory but do not identify “a boundary” per se rather Coast Salish people understand their territorial relationships as being nested in complex world of property, identity, ancestry and kin.

The Old People recall their Elders and leaders would spend time talking about their homelands, territories and resources. Elder Tillie Gutterez shared with *Naxaxalhts'i* that she recalls the leaders talking during the summer while fishing in the canyon about the land question and recalls that each meeting began with the following statement:

“*S'ólh Téméxw te ikw'elo. Xolhmet te mekw'stam it kwelat*” which translates into English as “this is our land and we have to take care of everything that belongs to us” (McHalsie 2007:85). The challenge we face is to remember to look beyond our colonial prisons of the “reserve” system and the colonizers' illegitimate claim to our territory and resources.

Defining boundaries and territory is further complicated by contemporary colonial processes of the reserve-system and modern treaty making which essentially translates into removing “reserve-status” and giving each band member a dollar for lost land and resources. The “reserve” is a colonial construction that in no way reflects our territories,

far from it. We absolutely have to dream a much bigger dream than this. For the *Ts'elxwéyeq̓w* our territory is clearly defined by oral teachings (passed from generation to generations, see *Willéq* in previous chapter) and our “boundaries” are marked by the landscape. I use the term “boundary” with much hesitation as it is an English concept that is inherently oppressive. There is a word in our language that means “as far as the eye can see”¹⁰⁰ and this word defines our territory, meaning if we climb to the top of *Lílheq̓i*, I believe she will tell us a lot about our territory.

The ability, therefore, to identify territory is found in our language and *sxwōxwiyám*. Corky identified the use of Place Names to help identify boundaries and territory:

One of the true ways of recognizing territory, some nations don't really have a problem there are very few, the Haida are one, they are self-contained on Haida Gwaii. But for people up and down coast and interior we have overlapping areas and overlapping cultures, cultures are different from one area to next. The diversity that we have in BC, I don't think we see anywhere else. Look at languages in Canada, eleven are recorded, six are in BC, the diversity just in those terms. I think our territories go with those cultures too. Those are the kinds of issues we got to think about. Our place names really defining those places that sets our boundaries with neighboring nations and having serious discussions with our neighbors over boundaries and shared territories. (Corky Douglas, 12-30-2010:5)

What's in a Name?: Defining Title and Rights Through Ancestral Names

What's your family's ancestral name? See that is where your rights come from, comes from word NE,HIMET, **NE,HIMET is the oldest form of land tenure as well as possession**. Like my name is *ṭesalaq* and when they named me that they also told me where name comes from, come from Malahat tribe. Talking about thousands of years ago now and when they named me my great grandfather's uncle's name that gave me the right to hunt, fish, to live on that land. It is the oldest form of land tenure, the oldest form of right of possession of all the resources that come from the land that is what NE,HIMET means. NE,HIMET means mine to protect because it comes from my ancestral name.

¹⁰⁰ Dalton Silver from *S'emá:th* shared this with me one day as part of my research for Coqualeetza.

That is why every one of us is given an Indian name that comes from the land and comes from land because Shexals named the land, humans didn't. See lot of the knowledge that, oral tradition of identifying our history has always been way we defined it. We would never never have written it until recently. Oral traditions talks about the ancestral ancient ways of transferring land, transferring responsibility over to families for next generation to look after. And this it that process that allows us; we invite people from all over Coast Salish country to witness the naming and this is when the name comes back from the history. It's a pre-contact process that has allowed us to deal with natural resources that come from the land... NE,HIMET is oldest, only form of land tenure, there is no other form.

(*t'esalaq* 02-08-2011:3)

Thus reclaiming identity through ancestral names becomes key. In the "high names" are title and deeds, responsibilities, and resources.

Reclaiming Ancestral Names

This is probably going to be the most exciting work that comes out of my dissertation journey. I look forward to learning about all the High Names, the names that can be traced to the beginning of time, names that are tied to territory, names that come with resource responsibility, names that carry gifts for the people, names that connect us to land, air, water, trees, fire, birds, animals, fish, and all our *sxexo:mes*.

Yewá:l Syewá:l:

First Ancestors of the Down River *Stó:lō*

In the Sacred Knowledge passed down from Old Pierre (*θɛ'łæctən*) from Katzie, he identified the first five men to be (1) *c'simle'nəx* from Musqueam: his name means "he who grows and multiplies" his gift is *Sxwó:yxwey*; (2) *sma'k'wəc* from Point Roberts: his gift was the winds and the four White Rocks; (3) *xʷθɛ'pæctən* from Port Hammond: *θɛ'łæctən* did not have very nice things to say about this man and did not recall the meaning of his name or his gift; (4) *Swaneset* (*swa'nəsət*) from Sheridan Hill: used to be the highest mountain until *Swaneset* shattered it. His name means the "Supernatural Benefactor" and from him came many great gifts. For example, he reshaped the land to have an abundance of Indian potatoes, cranberries, and other foods, and from his many wives came many more gifts. From his *Tel Swayel* wife (from the land on the other side of the sky) came sea gulls and eulachons; from his Salmon Wife came all the different types of salmon; and finally (5) *θɛ'łæctən*, and the Katzie people at Pitt Lake whose

name means “clothed with power” and whose gifts are the sturgeon (his daughter) and the white owl-like bird (his son) whom only descendants of *θɛ'ɫəctən* can see (Old Pierre as told to Diamond Jenness(1955)).

Old Pierre died in 1946 and his son Simon was in his 70s when Suttles worked with him for several weeks in the summer of 1952 to better capture what Old Pierre had told Diamond Jenness. Simon had also been present when Old Pierre spoke with Jenness, although a young boy.

Old Pierre:

The Creator did not create one couple as we see in Adam and Eve but groups of people to each he assigned a special leader and I would add a special gift (as quoted in Suttles 1955:10).

One group he settled at Musqueam with the leader *c'simlɛ'nəx* whose name means “He who grows and multiplies.” At Point Roberts he established a group under the leader named *sma'kʷəc* a name that I can not translate and at Port Hammond a mile above Katzie a third group under *xʷθɛ'pəctən* whose name also carries no meaning to us today. A fourth under *Swaneset* (*swa'nəsət*) the “Supernatural Benefactor” He planted on Sheridan Hill, it used to be the highest mountain but he shattered it as I will tell you shortly . We the Katzie mostly descended from *θɛ'ɫəctən* (clothed with power) who ruled the fifth group created at Pitt Lake. That is why my own name is *θɛ'ɫəctən*, for we Indians inherit our names as you know, in much the same way as you whites (p. 10). All five names come with gifts.

From *θɛ'ɫəctən* the people were given Sturgeon (who he transformed his daughter into) and a white owl like bird (his son) who only *θɛ'ɫəctən*'s descendants can see and pray to for power. From *sma'kʷəc* came the winds and four “White Rocks.” The son was practicing his sling shot with white stones: the first slipped and fell into the ocean near Victoria where it still is today, the second stone slipped and landed in the sea near Sechelt, the third fell north of Semiahmoo, the fourth went so far out of sight no one knows where it landed and this let the boy know he was ready (Jenness 1955:11). The son then flung *sma'kʷəc*'s adulterous wife from a sling and she became the south wind her tears being the rain that comes with it, the son also flung *sma'kʷəc* as his wife's actions had now brought shame to him and he became the north wind where people can pray to him to also become great Warriors. The son became the west wind saying “I shall blow and bring fine weather for those who come hereafter. I shall dry the tears of my mother when she weeps too long” (p. 11).

The gift of *sxʷa'yxʷəy* came with *c'simlɛ'nəx* which is a wooden mask to be used on special occasions for ritual of prayer and thanksgiving (Jenness 1955:11). *c'simlɛ'nəx* was presented with the mask of thunder,

a rattle and from the sky fell his costume to wear during this ceremony and the song to sing. The creator told him that over the years he would send three more powerful beings to help the thunder mask: the raven, the two-headed snake and the sawbill-duck and instructed *c'simlɛ'nəx* to make other masks to represent them (p.12). The creator told *c'simlɛ'nəx* to wear the mask when “grief and sorrow overcome you and it shall bring you joy again” (p.11). This ceremony was to be conducted during special occasions of life: when a child is born, when a daughter reaches womanhood, when your daughter marries and when a loved one dies, as no one lives forever. “Pray to me to care for the soul that has left you, to grant it a happy resting-place, and to spare for a short time longer those who remain behind” (p.12). According to Old Pierre no one remembers the special chant (sɔ̄'ɛ'ʔnəm) that the mask holder teaches his son when passing on this gift, only the chant (st'ələma'yət) which goes “My father lacks for nothing except haliotis shells,” but what those words really mean Old Pierre did not know (p.12) (however it is worth noting that Old Pierre is descended from the gifts of θɛ'təctən and not from *c'simlɛ'nəx*).

From *Swanaset* who was created at Sheridan Hill, came great gifts. He reshaped the land to have an abundance of Indian potatoes and cranberries as well as other foods (p.13), and his wives brought spectacular gifts such as eulachon and salmon. *Swanaset* also visited the sky people where he met one of his wives.

Swanaset's Tel Swayel Wife¹⁰¹

Swanaset climbed to the top of Sheridan Hill and, looking upward, observed an opening in the sky. Hurriedly he descended, gathered all his followers in Pitt Meadow, and bade them join him on the summit the next morning, bringing their bows and arrows with them.

At daybreak the people mustered on the summit. Then *Swanaset*, pointing upwards to the opening in the sky said: “Shoot an arrow into the edge of that hole, then another arrow into the butt of the first, and a third into the butt of the second. Continue to shoot until your arrows form a chain extending from the sky to this mountain on which we stand. I will help you.

Grizzly shot first, because he was the most powerful; but his arrow reached only half-way to the sky and fell back. Black Bear shot, his arrow went no farther than Grizzly's. One after another the others shot, but not one of them could reach the mark. A tiny person, covered with ochre from head to foot, stood over to one side and watched. It was *t'ɛt'ɛ'ʔmiyɛ* (wren), he who later became a tiny bird smaller than a humming-bird.

¹⁰¹ I have titled this myself so to be found on table of contents for my dissertation.

"You come over here and try," *Swaneset* called to him. "Yes, I will try, though I am so small that I may fail. You help me, *Swaneset*, as you promised"

t'et'e'miyε danced round and round, chanting "I am going to shoot the sky up there" Suddenly he stopped and launched his arrow, which flew up and up until it struck the edge of the opening. He chanted again and launched a second arrow, which struck in the butt of the first. He shot a third, a fourth, until he had used up all the arrows in his quiver. Then he called for the arrows of his companions. Slowly the chain lengthened until at last it touched the top of the mountain.

Swaneset now raised his right hand to the Lord Above and beseeched Him to strengthen the chain. "I am going to climb up" he announced to his people. "I may be absent for a long time, but do not be alarmed." Hand over hand he climbed to the opening and drew himself through. Beautiful meadows stretched away before him on every side, with nowhere any sign of a path or habitation, but after wandering about blindly for some time, he sighted smoke in the distance and directed his steps toward it. Finally he came to a house and heard voices, not seeing the speakers, he circled cautiously round and stole quietly through the door. Inside two blind women seated on opposite sides of the fire, were cooking wild onions. One would stretch out her hand and say "Let me give you some of my onions" and the other would answer as she accepted them "let me give you some of mine." So they sat there exchanging their food, unconscious of the stranger who had stolen into their house. *Swaneset* crept nearer and intercepted one of the exchanges. His blind victim said to her companion "Did you receive the onions?" "no" answered the other. "Oh, but I felt your hand" "I held out my hand, but nothing touched it. Never mind, take some of my onions"

Again *Swaneset* intercepted the exchange. Sensing that something was wrong one of the women said "is it possible that our grandson *Swaneset* has succeeded in reaching here from down below?" And he answered "Yes grandmother, it is I, *Swaneset*" Both women stretched out their hands to him passionately. "oh my dear grandson" they cried. "We have been blind ever since the Lord Above created us. Can you help us?" "Yes, my grandmothers, I will help you."

He went outside, gathered his medicine and bathed their eyes with it. Sight came into them and gratefully the women rose to their feet and fanned him with their hands. Now they asked him " Did you climb to the sky because you knew your uncle above had two beautiful daughters?" "Yes."

You must be very careful then your uncle's house is dangerous. We will help you because you have given us our sight. You must climb a small tree that overhangs a pool in which your cousins bathe each morning. But before you go we will prepare you for the dangers you must face. On the palms of his hands, on the soles of his feet, under his forearms and on his back they fastened flat stones and they told him their purpose. Then they

made him swallow a long tube of cedar-bark, which they tested by dropping three hot stones into his mouth one after the other. The stones passed through, leaving him unharmed. After they had cautioned him once more about the dangers that lay ahead, *Swaneset* lay down and slept.

Before daylight he reached the pool and hid in the tree. His cousins appeared soon afterwards, removed their blankets and waist-cloths, and prepared to wash below him, but as the elder girl waded into the water she saw his reflection and cried in dismay "Someone is smiling at us from the bottom of the water." Her sister ran forward to look and while they both stood in the water, gazing downward, *Swaneset* descended and seized their clothes. Furtively they watched him, overwhelmed with embarrassment and shame, but at last they asked, "Are you our cousin *Swaneset*?" "Yes."

"Then please give us back our clothes. Your uncle is a very dangerous man but we will try to help you." *Swaneset* restored their clothes and walked between them toward their home where their father's watchman was already shouting a warning. As they drew near the girls said to *Swaneset*, "This door opens freely to every stranger, but as he passes through it closes suddenly from each side and crushes him. Stand between us and when it opens let us all jump together." "No," he answered. "You two leap first and I will leap after you."

The door opened and the girls leaped through in safety. It remained open waiting for *Swaneset* to pass. Slowly he walked forward his fists closed on his chest and his elbows spread outward. The wings of the door crashed inward, shivered and broke to splinters against the hard stones that the old women had fastened under his forearms. As he entered the house unharmed, the girls' father sighed deeply from his bed, "Ah, you have beaten me." Then he added, addressing his wife, "Bring that bear-skin for our guest to sit on." She stretched a large bear-skin on the floor, but *Swaneset* remembering the old women's warning, stamped on it beneath his stone-shod feet and laying down crushed it with the stones on his back. So he broke all the sharp bone spikes that lurked under its fur and remained unhurt.

The man said again to his wife, "Cook him some food." The woman set three stones on the fire and heated them till they glowed. "Are they cooked?" asked her husband, and she answered, "Yes." He rose to his feet and lifted up the first stone with two sticks. "Open your mouth," he said to *Swaneset*. *Swaneset* obeyed. The hot stone dropped inside him passed down the long cedar-bark tube and fell on to the bear-skin, which began to smoke. The second and third stones also passed through with no effect though they reduced the bear-skin to charcoal. "You have beaten me again," his adversary cried. "My daughters, feed your cousin." The two girls set food before him. After he had eaten, their father asked *Swaneset*, "Did you come here to marry your cousins?" "Yes." "Well, you may marry them." So *Swaneset* took both girls as his wives. Yet one

more ordeal confronted him. In the morning his father-in-law said to him, "Do you know how to hew out a canoe?"

The story goes on with *Swaneset* again outsmarting his father-in-law as the stones on his elbows crush the canoe when it begins to close in on him. And so he succeeds in breaking his father-in-law's power.

The Gift of Seagulls and Eulachons

Swaneset stays with his wives and his father-in-law for many months but eventually longs for his home and decides to return to earth. He leaves his older wife behind to care for her aging father and takes the younger wife with him back to earth. When they were leaving the young wife's father handed her a box and said, "For your dowry I am not giving you the customary blankets, but food. Do you know what to do with it when you reach earth?" His daughter answered yes. In the box were two gifts, sea gulls and eulachons. She would teach *Swaneset*'s people how to care for them:

"For one month only each year will fish appear," she said. "Gather them diligently. None of them must die and rot. I will show you how to hang them up to dry suspended from light racks of split cedar."

The people obeyed her commands and caught and dried an immense quantity. Quickly the news of what was happening spread up and down the river and other Indians gathered at Katzie to reap the new harvest of fish. *Swaneset* then travelled around the country inviting the more distant people to come and share their good fortune. Some did come but many were senseless and would not believe him. (Jenness 1955:17)

Thus, *Swaneset* brought gifts to his people through his wives. The wife who brought sea-gulls and eulachon was *Tel Swayel* or one of the people from the land on the other side of the sky. Old Pierre went on to explain how *Swaneset* set about shattering Sheridan Hill so no one else would be able to ascend to the sky (Jenness 1955:16).

Kinship Ties with *Yewá:l Sí:yá:m*

How the downriver *Yewá:l Sí:yá:m* are connected to the rest of *Stó:lō* territory would probably take an entire book or two to document. For example, we know that

Willéq the 5th married a Katzie woman who eventually came to live with him and his people at *Qoqolaxel* (see Chapter 9). Vincent Stogan from Musqueam carried the name *c'simlé'nəx*¹⁰² and passed it to his son who resides in Musqueam. Vince and his older brother Walker also passed the name to my husband Ernie Victor who carries the name *Tsimalanoxw* Cheam. Vincent's mother was Harry Edward's sister from *Peló:lhxw* and his paternal grandmother was from Tait. Harry Edwards is Ernie Victor's maternal great grandfather. Ernie received his ancestral name as a young man, thus ensuring these kinship ties are recognized and honored by bestowing such a great name on someone who was then a young man of Cheam.

Other Yewá:l Sí:yá:m

That the first *T'xwelátse* was the very first ancestor of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* would naturally make him a *Yewá:l Sí:yá:m*, and one that was fathered by *Sqáyéx*. I don't think I would be too far off in suggesting that each *Ó:wqw'elmexw* would have a *Yewá:l Sí:yá:m*.

I look forward to learning who all the contemporary name carriers are for all names of our first ancestors, that is, for all *Yewá:l Sí:yá:m*. Within these names are land tenure, responsibilities to territory, resources and *sxəxo:mes*. With these names come gifts. Gifts that are meant to be shared with the people.

¹⁰² Another Tait version of this same name is carried by Elder Joe Alex from Cheam: *Siyámlálexw* which means "first man to this land" and was given to him by his mother Lucy who was Tait.

Chapter 7.

Sth'ó:qwi* and *Sxexo:mes

“One thing we want to maintain,
no matter the number of changes we face along with all other British Columbians,
is our special relationship with the salmon.”
~Ernie Crey

Gifts from Our Creator/Gifts from Our Ancestors

Sxexo:mes is the *Halq'eméylem* phrase that means “gifts from our creator.” The *Stó:lō* recognize and respect the many gifts that have been bestowed upon us by the Creator and rely upon *syuwá:lelh*, the words of our ancestors, our teachings and our laws to help us protect, respect and care for all our *sxexo:mes*:

These then are gifts from our ancestors and they are called *shwa mul us*. These are all inherent rights and are not granted by human beings. They are granted by ceremony. This is how our ancestors protected our rights to manage and respect those resources that were made available to us under our Indian names.

(*tesalaq* 03-30-2011:5)

Sth'ó:qwi is the *Halq'eméylem* word for all of our salmon and is recognized as one of our most sacred “gifts.” It is therefore one of our inherent rights granted to us by ceremony. From time immemorial *Sth'ó:qwi* have figured prominently in all aspects of *Stó:lō* life, not only for the many different necessary nutrients so vital to a healthy and long *Stó:lō* life, but also spiritually as seen in sacred song, dance and ceremony that honor and respect its place within our society.

As with many *sxexo:mes*, *Sth'ó:qwi* to the *Stó:lō* are considered relatives and are therefore treated with the same respect as our *Syewá:l* (ancestors). Some *Stó:lō* families trace their lineage to *Sthéqi* (sockeye) or *Tl'élx̌xel* (Spring) salmon. Many believe *Sthéqi* (the sockeye) have a soul just as *Mestiyexw* (humans) do. This view of *Sth'ó:qwi* as a most sacred *sxexo:mes* bestowed with *shxweli* (see Chapter 11) then shapes and

defines the relationship we have with the salmon as one of connection, relationship and inter-dependency. This along with ancient teachings and *syuwá:lelh* (words from our ancestors, i.e., laws) ensured salmon were plentiful. Such love and care shown to *Sth'ó:qwi* meant salmon families not only multiplied, they returned year after year to the numerous creeks and river banks to spawn.

The *Stó:lō* have teachings and ceremony that ensured there would always be enough *Sth'ó:qwi* for future generations. As shared by *t'esalaq*, our sister nation, the WSÁNEĆ have the same teaching: "To make sure these things stayed in place and didn't go away our people were given a system so we would remember these ceremonies and these gifts and it's called *sx̱exo:mes*. This *sx̱exo:mes* is gifts from our ancestors like burning ceremony when we burn food and clothes for our ancestors" (3-30-2011:5). For the gift of *Sth'ó:qwi* we have ceremony such as the First Salmon Ceremony and *Sxwó:yxwey* (Mask Dance) as well as *syuwá:lelh* as represented by our *Stó:lō* laws, customs, traditions and protocol that teach us how to relate to and protect our salmon gift.

"I and my people are different from all other beings on this earth. We are Sockeye Salmon" (Swaneset's Salmon Wife)

The special relationship that the *Stó:lō* have with *Sth'ó:qwi* is thousands of years old. It is carefully preserved and passed from generation to generation via *sxwōxwiyám* and *sqwélqwel*. For example, in 1936 Old Pierre from Katzie, who was around 75 years old at the time, shared with Diamond Jenness the origin story of how *Swaneset* brought the salmon to his people when he married his Sockeye Salmon wife. Leaving his own Katzie village he traveled south until he reached "a beautiful coast wrapped in a warm haze:"

The next village he (*Swaneset*) approached was the home of the Dog Salmon, who at that time possessed the shapes of human beings, as did all other fish and animals and birds, except the eulachon that he had brought back from the sky. He remarked the houses of the Dog Salmon, painted with red stripes. He saw too that some of the villagers wore red-striped blankets, others black-striped; whence the dog salmon that enter the Fraser River today bear similar stripes on their bodies. He did not linger, however, but travelled on to another large village inhabited by a different people, the Humpybacked Salmon, who told him that they did not travel by canoe every day, but only every second day, which explains why it is that now the humpybacked salmon do not enter the Fraser River

every summer, but only every second summer, one day in the land of the super-natural being is a year of human time.

The women in this second village were very handsome, but all the men were hunchbacks. Here, too, *Swaneset* did not linger, but continued on to a beautiful coast wrapped in a warm haze. This was the land for which he was seeking, and here he found the inhabitants, the Sockeye Salmon people, spending their time in games. The youths shot their arrows at rolling hoops or at marks erected at a distance, and the girls played battledore and shuttlecock.

Swaneset paid no attention to the players. His eyes were fixed on the houses, for in the middle of the village, he knew, was the house of the chief, whose marriageable daughter lay secluded in a chamber high up above the floor. Opposite this house he beached his canoe, and, landing alone, entered through the doorway. "I have come to ask for your daughter," he said to the chief. "Well, I do not know. No one heretofore has asked to marry her. Surely you come from a far off." "Yes," answered *Swaneset*. "From afar off have I come, and many villages have I passed on my journey. But when I saw your house, I liked its appearance and landed here." The chief said "I cannot promise you my daughter, but I will ask her mother to bid her rise and look at you. If you find favour in her eyes, I will not refuse my consent."

The girl rose at her mother's bidding and peered round her curtain at *Swaneset*. He was the most handsome being she had ever seen, and she felt drawn to him immediately. Her mother consented to the match and her father gave his approval. *Swaneset* therefore returned to the beach and bade his people carry up the two piles of blankets that he had won by his gambling, for these were to be his marriage gifts to his bride's people. When he broke their lashings in the middle of the house, they swelled up to their full size and filled the whole dwelling. He told his bride's father to distribute one pile among his kinfolk, but to reserve the other for his own use. They then held the wedding ceremony and *Swaneset's* men joined the villagers in the marriage feast.

After the feast had ended, *Swaneset* said to his father-in-law, "My people will now return home and report that I have married your daughter and am staying with you for a time." "That is well," said his father-in-law. "When the time comes that you yourself wish to return to your home, we will go with you." So *Swaneset* sent his men home, and remained with his bride's people. At evening he climbed with her to her chamber and slept there. Instead of the usual firewood, he noticed, the Sockeye Salmon people burned the stalks of the Indian consumption plant (*Lomatium nudicaule*). Hence today, when the Fraser River Indians roast their first catch of sockeye, they sprinkle the seeds of this plant over the fish.

Swaneset noticed another remarkable custom among his hosts. Every morning, when his wife's brothers and sisters went down to the river to bathe, her mother would come up from the beach carrying a fish in her arms just as though it were a child. Placing it on a layer of the Indian

consumption plant, she roasted it at the fire and, when it was cooked, summoned *Swaneset* and his wife to descend and eat. The young woman scrupulously washed her hands before she sat down, and *Swaneset* did likewise. His parent-in-law always warned him not to break the bones, but to lay them carefully on one side; then, after the two had eaten and washed their hands again, his mother-in-law gathered up all the bones and carried them down to the beach, while *Swaneset* and his wife retired to their chamber. When the woman returned from the beach a few minutes later, a young boy entered also, skipping gaily around her. This happened day after day, morning and evening.

Swaneset pondered in silence over this strange procedure and made up his mind to experiment. One morning, when his mother-in-law called him down to breakfast, he took from the wooden dish the front part of the fish and concealed a tiny bone from the top of its head in one corner of his mouth. The woman carried the bones down to the sea as usual and threw them into the water, where they changed, as before, into a boy; but this time, instead of merging from the water, the lad moved round in circles and was unable to rise to his feet. Much distressed, the mother rushed back to the house and told her husband, who turned to *Swaneset* and said "did you hide one of the bones?" "No," lied *Swaneset*. "It must be hidden in your mouth" the chief cried as he threw his son-in-law to the ground. "Open it." *Swaneset* opened his mouth, and his father-in-law feeling around with his fingers, extracted the little bone.

"I was curious about the matter and wanted to find out what I was eating," confessed *Swaneset*. The chief did not answer him. Instead, he hurried down to the beach and threw the bone toward the struggling boy. It entered his head immediately, so that he was able to rise and walk ashore. Father and son then re-entered the house, and the chief said to his daughter: "Tonight you must explain to your husband who we are and how we were created."

That night when the household retired to rest, *Swaneset's* wife explained to him: "I and my people are different from all other beings on this earth. We are Sockeye Salmon. During the greater part of the year we are human beings and make our home in this country, but at certain season we change into salmon and travel in the sea." *Swaneset* remained with them for several months, but at last he became lonely for his old home. He said to his wife: "Tell your father that I would like to return home and to take you with me." In the morning, when they descended for breakfast, she said to the chief: "Father, my husband wishes to return to his home and to take me with him." "Very well," he replied. "you may go when summer comes to his country."

When the proper season arrived, *Swaneset* and his wife embarked in a canoe that her father provided for them. Some of her people went with them to paddle the canoe; a few others changed themselves into salmon and swam alongside the boat. When the inhabitants of the Humpybacked Salmon and Dog Salmon villages saw their masters pass, they decided to follow. The Dog Salmon followed immediately, but the Humpbacked spent

a day in making their canoe and so did not appear in the Fraser River until a year later (Old Pierre as recorded by Diamond Jenness 1936 published by Suttles 1955:18-20).

The story goes on to explain how *Swaneseŋ*'s Salmon wife then teaches the Katzie people how to make nets to catch her relatives when they come visit and how to cook and prepare them for eating. She also teaches her husband's people all the rituals and teachings of the salmon.

Due in large part to both *Swaneseŋ*'s leadership abilities and the gifts provided by his wives, *Swaneseŋ*'s people are soon flourishing: "The Katzie people became so prosperous through their eulachon and their salmon that Indians from all around sought to share their good fortune by marrying Katzie girls" (Old Pierre as recorded by Jenness 1936:20). *Swaneseŋ*'s wife then taught one person from each tribe the teachings, rituals, prayers and taboos that her salmon family demanded and this person became known as the "priest" or "ritualist" (p. 20) who would hand down this knowledge to his successor and in this way this knowledge would be forever preserved and obeyed even today (p. 20).

Although I do not know yet which people *Swaneseŋ*'s Salmon wife belonged to, based upon *Stó:lō* oral traditions (see Ed Leon below) and the *Hun'qumi'num* name for sockeye, I think she belonged to an "Ocean" people. Islanders and Ocean people for example have been known to refer to the *Stó:lō* as "my children" referencing the fact that they *sent* their salmon babies to us at some point in the very distant past, so we could have salmon in our rivers. There is also the *sqwélqwel* in which we went in search of salmon and stole the salmon baby from the Ocean people. Mr. Tom Sampson (*ŋlesalaq*), who is from ocean people shared how closely their name for salmon is to people:

In the language that I speak, we are *Qwi:nexw*. I am a First Nation person, the salmon is called *Shay:nexw*. Just like a human name so our relationship is created through the naming of who we are through creation of who we are as a nation, as a people. We are *Qwi:nexw* and salmon are a part of that word -*shay:nexw*- see almost the same. Our names come from some form of relationship with the land and the resources. (02-08-2011:3)

The *Stó:lō* and *Sth'ó:qwi*

Stó:lō sxwōxwiyám, origin stories and the travels of *Xexá:ls* tell us that the *Stó:lō* have always had a special relationship to the salmon and the numerous creeks, rivers and lakes throughout our territory. *Stó:lō* ways of knowing tell us this relationship is rooted in teachings of respect and reciprocity. *Stó:lō* oral tradition tells us our ancestors occupied this territory during the last ice age and so were witness to the birth of the *Stó:lō* (the River of all Rivers). We know that in the beginning the salmon did not come with the rivers. *Sqwélqwel* tell us the salmon began coming up our river after we prayed for a food that would not bog us down and would give us good energy.

“We Prayed for a Food that Would Not Bog Us Down”

That when the creator first made mother earth, he had all the kinds of meat around here, bear, deer, elk. When you eat meat you get that heavy feeling and you don't want to move too much because meat weighs you down. They used to pray to the creator to send them food that didn't bog them down.” Yes, there is a difference between fish and meat – if you eat meat it slows you down. You don't want to get up and do things.

He said that one of the *Shxwlá:m* had a dream that the creator was sending something up the river and told him to go down to the river and scoop their dip nets, and it was the salmon. They told them how to respect the salmon and thank the ones that sent the salmon. The salmon people from out in the ocean, you pray to them and thank them for what they sent. He used the word children. I don't hear it often but he used the word children. The salmon people sent their children up to you so you'd have something different to eat that gives you better energy. Those are the words that Ed Leon used.... You have to thank them take the bones and send them back after you have eaten the first salmon. He said that if you didn't do that you weren't showing your respect for the salmon people and they would quit sending their children out to you. So you have to show respect for the things that people give to you in the *Stó:lō* way.

(*Síyamches* as cited in Carlson 1997:3-4)

Returning the bones and guts of the first salmon caught to the river is one *Stó:lō* fishing law of survival.

Stó:lō Fishing Laws

Stó:lō fishing laws are not codified or legislated for many reasons. The obvious reason is we come from an oral tradition, but a less obvious and perhaps more important

one is that codified and legislated laws tend to disconnect people from the “why,” diffuse responsibility, and completely annihilate accountability. *Stó:lō* fishing laws are found within our *Syuwá:lelh*, our teachings from our ancestors. They tell us how to “*xaxastexw te mekw’stam*” (respect all things) as we are all related and somehow connected to each other and all of life. This *Stó:lō* worldview is rooted in an ontology of spirit.

An essential and intrinsic component of *Stó:lō* ontology is spirit; without understanding our belief in spirit(s) and its role within our lives, one can never fully comprehend *Stó:lō* ontological beliefs that then shape and guide our values, principles, laws and way of life. *Stó:lō* ontology is rooted in many different beliefs about the world and our place within it. In the previous chapter we came to understand how the *Stó:lō* came to be via origin stories that place the creation of humans as last. Along with our creation we were given a language that showed us how to be, how to relate to others, how to relate to *S’ólh Téméxw* and everything within it. This is especially relevant to *Sth’ó:qwi* and our survival as *Stó:lō* people.

“We Have to Look after Everything that Belongs to Us”

Xólhmet Te Mekw’stám it Kwelát

Stó:lō fishing laws are based upon relationships (generations), respect, generosity (sharing) and reciprocity. In order to show respect for this sharing and generosity the *Stó:lō* are taught to return their salmon bones to the river during the *First Salmon Ceremony*. This act of respect and gratitude is also the explanation for how salmon find their way back to their spawning grounds. Thus this display of respect also works to ensure the salmon return every year as the bones and fish guts left along the banks act as a guide and a “river map” for the salmon.

Many *Stó:lō*, especially the Katzie people, believe that only humans and sockeye salmon possess a soul, or *shxwelfí*. Even through all of *Xexá:ls* transformations and origin stories, only the sockeye salmon have a soul as “in its home far out in the ocean it is really a human being” (Old Pierre as cited in Jenness 1955:35). Thus the *First Salmon Ceremony* (see below) is a fishing protocol (law) to be followed in order to ensure “the souls of the salmon return to take on new bodies” (Old Pierre as cited in Jenness 1955:35).

Until recently the main salmon for the *Stó:lō* was the spring salmon and second was the *Sthéqí* (now called sockeye). The *Stó:lō* relied heavily upon the *Tl’élx̄xel*

(Spring) and Sthéqi (sockeye), which were so plentiful we historically did not need very many pinks, cohos, or chum salmon, preferring instead to leave these types of salmon “for the people up river.” Those fishing the ocean salmon were also conscious of the needs of the people up river; their generosity is shown in not only sending *Swaneseł’s* wife with salmon as a gift for her husband’s people, but also in their generosity in sending salmon babies up the river. Upon catching the first king of all salmon, the WSÁNEĆ would literally cease all fishing activities to engage in a *First Salmon Ceremony* that could last up to ten days (Claxton 2008:55). Thus as the WSÁNEĆ celebrated, the majority of the spring salmon would pass their territory and make their way to *Stó:lō* territory.

So while there may not have been an “official” trade and harvesting agreement among all the Indigenous user groups, there were teachings and laws that ensured bountiful stocks of salmon.

“Just Take What You Need”

Ewe chexw qelqelit te mekw’ stam loy qw’ esli hokwex yexw lamexw ku:t
“Don’t waste/ruin, destroy everything, just take what you need”

Under the *Stó:lō* “management” regime, which is really a relationship based upon *syuwá:lelh* and teachings of respect, reciprocity and generosity, *Sth’ó:qwi* flourished as did the *Stó:lō*. A simple law such as “only take what you need” is a powerful law. *Stó:lō* fishing technology was designed to ensure people could catch only that which they needed and left the rest. This ensured every bit of the *Sth’ó:qwi* was used and needed and that there would be enough for everyone with no waste.

Today *Sth’ó:qwi* are “managed” by colonial agencies who for all intents and purposes do not have a clue what they are doing:

When they talk about managing resources they don’t know what that means because they have no relationship to the sockeye, no relationship to spring salmon or chum salmon, don’t know history of chum salmon. In fact chum was considered garbage, fertilizer salmon, now big fight over it. They are kind of survivors, the chum salmon.
(*ttesalaq* 03-30-2010:10)

Under Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regulations, fishing is a “timed” event, meaning one fishes from 6am to 6pm, for example, and there are times

the river is “closed” altogether. The DFO management regime thus forces people to fish according to DFO “policy” which is a depleting policy of “take what you can get.”

The First Salmon Ceremony

Sth'ó:qwi is one of our inherent rights (see teachings from *ʔesalaq* for example in next chapter) that is granted to us through ceremony so this sacred relationship can be protected and remembered generation after generation. For the *Stó:lō* we have several sacred ceremonies around the protection and respect afforded the *Sth'ó:qwi* such as the *First Salmon Ceremony*, the sacred *sxwó:yxwey* ceremony in which a spring salmon is featured, *sxwōxwiyám*, *sqwélqwel*, and salmon songs. While every family has their own unique way and teachings surrounding their own *First Salmon Ceremony*, there are several communal ceremonies that take place throughout *S'ólh Téméxw* as collective events. As shared by *Naxaxalhts'i* (McHalsie 2007:90-91):

We heard about how the men were transformed into birds and how they hooked up with Beaver and Rat – some Elders say Mouse – but they went down to the ocean where the salmon people are and captured the sockeye baby and brought the sockeye baby up. They threw the diapers in different places, like Coquitlam and Pitt River, the Harrison River, the Chilliwack River. Wherever they threw the diapers, that's where there are a lot of salmon. Then they brought the sockeye baby all the way up to Yale, and the sockeye baby went in the pools up in Yale, and that's why the salmon return each year.

And so because of that story, that's why we have the *First Salmon Ceremony* – or that's one of the reasons why we have the *First Salmon Ceremony* – and that's because when we have the first salmon we have to return the fish to the water. It's such a sacred thing that we're not allowed to touch it with our hands. They used to use their forearms and there were supposed to be certain elders that were supposed to prepare it. They were supposed to have knowledge of prayers, to say prayers to the salmon people, thanking them for the salmon, paying respect for it. The major part of the ceremony was actually sharing; even if you just had one little morsel of the salmon, the important part was making sure that a lot of people shared in that salmon. Then the bones would be saved and returned to the river, and that would involve one of the chiefs, a spiritual person, an elder, and a youth: those four people needed to be involved when that was happening. A prayer was said to the salmon and to the river, and then the bones would be returned to the river.

Thus our *syuwá:lelh* (ancestral teachings and laws) to do with salmon teach us relationships, respect, generosity, and reciprocity. These teachings direct how we relate

to our salmon and why, but also extend into our fishing and processing methods. For example, although the *Stó:lō* had the technology (especially in terms of the fish weir) to fish the salmon to extinction, we never did. In fact *Stó:lō* teachings of respect, reciprocity, sharing and generosity ensure not only that there was enough salmon for everyone, but also that the salmon families all multiplied in numbers year after year. The “management regime” of the *Stó:lō* was based upon relationships, respect, generosity and reciprocity; there were so many salmon returning to spawn each year you could literally walk across the river on their backs. Eulachon, which today only a few *Stó:lō* can harvest, were so plentiful they were literally “raked” out of the river.

***Sth'ó:qwi* and the *Halq'eméylem* Language**

Along with various ceremonies that go along with *Sth'ó:qwi*, there are many different *Halq'eméylem* terms that relay how prevalent and how important salmon are to the *Stó:lō*. In the *Halq'eméylem* dictionary if you look up the English word “fish” there are over 100 *Halq'eméylem* entries for this one English word. For “Salmon” there are another 50 *Halq'eméylem* entries. Our language included words for all the various types of salmon, whether they are young, old, male, female, already spawned, ready to spawn, as well as several different methods for catching and preparing *Sth'ó:qwi*. Also listed are many words for different parts of the *Sth'ó:qwi*. There is even a *Halq'eméylem* word for how one feels after eating a good meal of *Sth'ó:qwi*; *ts'éqw'* means to be “overcome with pleasurable feelings after eating great salmon” (Galloway 2009:1234).

Halq'eméylem Names for Various *Sth'ó:qwi*

Listed below are the ten most frequently used terms for various types of *Sth'ó:qwi* as listed in Upriver Halkomelem Dictionary (Galloway 2009:1505):

- *Sth'ó:qwi*, any kind of salmon
- *Sthéqi*, *Sthéqey*, sockeye salmon
- *Skwikwexel*, baby sockeye salmon
- *Tl'élx̄xel*, Spring or Chinook Salmon
- *Speqá:s*, White Spring
- *Tl'elx̄lōwelh*, Jack Spring
- *Hó:liya*, Pink, Humpy
- *Kw'óxweth*, Coho

- *Kw'ó:lexw*, Dog, Chum
- *Xéyqeya*, ready to die salmon
- *Sqwéxem*, first silver spring salmon (came up Harrison river and Chehlais Creek) (Galloway 2009:1240-1)

Other types of Fish found in *S'ólh Téméxw*

- *Qw'esíts*: trout (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:116)
- *Sp'íp'ehath'*: "If you mean them little trout that's supposed to hatch when the berry drops into the water, we call it *sp'íp'ehath'* You know them little blue berries that grows over creeks. Well, the berry's supposed when they drop into water they come to life as a little trout" (Bob Joe, when Wells asked him about cut-throat trout, Wells 1987:117).
- *Swiwe*: eulachons (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:116).
- *Q'óxel*: Round Fish, would come up the Sumas River and the old Chilliwack river, by the thousands, shiny silver and green on top (Bob Joe as cited in Wells 1987:117).
- *Skwó:wech*: sturgeon (Bob Joe as cited in Well 1987:117).

Although this list is extensive and gives a good understanding of the prevalence of *Sth'ó:qwi* within the lives of the *Stó:lō*, it is by no means an exhaustive list. There may be words that were not collected by Brent Galloway (although his work is extensive on our language) and/or other linguists due to their own ethnocentrism. Here, for example, is a situation whereby Oliver Wells (1987:117) failed to record the name of a water lizard identified by *Xwelxwé:yleq* (Bob Joe) as Wells immediately categorized it as "an old Indian belief" instead of a real fish:

Xwelxwé:yleq: You know there's another fish – you know these lizards, water lizards. Well, they turn into trout. Their fins, the arms of this water lizard.

Wells: It wouldn't be an eel, like eh?

Xwelxwé:yleq: No, it's not an eel. At times the fish forms in by the tail first, and the head is still animal or however you call it. Well, when you can see the head and the mouth of that little trout hasn't turned into a fish yet, it's not fit to eat. So we were told. (Laughs)

Wells: That's an old Indian belief?

Xwelxwé:yleq: Yeah, that's an old...yeah.

There may also be words that have fallen into disuse due to stringent regulations upon the *Stó:lō* access to rivers, creeks, lakes and the ability to fish itself. Also, many

salmon families and other types of fish that were killed off by colonial exploitation and the “re-arranging” of the land and waterways for “progress” and “development.”

***Sth'ó:qwi* To Track Time**

The *Stó:lō* also use the travels of *Sth'ó:qwi* to track *Stó:lō* time. For example *Tempó:kw'* is the October moon and is “time to smoke Chehalis Spring Salmon.” September through to October is known in *Stó:lō* time as *temkw'ó:lexw* which is “dog salmon time” and November is known as *temth'ó:qwi* which is “time to catch salmon.” July to August is known as *temth'óló:lh* “big spring salmon time” and *temthéqi* is the sockeye moon, which begins with the first quarter after the black moon in July. *Temchálhtel* is time to dry fish which is the first of July in Yale and October in Chehalis (Galloway 2009:1243).

Various Ways of Catching *Sth'ó:qwi*

Stó:lō fishing methods varied with *Sth'ó:qwi* being caught, time of year and fishing location. That is, fishing methods were inter-related to fishing location along the vast Fraser River, which is the longest river in B.C. (1375 kilometers) and the season. That the science of fishing has been perfected by the *Stó:lō* and our sister Nations cannot be denied. The variety of fishing methods and their effectiveness are ingenious by anyone's standards. The level of skill and knowledge required to be a good fisher by far exceeds that required to obtain any professional degree.

Although the canoe is a prominent method for catching salmon it was not the only one as we also fished off the banks of the rivers as well as off cliffs in more canyon-like areas using a variety of dip nets and hooks to do so. That the *Stó:lō* were expert fishers is an understatement. Fishing to the *Stó:lō* is a fine-tuned “science” directed entirely by the river and the changing environment, and perfected over generations of teachings and experience. We have fished for thousands of years; we fished at night; we fished early in the morning; we fished in calm waters; we fished in fast flowing rivers with dangerous currents and eddies; we fished in lakes, streams and rivers; we fished in the summer; we fished in the winter. Fishing, like breathing, is essential to the survival of the *Stó:lō* as a People.

We had a few different types of canoes depending on the water, as well as several different means of maneuvering a canoe that was also dependent upon the river

activity. For example “poling” a canoe was a method used in spawning areas so to not disturb the spawning beds:

Other leaders as well some leaders were for war, some for fishing, some for hunting and ones for fishing they were generally the best fishers and they would decide when time to go fishing and when to stop. There were rules we had to go by in fishing like time of year we were not allowed to use paddles in the tributaries because would stir up eggs from spawning. So if we traveled on those systems in our canoes we had to use poles so we wouldn't disturb the spawn. Know how spawning worked and aware to stay out of areas. After spawning still couldn't go in there because don't want to disturb the eggs, whoever was in charge of fishing made sure of this.

(Ken Malloway 02-02-2011:2)

To “pole” a canoe well was challenging, as explained by *Síyamches* (Frank Malloway): “when you go up the river there was a method of poling. You know that was a skill in itself. A person would pole right up the Fraser along the edge of the river. I think that there was a real skill in it because I tried it and I couldn't keep the canoe straight (as cited in Carlson 1997:9). Skilled canoe pullers also knew how to use eddies as a way of being “propelled” up the river, as well as some using sturgeon as a means of “motorizing” the canoe.

The *Stó:lō* had a variety of different fishing methods that were so effective fishing was actually a relatively low labor endeavor in comparison to the amount of labor that is required to fish today. For example (Galloway 2009):

- Kw'ōwiyékw, fish-hook (p. 1244)
- Qw'emóthetel, fishing line (p.1244)
- Qw'emó:thel, fish by line, fish with pole or rod (p.1243)
- Qw'iqw'emó:thel, line fishing (p.1242)
- Qw'óqw'iy, fishing pole (p.1244)
- Láxel, fishing platform (p.1242)
- Sts'iyáq, fish trap weir (p.1242)
- *Ch'iyáqtel*, fish trap (p.1243)
- Sthqálem, place where one fishes with dip net (p.1242)
- Míliyel, set net
- Tá:lh, spear
- Thá:q'els, spearing fish (p.1243)
- Hálxeywa, spearing fish by torchlight (p.1243)

- Lexéywa, to pit lamp
- Slá:meth, fish club
- Lhós, fish with drift net (p.1243)
- Swéltel, bag net (p.1088)
- Thqá:lem, to bag net, to still-dip with two canoes (p.1088)

The Stó:lō have never been given credit for their ingenuity around fishing and effective fishing methods. To just imagine standing on a bluff over the fast-flowing river-of-all-rivers with a twenty foot long pole with a net on the end of it and scooping fish out of the river is frightening. That fishers were able to do this safely requires not only a certain level of skill, but vast and intimate knowledge of the river. Mr. Sampson shared with me the ingenuity of the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) People:

So what our families did for thousands of years, they call it SXOLE (*swa la*) called reef net deep water fishing. We created our own river in the ocean out in gulf islands. The Elders said there has to be a way because we don't have a sockeye river. See fisheries said you people from Saanich have no right to sockeye because you don't have a river. We said how do you know that? Well you don't have a sockeye river. He don't even know what he is saying. See sockeye comes from word *sok kay* couldn't say *sok ka'* we called it sockeye long before English came along.

Our ancestors created a run see [here Mr. Sampson is showing me a diagram of the SXOLE system and how it works] put these right here, put all these things along here so when salmon come down Juan de Fuca coming into strait this is willow alder maple made out of things from side of river put on both sides, when sockeye come down strait they can smell the river but at end of runway is a trap. Enough fish in there then lift this net up, made out of cedar willow these nets.

See we know all about technology but we use that technology because we could relate to the land, to ocean we knew what was on side of river up Fraser river. When knew that where sockeye going so we created our own river in the ocean, see this is the subhuman person doing this, the savage who created this. (transcript 03-30-2010:9-10)

Preparing Sth'ó:qwi

It is estimated that the Stó:lō people consumed at least 100lbs of salmon per person per year (Cameron 1997:141). That we ate salmon year round was a given and we enjoyed it for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Cows and dairy products were not a part of our diet, our calcium was derived from salmon and lots of it. There is no other food as a main staple that can provide what the salmon provides for us in terms of health and nutrition, that we lived to be 100 years old and older was due in large part to our

heavy salmon consumption. There are several favorite methods of preparation (Galloway 2009):

- Chalhteláwtxw, fish smokehouse (p.1244)
- Ótheqwt, bake something in ashes (p.1088)
- Qetás, steam-cook underground, cook in a steam pit (p.1088)
- Salted, have not found *Halq'eméylem* word yet
- Sihits'es, wind-dried open and scored salmon (p.1660)
- St'ál, fish cut real thin for wind drying but without cross cuts (p.1661)
- Sí, fish drying rack for wind drying (p.1661)
- Sq'éyle, preserved fish (meat), what is put away (p.1661)
- *T'á:ts'*, means when you barbecue a fish on three sticks and put it on the fire they call that *T'á:ts'* (as told to Wells in 1965 by Albert Louie b. 1884, see Wells 1987:159).

The *Halq'eméylem* term *Istéyiyel* means group of canoes traveling upstream to dry fish.

There are challenges in having colonial governments understand *Stó:lō* ontology and epistemology in general and these challenges are multiplied and magnified when it comes to salmon and the river. Clearly the salmon are an integral component of *Stó:lō* people's lives.

And then along Came the Spider: The Fallacies of DFO “Management” and “Conservation” Policies

In 1925 *Syexwáłtn* (Dominic Charlie) was charged for fishing in the Capilano River where he caught two salmon using a gaff hook. *Syexwáłtn* (half brother to August Jack Khahtsahlano) and his people had been fishing in the Capilano river since time immemorial, however on October 21 1925 it was “closed” to all fishing except angling to protect the “sport fishing river” (Harris 2008:2). *Syexwáłtn* was acquitted when the magistrate found that DFO had no jurisdiction to regulate Indian fishing on an Indian “reserve” (p.2). Department of Fisheries and Oceans quickly hired a senior lawyer to appeal and *Syexwáłtn* was convicted by the county court and fined a dollar (p.2):

Although Indians held the exclusive right to fish on their reserves, the judge ruled that Fisheries could regulate the Indian food fishery, even to

the point of eliminating it to enhance a sport fishery... Indian Affairs refused to appeal or to release money held in trust so the Squamish could hire a lawyer to appeal. The conviction stood. Charlie could not fish on the Capilano reserve, a reserve that had been allotted to the Squamish as a "village site and fishing station," unless he used a sport fisher's hook and line. (Harris 2008:4)

In 2009 nine million sockeye salmon failed to return to their spawning grounds. This led to the establishment of the Cohen Commission¹⁰³ in an attempt to figure out what happened to the salmon. For First Nation fishers they already know what happened; this is not the first time and sure not to be the last that salmon go "missing" under the mismanagement of DFO. However, the Cohen Commission clearly states that "blame" will not be the objective of their commission.

The history of conflict between the *Stó:lō* and other "user" groups such as the commercial and sporting industries is extensive. What the *Stó:lō* had established and built up over centuries of *Stó:lō* management would be destroyed in less than fifty years by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and its predecessor, the Department of Marine and Oceans.

In a very short time the very people whose laws, customs and traditions evolved around their relationship to *sx̱ex̱o:mes*, especially the salmon that ensured salmon supply was more plentiful than anywhere else on the continent, would become the ones being accused of endangering the "stocks" and "spawning beds." We are the reason there are salmon here in the first place and to now be accused of destroying what we consider to be a "gift" and a "relative" can only be fueled by colonial lies and greed.

In August 2010 Commissioner Cohen made a community visit to the Cheam beach on the Fraser River as his first community visit as part of the Cohen commission. Here is what *Hiyolemtel* (Grand Chief Clarence Pennier) had to say:

The government is supposed to be able to sit down and talk to us in a good way about how it is we want to manage our resource and that doesn't happen. That's one of the reason why it's important for you to understand why it is we do what we do. We have to do it your way, carry in front of you talking about how we want to see change happen for our

¹⁰³ The final report was released October 31 2012.

future generations. Not just for us, we have to make sure fish is there for seven generations down the road and they [referring to seventh generation from now] have to do that as well. That is part of our teachings. Our elders gave us these teachings, these are the things you have to do to be able to make sure fish is going to be there to provide for

your food. We make sure we freeze a lot of fish, we can a lot of fish, we wind dry it also provides an economic component for our people so we can buy other foods from the grocery stores.

(Kat, Clarence Pennier, August 12 2010,
speech given to Commissioner Cohen, Cheam Beach)

Still Five Issues and Still Five Battlegrounds

In 1983 Reuban Ware compiled an extensive research paper published by the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre as *Five Issues, Five Battlegrounds: An Introduction To The History of Indian Fishing in British Columbia, 1850-1930*. The five issues he identified were:

1. British Columbia is Indian Land
2. The Importance of Fish
3. Government Recognition of Indian Rights
4. Indian Management is Best
5. Governmental Regulation

Rueben states “these issues are keys to understanding the struggle of the past, they are keys to organizing current research, and they are keys to winning the victories of the future” (Ware 1983:2). The five “battlegrounds” are: (1) The Cowichan River; (2) The West Coast of Vancouver Island; (3) The Fraser River; (4) The Skeena-Babine-Bulkley River system; and (5) The Carrier Region of Stuart Lake. As an “introductory” text that is over 200 pages long, he focuses mostly on the Fraser river and the conflict between colonial fish legislators and the various “Salish” tribes up and down the river.

Ware (1983:11-12) provided a six phase chronological framework from pre-1858 to the 1930s to help understand the development of government regulations with regards to the Fraser River:

Phase 1	Pre-1858 Indian control of land and resources. No Restrictions on Indian participation in commercial fisheries. Recognition of aboriginal rights
Phase 2	1858-1880s Non-regulation of British Columbia Indian fisheries. Protection of these aboriginal rights with no restrictions.
Phase 3	Early 1880s-1894 First attempt to separate Indian participation in the commercial fisheries from "food fishing." First regulatory clauses in Fisheries Act and British Columbia Regulations. Early attempts to "administer" fishing laws against Indians.
Phase 4	1894-1914 Significant regulation and restrictions of Indian "food fishing." Offensive launched on weirs and fish dams. A "permit system" established, though haphazardly enforced.
Phase 5	1914-1922 Intensified attack on Indian fisheries. Attempts to abolish all nets; then attempts at total prohibition of Fraser River Indian fishing.
Phase 6	1923-1930s Beginnings of the contemporary "Food Fish Permit" system

History of DFO Regulations and Policy

Prior to confederation in 1871, the fishing industry was not "regulated." The 1868 *Federal Fisheries Act* was first applied to British Columbia via an Order in Council dated May 8 1876 (Ware 1983:16). Although no regulations would be issued until 1878, in 1876 the first British Columbia Fishery Inspector, Alexander C. Anderson, was appointed. From this very first colonial officer we see the unlegislated discretionary powers that would later be abused by DFO enforcement officers. For example in his report to Ottawa Anderson states, "Many portions of the Fishery Act" are necessarily inapplicable to British Columbia and that he would apply only those sections "as may be found necessary or expedient" (as cited in Ware 1983:17). Anderson alone would decide which sections he would decide to enforce and which would not be enforced without ever having consulted or spoken with the *Stó:lō* people. This trend would continue until the 1990s when DFO would begin a facade of meaningless "consultative" measures.

In 1878 when the first Federal fishery regulations were issued, Anderson was "quick to react and urged exemption of Indians" (p.17). On August 8, 1878 he was granted authority to exempt Indians from the regulations "save in case of obvious abuse." Ware's research indicates that Anderson was in favor of allowing the *Stó:lō* unfettered access to fish. However, the discretionary powers and inconsistent application of policy left *Stó:lō* people vulnerable to the whims of enforcers. For example, in 1883 a local fish guardian seized a large number of nets from the Fraser belonging to *Stó:lō* fishers. The *Stó:lō* protested "loudly and angrily" and Anderson quickly responded by issuing an order to return the nets (Ware 1983:17). However, still today the discretionary powers and inconsistent application of regulations and policy would be

something the *Stó:lō* are forced to contend with causing much confusion, protest and conflict on the river.

Although it was against the law to fish with a net according to DFO regulations, local fishery officers were given the authority to amend the regulations depending on the circumstances (Ware 1983:18). Ware notes that “there was no systematic nature to this authority and it was arbitrary” (p.18). This unfettered and unreliable exercise of authority on the part of DFO officers is something that still exists today and contributes to outright violent and potentially fatal conflict on the river.

It was not until 1888 that “Indians” are for the first time written in the regulations. Enacted on November 26 1888, section 1 stated:

“Fishing by means of nets or other apparatus without leases or licenses from the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is prohibited in all waters of ...British Columbia. Provided always that **Indians shall, at all times, have liberty to fish for the purpose of providing food for themselves,** but not for sale, barter, or traffic, by any means other than with drift nets or spearing.” (emphasis added; as cited in Ware 1983:21)

Ware notes that although it had been policy for years, this was the first time that a distinction between “food” and commercial fishing was put into a regulation or statute (1983:21). However, that Indians shall, *at all times*, have liberty to fish for food did not last long.

Ware’s 6-phase analysis ends in the 1930’s. Another three phases can be identified since that time.

Phase 7. 1930s to 1970s: “Food” Fishing as a Discretionary Privilege

In 1894 the need for “permits” began when the above section was changed to:

Fishing by means of nets or any other fishing apparatus whatever for any kind of fishing without licenses from the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is prohibited in any of the waters of the Province of British Columbia, (a) Provided always that Indians may, at any time, with the permission of the Inspector of Fisheries, catch fish for the purpose of providing food for themselves and their families, but for no other purpose, but no Indian shall spear, trap or pen fish on their spawning grounds, nor catch them during the close season or in any place leased or set apart for the natural or artificial propagation of fish, or in any other place otherwise specifically reserved.... (Clause 1, British Columbia Fishery Regulations, 1894 as cited in Ware 1983:22)

The *Stó:lō* once again made their complaints known but, as always, these fell on deaf ears. At the opening of the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute in April 1894, six *Sí:yá:m* stated:

“...we are troubled when we are told that we must no longer catch our fish in the way we have always caught them, viz., the long net anchored along the sides of our streams and rivers. We are also told that certain seasons we may catch Salmon for our own use, but not sell them to white people. We think this very unjust, for there are times when the sale of Salmon would bring to us little things....And when the Salmon are in season, why should the Indians be compelled to pay licenses for catching and selling what belongs to them?”

(Chief John Sualis of Soowhalie as cited in Ware 1983:23)

The local newspaper, *The Chilliwack Progress* responded “restrictions placed upon indiscriminate slaughter of fish were as much for the benefit of the Indian as the white man” (Vowell as cited in Ware 1983:43). However, the only ones “indiscriminately slaughtering” the salmon were the non-*Stó:lō* “users.” For example, much protest had already been put forward by the *Stó:lō* regarding the “wholesale slaughter of the Sturgeon” by white fishermen (Ware 1983:24). In March 1894 eight *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* and 148 others protested that:

“We have witnessed boat loads of Sturgeon under four feet dead and wounded returned or dumped into the river, as the company only makes use of the large ones for exportation. It grieves us to think that the white people are also allowed their means which will soon kill Sturgeon life in the river”
(as cited in Ware 1983:24)

In 1897 over one million pounds of Sturgeon was sold in New Westminster by white commercial fishermen. By 1910 the Sturgeon fishery had been decimated. By 1917 only 730 pounds were sold (1983:24-25). They are still today an endangered species.

Again, the application of the permit system was haphazardly enforced with little to no apparent rhyme or reason. Ware found that there was “no systematic issuance of permits until the 1920s” (1983:23). Another area of unlegislated discretion DFO exercised was to try to limit permits for food fishing to those who could not work in the wage economy (Harris 2005:3). Sometimes *Stó:lō* fishers would be subject to two different levels of “discretionary” power being abused by agents of the colonizers, as

when permits were issued based upon the advice of the local Indian agent who could in turn be second-guessed by the Inspector (Harris 2008:111). June Quipp recalls fishing undisturbed up until the 1970s without a permit (prep meeting October 14 2010).

Phase 8: 1970s to 1992: Restricted Access 6pm Thursday to 6pm Sunday

“We’d make extra money and run from the fish wardens, cause if the nose and the dorsal fin wasn’t cut, they would seize your car, seize your fish, cause that’s how Indians had to mark the fish.¹⁰⁴ You know, we got money doing that. All you needed was gas for the motor, gas for the car, some smokes and some beer. We’d stay up four/five days and nights to do what you gotta do to go fishin.”

(Katelíla as cited in *Stelómethet* 2002:155)

In 1968 DFO fishing regulations closed the river from Mission to Lytton for “food fishing” on the part of the *Stó:lō* fishers. This closure was for the whole month of July. Many *Stó:lō* people continued to fish and were arrested and had their fishing gear confiscated (Cameron 1997:147). The *Stó:lō* were told they were being kept off the river to protect the Stuart Lake sockeye run, however, the commercial fishery remained open during this time. This called the “protection” measure into question and solidified what has always been the case: “the conservation measures protected industry revenues, not Aboriginal fishing” (Cameron 1997:147) and certainly not the Stuart Lake sockeye.

Food fishing was, therefore, being treated as a “discretionary privilege” and could be closed while commercial and sport fishing continued (Harris Scow Institute 2005). As noted by Ware, it is unclear how focusing on 5% of the catch would protect and conserve fish while 95% of the catch goes completely unfettered, and yet this is the type of reasoning that has characterized DFO’s “conservation” efforts and contributed to continued declining fish stocks. DFO insistence on blaming the 5% caught by First Nation fishers for declining fish stocks would go unhampered and unquestioned until the *Sparrow*¹⁰⁵ decision of 1990.

¹⁰⁴ I believe this to be another abuse of “discretionary powers” as I cannot find the policy or legislative direction that mandated this abuse of Sth’ó:qwi.

¹⁰⁵ *R v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075.

Sparrow

In its ruling on the *Sparrow* case, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) found that DFO regulations in effect required the Musqueam to conserve fish for other users and that this violated Canada's obligations to uphold the "honor of the crown" (Harris 2005:5). As a result of *Sparrow* food fishing would no longer be seen as a discretionary privilege as the SCC ruled Aboriginal fishing to be a constitutionally protected right with priority over other users (Harris 2005).

As a result and in response to the SCC findings in *Sparrow*, DFO began implementing communal fishing licenses under the Aboriginal Fishing Strategy (AFS). The AFS was to act as an interim measure while treaties were being negotiated in British Columbia (Scow Institute 2005:2). However, the strategy was fraught with conflict from the beginning. DFO used it to maintain control over the fishery and *Stó:lō* leadership viewed it as a mere stepping stone to increased control over our fish. As indicated by Ernie Crey in a speech to Commissioner Cohen:

You know in 1992 the government of Canada came to this community and other *Stó:lō* communities and said "we will allow you, we will allow you, to sell some of your catch in exchange for you identifying an allocation for yourself" and in 1992 some of the *Stó:lō* leadership thought, well, as an interim step, it might be fair. What we have seen since 1992 is fewer and fewer of our communities wanting to sign these agreements because as years go by these agreements that DFO bring to us, they are less willing to actually negotiate agreements with us that are respectful of our elders and people in our community and our fishermen. These agreements keep getting more and more stringent in fact a hyperbole or exaggeration on my part to say they have become Draconian. Such as the agreement you see here now in 2010.

In 1992 the vision of my brother Kat and our brother now departed Sam Douglas, they had a broader vision for our fisheries. They said "we will sign these agreements with the understanding that as time goes by we will take more and more responsibility for looking after our fishery in cooperation with you" - hence the notion of cooperative management, co-management. These agreements have lost sight of this early vision that we had working with the government of Canada. This needs to change, Commissioner, starting now and starting next year.

(Ernie Crey, speech given at Cheam Beach to Commissioner Gohen August 12, 2010)

Phase 9: 1992 to Present: AFS and FSC Increases Restrictions and Regulations

Another controversial element of the AFS was the Pilot Sales agreement that allocated fixed quotas to signatory bands for “whatever purposes they determined, including fish for food or sale” (Scow Institute 2005:2). However, in practice pilot sales agreements were actually being used to further restrict *Stó:lō* access to the fish. June Quipp of Cheam actually counted the days of fishing being allowed before Pilot Sales agreements were initiated in 1992 and after. She found that before these “agreements” fishing was from six pm Thursday to 6pm Sunday which amounted to just over 200 days of fishing, whereas under the Pilot Sales agreement fishing was restricted to 22 days of fishing even for those communities who did not sign the agreement (October 14, 2010, meeting in preparation for fish trial).

In keeping with true colonial chaos and mayhem, several commercial fishers were charged with fishing during a 24 hour closure open only to those bands that signed a pilot sales agreement. The mostly non-Indigenous commercial fishers argued that the opening for pilot sales only resulted in a “race-based” fishery and took their case to court. The trial judge agreed that a fishery based upon race violated *Section 15* of the Charter, however the SCC disagreed and upheld the constitutionality of the AFS and the pilot sales fishery which resulted.¹⁰⁶

“Food, Social and Ceremonial:” One Step Forward or Three Back?

Another issue arising out of *Sparrow* is in the interpretation of fishing for “food, social and ceremonial” purposes. It is very telling that the Court of Appeal restricted its decision by confining the Aboriginal right to fish to food, social and ceremonial (now often shortened to FSC fishing) purposes and that the SCC agreed:

In the courts below, the case at bar was not presented on the footing of an aboriginal right to fish for commercial or livelihood purposes. Rather, the focus was and continues to be on the validity of a net length restriction affecting the appellant's food fishing licence. We therefore adopt the Court of Appeal's characterization of the right for the purpose of this appeal, and confine our reasons to the meaning of the constitutional

¹⁰⁶ *R v. Kapp*, 2008 SCC 41, [2008] 2 S.C.R. 483.

recognition and affirmation of the existing aboriginal right to fish for food and social and ceremonial purposes.¹⁰⁷

The irony is the BC Court of Appeal defined the right as “food, social and ceremonial,” as they did not agree with restricting the right to mere subsistence:

The British Columbia Court of Appeal in this case held that the aboriginal right was to fish for food purposes, but that purpose was not to be confined to mere subsistence. Rather, the right was found to extend to fish consumed for social and ceremonial activities.¹⁰⁸

In effect we have the courts defining an Aboriginal right. While the *Constitution* recognizes and protects Aboriginal rights under section 35, it did not define these rights. It only makes sense that Indigenous people ought to be the definers of our own rights. However, *Sparrow* is a prime example of a colonial court taking it upon itself to define for the Aboriginal people our Aboriginal right to fish as being the right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes. The colonial court actually thinks it is doing us a favor as it did not want to limit our right to mere subsistence, that is, it did not want to limit our right to fish as for “food” only. As a *Stó:lō* I would agree that I have a right to fish, period. I would also agree that, pre-contact, the *Stó:lō* did not fish “commercially” if “commercially” means exploitation as such a concept would go against many *Stó:lō* laws and principles. However, that the *Stó:lō* had a “commodity” in our fish is undeniable, that is our fish was the basis of our economy. However, “commodity” has come to be seen as synonymous with commercialization and thus requires “othering” and distancing oneself as separate from the “commodity” so it can be exploited for personal gain.

Clearly the *Stó:lō* did “profit” from our relationship with *Sth’ó:qwi*, no doubt about it! In fact, our relationship with *Sth’ó:qwi* made us extremely wealthy people. We worked eight to nine months out of the year and every year we took up to three months off to sing, dance, gather and visit. How many societies are/were this wealthy that they only had to work nine months out of the year?

¹⁰⁷ *R. v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075.

¹⁰⁸ *R. v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075.

To have our relationship with *Sth'ó:qwi* defined by either colonial policy or colonial courts is disastrous. Under colonial policy our relationship was confined to “food” as in colonial “food fishing permits” and our origin stories along with our laws tell us our relationship with *Sth'ó:qwi* was so much more than this. Under colonial courts it is confined to “food, social and ceremonial” as in fixed quotas under the AFS agreements. I am *Stó:lō* and I cannot even begin to understand what fishing for food, social and ceremonial purposes even means. To me it sounds like “you can fish, but you cannot profit from your fish” and this violates my inherent right to fish; my ancestors profited tremendously from *Sth'ó:qwi*. Why can't we?

Phase 10. The Future: *Stó:lō* Fishing Laws Restored

Whether or not the *Stó:lō* return to relating to *Sth'ó:qwi* as *sx̣exo:mes* and not as a commodity to be exploited is still to be determined. I certainly hope so. The reality, however, is that it could be too late. Many *Stó:lō* fishers no longer follow *Stó:lō* fishing laws and protocol. Under DFO regulations, some fishers have been known to waste fish as fishing is a “timed” event not an “as needed” occurrence; many if not most *Stó:lō* fishers are forced to sell their fish far below market value. The *Stó:lō* are forced to use colonial language such as “incidentals” and “EO fishery” and in many ways have come to view fishing through the eyes of the colonizers.

Ware (1983:8) also brings awareness to the different language that is used when “Indians” fish compared to when “others” fish. He makes note of Canada’s commodification of salmon in the language used to describe it, for example the salmon “industry.” Another example would be the distinction made between “food” and “commercial.” Ware found that the term “spawning grounds” was a term used to describe any area above the commercial limits and thus a way for DFO to regulate any fishing being conducted outside of the “commercial industry” (1983:10). Thus catches made by the commercial fishery were referred to as “harvests” and “packs” while catches made by Indigenous fishers were defined as detrimental to “spawning grounds.” In this way 5% of the total catch was and still in many respects receives all the attention, while those catching 95% of the fish do so virtually unregulated, undisturbed and certainly not criminalized for it.

When the number of fish decreases, the commercial industry receives funding to support these times of low numbers. First Nations do not. When fish runs are high, *Stó:lō*

fishers almost give their fish away, while commercial fishers increase their prices. After four years of closures, in 2010 the commercial fishing industry was asked if fish prices would drop given the large run of salmon, to which the industry replied, “No way; we have four years to make up for.”¹⁰⁹ Now if Indigenous fishers could only think the same way, as we have over 100 years to make up for.

Harsh Realities

So even though we struggle to look at self-government,
what is it we are trying to govern? What is left to govern?

~ *ṭ'esalaq*

ṭ'esalaq made the following observations in relation to current *Stó:lō* efforts and the time wasted dealing with the current DFO regime of agreements and boardroom meetings:

Fraser River was almost most powerful river in north American. Now it is almost nothing and we still go to meetings when we should be fighting on the bank of the river, no more logging, no more mining, it has to stop if you want salmon.

Not going to get free farm fish from them, they are going to charge you because its their fish now. Not ours anymore its theirs. Our guys can't seem to see that the fisheries are probably ugliest creatures of the bunch, even the Catholics weren't that bad (laughter) well at least they let us live. Process we are into is heading right into extermination. (*ṭ'esalaq* 03-30-2010:11)

In 1983 Ware noted that there were some 63 Salmon creeks within *Stó:lō* territory (probably defined as the area from around Langley to Yale) and that many “have seriously declined since 1947” (p.35). For example in 1947 some of the creeks and sloughs of Nicomen Island (Harrison Mills to Mission) had runs of 2,000 to 5,000 fish, but by the early 1980s had runs of only 25 to 50 and for some there were no recorded spawners at all (p.35). Today sturgeon and eulachon are on the endangered species and species-at-risk lists, and most of the creeks and lakes are no longer home to fish. A

¹⁰⁹ Retrieved August and December 2011. (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2010/08/06/bc-sockeye-salmon-opening.html>).

1997 report from DFO that listed all the rivers, streams and creeks within the lower Fraser valley noted that 63% were endangered and 20% already lost.¹¹⁰

What are we going to do when we spread the feathers on the floor, have chicken feathers? Very few places might see one or two hundred ducks, get out in ocean there the gulf islands, nothing out there, no birds, no ducks, no nothing. Last two years in a row not one herring spawned on our beach no herring, yet still have openings on Johnson Strait up north still have openings and herring don't reach here no more. One commercial fisherman said its good year spotted about three miles of herring coming down strait and when I listen to some of our history, herring from Alaska all way to California and now you talking about three miles when there was thousands of miles of herring. Now all gone almost all gone (*t'esalaq* 03-30-2010:11-12).

“The Mountain Is Mine, The Timber Is Mine, The Fish Is Mine...as far as I Can Remember There Was No White Man in My Land”

In 1902 several *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* wrote a grave letter of concern to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries in which they urged the Minister to limit the depth of the nets being used by commercial fishers. They wrote this letter after watching the fish stocks decline in direct relation to the increase in net sizes being used by non-Indigenous fishers:

the depth of nets, we complain of are from 70 meshes to 110 meshes, thus when in action, dragging along the river bed and giving but very little chance to those fishermen using nets of lesser depth to catch any fish, also preventing the surplus fish on their way up, from reaching the spawning ground in the interior waters. (as cited in Ware 1985:145)

The *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* went on to urge the Minister to limit net size as to not do so would jeopardize and endanger the salmon just as they warned would happen to the sturgeon, which also went unregulated and became endangered:

What we are anxious for the Department to do, towards all parties concerned, is to adopt a uniform depth of nets of not more than 60 meshes to be used in the future. This will give all an equal chance and leave a big margin of space to allow fish not gilled to pass on to the spawning beds. Unless this plan is adopted, the Salmon industry will be

¹¹⁰ Retrieved December 8 2011 (<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library/229864.pdf>).

greatly injured in the future... We on former occasion, gave the Government timely warning as to the fate of the Sturgeon fishing and with what results we all know now to our loss and regret. The Sturgeon now have been destroyed in the Fraser. (as cited in Ware 1983:145)

In 1913-1916 again many *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* gave testimony to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs. On November 19 1914 Chief James of the Yale Band testified:

It is true that my heart is very sore over the land question. I am now reaching an old age and my heart has always had a thorn in it. I have had no benefit yet from my land. It is the government that has taken all my land and sold it to the white people. That is what hurts my heart... And my heart shall never be remedied until the government of Canada has compensated us for our original rights. Then my heart will be smothered down. It is sure that the lands surrounding here is my land, the mountains are mine and the timber is mine and the fish is mine... as far as I remember, there was no whiteman in my land except my forefathers. They are the only ones... the whitemen... are the intruders in my country. For instance look at the Salmon. The Salmon is my food and then the whitemen came with a policeman.. and stopped me from using my food, and I was sore again in my heart. If the white people feeding on a place, I would never go there and snatch away their food; it would be a bad thing to do... He (referring to James Douglas) said that whitemen will not take land away from the Indians unless whitemen will buy it before they take it away-that is what he said. I remember it in my heart....

(as cited in Ware 1983:179)

Despite these strong words the Department of Marine and Oceans and its successor, Department of Fisheries and Oceans continues business as usual and today we have *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* saying these exact same words to yet another commission.

Chapter 8.

***Kwitsel Tatel* and Fish Trial # 47476**

“I don’t care what some colonial hick on a horse says”

In April 2008 I received a phone call from Patricia (“Trish”) Kelly asking me if I could help her with her fish trial. She explained that she was being charged with the illegal possession of fish and that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans had stolen her fish. First, I am one who has come to see very clearly that the Criminal Justice System is no place for Indigenous peoples¹¹¹ and is most definitely not the place to have our inherent rights, title and responsibilities defined, let alone respected. Second, I was swamped with PhD work, children, teaching and life. But there were two things about Trish that I could not deny. One arose from the time I had spent working with her when we were hired by Coqualeetza Cultural and Education Centre and the *Stó:lō* Research and Resource Management Centre to conduct research on the impacts of a proposed extension to the BC Hydro lines running through our territory. During this research project I was impressed by Patricia’s ability to not only verbalize “what is ours” but in her quick and always willing way to stand up for the *Stó:lō* people even when doing so put her in an odd spotlight, and often left her totally misunderstood.

But even more than this was what she said to the Judge in her first court appearance to deal with this matter. She said she entered the courtroom and asked the judge to “first show me how it is you have any jurisdiction over me, a *Stó:lō* woman let alone over my right to fish” (telephone conversation, April 2008). I could not believe she said what I am sure all of us are thinking but don’t dare ask in such intimidating and disempowering circumstances. I was beyond impressed; I was hooked. I knew I had to

¹¹¹ See for example Victor (2001, 2007) and Palys & Victor (2007).

help somehow. She proceeded with a statement that I would hear her make many times over the course of the next two years: "I am unceded, unconquered, and unsold. Until there is a treaty signed between my nation and yours you have no jurisdiction over me or my fish." Such sovereign thoughts are gems and very rare in these harsh colonial times.

The court, on the other hand, completely trapped within its colonial prison, is unable to hear let alone address such statements. But this self-serving colonial inability is in no way a reflection of the degree of truthfulness within these statements. Quite the opposite is true. The court is like an ostrich sticking its head in the sand and insisting "I can't see you" and Trish replying "well that is too bad for you because I am standing right here." These assertions made by Patricia are assertions of sovereignty and the only incredulous thing about them is she is quite often a lone voice. Her assertions reflect her sovereign mind and I have found sovereign minds to be a rarity indeed in these times of Indigenous disempowerment.

Patricia also had been denied legal aid and was unemployed due to having lost her job because of the time spent on her trial so she could not afford to hire a lawyer. She was forced to self-represent, or go to jail. I knew I had to help her, somehow. Over the course of the next two years I would make over 20 court appearances with Patricia, which would include a *voire dire* to have the court recognize an "Elder" as an "expert witness," the writing of a factum to outline an Aboriginal rights defense, an application for a cost award and the overview of the cross examination by Crown Counsel for Patricia's testimony and that of her Elder, June Quipp. These two years and twenty court appearances would be filled with challenges, both mental and emotional. I would cry for days after court, I would fret and fuss for days before court and quite often I would find myself enjoying some of the best laughs after court as Trish and I debriefed about "our day in court" and some of the crazy things that went on as we did our best to assert inherent rights language into a colonial court.

The futility of it will become evident and I share this part of my journey for several reasons. The most important is to tell a story – a story that is just as much about heart ache and frustration as it is about colonial oppression, subjugation and willful blindness. As I mentioned in the first chapter, an analysis of the cases involving Indigenous rights and title is important work; but it is not my work. This is the work of legal scholars such as Patricia Monture, Sakej Henderson, Kent McNeil, Louise Mandell and John Borrows, all of whom have done excellent work in exposing the "ghost" inherent to Canadian court

battles. My focus is the story behind the case. Just as we often forget that embedded within statistics are the real lived experiences of human beings, behind every court case is a personal story of struggle and tremendous personal emotional, physical, mental and spiritual cost.

Background Information to Fish Trial #47476-01

On July 14th 2004 Patricia E. Kelly and a second person were charged with the “unlawful” possession of fish, caught in contravention of the Fisheries Act or Regulations, contrary to Sections 33 and 78 of the Fisheries Act (information, see Agency File Number DFO6:04-05670). Patricia and a second person were charged at a processing plant located within *Stó:lō* territory. They had in their possession 400 sockeye salmon, which DFO refers to as “incidentals,” a term that adds to the colonial language that disconnects us from our relatives.¹¹² The sockeye had been caught by several *Stó:lō* fishers. I am not entirely sure why but Patricia took all responsibility and the charges against the second person were dropped. It is my understanding that others involved with this charge would have preferred to enter guilty pleas and be done with it, while Patricia was of the mindset that “I will never plead guilty for doing what my ancestors have always done and is my inherent right to do.”

Patricia was charged under section 33 of the Federal Fisheries Act which states:

33. No person shall purchase, sell or possess any fish that has been caught in contravention of this Act or the regulations
(R.S., 1985, c. F-14, s. 33; 1991, c. 1, s. 8.)

The manner and way in which Patricia was approached and charged on July 14 2004 is rather suspect, but unfortunately seems to be typical of the harassing nature of DFO officials towards Indigenous fishers. It must be noted that there is a long history of violence and harassment that characterizes the relationship between *Stó:lō* fishers and DFO enforcement officers. Many Canadians would find some of the incidents I have

¹¹² This is a term used by DFO to describe the catch of fish that are caught incidentally to the type of fish actually being harvested. In this case the DFO regulated opening was for Spring salmon and thus any sockeye caught would be considered “incidentals.”

heard about hard to believe given the country we live in and an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For the safety of all, an official examination of this historical relationship characterized by violence needs to be conducted by an external examining body. One possibility would be the filing of a class action law suit so the violent treatment of *Stó:lō* fishers by DFO enforcement officers will have to be examined by a post-colonial court. Patricia is all too familiar with this violent history, having personally experienced it as well as witnessing it perpetrated against many members of her family.

With this violent history as a backdrop, on July 14th 2004 there were eleven DFO fishery officers at the processing plant the day Trish brought her fish in for processing. It almost appeared they were there waiting for her. As Patricia was unloading her fish she was accosted by the 11 officers. As she explained to me:

It was July 14 2004 that 11 fishery officers under training came to the plant where I happened to be. This is my third trial, self-representing because I do not have a disposable income to pay a lawyer. When I was fishing in 2004 I was also working at *Stó:lō* Nation at *Stó:lō* research department. I don't work there anymore because of this trial. I am sure of it. We have spoken to some degree about the principles and the commitment behind this trial. Food is food and I told those officers it's food in these totes and I don't go snooping in your food. So we had very long day at Sundance Foods in Coverdale. Roughly six hour episode that I was sitting on top of my fish in my tote.

(Patricia Kelly 10-07-2010:1)

While sitting on her tote of fish and asserting her inherent right to them, Patricia called several *Stó:lō* leaders in the fishing area to tell them of her situation. The response she received from them varied from sympathetic to indifferent and none offered any immediate or future assistance. Such lack of response is telling and may reflect learned helplessness and/or exhaustion. After a six hour ordeal, Patricia relinquished and DFO proceeded to confiscate or – as Patricia sees it – “steal” her fish and to add insult to injury, proceeded to sell her fish for a little over \$2000.00 to a non-Indigenous restaurant.

Stage 1: The Trial

The first stage of this trial began January 16th 2005 when Patricia entered a “not guilty” plea, asserting that she could not be guilty of “unlawful possession” because her fish had been caught during a DFO-regulated opening. Her actual trial began in March of

2005. Both she and DFO called their respective witnesses to the stand. Patricia called witnesses to speak to her inherent right to the fish and to her superior fishing techniques that would ensure the fish stayed fresh longer. DFO called witnesses to verify that she was fishing in contravention of the *Fisheries Act*. DFO had sent pieces of her salmon to labs to determine how long the salmon had been out of the water (or how long they had been dead, I am not sure which).

On July 8th 2008, the Judge made his ruling and agreed with the western scientists who determined that the fish were too fresh to have been caught within the regulated opening and therefore found Patricia guilty of illegal possession. At this point Patricia entered an Aboriginal rights defense to the charge and the case then began its second stage, referred to as the Aboriginal rights stage. To some this may appear as using this defense only when convenient. This could not be further from the truth. In hindsight, Trish may have chosen to begin her case with “although I was fishing during a regulated opening, that is neither here nor there as I was exercising my Aboriginal right to fish.” Even so she would still be required to enter a plea for the charge. For example, in *Sparrow* Mr. Sparrow immediately entered a guilty plea as he was in fact fishing with a net that did not meet DFO regulations, that is, he was guilty. He then asserted his Aboriginal rights defense. In Trish’s case she was actually fishing during a regulated DFO opening and could not therefore enter a guilty plea. It was only if she were fishing outside of the DFO regulated opening that she would have the option of immediately entering a guilty plea and asserting an Aboriginal rights defense. Once the court made the legal determination of guilt, she could then move to an Aboriginal rights defense. It strikes me as a misuse of law when an “Aboriginal rights” defense can only be used when a guilty plea has been entered. For many Indigenous thinkers, our rights are our rights and they exist independently of guilty pleas.

Stage 2: Aboriginal Right as a Defence

On March 1 2007 Patricia filed a factum she had prepared on her own with the Chilliwack court registry in which she stated:

I am disputing these charges on a number of grounds, one of which is on the basis of my Inherent and Aboriginal Rights and Title...this ground of defence prevents the application of the Act to my circumstances. There is an incompatibility of Aboriginal rights with common-law notions of a common fishery. Moreover, even “if” the Department of Fisheries does have a right to regulate the fishery it’s not a right that can impede my

inherent rights. For example, if the Department of Fisheries has mismanaged the fishery (which declining stocks etc. all suggest) then I have a right to revive my traditional *sto:lo* (sic) fishing management regime which historically managed the fishery very effectively.
(File #2004-05670, filed March 1 2007)

Ms. Kelly went on in her factum to state:

As I am un-ceded, un-sold, and un-conquered, therefore, unextinguished, as an Indigenous person to *Stó:lō* Nation, I am entitled to call witnesses who should be paid for by the Provincial Courts of British Columbia or Canada. Either way the onus is on the Crown, incremental fees are part of the whole system since contact... Canada and B.C ought to adhere to their own laws and agreements and respect mine as a *Stó:lō* fisher. Further, courts like this one contravene the whole purpose of negotiations among the three orders of government: *Stó:lō*, Canada and B.C.
(File #2004-05670, filed March 1 2007)

It is my understanding that, from the beginning, Patricia Kelly called into question the jurisdiction of the provincial court over her, the *Stó:lō* people, and our right to fish. One of her concluding requests in her factum reads: "I am also requesting that this trial from this point forward be handled within the proper jurisdiction, that is the Federal Court" (factum dated March 1 2007). She concludes by stating that it is her "right to be treated as an Indigenous *Stó:lō* woman with Inherent and Aboriginal Rights and Title."

Limitations of the Court

At this point in the trial, Patricia's case moved to the Aboriginal rights and title phase, wherein she asserted that she had been exercising her constitutionally protected right to fish and that DFO legislation was infringing upon this right without justification. It was at the beginning of this phase that I became involved. One of the first things Patricia asked me to do was to review an addendum she was working on. Thus I became immediately aware of one of the court's limitations and that is its inability to hear Indigenous peoples from within our own worldview.

From both Patricia's first factum and her addendum it was obvious that the way in which she tells her story is much different from what courts are used to hearing. As a criminology student, I was painfully aware that there would be more challenges than not in having her story heard. As I edited her addendum I was very conscious of not wanting

to alter her voice too much, while also being mindful of the court's limited view when hearing cases. I knew harsh truths like the following would not be considered as part of the problem:

This country called Canada and its laws are still in their formative years especially in comparison to Indigenous laws and even other countries internationally. Through oral testimony and by firsthand experience, I too have seen the declining fish stocks for the last four and half decades. I call DFO to task for their inept and incapable fishing regime which allows pollution, sea lice, and over-fishing to go relatively unchecked while warmer climate temperatures in our waters, and over logging the river's tributaries all relate to their mis-management of all our resources. DFO could do some good to put their attention on these colonial-derived problems rather than focusing their attention on Indigenous fishers who have fished these rivers for thousands and thousands of years.

(Kw'í:tse! Tatel edited addendum kept on file with author)

Court Is Not for the Poor

Another limit to the case was Patricia's lack of resources. She was not being supported by her Indian-Act "band" nor was she being supported by either of the tribal councils located in *Stó:lō* territory.¹¹³ Adding to the lack of support was her poverty. She could barely find gas money to get to court let alone find resources for people she wanted to call as witnesses. She made a plea to Crown to have them cover these expenses:

...is on the basis of my collective and protected Inherent Aboriginal Rights within the 1982 Constitution of Canada. It is an infringement to force me as one person in our collective Inherent and Aboriginal Rights and Title over *Stó:lō* fish and *Stó:lō* lands, waters and our resources to be the sole woman, single mother fighting against the Federal Government or their counterpart, the Provincial Government of British Columbia, their laws, their brute force affiliates who interpret the Act. This is outright wrong and abuse of my inherent rights and title to fish.

(addendum to factum submitted January 27 2010)

¹¹³ It should be noted that not surprisingly tribal councils are not funded for Aboriginal Rights and Title legal fees. Yet Department of Indian Affairs paid out \$90 million in legal fees to fight against Indigenous peoples' endeavours and/or initiatives (a comment my father made to me in reference to a conversation he had with Otis Jasper).

Patricia pointed out on several occasions the unfairness of her as a single unemployed mother of two, self-representing in a case involving a collectively held and supposedly constitutionally protected Aboriginal right against a Crown prosecutor with unlimited resources at his disposal. Even prepping for court was a challenge as Patricia does not own a computer, has unreliable transportation (and public transportation in Chilliwack is very limited) and was often homeless let alone able to keep her cell phone turned on.

There were many times Patricia had to attend court virtually unprepared and had to “wing it” as I came to call it. On a few occasions I would burn the midnight oil to prepare documents for her and hope we would have enough time together before court to review them to see if they suited her needs. Most were never used and Patricia often seemed more comfortable relying on what was in her heart and mind even if it seemed off-topic to the court.

As time went on I found the court relying more and more on me to help keep Patricia focused on the legal issues at hand. I tried as well as I could, but was also fully aware that there were far too many challenges to overcome. Patricia was suffering mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. This personal suffering was taking its toll upon her and I often felt helpless and unable or unsure how to help. On top of this were all the court’s limitations in terms of being able to understand, let alone admit as evidence, Patricia’s sovereign arguments.

“Honor of the Crown”

Not surprisingly, the Crown refused to pay the expenses for Patricia’s witnesses. Some may agree and not understand how Patricia might come to think that the Crown would pay for witnesses who are in essence going to give testimony against the Crown. Patricia, on the other hand, saw the prosecutor as a “Crown” counsel who therefore would have a fiduciary responsibility to First Nations as well as being court-ordered to act honorably. When he refused to help her, Patricia’s response was, “So much for the ‘honor’ of the Crown.” The court, however, recommended that Patricia pursue either a cost award or a *Rowbotham* order, given that her legal aid request had been denied.

“The judge who has no jurisdiction is going to rule on whether or not he has jurisdiction”

It was also at this point in the case that Patricia was asked to define for the court what she believed her inherent right to be (see court file #47476, court date, October 29, 2010). In order to complete such a request would require help; the defining of “inherent” rights cannot be left to a single *Stó:lō* woman. We, therefore filed for a cost award that would require Crown to cover the costs associated with the trial (see Appendix D for Threshold Criteria and Cost Order Conditions). Her cost award application was filed on November 10, 2010. It was heard in court on February 9th, 2011 and on March 16th 2011, Judge Crabtree ruled that as a provincial court judge he did not have jurisdiction over a cost award application: “I have concluded that provincial court has no inherent jurisdiction to award costs absent legislative authority” (Honorable Crabtree, court file #47476, court date March 16 2011).

The colonial irony of this ruling was not lost on Patricia. Before going to court Patricia commented that “the judge who has no jurisdiction is going to make a ruling on whether or not he has jurisdiction.” I was too stuck on the details and remember thinking, “Yes, but this is jurisdiction in a different area.” When he ruled that he did not have jurisdiction, Patricia, I believe, was the only one who understood the overall irony of this situation. I myself was too caught up in the thoughts of why would he not award her something? He knows she is flat broke, and he knows she is defending a collective right that belongs to the poorest of the poor in this country. She has no legal representation, which is affecting her ability to be heard in court; he has asked her to “define” her inherent rights (something Ministers couldn’t even do); her case is entering its sixth year. Why would he not want to balance the playing field even just a bit? But I can be a little slow and I believe in people even when I should not.

To Trish, the judge was trying her case even though he could not identify “legislatively” how it is he had jurisdiction over her or her fish. Lack of legislation did not seem to bother him at all, but Patricia continually denying him jurisdiction did. Yet, when it came to an opportunity to assist Patricia financially, he was uncomfortable in doing so due to “lack of legislative authority.”

What I found interesting through the whole cost award and *Rowbotham* application process was that the Crown prosecutor for Patricia’s case did not work on either application. Rather, a Crown prosecutor from Vancouver, a lawyer who

specializes in this area of law, was brought in to handle both applications. Now Patricia was up against two Crown prosecutors, all the while arguing for funds that would enable her to hire herself one lawyer. Part of both applications is the requirement that she prove that the case is complicated enough that, without a lawyer, the case would be compromised. Meanwhile the local prosecutor was able to bring in a second lawyer from the regional Crown Counsel office to argue this for him – suggesting that the case was beyond the expertise of even this person who is already a licensed lawyer – while Patricia was expected to argue her side on her own.

The preparing of both these applications represented an undue hardship upon Patricia who, at this point was barely hanging onto a home, had no computer, car or phone. The cases and background information to prepare for both a Cost Award and a *Rowbotham* order were therefore sent to my address. When the package arrived it contained two bound documents comprising over 500 pages and approximately seven court cases to be reviewed. I was flabbergasted. The situation was absurd and hypocritically twisted. The court was completely incapable of hearing Patricia's story to begin with and now it was drowning what little voice she had left in legalese and bureaucracy. In preparation for both the cost award and the *Rowbotham* order it became painfully obvious that what Patricia and I hold near and dear meant absolutely nothing to most of the Canadian public and least of all to the courts. The Cost Award application is kept on file with the author. The *Rowbotham* application (see Appendix E) was completed by both Trish and I, but I am unclear if it was ever filed. I have included it as an appendix as it highlights Ms. Kelly's frustrations in trying to get the court to re-focus on the issues of importance, which of course were not the ones being highlighted during this procedure. As well, it unintentionally demonstrates the absurdity of trying to fit a fishing case, which is an Indigenous right and title issue, into a criminal proceeding such as a *Rowbotham* application.

Then all of a sudden Patricia's legal aid referral (which she had filed at the very beginning of her trial) was accepted and funded (February 15, 2011). However legal aid tariffs are exceptionally low and most firms will only take on a few legal aid cases as they pay so little. Finding a qualified lawyer who would work for legal aid tariffs became a challenge in and of itself. All qualified lawyers at this point either already had one or two fishing cases as their legal aid quota or were swamped with the Cohen Commission, which began that summer. The fact that the majority of *Stó:lō* being charged cannot

afford a lawyer is in and of itself a “legal” aspect that is sadly overlooked by the Department of Justice and perhaps conveniently so. Any fishing case within *Stó:lō* territory involves issues of Aboriginal rights and title and absolutely nothing to do with a “criminality,” which makes the need for a lawyer mandatory.

Issues of Translation

Another court limitation could be described as a problem of translation. Although they both were speaking English, the court and Patricia were speaking two entirely different languages. Patricia’s language was heartfelt, passionate, and based upon *Syesyewá:lelh* (all her ancestors) and *Syuwá:lelh* (their teachings), rooted in an ancient relationship several thousands of years old. She spoke from a place of sovereignty that does not recognize the Crown or colonial legislations as legitimate. As she explained to *ʔesalaq*:

I am on stand myself, arguing the sovereign position, little me, I am claiming jurisdiction of the river and all its contents and it’s up to me to decide what to do with the fish, not the Queen, not the government as the Queen’s representative. I have a real feisty attitude about that. Tom I have been at war and I bet you have too. [I]t’s an inherent right battle against the *Fisheries Act*, section 33. The judge ruled on July 8 2008 that I was guilty of possession of 400 fish. I have asked over the years, “with all due respect your honor, how did you get jurisdiction to charge me, even to jail me over my fish? I have no treaty with you or with Canada. (Patricia Kelly *ʔesalaq* 02-08-2011:1)

In contrast, for Crown Counsel this case was a simple “routine” charge of a “repeat offender” charged with a “regulatory offence” that called for him to follow the logic outlined by the Supreme Court in *Sparrow*. His cross examination sought to establish the following:

- whether Patricia was claiming an individual right or a communal right;
- that Patricia was not a voice of authority or a credible voice because she was neither an *Indian Act* sanctioned leader nor a DFO-recognized fish representative;
- that without government regulations (read DFO regulations) fishing would be a “free for all”; and
- that because she pleaded not guilty to the offence she could not now claim an Aboriginal rights defense (only true to a colonial mindset).

At the same time, his questioning ignored entirely her claim that she had a “right to fish,” period and that this right includes her right to fish according to her own *Stó:lō*

customs, laws and traditions. Instead, Crown Counsel kept insisting that the only right she might hold would be the right to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes – as scripted by the BC Court of Appeals and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in *Sparrow* – but *not* to sell the fish that she catches.¹¹⁴

In his cross examination of *Siyolia* (June Quipp) during the *voire dire* to establish her as an Elder and therefore an “expert” witness, questions posed by Crown Counsel were again designed to discredit her as she, too, was not a “good little Indian,” meaning she was not speaking in terms of upholding either the *Indian Act* or DFO legislation:

Was Patricia asserting an Inherent right or an Aboriginal right?

- What were those laws that limited the inherent right to fish? (asking about *Stó:lō* laws that limited access to fish, therefore assuming that *Stó:lō* laws equate to limitations)
- What does it take to be an Elder? (a question only a *Xwelitem* would ask)
- The opinions you give are they the opinions of the Cheam Band? The opinions of the Lakahamen Band? (June replied she doesn’t work for “bands” she works for the people).
- So there isn’t unity among your own group, the *Stó:lō*, on fishing issues? (in re-examination, Patricia asked June if all Canadians agree with DFO’s stance on fish?)
- In terms of the *Stó:lō* position on fishing, do you know Ms Kelly’s Band position on fishing? (Knowing full well that Ms Kelly’s “band” is one that tends not to contradict DFO rules and regulations).
- Were you a chief in 2004? A member of council in 2004? A portfolio holder on fish in 2004?

The stance of the Crown Prosecutor was that the DFO officers did nothing wrong on July 14 2004 when they “confiscated” (i.e., stole) Patricia Kelly’s fish as they were acting pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*. He further asserted that the *Stó:lō* (who can never “really” define who we are) should be thankful, as without DFO legislation it would be a complete free-for-all on the river. Patricia’s response was, “I don’t care what some colonial hick on a horse has to say! I am unceded, unconquered and unsold. I am appealing based upon my *Stó:lō* blood, customs, laws and traditions” (court date of April 29 2010). As she wrote in her factum:

¹¹⁴ See previous chapter on limitations of *Sparrow*, in particular page 204.

Based on my own customary laws, this court does not have jurisdiction over my right to fish as Canada and British Columbia did not consult or accommodate me or my relatives when writing the *Fisheries Act* and its regulations and rules. These laws, rules and regulations have been written in the best interest of non-*Stó:lō* Fishers and not for me or my Indigenous relatives. These laws have been amended and changed gradually since 1888 as further evidence of their mandate to protect non-*Stó:lō* fishers even when to do so infringed upon the *Stó:lō* right to fish.
(see for example Harris 2001)

The Futility of Litigation in Domestic Courts

“I am not advocating a complete abandonment of a rights-based discourse, as it can be a useful tool for facilitating political maneuverability and opening new indigenous spaces within the statecentric system. I am urging that communities act to assert their powers and responsibilities as nations in order to promote an indigenous-centred discourse on sustainable self-determination.”
(Corntassel 2008:121)

To Patricia this case was about asserting her inherent right to fish. To the Crown prosecutor it was a regulatory offence and a routine charge (Finn Jensen, court date, April 29 2010). To me it was an excellent example of futility. No matter how many times Patricia asserted “I am unceded, unsold, unconquered and until there is a treaty signed nation to nation, you have no jurisdiction over me or my fish” the court and the prosecutor were unwilling to acknowledge this fact. Not surprising as even the Supreme Court of Canada refuses to recognize our equal status:

[O]ver the last thirty years, the Supreme Court of Canada has consistently refused to recognize Indigenous Peoples’ equal and self-determining status, based on the Court’s adherence to legal precedent founded on the white supremacist myth that Indigenous societies were too primitive to bear fundamental political rights when they first encountered European powers...despite a degree of recognition for certain “cultural” practices within the colonial state, it [the court] has nonetheless failed to challenge the racist origin of Canada’s assumed authority over Indigenous peoples and their territories.
(Coulthard 2008:195)

***Stó:lō* Fisherwoman Wanted: For the Illegal Possession of Fish!!**

In June of 2009 (at the beginning of sockeye fishing season), the Crown prosecutor posted Patricia’s picture in Crime Stoppers when she failed to appear for one of her court dates. Her “mug” shot was placed beside a man being charged for impaired driving and a man charged with assault. Patricia’s caption read “wanted: for purchasing,

selling and possession of fish against the fisheries act.” The complete absurdity of this can only be missed in a society hell bent on maintaining its colonial fallacies. This mug shot appeared during the second phase of this trial, i.e., when Patricia was asserting her Aboriginal rights defense. Thus the Crown’s action was one of criminalizing Patricia for asserting a constitutionally protected right! When Patricia protested this in court it fell on completely deaf and uncaring ears.

Perhaps even sadder is the response the *Stó:lō* community had upon seeing one of our fishers being placed in Crime Stoppers, that is, none. No response at all: no outcry, nothing. I can only think of two reasons for this non-response and both are very indicative of symptoms of being oppressed and marginalized for generations. One is that maybe some *Stó:lō* are disconnected enough from their *Syuwá:lelh* (teachings) and *Syewá:l* (ancestors) to actually believe that fishing can be a “crime.” But another is that we now have been prosecuted for so long for “fishing” that the fight has gone out of us. In fact when Patricia asked the Crown prosecutor how many fishing trials he has prosecuted in his very long career he said he didn’t know and did not keep this kind of statistic. I think this type of information needs to be noted. And when Patricia phoned the Department of Justice directly to ask for the statistic on the number of charges laid under section 33 of the *Fisheries Act* and what percentage of these charges were against Indigenous people she was told, “Well, that’s a loaded question” and not given the number.

“Impeccable Timing” of Crown

In my short involvement with Patricia’s case – which, by the way, was two years, I saw three more fishing charges being laid, two other fishing cases on trial (one of which involved six fishers) and one case in the B.C Court of Appeal. In one of the new charges a young *Stó:lō* fisherman had his boat confiscated from the beach. His boat was not even in the water. To a young *Stó:lō* man his boat is his everything. He was then essentially coerced into entering a guilty plea in order to get his boat (read: his livelihood) back. The confiscation occurred at the beginning of the fishing season and the trial was conveniently being delayed until sockeye fishing was over. Once sockeye fishing closed, Crown called and said they were ready to hear his case regarding the boat. Waiting until after sockeye season caused this young fisherman undue hardship, as June Quipp states “they (referring to the courts) do that, their timing is impeccable” (meeting October 14, 2010). To add insult to injury, Crown offered to return the boat for

\$5000.00 (June Quipp, meeting in preparation for court, October 14, 2010). Commercial fishermen may be able to afford such an amount, but the *Stó:lō* fishing under strict regulations and for “food” certainly cannot.

What choices does this leave a young *Stó:lō* fisherman without a boat? Rather than spend years fighting a futile case and missing several fishing seasons in the process, he opted to enter a guilty plea, just as Crown and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans whose legal fees are through the roof would prefer to have happen. How convenient for both Crown agencies. Just before he went in to court to enter his guilty plea Patricia asked him “but are you guilty?” to which his Uncle responded “the better question is: are you hungry?” The young man entered a guilty plea.¹¹⁵

To *not* enter guilty pleas means one will fight a futile fight at great personal expense. Patricia Kelly has been unable to secure employment, was evicted twice from low income housing, had her picture posted in Crime Stoppers, was detained for 24 hours during which time she was vaginally and anally searched, has had to self-represent and is now in her seventh year of court appearances. This does not even include all the emotional stress. One morning we were meeting in my kitchen before court and when Patricia arrived, she walked into my kitchen and immediately fell to the floor in tears. She had a complete breakdown. Attending court month after month, year after year to fight for an Indigenous right within a colonial court is mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually draining. I was feeling it after only two years, I can just imagine the strain she was under. As her friend I comforted her, but to this day I wish I could have done more.

Inherent Rights Defined

It is unfortunate the court’s own limitations do not allow it to move forward or beyond the confines of a colonial regime. If the court were interested in finally defining “Inherent Rights” this is what they may have been privy to:

¹¹⁵ There was a second case as well whereby a *Stó:lō* fisherperson was picked up on a Friday for a fishing charge and told he could spend the weekend in jail or enter a guilty plea and be immediately released. He entered a guilty plea which he later came to regret and hired a lawyer but was unsuccessful in having his plea rescinded or changed.

Your birth right in the *Hun'qumi'num* language is called *shoe win* - it was this at the very beginning that is what it says. But what NE,HIMET says -means mine *nasqway* that means mine first part of word says and *himt is* to protect so NE,HIMETis mine to protect. *tesalaq* is mine to protect because comes from my great grandfather's brother and goes back hundreds of thousands of years.

So this process is not an acquired right it is an inherent right. Everything else that happened in modern time, beginning in 1492 if you want to go back not that long ago, everything that came out of 1492 up to present moment is an acquired right including the Canadian constitution. And these constitutional rights are not inherent rights. Section 35(1) which talks about Aboriginal and treaty rights, these are rights that are defined in English language and way it sounds to me it has to be written down. But ours is an oral tradition. And if you look at definition of oral tradition it clearly says what is versus acquired right is manmade and inherent right comes directly from the Creator. That is the difference between inherent or Indigenous right and acquired. Acquired right comes from Canadian constitution, which is not developed by our people developed by people who recently came to this country.

So we have difficulty communicating with the government. How do we bridge gap between inherent or Indigenous right because we are talking about time when there was only one language spoken and that was language we know whether Halkomelem which is general language of Coast Salish people, or SENĆOTEN language which is of WSANEC people. These issues raised with us whether the Canadian constitution or any section of Constitution Act which include Fisheries Act these are all rights that have been recently developed and fall directly in conflict with our Indigenous inherent right. Indigenous or inherent means it's home-grown, this is what it was at the beginning of time. It's not an acquired right that somebody decides, we are going to go fishing derby or have an open season these are processes that were developed through Canadian constitution and are acquired rights, they are not even, I don't like to say this but the way it sounds to me, it's not a sovereign right. It's an acquired right because developed by human beings and our rights were not developed by humans.

Everything, when we talk about salmon, we talk about them because they are a part of us. Legends tell us humans were last to be made. Everything was made before humans were created according to our legends. So we are youngest of all creation, so everything we learn came from the salmon, the bear, *spath*, deer, *simyeth*, they were not animals they were already part of existing creation that worked in harmony with each other. None of us, none of them at that time infringed on rights of each other because protected it. Salmon had its own way of protecting itself. Creatures that live on land had their own process of looking after their own families. One they use the most, the wolf clan because this is about how a family is grown up, how they manage, the wolf is teacher of family structure.

The issue of our right as Canadian citizen, *if there is such a thing*, is constantly in conflict because they ask us to surrender our inherent rights and accept acquired rights with no choice at all. And that has

been an on-going battle for the last 500 years, has not stopped. Process government has developed is in total conflict of management of natural resources, they call it, whether fisheries forestry or any other industry they call now. What they have done to our, to everything that we have come to know as a relative, we see the land, the animals they call, we see them as relatives of ours, we don't see them as animals or someone who is not civilized. Humans I think are probably the most uncivilized people in the world, everybody knows that now. When you look at that, the way the process was developed for us, we had to learn all these things and that is where inherent rights came from.

These inherent rights come from word we call *shuwin* (shoewin), in very beginning, this is what your right was and they named everything in Hul'q'iminum and SENĆOTEN language. Reason we can't defend ourselves anymore because they took our language away from us. Loss of our language, it was the first thing they attacked. Attacked our children after that to make sure they would never speak their language and not be able to defend themselves.

(*tesalaq* 02-08-2011:4-5)

“Am I a Mythologist or a Warrior?”

“Every time I go to Court I asked myself what am I going to be today?
Am I going to be a Mythologist or a Warrior?”
(*Kw'í:tse! Tatel*)

Working with Patricia on this court case was emotionally challenging. I don't regret my time spent working with *Kw'í:tse! Tatel*, despite how frustrating it became at times. Although I cried many times and absolutely dreaded every single court appearance, I also learned many things about the *Stó:lō* and our perseverance even in the face of complete adversity. From Patricia my belief in *Xexá:ls* and the power of transformation was reinforced and ingrained even further within me. To me, Patricia represents a present day *Xá:ls*, her sovereign mind is a gift to the people. Watching her in court was inspirational and indicative of the power of *Stó:lō* women. In the face of almost certain defeat and a complete incompatibility of perspective she never relented. She stood firm in who she is and her *syúwél* teachings even when to do so meant she would be completely misunderstood and worse “criminalized.” What would happen if we all had her unflinching belief in who we are as *Stó:lō* people and what is ours?

Chapter 9.

Traditional *Stó:lō* Leadership

"I mean anyone can be elected to a leadership position in their community; but to be a true leader you need to know who you are and where you come from."
~ Charles "Corky" Douglas

There can be no doubt that the *Stó:lō* had and have great leadership. We could not have survived all that we survived without it. Pre-contact we survived famines, floods, landslides, disease and raids. We were so successful in our ability to live in peace and harmony with our environment, all we needed to survive was adequately provided by *S'ólh Téméxw* and our knowledge of it. Our knowledge of *S'ólh Téméxw* has been built upon thousands of years of living, learning and passing teachings from one generation to the next since the beginning of time. As one of my dissertation teachers, Otis Jasper shared with me:

Ultimately I feel that we as *Stó:lō* people have a responsibility to maintain a relationship with *S'ólh Téméxw* to the territory, respect and honor what our ancestors experiences were and what they learned and what they were taught by their ancestors. I believe that they had a lot of trial and error over centuries of understanding the impacts of our movements on the land and how we conducted ourselves and how in turn that respected the land and everything around us.

(01-17-2011:1-2)

Our knowledge of *S'ólh Téméxw* is intimate and detailed; it encapsulates the inter-dependency of all living things. As Mr. Sampson provided for leadership:

The sacred belief of our people is every creation must be treated very sacred so it will always remain here on mother earth for our use. It is said that when the tide goes out then the dinner table is set and time to eat food given to us by the Creator. Another sacred belief is when we take food from the land, the gifts given to us by the Creator, that we must treat these gifts with the greatest respect and honor.

There was a time when our forest was so big could hear trees speak half mile way and branches would move around in wind. This information

provided us with many indicators of what is happening in our waters, oceans, lakes, rivers and the air we breathe. The forest was once full of every kind of creatures of life like deer, elk, bear cougar, wolves etc. These through the generations, these resources have become depleted. We the SENĆOTEN knew of time when the air was so sweet and beautiful to smell, before air became so polluted with poisons. The forest gave flavor to the ocean so salmon could find their way back to their sacred place of birth in our rivers.

(part of a report written by Tom Sampson (*t̓esalaq*) for leaders, shared with me on 03-30-2011)

Stó:lō knowledge of *S'ólh Téméxw* is effective and highly productive, so much so that we would often take several months out of the year to sing, dance and visit all our relations. This would also require a tremendous amount of foresight and co-ordination to ensure enough food was preserved, necessary medicines were available, adequate protection was provided and so on. Even by today's standards, it is very rare for families, let alone entire communities to be able to afford to take several months off of work to sing, dance, visit and verify teachings. While several factors need to work in tandem to ensure such a lengthy "holiday" for all, good leadership and cooperation would be mandatory.

Post-contact we are still survivors with, for the most part, our integrity and sincerity intact. While the majority of the *Stó:lō* may live below the poverty line, the fact that we still exist as a People cannot be under-rated. Since contact we have survived devastating diseases such as small pox which in some cases decimated entire villages. We have survived racist and assimilative policies that can be as benign as the unofficial "no hire" practices among local businesses and the denial of an education carefully hidden in terms like "high drop-out rates," to the more malignant and often blatantly lethal practices and policies such as residential schools, the criminalization of our inherent right to fish, hunt, economic racism, imprisonment for practicing *milha*, and even state-sanctioned hangings that occurred throughout our territory (see Appendix F for chilling and heartbreaking account of the hanging of my husband's great great great

grandfather for being a *Shxwłám* (*Stó:lō* doctor).¹¹⁶ Against all odds, we have survived. Our ability to survive colonialism can be attributed to several factors, but for sure one again is good leadership.

While I do look at both pre-contact and post-contact leadership styles and issues, I do so for very specific reasons that are firmly rooted in contemporary realities. I am extremely interested in looking at pre-contact leadership styles and then making a conscious decision as to whether they are applicable when addressing contemporary (read: colonial) challenges. It is not that I want to glorify our pre-colonial past, or position contemporary leaders against traditional leaders. I do want to reacquaint the *Stó:lō* with traditional leadership styles, and to highlight the ingenuity and strength of contemporary leaders so we can take the best of both worlds and quicken our departure from colonial disempowerment.

Pre-Colonial *Stó:lō* Leadership

Pre-colonial (i.e., pre-*Indian Act*) leaders were charismatic, influential, powerful and highly respected.¹¹⁷ Their power was derived in part from birthright, but this was not required, as it also came from training, knowledge and especially from spiritual powers that can be bestowed upon those willing to undergo the strict and rigorous training. *Stó:lō* leaders did so, not to gain power or control over the people, but because they cared about the people (see *Lílheqi* as an example). That they had the well-being of their people first and foremost on their minds is undeniable (oral tradition, *sxwōxwiyám* and the *Halq'eméylem* language verifies this for me).

The role of leadership was a lifetime event, often beginning at birth, carefully groomed throughout childhood and undergoing rigorous spiritual training as a young

¹¹⁶ See for example Carlson (2006) and the lynching of a 14 year old *Stó:lō* boy by the name of Louie Sam at the hands of a vigilante group from Washington state. See also appendix F for newspaper article dated January 23 1895 on the hanging of a *Stó:lō Shxwłám*, Louis Victor who was executed when the young boy he was helping died. At this time "Indian doctors" were criminalized, including executed, if they continued to practice.

¹¹⁷ While this dissertation documents *T'xwelátse*, *Willléq*, Swaneset, Swaneset's Salmon Wife, Swaneset's Tel Swayel Wife, and *Lílheqi*, there are many many more to pick from. I look forward to documenting more as a future project in Traditional *Stó:lō* Leadership.

adult in order to acquire special power for the people. At birth children would be watched by *Sí:yólexwe* (Elders) so their “gift” could be identified and thus nurtured. *Sí:yólexwe* (Elders) would also watch for the return of the *shxwelí* of a *Syewá:l* (ancestor) as this too would inform them on the work and leadership abilities of the child. Based upon this and what the child may have to say, the person would begin his/her acquisition of necessary information and history to properly lead the people.

In some cases this involved learning a “high language” within which would be the necessary *Halq'eméylem* words and concepts that would tie the *Ó:wqw'elmexw* (tribe) to its territory, resources, and responsibilities; would tell the history of the *Ó:wqw'elmexw* beginning with the *Yewá:l Syewá:l* (First Ancestor) and include *Shxwtelís te Syewálelh* (“where the past ancestors came from”). With rigorous spiritual training, sometimes requiring up to two years alone in the mountains, the young adult would acquire special spiritual powers and visions which gave him/her the ability to “see” where his/her people were going and how best to lead them there. S/he could call upon his/her spiritual powers during difficult times and be provided with the necessary guidance to help his/her people. Many *Stó:lō* leaders had the gift of *Qwóqwel* and were gifted speakers with the “power of persuasion” as they had the skill and the knowledge to back up what they were saying. *Stó:lō* leaders knew exactly who they were, where they came from, what was theirs to protect and how to protect it.

Leadership Roles Defined

Most *Ó:wqw'elmexw* had several leaders; their leadership role was defined by the needs of the people as much as by their intrinsic qualities, training and spiritual powers. For example some of our *Siyá:m* roles were:

<i>Siyá:m</i>¹¹⁸	Respected One; plural is <i>Sí:yá:m</i>
<i>Yewá:l</i> <i>Syewá:l</i>	First Ancestors (although not physically present are still considered <i>Sí:yá:m</i>)
<i>Hi'weqw</i> <i>Siyá:m</i>	Tribal Leader, Head Leader, ones with the high names, “master of whole country” (see Carlson 2010:48)
<i>Sia:teleq</i>	“task masters” – ones with situational and vocational specialties (Carlson 210:48). They were led by <i>Hi'weqw Siyá:m</i> the leader of leaders.
<i>Sxwsiyá:m</i>	“prominent family leaders who owned and controlled” family resources (Carlson 2010:48).

¹¹⁸ Pronounced “see am” plural is “seee am”

Sxá:sls	the ones who keep track of everything - “keepers and communicators of sacred histories” (Carlson 2010:62).
Shxwlá:m	specialty trained healers who received hereditary knowledge and “full initiation into the body of esoteric experience and knowledge that enabled them to travel through the mystical spiritual dimension of the <i>xá:xá</i> realm” (Carlson 2010:68 from words shared by Old Pierre to Jenness).
the Sí:le¹¹⁹	Grandmothers/Matriarch – In <i>Sxwōxwiyám</i> each <i>Siyá:m</i> had a grandmother figure prominently in his/her ability to lead and survive (see also <i>Qwul’sih’yah’maht</i> 2011).
Stó:méx	Warrior, War Leaders
læsiε’mét	<i>Ts’elxwéyeqwu</i> name for head leader (Duff 1972:82) last two letters are very difficult to read – “the head governor of the tribe” – each village had a leader but there was one main leader for them all – everything had to be reported to him - “he was expected to take command in wars... expected to be of good character and friendly with everybody.”

The Role of Spirituality

Both a profound sense of spirituality as well as personal and collective spirit powers figured prominently throughout *Stó:lō* leadership roles and responsibilities. *Stó:lō* leadership relied heavily upon the spirit world and spiritual beliefs to survive. To separate spirituality from leadership would be tantamount to a death sentence and render the *Siyá:m* virtually powerless. The *Stó:lō* believe that every human has seven spiritual powers: *shxwéli*, *smestíyexw*, *swia’m*, *qey’xene’?ten*, *spoleqwith’a*, *syúwél* (or *ó:lkwlh*) and *sle’qwem* (*θε’læctən* as cited in Carlson 2010:71). It would then follow that everyone be mindful of these seven spiritual aspects of self and that especially *Siyá:m* would be well-versed in ensuring his/her power was strengthened by them.

The *shxwéli* (see also Chapter 11) is our life force, for example, and upon death it can be sent back to earth within someone or something else. If sent back as the *shxwéli* of a descendent then the current carrier could call upon and build upon the powers always inherent within it. *Smestíyexw* is one’s vitality which is both energy and thought. Our *smestíyexw* is found throughout our being and therefore if we are to lose a part of our being our vitality will suffer. For example if we cut our hair which contains *smestíyexw* or lose a limb our vitality will decrease. We derive *smestíyexw* from the sun which is why our energy levels are lowered during the winter months as we are exposed to less energy from the sun. This is one reason why *Xwélmexw* practice *milha* during the

¹¹⁹ Pronounced “see la”.

winter months as our *smestíyexw* is revitalized by the power found in the *qw'eyílex* (dance) and *syúwél* (spirit song) of the *Shílhéxes* (dancers).

Swia'm is closely connected to one's *smestíyexw* and represents one's gift, talent or power, which perishes with the person upon death (*θε'łəctən* as cited in Carlson 2010:71). The spirit associated with one's shadow or reflection that is cast by the Sun and Moon is known as *qey'xene'ʔten*. When one dies your *qey'xene'ʔten* and *smestíyexw* merge together and is called *spoleqwith'a*, or your ghost. Your *spoleqwith'a* tends to roam around invisible after death and can cause much concern among the surviving family members whose *smestíyexw* may be enticed away by *spoleqwith'a*. To protect family members from this, the *Stó:lō* adhere to strict protocol and ceremony during the passing of ancestors. Our sixth spiritual aspect is *syúwél* or *ó:lkwlh* which is one's spiritual power obtained from guardian spirit(s), it can manifest itself during *smílha* as well as through one's vocational expertise or professional abilities. The seventh spiritual entity is *sle'qwem* which are the spirits that impregnate one's breath with power (Carlson 2010:72).

Thus spirit power very much distinguishes a powerful *Siyá:m* from a less powerful one. *Stó:lō* history is filled with both *sxwōxwiyám* and *Sqwélqwel* of "powerful" *Siyá:m*, *Stó:méx* and *Shxwłám* who could use their spirit power to accomplish monumental feats with ease and grace. *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* could literally move mountains (Sheridan Hill and *Lílheqi*), fight entire wars single-handedly (*T'xwelátse*), bring people's wandering *smestíyexw* back to them (Olectan) and forge relations through marriage and the building of "empires" infused with the most magnificent symbols of kinship and prestige. One such *Stó:lō* Leader was *Willéq* the fifth.

Willéq: Traditional/Hereditary Stó:lō Siyá:m

From my research journey I am excited to learn of many influential and powerful *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* who in various ways shaped who we are today. I look forward to documenting and writing more about them as a future project. For my current research I

have focused on *Williléq*¹²⁰ and *T'xwelátse*¹²¹ for a few reasons. The first is that they are both *Ts'elxwéyeq* and therefore directly related to me. Second, because of this I have relatively easy access to oral information to learn more. Lastly, each highlights a different area of leadership expertise, one was a warrior and the other was what I have come to refer to as *Qwóqwel* or to have the gift of the “power of persuasion.”

The Importance of Ancestral Names

The contemporary name carrier of *Williléq*, Mr. Ken Malloway received the name in 1971. He was 18 years old and a *xawsó:lh* (new dancer) at the Tzeachten Longhouse (01-20-2011:1). He was given the name by his grandfather Vincent Malloway (*Yexwéylem*) and his grandfather's brothers Bob Joe (*Xwelxwé:yleq*) and Ritchie Malloway (*Th'eláchiyatel*) at a gathering at Tzeachten with over 1500 people in attendance. As is customary the bestowing of an ancestral name is a big deal in *Stó:lō* country and requires proper protocol and procedure be followed.

The verification and “ownership” of ancestral names is the responsibility of the *Sí:le*, or grandmothers which is still the case despite the *Indian Act*'s displacement of *Stó:lō* matriarchs¹²² from their ancestral homes. However, the displacement of *Stó:lō* the *Sí:le* has meant that some confusion and in some cases mistakes can be made when ancestral names are being passed from one generation to the next. However, these mistakes have to be publicly announced and corrected. For example, Mr. Malloway shared with me that the return of Laura Wealick (a displaced *Sí:le*) to *Ts'elxwéyeq* territory called his right to the name into question (01-20-2011:1). Laura is Jack Wealick's great granddaughter, and Jack Wealick was *Williléq* the 6th as he was the grandson of *Williléq* the 5th from whom he received the name. As *Williléq* the 6th's great granddaughter, Laura does have a direct tie to the name and according to Mr. Malloway was upset when she heard he was carrying her name. Mr. Malloway explained to Laura

¹²⁰ Pronounced “wha lay luck”.

¹²¹ Pronounced “took wha lattsa”.

¹²² Family female leaders responsible for cultural continuity in terms of determining and grooming those picked to carry family gifts, names, songs, ceremony and history.

and that his own great grandmother was Charlotte Wealick and so they were in fact related (01-20-2011:1).

Another example Mr. Malloway shared with me involved another of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* hereditary names, *Yexwéylem*, which was given to an adopted grandson who they believed to be from Saanich, outside of *Ts'elxwéyeqw* territory. Mr. Malloway explained that this happened by mistake and that his Grandfather Vincent (*Yexwéylem*) asked him to help sort it out as the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* hereditary names are not to leave our territory (01-20-2011:11). Sorting it out meant talking to his Uncle Frank (*Síyamches*) who then talked to the Grandmother who had passed the name to her adopted grandson. From these discussions it was decided that the adopted grandson would carry the name "only until he dies and then it has to come back here [meaning *Ts'elxwéyeqw* territory] and nobody else will be allowed to have it" (01-20-2011:12). This decision and the reasons were announced at a gathering where Mr. Malloway also passed part of his own name (a derivative of *Williléq* which has "tel" added to it to denote second one) to two family members, one in Nooksack and another in Saanich (01-20-2011:12). Although *Williléq* did not say that this was to ensure balance, it is in line with *Stó:lō* protocol with ceremony that we would not just take something without putting something back. The putting something back can happen any time and can be with a family member and not necessarily the individual form which something was taken.

The important role that women play in the passing of names and staying true to proper protocol was reaffirmed when Mr. Malloway decided to pass his hereditary *Siyá:m* name to his daughter and had this verified by his Auntie:

At the time I was thinking I'm not going to live forever, I am diabetic and looking to pass my name on. I looked at my sons and looked at my grandsons and looking around at my family and talked to Uncle Frank and Auntie Doreen about it. I told them I don't feel comfortable passing it on to any of the boys in my family right now, only my daughter Jessica I could pass it on to and feel good about it. It has always been a boy, as hereditary chiefs have been boys.

Well I said only one is Jessica, at this time, later might feel different. Well we will talk about it and Auntie Doreen came back and said okay we agree. We had a gathering and announced it. The name has been in my family for over 1000 years and has never been carried by a girl. But Jessica's Indian name is Whawayla (phonetic), the female version, So she is carrying a hereditary chiefs name, first female ever. She puts me in line like my Auntie Doreen. Traditionally men have always been leaders of tribe, but Auntie Doreen has always been head of my family. She tells you and you just do it. (01-20-2011:13)

Meaning of *Wilíléq*

Part of the protocol in carrying an ancestral name is that the name carrier learn as much as possible about the name. This includes its history, family ties, territory and responsibilities that come with the name. Some of this work may be done in preparation for receiving the name and it is expected that this work will continue well into late adulthood. For the most part it involves listening to the Elders who will share the information one needs in relation to his/her name. For example, Mr. Malloway shared with me what *Sí:le* Tillie Guterrez (*Siyolexwálh*¹²³) had shared with him:

One day I was talking with Tillie Guterrez, I wanted to talk to you about fishing she said. Your name, what's your name again and I said *Wilíléq* and she said that's a good one, and she turned to her husband and said that's a good one hey and he said ya that's a good one. She said that's a really big name. It means one who is always careful one who is always aware she said. Its hereditary chief of Chilliwack tribe. She talked to me about chiefs and names and she said people from Yakwekwioose who carry those names have a lot of influence in the tribe.
(Ken Malloway, 01-20-2011:5)

Transformation Story of *Wilíléq* and the Black Bear with a White Spot on His Chest

Ken Malloway also shared part of the *sxwōxwiyám* of one of the *Wilíléq*'s transformation to a black bear with a white triangle on his chest:

They say the man carrying the name *Wilíléq* when *Xexá:ls* was traveling through *S'ólh Téméxw* was transformed into a black bear. My family they tended to stay away from eating bear meat because we were told one of the men that carried the name *Wilíléq*, when *Xexá:ls* was going through here, he was transforming some people into different animals, cedar trees, *Wilíléq*, might have been the fourth one, was transformed into a bear to feed the people. If see bear with white triangle mark on chest we can't shoot it, it's one of our relatives.
(Ken Malloway 02-04-2011:3)

In preparation for receiving his ancestral name, Mr. Malloway received many teachings from his *Sí:yólexwe* (Elders):

Bob Joe and Vincent Malloway and Ritchie Malloway used to sit me down and always talk to me about the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* Tribe, mostly the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* tribe too, not *Stó:lō*. It was always *Ts'elxwéyeqw* Tribe

¹²³ Halq'eméylem term used to denote an Elder who has passed on

they talked about. Even though *Ts'elxwéyeqw* Tribe is *Stó:lō*, they were quite unique and apart from rest of *Stó:lō* as their homeland initially was at Chilliwack Lake. One meaning given for Chilliwack, the river, is that it is as far as you can go by canoe.

Up near where the Vedder bridge is where the river used to swing around the mountain at Vedder bridge and go right through Tzeachten, Skowkale and Yakwekwioose but that is where the river got rough and as far as you can go by canoe. One of the meanings for *Ts'elxwéyeqw* is far as you can go by canoe.

With his name came ties to territory and responsibilities to it:

My grandpa would take me outside and say *Ts'elxwéyeqw* tribal territory go over that way between elk mountain and mount Cheam and go that way and go in direct line back behind the mountains behind Chilliwack lake and go right to where Skagit is and come around border to Skagit territory below Chilliwack lake and come around all the way this way Chilliwack valley and come over where Sumas lake used to be and take line right there and go down to mouth of Sumas River, Devils run and that's part of our boundary. Then go up middle of river and get to kwapilth slew and that boundary between Chilliwack and Pilalt tribes. The boundary kind of...they put Wellington road right on top of what used to be a trail and it was a boundary. So where Wellington road comes all the way down to slew that was part of the boundary and went right up to five corners and from there went over that way between Elk mountain and Mt Cheam. He used to always tell me this and tell me to remember this. If we ever get into Treaty talks, our people always wanted a treaty, so if we get into Treaty talks you have to remember it. (01-20-2011:2)

***Willilég* Name Carriers**

If one assumes approximately 50 years between name carriers, as names tended to be passed from grandfather/granduncle to grandson/nephew, the name *Willilég* can be traced to approximately the mid-1500s. If *Qoqolaxel* was built in the very early 1800s (Schaepe), then *Willilég* the 5th may have been born around the 1770s. *Willilég* the 5th passed his name on to his grandson Jack Wealick (Carlson 2010:125). Jack Wealick was born in 1830 and died in 1900 and is the sixth person to carry this name. Jack Wealick (*Willilég* the 6th) then passed the name to his grandson (the eldest son of a younger son according to Duff) George Wealick (*Willilég* the 7th) born in 1890 and passed away in 1951 at sixty one years of age (Carlson 2010:125). In the 1970s the name was passed to Ken Malloway who carries the name today. As Ken explained to me:

Bob Joe used to talk about *Wililég* (Wwha lay luck) that was his name. He had two names one was *Wililég* and other was *whole lay luck* (phonetic spelling).¹²⁴ I ended up getting both his names when I was 18 years old, when I was a new dancer at Tzeachten in 1971. Bob Joe and Ritchie Malloway and Vincent Malloway – Vincent is my grandfather, and Ritchie and Bob and Vincent are brothers, Bob was eldest. I am not sure, people not too sure who his father was, Bob Joe told Marian Smith that his father was George Wealick.

(01-20-2011:1)

Wililég, along with the names *Síyamches*, *Th'eláchiyatel* and *Yexwéylem* are the four ancestral names of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* along with their Uncle *T'xwelátse* who was the Warrior Leader. While all the name carriers of *Wililég* are necessarily accomplished and highly respected, *Wililég* the fifth is to me exceptional.

The Birth of *Wililég* the 5th

The first *Ts'elxwéyeqw* settlement is found at Chilliwack Lake, where after a series of events such as a landslide and the river changing course, the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* eventually settled at Thathem:als, less than a kilometer upstream from what is now known as Vedder crossing. It was at *Tháthem:als* (θa'θəməls) that *Wililég* the 5th was born. His birth was notable for many reasons, a main one being the birth of his twin sister, *Lumlamelut* (Lightning), a month after *Wililég*; her birth was signaled by a great thunder storm (Duff 1972:44). *Wililég* also had an older sister¹²⁵ and three younger brothers *Síyamches*, *Th'eláchiyatel* and *Yexwéylem*. *Wililég*'s Uncle was *T'xwelátse* a direct descendent of the first *T'xwelátse*, the *Yewá:l Syewá:l* of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw* people.

It is believed that *Wililég* the 5th's first wife was from *Swí:lhcha* with whom he had a child. His second wife was from Katzie and with this wife he had a daughter. Upon marrying her he spent some time with her and her people at Katzie. Although multiple spouses, especially wives was common among *smelá:lh*, it is said that his first wife eventually tired of waiting for him and returned to her family at *Th'ewá:lí*. Eventually *Wililég* the 5th returned with his Katzie wife to *Tháthem:als* but soon moved his people “a

¹²⁴ Spelled *Xwelxwé:yleq* (as recorded by Brent Galloway in Upriver Halkomelem dictionary).

¹²⁵ Name unknown at the time of writing.

few hundred metres downriver to a small flat area immediately upstream from Vedder Crossing” (Carlson 2010:123). It is here that *Williléq* the 5th constructed the most incredible *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse) which is known as *Qoqolaxel* or “Watery Eaves” in English.

The Building of *Qoqolaxel*

There are several qualities about *Williléq* the 5th that define him as a Leader of Leaders, or *Hi'weqw Siyá:m* among the *Stó:lō*. First was his birth into a long line of *Sí:yá:m* named *Williléq*. Second is the incredible and to date never replicated birth of his twin sister *Lumlamelut* one month after his own birth. Third is his ability to marry *smelá:lh* women of standing that would solidify his place among the *Stó:lō*. His first wife was from Swilcha, thus solidifying his people's place among the *Th'ewá:li* and second his success at marrying one of the highly coveted *smelá:lh* women from Katzie who brought with her ownership to valuable resources, streams and berry sites (Carlson 2010:123). Fourth, he spent time with both of his wives' families, thus gaining him invaluable respect from important *Stó:lō* communities.

Fifth, he eventually returned to his own people, the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*, and built *Qoqolaxel* in such a style and fashion that guaranteed him and his people's place among the *Stó:lō*. Sixth, he enlisted people from neighboring *Ó:wqw'elmexw* to build *Qoqolaxel*, namely Sema:th, Matsqui, Peló:lhxw, Sts'a'i:les, Scowlitz, Katzie, Kwantlen, Whonnock, and *Leq'á:mel* (Carlson 2010:124-125 also see fn27). Such a feat, of bringing all these different *Ó:wqw'elmexw* together to build the most incredible Longhouse is often understated, or even overlooked. This is an incredible feat to accomplish and one that identifies *Williléq* the 5th as an incredible leader with both personal power and the power of persuasion.

Lastly, is the design of *Qoqolaxel* and the ingenuous architectural ability of *Williléq*. He had designed the *Xwelmexwáwtxw* so it had no back, that is, he basically placed two *Xwelmexwáwtxw* back to back so no one had to occupy the less desirable areas in the back, thus ensuring no one was offended when visiting *Qoqolaxel* for ceremonies:

So higher ranking people front and center more floor space and structurally it works out. Pretty clearly that way seems to be the pattern. Leadership of each house front and centre and has more

space. As you go to the back your rank in that house is less as you go into back corners.

So if you have a house with all high ranking families from multiple tribes and you put them in the back corners, what does that tell you? So you build a house with two fronts, two shed roofs back to back there's no back to the thing there's only two fronts. so everyone has front place hard to argue where centre is because doors are on edges like this now. Certainly no central place or back place hard to argue where the centre is and certainly no back to it. That's what comes to my mind. (Dave Schaepe 01-07-2011:6)

The roof is an example of engineering expertise as by using an “inverted gable” roof he was able to store rain water in a log like trough in the middle of the roof, then “through an ingenious system of gates and levers, the log could be manipulated during ceremonies, causing hundreds of litres of stored water to burst through” the mouth of an ornately carved Raven¹²⁶ located at the back of the building (Carlson 2010:123). It is said that *Qoqolaxel* also housed the most magnificent story poles both inside and out and “that every pillar in the house was carved, polished and painted” (123).

Willilég the 5th would eventually move his people to *Sxwó:yxwela* where he would construct a second *Xwelmexwáwtxw* although not nearly as detailed and intricate as *Qoqolaxel*. It is here that *Willilég* as an old man and his sister (I assume *Lamlumlot*) were buried in the style known to be reserved for *smelá:lh* and *Sí:yá:m*.

Summary of Traditonal Leadership

Governance research conducted by Keith Thor Carlson in 1992 found that the Elders explained traditional leadership as:

The way Elders had described Stó:lō society as having been organized around networks of overlapping extended families, and how in the past leadership was primarily nested among those members of high status families who had demonstrated the greatest organizational skills and aptitude at dispute resolution – among the high status people referred to as *siyá:m*. (2007:5)

¹²⁶ The replica at SRRMC has a beaver, but Dr. Schaepe is pretty sure Dan Milo for example said Raven (see Schaepe 01-17-2011:7).

From *Sí:yá:m Wilíléq* and *T'xwelátse* (from Chapter 5) the following characteristics of pre-contact leadership can be identified:

- Pre-contact *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* knew their history (i.e., were *smelá:lh*),
- Knew who they were,
- Knew their territory,
- Had a vision for their people
- Had a defined role by knowing what their responsibilities entailed.
- They were recognized by the people by the name they carried and the language they spoke.
- They honored and respected their spiritual powers.
- Women (wives, sisters, *Sí:le*) played prominent roles within their lives.

Chapter 10.

Contemporary Stó:lō Leadership

Contemporary leaders are faced with challenges that often call their effectiveness into question. Contemporary leadership is not only a challenging and demanding responsibility, it leaves Stó:lō leaders vulnerable to attack, both internally and externally, and more often than not for mistakes and realities not of their own making, let alone fault.¹²⁷ As highlighted below, contemporary challenges faced by contemporary Stó:lō leaders are largely, if not solely, due to colonial impacts and the *Indian Act's* racist and oppressive ideologies. My preference therefore is not to look at all the mistakes our leaders are making due to colonialism, but to highlight all the good they are doing *despite* it.

This does not mean that I am not critical of many contemporary Stó:lō leaders especially if they are promoting assimilation and internal colonialism. I do however see this as a planned and purposeful outcome of the colonial process, that we, the people, need to demand to be stopped. *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* (Robina Anne Thomas) explains it as follows:

Naively, I believed our leadership was in fact qualified and knowledgeable; our leaders were, despite our systemic problems, the experts. However, the only changes I have witnessed are faces. Our communities continue to struggle with a myriad of social issues. In fact, more and more I hear community members discuss how concerned they are with the state of affairs in our communities. I would be negligent not to state that the reason our communities are in chaos is directly due to the imposition of a racist and sexist policies which attempted to replace our ways of knowing and being with Christian values and beliefs. This, in turn, has created a cultural crisis. (2011:22)

¹²⁷ I am not saying that we do not have corrupt leaders that purposely take advantage of our disempowered colonial existence, but these are not the leaders I am focused on for this study.

This “cultural crisis” described by *Qwul’sih’yah’maht* (2011) is a direct result of the imposition of the *Indian Act* system that replaced our collective ontology of interconnectedness and inter-dependence with all living things rooted in the customs and practices of our culture, with the individualism and factionalism dictated by the *Indian Act*.

Within the *Stó:lō* context this cultural crisis has historically created leadership that can be placed within two main categories: those who lead according to the *Indian Act* system and those who lead according to *Stó:lō* laws and traditions. We often see this dichotomy described as contemporary leaders versus traditional leaders. This dichotomy began in the mid-1850s as a direct result of both government and church endeavors aimed at separating the “good Catholic Indian” for example, from the pagan and amoral traditionalists who had succumbed to alcoholism (see below for more on the origin of this divide). While such a dichotomy is useful for analytical and categorical reasons, I have found it to be too simplistic to accurately describe the complexity of *Stó:lō* leadership in our contemporary and colonial times. Whether abiding by colonial ideology or *Stó:lō* laws and traditions, in order to be effective current *Stó:lō* leaders have no choice but to contend with the fact that we have been colonized.

Where a dichotomy is useful is in deciding where we want to go from here. Do we want to continue on the colonial path we are currently on, which will result in the colonial objective of complete assimilation? Make no mistake; just because we may continue to sing and dance, carry “Indian” names that we know nothing about and even blanket government officials in true *Stó:lō* style, does not mean we are not assimilated. The superficial and exploitative misuse and abuse of culture is not about *Stó:lō* resurgence, but rather our own participation in the continuation of the colonial project. Or, do we want to begin the painful process of de-colonization so we can re-build our people and our leaders in a way that honors and promotes our Indigeneity, our *syuwá:lelh* (*Stó:lō* laws) and respects who we are as the original people of this land?

The two main challenges I faced in completing this analysis of *Stó:lō* leadership were: (1) identifying colonial impacts and internal colonialism and (2) the diversity and complexity of not only *Stó:lō* communities, but *Stó:lō* leaders. I use the term internal colonialism to describe the process whereby the colonial project is being furthered by the Indigenous peoples. Examples can be as blatant as the use of the *Indian Act* by Indigenous peoples to continue our oppression and subjugation, such as when we deny

Indigenous peoples the right to define themselves. It can also be as subtle as the use of covert internal racism in order to justify our own sense of superiority over other *Stó:lō* people, or when we “other” ourselves, or unknowingly promote eurocentrism in our professional and daily lives. While I countered my own internal colonialism through painful and on-going processes of decolonization, this is not something I felt comfortable asking people along my dissertation journey. That is we are not yet at a place where we can have open and frank discussions about the permeating impacts of internal colonialism, let alone processes of decolonization. Therefore, an unintended but timely outcome of this research project is that these types of discussions will be generated, and in some cases revisited.

In 1992, for example, two influential *Stó:lō Sí:yám*, Sam Douglas from Cheam and Clarence Pennier from Scowlitz, on behalf of the *Stó:lō* Tribal Council approached historian Keith Thor Carlson to conduct a research project on *Stó:lō* governance. This project aimed to begin researching and documenting ways in which the “cultural crisis” being felt by the *Stó:lō* people could be addressed:

The *Stó:lō* Tribal Council chiefs (representing many of the two dozen First Nations clustered in the Fraser Valley) had hired me two years earlier to conduct research designed to demonstrate to their community members the drawbacks of the federal government sponsored municipal-style election system. In addition, they asked me to work with Elders to provide a cultural context sufficient to enable *Stó:lō* people to re-craft a governing system that was anchored in their own cultural traditions.

(Carlson 2007:1)

During this project, Carlson found that while most, if not all, *Stó:lō* were dissatisfied with the current governing structure under the *Indian Act*, acknowledging colonial impacts and the ways in which they now influence leadership was and is more difficult to identify and address:

Moreover, colonial impacts on *Stó:lō* governance have often assumed forms that are less than obvious. They have, for example, been tied to land development, resource extraction, spirituality, ritualism, ceremonialism, and education, as well as to the more obvious realm of Band government. As such, research that peels back the layers of time to shed light on the colonial events, processes, and personalities that have undermined extended family cohesion can serve to build a foundation of knowledge upon which people can begin to decolonize minds and communities.

(Carlson 2007:10)

This chapter does as Carlson suggests and begins by peeling “back the layers of time” to shed light on the colonial impacts that undermine our leaders and good governance.

Without first addressing colonial impacts and issues of internal colonialism, the second challenge in addressing the diversity of *Stó:lō* leadership is exacerbated. The diversity and complexity of *Stó:lō* leadership can be further compounded by differing visions and directions, or even a lack thereof. With some leaders continuing with what the Harvard project referred to as the “standard approach” (i.e., the objectives of the *Indian Act*) and others struggling to disengage from colonial ideologies and endeavors all while the *Indian Act* is firmly rooted in our daily existence and continues to dictate our lives from “cradle to grave.”

Highlighting colonial impacts upon *Stó:lō* leadership is helpful for many reasons. First, making a direct link between colonial impacts and contemporary *Stó:lō* leadership challenges exposes the ways in which internal colonialism may be at work, even if the perpetuation of internal colonialism is unintentional. Second, the willingness to identify internal colonialism means we can begin to address it and therefore begin the all-important steps of decolonization. Lastly, only by undergoing processes of decolonization can we be sure to achieve the empowerment of Indigenous, or *Stó:lō* governance that is rooted in who we are as *Xwélmexw* people. Without first undergoing processes of decolonization we run the risk of merely furthering the colonial project under the guise of self-determination.

From my research journey in coming to understand governance and leadership, I found it helpful to identify the following colonial impacts as they pertain to the *Stó:lō*'s ability, and in many cases inability, to provide good leadership and governance. I identified them by keeping in mind what was important to us prior to contact and what areas of our social organization were the primary targets of colonial policy and legislation, namely our women, children, male leaders, land and governing “institutions.”

Colonial Impacts Upon *Stó:lō* Leadership

There are at least five aspects of the colonial process that have had a devastating impact upon *Stó:lō* leadership, all of which were and are dictated by the *Indian Act*. They are: (1) the displacement of *Stó:lō the Sí:le* (or matriarchs) by the

patriarchal *Indian Act* which stated women upon marriage were to be registered and live with their husband's "band." This displacement was further compounded by section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* which stated that a "registered Indian" woman who married a non-registered man would lose her "status" of being an "Indian;" (2) the division, and in some cases, the creation of male *Sí:yá:m* by both government and church officials; (3) the appropriation of *Stó:lō* lands; (4) the residential school system and finally (5) the anti-potlatch law which tore apart the very heart of *Stó:lō* governance.

The Displacement of *Stó:lō* the *Sí:le*

While I was aware of the prominent role that Grandmothers play within many of our *sxwōxwiyám*,¹²⁸ I had failed to truly understand their significance until I lost my own *Stó:lō* Grandmother. Although my Grandmother was Chinese and born in Jamaica (see *Sqwéłqwel* in Chapter 5), the role she played within my *Stó:lō* family was crucial. When she passed my family literally crumbled and has not yet fully recovered. The grief and sorrow we experienced ripped our family apart and created divisions that have weakened us as a family unit. I know she is still guiding us and one day we will recover. As her oldest granddaughter she instilled in me valuable life lessons and teachings that continue to guide and inform me, my family and my role in my community. All together she had eleven granddaughters¹²⁹ and her legacy remains alive in each and every one of us in unique and special ways.

The vital role that Grandmothers play within *Stó:lō* governance and leadership needs to be reclaimed and re-centered if we are to achieve independence. For this to happen we need to acknowledge the ways in which they have been displaced by colonial legislation and their continued displacement via internal colonialism when our predominately male leadership fail to acknowledge them and ignore their advice, something that seems to be a recent phenomenon. For example Margaret Commodore, the granddaughter of Amy Cooper recalls that although her grandfather was the

¹²⁸ See for example *Lílheqí*, Stone *T'xwelátse* and Swaneset's ability to survive his visit to Tel Swayel because of teachings he received from his grandmothers.

¹²⁹ She also had six grandsons and 13 great grandchildren when she passed.

hereditary chief, it was her Grandmother that “really ran the reserve” (as cited in Hayden 1999:338).

Prior to colonialism, the *Stó:lō* were matrilineal and in many ways matriarchal. I use these terms hesitantly as they are not *Halq'eméylem* terms and do not describe the complexity of *Stó:lō* social organization in its entirety. In many regards we can also be described as egalitarian. While women played vital roles within our communities and were decision makers in many aspects of our daily lives, they did so in complete harmony and balance with the men in the family. As well gender alone was never a sole determinant for who would carry certain roles and responsibilities. While we did divide many responsibilities along gender lines these lines were fluid and flexible. For example, it was possible to have a female warrior¹³⁰ and a male weaver and historian.

It was, however, *the Sí:le*¹³¹ who “owned” the names, songs, ceremonies and cultural property and it was *the Sí:le* who would determine which family members would carry their family’s cultural property. While *the Sí:le* were ultimately the ones responsible for the passing on of cultural property and *sxəxo:mes*, all the cultural gifts I am aware of have a male and a female component. For example one cultural gift among the *Stó:lō* is the sacred mask dance, or *Sxwó:yxwey*. Although it is the men in the family who carry the masks and dance, it is the women who own the songs and determine which men will carry the masks. Other sacred ceremonies among the *Stó:lō* also have a female and a male presence, as well many of the songs among the *Stó:lō* are “co-ed” songs which have a part to be sung by the men and a part sung by the women.

As many ancestral names come with title to material property and responsibilities to certain *sxəxo:mes*, these names were predominately, but not always, passed on through matrilineal lines. This was especially important in pre-contact times when multiple spouses was the norm among *smelá:lh* families. While male ancestral names tended to be passed from grandfather/uncle to grandson/nephew, the decision to determine who would be next to carry the name would be almost exclusively a *the Sí:le*

¹³⁰ Sækema'yłt a female warrior who stopped to cut the head off the man she killed A Cowichan woman apparently warring with xe'tanex against the Klallam (see Elmendorf's (1993:133) informant (nameless) who actually saw her (as cited in Angelbeck 2009:118).

¹³¹ Pronounced “See la”.

decision. Many factors would go in to the decision and would include the strengths of the successor, his behaviors up to this point, his potential into the future and where he would ultimately reside. The ancestral names with location-specific knowledge, history and “ownership” could not leave the territory.

Upon contact and the unilateral imposition of the *Indian Act* all of this was disrupted and the vital role played by *Sí:le* was displaced. Amendments to the *Indian Act* in 1869 forbade *Stó:lō* women from, not only voting, but from holding chief or councillor positions under the newly imposed election system, this gender discrimination would stay in place until 1951 (*Qwul'sih'yah'maht* 2011:7). In 1869 clause six of the *Enfranchisement Act* stated that any status woman who married a non-status man would lose her “Indian” status as would her children, including any children previously born with a status father (Stevenson as cited in *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* 2011:18). This gender discrimination would stay on the books until 1982. As aptly put by Winona Stevenson (1999) “by the stroke of a pen First Nations women and their children could be denied their birth right as First Nations citizens...” and identity that was matrilineal was now being defined by the male line (as cited in *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* 2011:18).

The impact this had on the communities and the very women themselves is still largely an untold story. It is not difficult, however, to have compassion when we understand the depth of the wound. For example Margaret shared with me how Mary Two Axe Early had expressed the depth of this assault:

I remember a woman by the name of Mary Two Axe Early. I was at a meeting with her one time and she was so angry. She said “I lost my status, I can’t even be buried at home. They can bury a dog on my reserve but they can’t bury me there.” Isn’t that horrible? I will never forget that and its true.

(Margaret Commodore 01-06-2011:7)

Margaret experienced a similar loss as she, too, lost her status upon marriage. Her marriage eventually broke down and she found herself in between two worlds:

I couldn’t come home and could not live on my reserve; I could not build a home on my reserve. I had lost all the benefits. When I was a single mother again with two children I wanted to go back to school, I couldn’t go back to school, there was no housing available to me no child care available to me. I did go back to school but it was a struggle. But you know what it does? It makes you stronger because you have to fight stronger for what you want, and what you want to achieve.

(01-06-2011:7)

Lastly, status women marrying status men would be automatically registered to their husband's "band." This in turn would adversely impact the passing of important *Sí:le* ancestral names to future generations as over time "bands" were forced to behave individually and separate from other "bands" despite close and intimate kinship ties. This created divisions. Along with women being dislocated to their husband's band, the passing of female ancestral names has been greatly inhibited and further complicated as these names are tied to traditional territory and not "reserves."

Thus many *Stó:lō* women who carried important cultural knowledge and property were no longer able to perform this vital function when dislocated to another "band." The impact that this has had on the *Stó:lō*, our leadership and our social organization is just recently being identified. To go almost overnight from a woman-centred society heavily influenced by matriarchal Grandmothers to the patriarchy dictated by the *Indian Act*, to say chaos ensued would be an understatement. It also helps to explain the confusion, lack of direction and sense of loss most, if not all, *Stó:lō* families feel at some level.

The Division and Creation of Male "Chiefs"¹³²

While *Stó:lō* matriarchs were being dislocated and dispossessed, both government and church officials set about ensuring the *Stó:lō* abided by the election system imposed by the *Indian Act*. Under this foreign system only men were eligible to run for "Chief" and only men could vote. Thus, *Stó:lō* families who were used to the luxury of having several different types of *Sí:yá:m* with highly specialized skills and aptitudes, were being forced to select a single leader. How the single "Chief" was to be determined was being heavily influenced by both the state, via Indian Agents dispensed by the Department of Indian Affairs, which had been officially established in 1755, and the church, via church officials from a number of different denominations who by the mid to late 1800s had a firm hold on the by now weakened *Stó:lō*. As noted by historian Keith Thor Carlson:

As the era of colonial settlement progressed, one thing was becoming clear: State and Church authorities were collaborating to undermine the social and familial linkages between communities upon which supra-tribal

¹³² Subtitle borrowed from Carlson (2010).

Stó:lō identity was based. Under the combined systems of Department of Indian Affairs Band governments and Oblate Reductions and Temperance Societies, settlements were intended to be autonomous of one another. Leadership was to be expressed through western-style institutions and conducted under the supervision of non-Native individuals rather than through the extended family connections that earlier bound people of different settlements together under variously ranked family and tribal leaders. (Carlson 2007:18)

There were many factors at play that contributed to the death grip the Church was able to establish among the Stó:lō. The glue and continuity provided by Stó:lō Sí:le was no longer accessible via their dispossession and dislocation, added to this was the removal and loss of Stó:lō children via the residential school system and villages and families being decimated by diseases such as tuberculosis and small pox. As a direct result many Stó:lō were self-medicating and succumbing to the vices of heavy alcohol consumption that had been brought by the thousands of miners infiltrating S'ólh Téméxw in search of gold. All these factors combined meant the Stó:lō were in a weakened state of anomie exacerbated by grief and heartache.

When Church officials arrived promising salvation and a better life, many Stó:lō in an act of desperation and an innate desire to survive began converting to a number of different religious affiliations. As a result several colonial-induced divisions among the Stó:lō became clear. First there was a division between those Stó:lō converting to various religions such as Catholic, Christian, Protestant, Anglican and Methodist and those maintaining their “pagan” beliefs and Xwélméxw identity. This division was further compounded and cemented when Church officials characterized the latter group with heavy alcohol consumption, violence, death and pitiful living conditions (Bishop D'Herbomez as cited in Carlson 2010:184). Oblates then set about setting up “temperance” or “sobriety” societies in every Stó:lō community which would, in the absence of the priests, be overseen by church-appointed Stó:lō watchmen, captains and catechists (Carlson 2010:184).

In some cases this led to “Church Chiefs” appointed by Church Officials being seen as the “real” chief and those hereditary and then elected Chiefs being seen as the “honorary” Chief (Carlson 2010:200). In some cases Stó:lō communities were further divided along differing religious lines. For example, in one Stó:lō community of barely fifty members “chiefs” were being appointed by three different church officials in such a manner as to be ludicrous. As described by Carlson (2007:19):

There are now three [chiefs] in this little village. It is the Catholic who has the most subjects, the Methodist is in control of thirteen, and the Episcopalian has only his wife to govern. This situation causes much laughter among whites and Indians.

The presence of “competing religious camps” among the *Stó:lō* communities would continue throughout most of the nineteenth century. Carlson (2010:200) notes that by the end of the 1800s most *Stó:lō* Chiefs elected under the *Indian Act* and therefore recognized by the Canadian state were in fact Catholic Church Chiefs. Furthermore, by the end of the nineteenth century Catholic Chiefs were being elected by the *Stó:lō* catholic voters as opposed to appointed by Church officials:

The fact that it was not the priest but the *Stó:lō* Catholics themselves who ultimately anointed the Catholic Chief is significant, and goes a long way to illuminating the degree to which internal boundaries were being created by Indigenous people along lines that were ostensibly controlled by outsiders. (Carlson 2007:19)

Ultimately *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* and *Sí:le* were replaced by religious leaders who were bound by colonial law and legislation, namely the *Indian Act*. This then worked to change not only who and how leaders were selected, but to displace thousands of years of culture, tradition, laws and knowledge which was either now being criminalized or deemed to be “savage” and of little significance.

Land Appropriation

That colonial state and church worked in tandem to replace, not only *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* and *Sí:le*, but to drastically change their governing principles and vision is evident. Their reasons for doing so may differ slightly, with the Church’s goal being “conversion” and “civilization” while the state’s goal can be consolidated into one overall objective – the illegal expropriation and appropriation of *Stó:lō* land. The theft of *Stó:lō* land is identifiable through the misuse and abuse of two colonial tools – mapping and the reserve allocation system.

Throughout *S’ólh Téméxw*, colonial “reserves” were created in the spring of 1864 under Governor James Douglas who was regarded by most *Stó:lō* as a friend and ally (Carlson 2010:215). From both his words and actions, it is generally agreed that Douglas viewed the Indigenous people quite differently than most of his colonial colleagues. That is he believed them to be capable of self-sufficiency and independence; a belief that is

reflected in his land allocation system. For those *Stó:lō* opting to run farms and or agricultural pursuits individually were able to pre-empt land under the Douglas system (Carlson 2010:172). The pre-emption of land was common practice for non-Indigenous settlers but was generally denied to Indigenous peoples. For those *Stó:lō* choosing to remain living collectively on reserves he was clear in his direction that ample land be set aside for them as they were not to expect government handouts or to access agricultural produce from lands outside of the reserve boundary (Carlson 2010:172).

The surveyor hired to map the reserves set out by James Douglas was Sergeant William McColl. In May of 1864 he produced a map based upon the surveys he conducted under the direction of James Douglas, which are often referred to as the Douglas Reserves. The original McColl map is kept at the Provincial Crown Lands Vault, B.C. Surveyor General's Office, Victoria B.C. Ref no. 31-T1 and includes reserve boundaries and a table of population figures along with a commentary on the value of the land's agricultural potential (Carlson 2010:173). For example, partial information from a table provided by Carlson (2010:176) has the following acreage listed for the following *Stó:lō* tribes:

Initial Letter on Plan	Name of Tribe	No. of acres laid off by Mr. McColl
A	Whonock	2000
B	Saamoqua	500
C	Matzqui	9600
D	Tlalt-whaas	2000
E	Sumass (Upper)	1200
F	Sumass (Lower)	6400
G	Nickaamen	6400
H	Iswhy	3200
I	Isquhay	3200
J	Koquaa-pilt	400
K	lswaya-aayla	1000
L	Assay-litch	400
M	Yukeyouqua	2500
N	So-why-lee	4000

However a few events happening in close proximity time wise would result in the boundaries set out by Douglas¹³³ never being honored and the some 43,000 acres surveyed by McColl for the above listed 14 *Stó:lō* tribes being reduced in some cases by as much as 99%. First, just before the McColl map would be completed Governor Douglas would retire in the spring of 1864 and be replaced by Fredrick Seymour (Carlson 2010:173). With Seymour's ascension control of Indian Affairs was given to the new Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and a construction contractor, Joseph Trutch (p.173). McColl would pass away shortly after completing his map and with Douglas retired, Trutch somehow set about dismissing McColl's work and drastically reducing the reserve boundaries. For example under the McColl map the Matsqui reserve was 9600 acres and in 1868 was reduced by Trutch to a mere 80 acres (Carlson 2010:188). So-why-le (i.e., *Th'ewá:lí*) was mapped by McColl at 4000 acres and reduced in 1868 to 600 acres (2010:194). Where McColl had allotted anywhere from 50 to 200 acres per adult male (Carlson 2010:173), Trutch set about drastically reducing, sometimes to a mere two acres per family head (read: adult male).

An 1868 Petition of the Whonock Indians describes both the unfair manner in which these reductions took place as well as the devastating effects these reductions had on the people:

Some days ago came new men who told us by order of their Chief they have to curtail our small reservations and so did to our greatest grief; not only they shortened our land but by their new paper they set aside our best land, some of our gardens, and gave us in place, some hilly and sandy land, where it is next to impossible to raise any potatoes, our hearts are full of grief day and night, and in fact we have been many days without being able to sleep. (see Appendix G for complete petition)

Another Petition of 1874 (Appendix H) states: "our hearts have been wounded by the arbitrary way the Local Government of British Columbia have dealt with us in locating

¹³³ Even the boundaries set by Douglas were deemed inadequate by many *Stó:lō Sí:yám* (see Appendix G Whanock Petition that opens with "governor Douglas did send some years ago his men among us to measure our reserve and although they gave us only a small patch of land in comparison to what they allowed to a white man...")

and dividing our reserves.” The Petition goes on to list the following *Stó:lō* communities and the reduced acreage being assigned to them:

Community	# of Families	Size of Reserve	Acres per Family
Ohamiel	20	488 acres	24 acres per family
Popkum	4	369	90 acres per family
Cheam	27	375 acres of bad, dry and mountainous	13 acres per family
Yuk-Yuk-yoose	7	42	5 acres per family
Sumass	17	43 for hay 32 acres dry land	(not listed in petition but would work out to 2 acres per family)
Keatsy	100 inhabitants	108	

The Petition signed by 20 *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* and 25 other *Sí:yá:m* from Squamish, Sliammon, Klahoose, Tsawwassen, Lillooet and Thompson tribes goes on to state:

[we] are commencing to believe that the aim of the white man is to exterminate us as soon as they can, although we have always been quiet, obedient, kind and friendly to the whites.

Discouragement and depression have come upon our people. Many of them have given up the cultivation of land, because our gardens have not been protected against the encroachments of the whites. Some of our best men have been deprived of the land they had broken and cultivated with long and hard labour, a white man enclosing it in his claim, and no compensation given. Some of our most enterprising men have lost part of their cattle, because white men had taken the place where those cattle were grazing, and no other place left but the thickly timbered land, where they die fast. (see Appendix H for full copy of 1874 Petition)

With no rhyme or reason, let alone real legal authority, *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* who for hundreds of years had built governing structures based upon *syuwá:lelh* and an intimate knowledge of *S'ólh Téméxw* and all our *sxexo:mes*, almost overnight found themselves being confined to colonial prisons named “reserves” and stripped of all their authority. In their place were *Stó:lō* Catholic Chiefs “elected” by male voters or appointed by Church officials whose authority to lead was derived from an *Act* designed to ensure their very annihilation.

Residential Schools

“Until you realize the effect residential school had on you
nothing is really going to change.”

~ Margaret Commodore

The legacy of the residential schools is beyond the scope of this paper, the full story and impacts have yet to be told. Even with beginning and rudimentary evidence that is beginning to surface, residential schools were by far the most damning and appalling of all colonial policies and actions especially as its very target were innocent *Stó:lō* children. Through the residential school era generations of children were removed from their families and communities to be “raised” in “schools” where they were beaten, sexually, emotionally and mentally abused, starved and deprived of all contact with their family members. Those that survived these schools are still healing and telling their stories.

The impact the forced removal of *Stó:lō* children had upon *Stó:lō* leadership is difficult to fully determine as it remains largely unexplored. We can however conclude that it would have a stagnating impact as future leaders would not be able to learn and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become a *Stó:lō Siyá:m* as they were being, not only denied access to the *Stó:lō Siyá:m* who would be training and teaching them, they were also being brainwashed by church officials as to the “savage” “uncivilized” and “pagan” ways of their family members. Thus in some cases divisions were created within *Stó:lō* families as “graduates” of the residential schools came to believe their ancestors to be savage pagans. Inspector Ditchburn made note in a letter he wrote to Indian Affairs dated August 29 1913 that “I am informed by numerous missionaries that there are a great number of the younger Indians throughout the province who would be only too willing to give the custom up [in reference to “potlatching”], but cannot do so owing to the influence of the older people; that if the Department issues the decree that potlatching is to cease it will give them their excuse for...not taking part in them” (see Appendix I).

Residential school survivors also either were stripped of their language all together, or forced to speak it silently in their minds to avoid punishment. What language they did retain therefore would be defined and limited by the age at which they entered residential school, which was generally around the ages of five to nine. This would have

a huge, but largely under-rated impact upon the “high” language that would identify *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* from others.

Lastly, as Ovide Mercredi explained to me “residential schools brought sorrow upon our people” which makes it difficult to then have time and attention for leadership and issues of sovereignty:

They have occupied our time and how have they done that? First they brought sorrow to the family and when a family is in sorrow they cannot nourish anything. But the sorrow is to take kids away from home to put into school; that is sorrow I am talking about. People call it residential school, but more than that industrial schools before that and day school now you bring sorrow to the family and you immobilize them. When people are weakened by sorrow of that kind, a sorrow not of their making they don't turn attention to issue of sovereignty or self-determination because they are struggling just to survive.

(07-22-2010:8)

The difficulty in assessing the impact residential schools had on *Stó:lō* leadership is due to several things. For one survivors are just beginning to tell their stories and for another this part of Canada's colonial history is extremely painful for everyone, but especially for the survivors and their descendants. The connections between poor parenting, depression, suicide, drug and alcohol addiction and residential school syndrome are slowly and painfully being made. The impact that residential school has had on leadership has not yet been adequately analyzed. For example my dissertation teacher Margaret Commodore who is both a leader and a residential school survivor shared with me:

One of the things I could not do for the longest time is look and say I did all these great things. I couldn't accept that I had done a lot of really good things. Because I was a residential school survivor I was in denial for long long time. I found out why we do that. We do that because we don't want to think about things that are bad. I only found that out when I went to programs for residential school survivors. What that program does is take you back to residential school and helps you deal with things you don't want to remember. It's hard remembering those things, but you have to deal with them if you want to move on. And when you do that you learn to appreciate who you are (01-06-2011:8).

Such an analysis could shed light not only on the ways in which residential school survivors now lead their communities, but also on the ways in which survivors

have impacted the next generation of leaders who did not attend. As shared with me by Otis Jasper who did not attend residential school but as a leader still feels the impact:

I think of my own family. My grandmother is a residential school survivor and its only been in last few years she is beginning to talk about her residential school experiences. This helps some of our family understand who she is today. Some of her parenting practices, some of her grand parenting practices and how she's influencing us. In some ways she identified some of her own struggles which helped me open my eyes to the fact that there's a major influence on teachings and identity of our family. There's not a lot of affection, emotions those things are pretty suppressed. (01-17-2011:2)

I did follow this up by asking Otis if he felt this had an impact on his leadership style, to which he responded "maybe I will tie it in [referencing residential school's impacts upon governance and leadership]...no not quite going there" (01-17-2011:2) and understandably, he spoke instead on the ways in which the *Indian Act* impacts his ability to lead.

The Anti-Potlatch Law

The anti-potlatch law contained in the *Indian Act* came into effect in 1884 but was haphazardly, if at all, enforced in *Stó:lō* territory until the early 1900s. In fact in 1901 the Chilliwack Progress reported on the "rising of a strange looking building" by "Old Joe" (my paternal grandfather's great grandfather) to be used as a "dance house... Last week about two hundred Indians congregated at the invitation of Joe, and had a great feast and dance" (Chilliwack Progress December 18 1901, see Appendix J). The paper goes on to explain how "with one foot in the grave "Old Joe" has scraped and saved for years in order to procure money sufficient to build this dance house." Given the time of year, December there can be no doubt by dance they were referring to *milha*. The tone of the newspaper article is merely reporting an event of interest and gives no indication that anything amoral, let alone illegal was going on.

This changes by the following year when in 1902 (see Appendix K) the same paper again reports on a dance held by Old Joe, but this time suggests that this type of behavior needs to be stopped:

The Indians congregate frequently at the dance-house of old Joe, near Mr. Crankshaw's, to perform their feast-dance in response to the prompting of the spirit they call "Yowen" [sic]...

Old Joe, the Indian near Mr. Crankshaw's gave a potlatch one night last week...and dancing and feasting engaged in all night till the Constable left. As soon as the officer of the law was out of the way, old Joe, "Potlatched" ten blankets and a number of Indian manufactures to his friends. These fellows are growing bold and should be dealt with summarily by the law. (Chilliwack Progress, November 26, 1902)

The presence of the constable is notable and that any "giving away" of gifts was held off until his departure. This suggests that at some level both he and the *Stó:lō* knew of the anti-potlatch law. At the time section 149 stated:

Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourage either directly or indirectly another to celebrate any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying or giving back of money, goods or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles takes place before, at or after the celebration of the same, or who engages or assists in any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for term not exceeding six months and not less than two months; Provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the holding of any agricultural show or exhibition or the giving of prizes for exhibits thereat.
(see Appendix L)

Beginning in at least 1913 there is a series of correspondence between agents of the Department of Indian Affairs and the secretary of Indian Affairs requesting that section 149 of the *Indian Act* be enforced among the *Stó:lō*. A letter written by Inspector Ditchburn dated August 29 1913 and addressed to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs reads:

I would say that the time is opportune for this clause [referencing section 149] to be put into force and that all Indian Agents and Dominion Constables in the employ of the Indian Department should be informed that the section of the Act pertaining to potlatching or the giving or receiving of presents as defined by said section must be rigidly observed.
(see Appendix I)

The division between *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* created by the missionary influences is put to use by both church officials and Indian agents to ensure their request to enforce the anti-potlatch law is granted. For example a petition supposedly representing over 80 *Stó:lō* "chiefs" and "principal" men is sent to the Department of Indian Affairs requesting that

“this regrettable superstitious practice” be abolished (see Appendix M). The petition is suspect as very few, if any, *Stó:lō* Church Chiefs read or wrote in English at this time. In addition the wording of the petition sounds like a priest and refers to the “Indians” in the third person: “besides it is a recognized fact that the Indians who attend such festivals do not become civilized or adapt themselves to the changing conditions caused by civilizations...” sounds more like a priest than a *Stó:lō* *Siyá:m*, even if a “chief” created by the church.

A second petition of September 1914 is sent to the Department of Indian Affairs, however this one is actually written by the “Indians” and is requesting that the potlatch not be banned. The petition in both its content and wording is quite different from that of the above petition:

We know it is the Missionary is against our Custom, but this don't interfere with them, for we don't invite them or any of them to spend their time with us in our fashion, and it is them that's petitioning the Government to stop our custom. While they do not understand us, we are Indians and they are whites. Indians don't understand white man's fashion and white man don't understand our fashion, and they can't live as Indians does. (see Appendix N)

This petition, however, is not signed by any upriver, or *Halq'eméylem* speaking *Stó:lō*, it is signed by Old Pierre, Simon Pierre and Frank Pierre of Katzie and other *Hun'qumi'num* and *Hul'qumi'num* *Sí:yá:m*. The Department of Indian Affairs responds to Simon Pierre with a letter dated December 30 1914 in which the wording of section 149 is provided and the following insidious divide and conquer suggestion:

The Department feels that in trying to keep the Indians in line with the advance of civilization, it should have the support of the chiefs and principal men of the different tribes in the Province. It is only a question of time when all the Indians of the Province will see this matter in its proper light, and in the meantime in its efforts towards improvement the Department will be glad to have the support of the more enlightened members of such bands as are still backward in the matter. (see Appendix L)

Purportedly, one of the more “enlightened” members was a *Siyá:m* from *Th'ewá:lí* named Sua-lis, who due to his excellent oarmanship came to be known as

Captain John.¹³⁴ From an article kept on file at Coqualeetza, I wrote the following for a paper I wrote during my Master's program:

Sua-lis was an excellent oarsman and could navigate the rivers better than anyone else around, whether in a steamboat or a canoe. He was the first man to navigate a steamboat along the Fraser river and make it all the way to Fort Langley. He won a fair deal of recognition for this trip and his natural ability and came to be called Captain John. Many of the *Stó:lō* respected him as a great leader of the people. Due to pressure from the local missionaries Sua-lis eventually converts to a "white man's religion" and began publically speaking out against the Spirit dance.

One evening he heard about a dance in Cheam so he went. When the people were finished their work, Captain John stood up and announced his alliance to the White church and said this dance was evil and wrong. Captain John's own mother was a dancer and she approached her son after he finished his speech. She didn't say anything to him she just touched him with a part of her sacred regalia. At first nothing happened, but then Captain John's hands began to shake uncontrollably and soon his shake overtook his whole body and Captain John got up and began to dance. He danced for hours and hours without stopping. Close to daybreak he finally sat back down and slowly the shake left his body. After this Captain John never spoke negatively about the winter Spirit dance (*milha*) ever again.

By the 1920s *milha*, and the *Stó:lō* version of a "potlatch"¹³⁵ had gone totally underground and were being performed in secret, generally held in someone's basement. That constables and Indian agents began enforcing section 149 appear to be the reason. The impact that this had on *Stó:lō* families, leadership and governance have yet to be fully identified, let alone understood.

There are traumatic impacts that would be passed on to future generations. For example the *Stó:lō* believe in the power of *syúwél* (one's spirit song) and that when one is overtaken by *syúwél* it must be looked after very carefully. If *syúwél* is ignored or not taken care of one can literally go crazy or even die, not to mention one's family members are also vulnerable to all kinds of ills including death when one of their members is "spirit

¹³⁴ This is the same Siyám who spoke at the opening of the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute in 1894 regarding unfair fishing regulations (see Chapter 7 page 207).

¹³⁵ The *Stó:lō* did not use this term to describe our ceremonies or gatherings that occurred in a large number of Longhouses located throughout *Xwélməxw* territory.

sick.” Thus the illegalization of our *milha* was tantamount to a death sentence for some *Stó:lō*, while others were exiled to institutions for the mentally insane where they were diagnosed with a variety of mental illnesses and “ghost sickness.”¹³⁶ The impact this had on individuals and individual families is still being felt today.

For example in 1925 the following exchange between my great great grandfather Billy Hall and an Indian agent named Mr. Dallan was recorded by my great great grandfather in his journal.¹³⁷ The Indian agent had heard that the “Indians” had a dance in which *milha* was involved which was illegal and so asked to speak with Billy as he was the Chief of Tzeachten at this time. In his journal entry dated February 2 1925 he writes that he had gone to the dance which finished at midnight and that after it was all over he was approached by Mr. Dallan and questioned as to who was responsible for the dance. In his entry dated February 3 1925 he sends for Jules Manuel (the Father of the boy, Richard¹³⁸ for whom the dance was held) to come see him to explain. He writes that Jules tells him that his boy Richard began to sing in his sleep and not knowing what to do he went to the women to ask them. Jules was told that he would have to have a gathering for his boy and to call Sampson as he would know the boy’s song. As my great great grandfather wrote in his journal “I questioned Jules regarding Sampson Charlie and his answer is this:”

Sampson had the experience in the Trance dance was reason why I hired Sampson to help me with my boy Richard as I was afraid my boy would die...Sampson is taking my boy over to Harrison to dance. I have nothing to do with it. I do not know what to do and why my boy got into a Trance and I have got to follow what Sampson says to save my boy.
(Bill Hall Journal entry, February 2 1925)

Then Billy records the exchange he had with Mr. Dallan:

Mr. Dallan: Was there drunks?

¹³⁶ The DSM-IV has “culture bound syndromes” which may not be linked to a particular DSM-IV diagnosis (read, not a part of Western culture) such as Pibloktoq and Ghost Sickness (DSM-IV 1994:130 as cited in Corrado & Cohen 2003:16).

¹³⁷ Kept on file with author

¹³⁸ The boy Richard is *Th’eláchiyatel* (Richard Malloway), Síyamches’ father and is well known throughout *Stó:lō* territory for not only be a great leader of the people but also as one of the most powerful *milha* dancers of all time.

Billy: No

Mr. Dallan: Was Thomas Cline there?

Billy: No I did not see him

Mr. Dallan: Did Sampson Dance?

Billy: Yes

Mr. Dallan: Did Sampson have feathers on his head?

Billy: No

Mr. Dallan: And did he have paint on his face?

Billy: I did not know because light is dim. I could not see very good.

Mr. Dallan: Is this your daughter?

Billy: Yes

Mr. Dallan: Now chief, there is no use of beating around the bush. I want you to tell me if Sampson is at the head of these dances.

Billy: I do not know

Mr. Dallan: He was the leader of the dance at Popkum January 12 1925

Billy: I do not know

Mr. Dallan: And he is the leader of the Harrison river dance?

Billy: I do not know

Mr. Dallan: Did you see Thomas Cline?

Billy: I heard he is in jail

Mr. Dallan: No he paid the fine and is out. Now Chief you must know something about Sampson being the leader of those dances?

Billy: I do not know

Mr. Dallan: There must be some reason?

Billy: Yes, there is a reason because Sampson has the experience in the trance dance. If they do not follow this boy's song which came to him in his dream he will get sick and die. That is the Indians belief from away back.

My great great grandfather goes on to write in his journal that he did not think that Mr. Dallan believed him and that he searched the entire house and found nothing. I remember that just reading about this interrogation had a negative impact upon me, the search of his house, trying to protect *Stó:lō* beliefs while being interrogated, and the insidious threat made toward his daughter made me angry and this happened almost ninety years ago!

The impact that the illegalization of *milha* has had on *Stó:lō* leadership and governing structures needs to be understood in terms of a foreign governing body

ousting and replacing the duly convened and legally instated governing structures with those of the foreign power. The illegalization of *mílha* and the inability of the *Stó:lō* to “gather” needs to be understood as a colonial mechanism being used to replace *Stó:lō* governing structures with what essentially results in anomie. When the foreign government replaced these traditional governing structures with the *Indian Act* the *Stó:lō* were not considered Canadian citizens let alone able to participate in colonial democracy. Furthermore, under the *Indian Act* regime the ultimate authority rests with the Minister of Indian Affairs who is appointed by the Prime Minister. Thus the *Stó:lō* governing structures are basically replaced by a dictatorship, as the *Stó:lō* are not even afforded the democratic right to vote for their “leader” (i.e., the Minister of Indian Affairs).

In Chapter 10 I expand on the importance of these *Stó:lō* gatherings as our governing structures as it was during these winter gatherings that ancestral names would be passed and verified, teachings passed to future generations and relationships solidified. It was during these gatherings that *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* status would be verified and validated.

Contemporary Leadership Challenges

The colonial impacts upon *Stó:lō* governance and leadership identified through my research journey are used to highlight several challenges identified by the contemporary leaders I interviewed as part of my learning process (see Chapter 4 for their biographies). These challenges are categorized under the following themes:

1. The dependency and dysfunction caused by the *Indian Act* which manifests through acts of internal colonialism
2. Undefined roles and responsibilities for *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* resulting in work overload, confusion and in some cases diffusion of responsibility
3. Economic racism being couched in discourse of “poverty” and “high dropout rates”
4. Lack of sustainable formal organization among the *Stó:lō* complicated by our diversity which has been conflated in two important areas: i) multiple *Sí:yá:m* roles conflated into singular and usually male-dominated role of “chief,” and ii) the conflation and/or disbursement of “tribal affiliations” based upon intricate kinship ties and connection to territory, into *Indian Act* “bands” which by their very construction support land appropriation via reserve boundaries

and Indigenous annihilation via “membership lists” that are based upon paternity and “status.”

Dependency and Dysfunction Caused by the *Indian Act*

Whether at a national level or a local level, the *Indian Act* is an impediment to progress and Indigenous empowerment.¹³⁹ The *Indian Act* is designed to “civilize” and “assimilate” and therefore will result in the annihilation of Indian people. The colonial annihilation of our people has been an on-going endeavour for seven generations and over time has become insidious as a direct result of *Indian Act* policy and practices, more and more Indigenous people are disconnected and alienated from our lands, culture and traditions.

Our contemporary leadership whose authority is derived from this act are now the sixth generation to lead under its oppressive laws. As colonial policy worked to sever our people from our own history, laws, customs and traditions, many know only what is dictated by the *Act*. As a result in some cases the *Indian Act* has come to be seen by those who know no different as a source of authority in Indian country. The governance research project conducted by Carlson in the early 1990s found this to be the case for a minority of *Stó:lō* chiefs:

A minority of chiefs were satisfied with the election system and the governance provided by elected chiefs and councillors, and felt it would be reckless and potentially undemocratic to try and revive an older family-based system of leadership that might emphasize heredity. Clearly, in communities where cultural traditions had been the target of well over a century of concerted colonial efforts at assimilation, Aboriginal governance was a complicated and hotly debated matter. (2007:4-5)

As a result we are in a precarious and all important cross-road in relation to good governance. Where do we go from here? There are at least two important ways in which the *Act* has adversely impacted our ability to lead in a good way: (1) the division and factionalism caused by the creation of *Indian Act* bands; and (2) “membership” lists and

¹³⁹ See for example research papers written by Burrows (2008), Carlson (2007) and Coates (2008) for the National Centre on First Nations Governance (NCFNG).

the imposition of the “election” system that further divides and weakens not only our leaders and communities, but our families, which are the bloodline of *Stó:lō* organization.

Chief and Council as Contemporary Indian Agents?

Up until approximately the 1970s the majority of band affairs was led and dictated by Indian Agents deployed by the Department of Indian Affairs:

The elective system of government under the *Indian Act* provided only very limited powers of local government to bands. In contrast, the Act gave considerable powers to the colonial government to manage and direct the political affairs of bands. For example, the Superintendent-General, or an agent delegated by him, was empowered to call elections, to supervise them, to call band meetings, and to preside over and participate in them in every way except by voting or adjourning them.
(St. Germain and Dyck 2010:4)

There is very little written specifically on and about the role and impact that Indian agents had upon *Stó:lō* communities, that their powers were abused is well preserved in both archival correspondence and oral testimonies, but has yet to be formally documented. From a newspaper article kept in my Grandfather’s portfolio the skills and knowledge of the agents were being questioned and often deemed insufficient by local *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* who requested that the current agents be replaced with ones more skilled and knowledgeable in areas of importance such as land, resources, financial astuteness and education.¹⁴⁰ This did not happen and instead we see Indian agents no longer being deployed to the local communities, but maintaining their presence and power from local offices located at DIA headquarters in Vancouver. We also begin to see the term “Indian agent” falling out of use and being replaced with titles such as Funding Services Officer or FSOs, along with the department providing training programs to train community members to look after Indian Registration, Land Management and Band administration.

Ultimately we see a shift from Indian agents to DIA-trained community members and elected leaders. In so doing the *Indian Act* is being maintained, perpetuated, and enforced by our own people. This shift can be described as subtle and in many ways

¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately this article does not have a date, but the ones around it are dated in the early 1970s.

covert, and in all ways reflective of the duress Indigenous peoples are under. Many of our contemporary internal Indian agents do so because they need a job, a means to feed their families. They do not necessarily have an eye to the overall picture of oppression and disempowerment and may not be aware of how they are contributing to our annihilation. Or do they?

For example, many *Stó:lō* choosing to run for these elected *Indian Act* positions are doing so because they want to make a difference, improve the health of their people, make sure their families receive adequate housing, education and employment. For most they truly want to be a leader, a *Siyá:m* by fulfilling their responsibilities to their community. Most do not think of their elected position as being one of an Indian agent representing the Ministry of Indian Affairs. Rather, they enter into it thinking they can help their people:

...to be chief you are a conflicted person because you know you are leading your people but you are constantly being reminded by white bureaucracy, government bureaucracy that you have no authority. So that is where you really begin to appreciate your history. Start digging deeper into your own source of sovereignty as a leader where does it come from? Where does my power to lead my people really come from? Does it come from the *Indian Act* or from the people I represent? And clearly the answer is that it comes from the people I represent but the conduct is different. Because when you lead a community as a chief and council, what are you doing now? You are not leading toward self-determination, you are not leading to enforce your own inherent authority over your traditional land and people.

(Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:2)

Corky agreed elected leaders under the *Indian Act* have no real authority or power:

Under the *Indian Act* election system the power is granted to so called chief and council of our community and the only power they really have is bylaw making power under the *Indian Act* and their only governing authority is those bylaws which are only within the boundaries of the reserve.

(12-30-2010:1)

On the other hand leaders such as June Quipp have been creative in using the *Indian Act*, especially people's ignorance of it, to effect change. For example she shared with me a time she shut down the highway when DFO officers were attempting to take the salmon caught by her community members, during the court proceedings she was asked by Crown:

"what makes you think you can tell the officers to take the hand cuffs off?" I said "well in my position I have as much authority as the Prime Minister of Canada!" He didn't say a word and even the judge just sat back because they don't know. I use that a lot. (12-28-2010:10)

As elected officials under the *Indian Act* we are, as put by Ovide Mercredi: "simply an extension of DIA. You are simply providing the services that used to be provided by DIA now we do at the local level because of devolution. So what do we run now? Housing programs, social assistance, some basic core funding" (Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:2). All too often these service delivery programs are mistaken for governance when in reality they are Indigenous peoples agreeing to administer our own misery. The social housing program is a case in point.

While many see the troubles caused by the *Indian Act*, contemporary leaders have to contend with the dependency that it has created:

The biggest challenge is trying to move away from existing systems that we live under right now. First one I will speak about is the *Indian Act* which to me is this suffocating blanket for Aboriginal people. Some need this blanket but most don't. (Joe Hall 02-28-2011:1)

This dependency by some upon the *Indian Act* is sadly a present day colonial reality. For many *Stó:lō* it may be all they know. What Otis describes in his community I am sure is felt in all:

That's a major challenge in the future, look around my community and majority of my community has never known anything but the *Indian Act* policy. I believe our first chief that came through the elected system was in 1970. That's not a whole lot of time. That's the last 40 years, but way more than needed because that's just the way of our community. Everyone has lived with that and to really move away from that is a real challenge. (Otis Jasper 01-17-2011:3)

Ovide Mercredi expressed this dependency and its manifestation of internal colonialism when Indigenous people report to the Department of Indian Affairs when their *Indian Act* elected officials are not doing as they think they should:

Our people have bought into that system and if we do not comply with the terms of reference as to what the people have come to understand those terms of reference to be they will complain to Indian affairs. They will complain to Department of Indian affairs; they will not go to the Elders council they will go to Indian affairs and they will write letters – not letters to chief and council complaining of decisions they have made but letters to Indian Affairs accusing chief and council of

this and this and this so our people have been indoctrinated into thinking that source of our power is the *Indian Act*. (07-22-2010:2)

As mentioned earlier by Ovide Mercredi added to this is community pressure that *Indian Act* elected chiefs abide by cultural customs and norms. Otis Jasper shared similar conflicting demands from his *Stó:lō* community:

I have heard some pretty outspoken community members, not just in my community, really hold their leaders accountable. And accountable to what INAC policies say and they say this is what you can and can't do as a chief according to *Indian Act* policy. And then in same sentence, in same condemnation of leader, they say you can't get stuck in INAC policies, you can't be just an *Indian Act* chief you have to respect our ways, and respect our traditions. (01-17-2011:3)

Such a request I believe is not possible, the very spirit of the *Indian Act* is about our removal as "original" people. It is, therefore, virtually impossible to uphold the *Indian Act* and practice culture and tradition in a meaningful way. The reverse situation may also be the case when *Indian Act* elected officials point to the *Indian Act* when they are faced with difficult decisions. In this way the *Indian Act* becomes a useful internal colonial tool to be used by community members and leaders alike to further the colonial agenda.

The dependency and dysfunction caused by the *Indian Act* is rampant throughout *Stó:lō* territory. As formally documented in 1992/3 by the research conducted by Keith Carlson at the request of *Stó:lō* *Siyám* Sam Douglas:

In interviewing the various *Stó:lō* Chiefs I learned that many shared Chief Douglas' concern over the way the *Indian Act* election system and municipal-style governance system divided their communities and thwarted efforts at consensus-driven long-term planning. They expressed regret that many people in their communities (including themselves on some occasions) knew very little about the way *Stó:lō* society had been traditionally organized and the way leadership had been traditionally exercised. (Carlson 2007:4)

The end result is burnt out leaders who either give up, as noted by Corky "most go into it with a really good heart and vision but they give up, get drained because of lack of progress and discussing issues and nothing happening" (12-30-2010:5) or worse acquiesce and by their very silence begin promoting DIA policy and practice. The shift from an original desire to lead the people to that of promoting the continuation of our

annihilation under the *Indian Act* is insidious, making it difficult to identify, let alone address.

Such insidiousness is exposed if we remember the *Indian Act* is the unilateral imposition of a foreign system of governance whose legitimacy is based upon its ability to render invisible and powerless the original people of this land. In a purposeful manner colonial governments have been very successful in forcing Indigenous people to abide by this foreign system and become its perpetuators via terms such as self-government and devolution. Under the auspice of devolution we are simply the administrators for Canada's policies:

Our time is occupied by being administrators of Canada... we are reacting to federal policy and federal law. As you can see with the assembly's agenda...dealing with federal policy on education, postsecondary education, and tomorrow we deal with fee simple on reserve lands which is another federal policy that will destroy our own inherent ideas of how we should treat our land and how we should own the land. (Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:2)

Why then do we continue to abide by it?

I can only make sense of this if I compare our relationship with the *Indian Act* to that of an abused person and their abuser. After a while the abused become so used to being abused, it is all they know. The abused learn to adjust and find creative, albeit ultimately self-damaging and dysfunctional ways to survive. Eventually the thought of leaving the abusive relationship creates more fear in the abused than to stay and endure the abuse.

Dysfunction Caused by Election System

The election system imposed by the *Indian Act* has been and will continue to have disastrous effects upon the *Stó:lō* people and our ability to govern in meaningful ways. As described by Corky, the election system not only divides our families and communities, it results in *Stó:lō* people being prisoners of democracy:

One of the big issues that we face is the *Indian Act* election system and how it breaks the families and communities up. We are prisoners of democracy in that regards. The *Indian Act* election system with every election divides our communities more and more.

(12-30-2010:1)

Joe Hall voiced his concerns over the election system often being nothing more than a popularity contest resulting in community members simply waiting out the two year term or for a time when their family members outnumber other families on the voting list (02-28-2011).

Margaret voiced a similar opinion in relation to community members voting, but doing so with very little knowledge of why or what issues a particular candidate is interested in:

When I see people running in elections down here [referencing the *Stó:lō* as she had spent many years in the Yukon], even in my own band, do the people in Soowahlie actually know why they are voting for a person? Do they even know? They would only know if that person went around talking to them and telling them why they are interested in running for chief and council and what they want to do for that band. Community members need to be more involved in that process and only then can the two work together. [01-06-2011:2]

Margaret compared this to her experiences running for MLA positions in the Yukon whereby she actively campaigned by literally going door-to-door so potential supporters could meet her and get to know her “politics” so to speak:

I went and knocked on every single door in the riding to tell them who I was and what I was doing. You can't just go in there and say nothing. They have to know who you are and what you stand for, what you want to do. And in end you have to be accountable to them.
(01-06-2011:2)

The dysfunction of the election system does not impact “bands” alone as the divisions and hostilities created at home often find their way to the tribal and national levels as well. Joe Hall highlighted the manner in which the election system curtails our ability to build a nation as well as our ability to defend our rights in court: “because we have acquiesced to this *Indian Act* election system and bands we have been unable to defend our rights in court... it was virtually impossible to defend rights and title of Tzeachten because Tzeachten is an *Indian Act* entity (02-28-2011:1). In terms of the split of our “nation” in 2002 into two separate tribal councils, Mr. Hall explains it as being a result of a power struggle over the election of the executive positions held by *Indian Act* elected officials: “It wasn't even money because back then they were not even paid positions, so was a power thing” (02-28-2011:9). This was being further compounded

when those holding executive positions at the nation table lost their elections in their home communities.

Custom Elections

Indian Act “bands” can elect their leaders under “custom codes” approved by its membership and as accepted by the Department of Indian Affairs. Custom codes typically allow for the placement of family representatives into the “councillor” positions and does not necessarily need to go to a vote if the family is unified in its selection of a family member to be its representative. “Custom” elections are actually the default method and were meant to be replaced only when government officials deemed the band to be “advanced” enough to move to the election system under section 74(1) of the *Indian Act* (St. Germain and Dyck 2010). Subsection 74(1) provides that:

Whenever he deems it advisable for the good governance of a band, the Minister may declare by order that after a day to be named therein the council of the band, consisting of a chief and councillors, shall be selected by elections to be held in accordance with this Act.

As St. Germain and Dyck explained:

Historically, Indian bands would continue to select their leadership by way of custom until it was determined that they were “sufficiently advanced or civilized” to select their leadership pursuant to the provisions outlined in the *Indian Act*. (2010:5)

In practice however section 74(1) was being used as a means to displace those traditional leaders continuing to thwart the colonial process, especially those in the western part of Canada. As noted by St. Germain and Dyck:

In subsequent amendments to the Act, the government continued to expand its control over band political affairs by removing elected traditional leaders and prohibiting their re- election. In 1895, the Minister was further granted the power to depose chiefs and councillors where the elective system did not apply. “This amendment was included because the band leaders in the West were found to be resisting the innovations of the reserve system and the Government’s effort to discourage the practice of traditional Indian beliefs and values.”

(Tobias as cited in St. Germain and Dyck 2010:5)

Currently within Canada there are four different methods being used by First Nations across Canada to select their leadership:

- 252 Indian bands (or 41%) hold elections in accordance with the election provisions of the *Indian Act*.
- 334 bands (or 54%) conduct “custom elections” under custom codes developed by the band.
- 29 First Nations (or 5%) select leaders pursuant to the provisions of their self-government agreements.
- Approximately 10–15 bands follow other leadership selection mechanisms, such as the hereditary or clan system.

(St. Germain & Dyck 2010:5)

Within *Stó:lō* territory the majority are of the first category, with a few “reverting” back to custom elections. However, Carlson’s research found that even bands adhering to custom election codes were not faring any better than those adhering to *Indian Act* elections for both chief and council:

Even in these supposedly more “traditional” communities, Chief Douglas explained, one heard complaints from people who felt marginalized by either the selection process and/or the governing system. Moreover, none of the hereditary/custom communities were, in Chief Douglas’ opinion, operating in a manner sufficiently consistent with older pre-contact traditions. He explained that heredity, as currently understood, failed to adequately reflect the flexibility of pre-contact governance just as it failed to meet the needs of contemporary political concerns. The DIA’s “custom” system was, therefore, a hybrid and adaptive response that both accommodated and reflected the *Stó:lō* people’s creative efforts to adapt to a variety of colonial pressures over time; but it was a half-way measure, and as such ultimately inadequate. (Carlson 2007:4)

The *Sí:yám* model, or family representative system that is used by those bands adhering to a custom election code are still unable to adequately govern due to restrictions and divisions created by the *Indian Act*:

the extent to which such improvements would be limited by the administrative, financial, and political isolation of each *Stó:lō* reserve community from the others. More than a century of colonial efforts at assimilating *Stó:lō* people had resulted in First Nations communities that were in large part products of colonial policies aimed at dividing and subverting Indigenous culture and governance. Reserve boundaries, policies regarding the distribution of federal financial resources, missionary sponsored inter-denominational feuds, and the reification of

Band membership lists, together with other facets of colonial history, had worked to constrain the revived *siy:ám* council. (Carlson 2007:4)

The colonial impacts upon the *Stó:lō* family units have not been adequately addressed, namely the effects of residential school and child welfare policy and the displacement of *Stó:lō Sí:le* and women, all of which have worked to tear at the very fabric of the *Stó:lō* family unit. Without healing from these colonial wounds, many families experience internal dissent and dissonance which make the family representative system just as difficult as the election system. As noted by June Quipp: “I think if we went to family law they would need two or three reps, I mean there is so much family feuding going on in all our communities, family leadership wouldn’t necessarily work unless worked on to be sure everyone is represented” (12-28-2010:7).

Otis Jasper also described the ways in which the election system was fracturing his community:

At same time it is quite clear the vote has really fractured not only family to family relationships but within our families certain families are fractured by votes. One sense want to give that voice, if you consider the ideal being the democratic way and that generally is what people are looking for today – but in providing that you are going to divide the community. (transcript 01-17-2011:3)

Even “bands” abiding by a “custom” election code which often results in a family representative system are still bound by the Indigenous disempowerment inherent to the *Indian Act*. Custom elections do not address the eurocentrism, the oppression, subjugation and inequities inherent to the *Indian Act*. Thus the family representative system will only work if it transcends current colonial boundaries:

What is becoming apparent to people, however, is that reviving a governance system based on extended family requires engaging family in its broadest and fullest sense – and that means transcending not only the physical boundaries of the local Indian reserve, but the mental and legal boundaries of the *Indian Act*’s membership lists. (Carlson 2007:24)

Undefined Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

People used to say you think this is bad, the worst kind of politics is band politics and I found this to be true. As MLA we were structured, had rules and laws to follow in order to do the job that we did. Everything had to be done according to how it was supposed to be done. (Margaret Commodore 01-06-2011:3)

Under the current colonial regime dictated by the *Indian Act*, there is neither a job description for the position of “chief,” nor are there required qualifications or skill sets necessary to run for either chief or council. As explained by *Xwelixweltel* (Steven Point, Treaty meeting January 26 2012) that aside from no job description, elected Chiefs are expected to do the work that among Canadians is divided between three different levels of government. For example under the Canadian system, powers are divided between three levels of authority: federal, provincial and municipal. Under the *Indian Act* elected chiefs are expected to cover not only all three of these levels of governance on their own, they are also required to stay on top of Aboriginal rights and title issues and case law.

Chiefs are generally elected for two year terms and for the most part are not adequately compensated financially for their time. This means that many contemporary leaders have to maintain some sort of employment on top of their elected chief position. As Otis Jasper explained:

In our community we are relatively small, really little to no finances to allow for some sort of compensation to ensure I can dedicate the bulk of my time to the community. Right now I have to go out and work a full time day job that takes me away from my community.
(01-17-2011:8)

What little time they do have after family and work obligations must then be split among competing interests:

So that gets into what is the role of chief today? Often these INAC policies is dictating this, keeping you busy and away when maybe your role of chief is connecting with your community connecting with the families. Hearing from them and looking at ways that are in the best interest of community. Not what is chief going to do? Or council going to do? But what initiatives can be there? So providing that support for them so we can grow as a community, as a tribal group, as a nation.
(Otis Jasper 01-17-2011:8)

Economic Racism Hidden in Discourse of Poverty

In every discussion I had with my dissertation teachers, the issue of poverty was touched upon. While this is a very real issue among Indigenous people across the country, I am analyzing it from the angle of its impact upon leadership and as being a direct result of what Arthur Manuel refers to as “economic racism.” Especially as I have now come to realize that pre-colonialism, the *Stó:lō* were among the richest people on

this continent, yet in less than 100 years after the enactment of the *Indian Act* we are among the poorest. To understand this it must be placed within a colonial context that in very purposeful ways kept the *Stó:lō* from gaining financially or economically. We see this quite clearly in how severely our access to the central tenet of our economy, the salmon, has been restricted. However, the *Stó:lō* were also restricted from farming and the dairy industry through both the appropriation of land (see Appendix J) and the inability to access necessary equipment via government restrictions and refusal to provide financial aid which was being offered to non-*Stó:lō* farmers.

In discussion with my dissertation teachers it became evident that both issues of poverty and the lack of economic opportunity are huge contemporary challenges. Added to this dilemma is the manner in which the *Stó:lō* people have been excluded from both labour and business opportunities because of racist ideology and legislation. The result is the majority of *Stó:lō* people, like other Indigenous groups, are living at or below the poverty line:

That is why poverty is our worst enemy. Most of our people - could be 60% could be as high as 90% - are struggling to survive. Just trying to make ends meet. Food for themselves right, so many of our people are homeless and in the cities, they have given up because no opportunities for them. They have been dismissed from society.

(Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:8)

As a result contemporary leadership must contend with all the social ills that accompany not only colonialism, but the ensuing poverty of the people:

I am concerned about what's happening with the people now. I am concerned about the social problems; I am concerned about a lot of things. I look at some of things I don't like that's the unemployment, the addictions, the lack of knowledge on how to raise a family. I notice a lot of young women having children. Those things to me are things that are happening now and how do we go about changing that as First Nations people.

(Margaret Comodore 01-06-2011:1)

These challenges are exacerbated by contemporary leadership that is dependent upon "funding" from colonial governments:

Just enough money provided to First Nations for delivery of services, but not to govern, just enough there for you to stay poor. That is essentially what has created a lot of our problems.

(Joe Hall 02-28-2011:5)

Currently there are no “transfer payments” for extracted resources or “back rent” for occupied lands being offered to the *Stó:lō* leaders who are forced to govern under the misconception of “government hand outs:”

I think some of the big hindrances that we have are money. As soon as there is a little pot of money they [referencing federal and/or provincial governments] dangle it out there and our leaders fight for it like a big scramble. The power that goes with controlling that money is a big hindrance. As long as our leaders think about it in those terms they will never know who they really are, if they never have the courage to just say no once in a while. (Corky Douglas 12-30-2010:3)

Corky went on to explain:

As long as we keep relying on government source funding they will always keep us over a barrel with that. They can make us weak by taking the funding away, I mean they do that. We have to really start to push for revenue sharing or developing our own revenues in some fashion. (Corky Douglas 12-30-2010:4)

Economic development on reserve has been thwarted by both *Indian Act* prohibitions and laws, as well as by the fact that contemporary business opportunities are generally grounded in principles that are diametrically opposed to many Indigenous cultures and values:

When we want to engage in business opportunities we have to engage in that game if we don't we will not get grants from the federal government and banks will not want to deal with us unless clear to them that their money is secure and they will not grant any money unless there is a business plan so that takes us further away from our society and deeper into theirs. So addressing poverty in that way we are in effect ignoring how we could have done it differently. (Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:3)

Otis Jasper expressed similar concerns:

I hear a lot of talk whether in leadership or influential people, we need to get on the economic train. It's the key to becoming independent and self-governing. A lot of what I hear along those lines is about getting into forestry, those industries, whatever it is we have an opportunity in. If we can seize that moment and get our own piece of the pie and I agree that's needed. But I really fear that say that economics is a fire, that's a fire and I fear that by us getting involved and building that fire even stronger so it can burn stronger is ultimately going to deplete our environment. It will be what utilizes the last of resources in its own way that fire has potential to put out our

own ways of living, our own ancestral ways, of knowledge of the land,
how to respect, how to life with, built up over centuries.

(01-17-2011:6-7)

Thus leadership and governance are hindered tremendously by both inadequate source funding for governing institutions, staff and leaders which is further compounded by the poverty levels found in *Stó:lō* communities:

What I portray to you is what I call a conflicted people. People want to be free of shackles of colonialism but same time have so many burdens don't entertain how they are going to do that because busy just trying to survive, just trying to survive.

(Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:8)

***Stó:lō* Diversity**

From a number of different sources (written and oral) and many experiences along the way (see Chapter 4), it is apparent that one of our strengths as *Stó:lō* people has become a hindrance under the current colonial regime, namely our diversity. The *Indian Act* has successfully conflated our diverse and complex *Sí:yá:m* system into an *Indian Act* elected position of "chief." Section 74(2) of the *Indian Act* clearly stipulates that "no band shall have more than one chief." Second, the *Indian Act* conflated our intricate kinship system to a "registry system" and "membership lists" that further divide our families and sever important connections and relationships. In so doing the vast majority of *Stó:lō* people were left with either no political representation on reserve if living off reserve and/or "politically orphaned" from family members living on other reserves:

The DIA system of autonomous Bands not only tends to marginalize those who live off reserve, it also leaves people politically orphaned from their relatives elsewhere within the larger *Stó:lō* territory.

(Carlson 2007:9)

Not only were *Stó:lō* people therefore not able to benefit from the expertise of several different leaders in several different areas, they were not able to determine who they would politically represent as membership lists are determined by *Indian Act* policy. How membership lists are generated and "status" determined is nothing short of complete chaos. In the beginning, for example, membership was determined rather broadly with everyone and anyone present at the time the list was being generated being added to

the list. Then quite clearly as membership lists were being used to determine the size of reserve allocation, registration became more and more stringent and up until 1985 “status” would be removed if a status woman married a non-status man, if one wanted to own land or a business, join the army, or obtain a professional degree.

However if a status man married a non-status woman, she would gain status. This gender discrimination was supposedly addressed by Bill C-31 which came into effect in 1985. However there was still some residual discrimination as the grandchildren of a male status were afforded “more” status than the grandchildren of a female status. Both the idea of “more” or “less” status and how exactly it is determined is so complicated and bizarre as to be ludicrous. Sharon McIvor¹⁴¹ took this to court and the result is Bill C-3 the *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*. As a result we now have “six-twos”¹⁴² “six-ones”¹⁴³ and “six-one-c-ones”¹⁴⁴ all of whom have different levels of status and ability or not to pass status to their children. Under this system it is possible to eventually end up with a “status” Indian who has no Indigenous ancestry (e.g., a “six-two” and a “six-two” creates a “six-one” (full status) who could be four to five generations away from Indigenous ancestry but is now considered to be full status). The only way any of this can make sense is if we remember that *Indian Act* policy is designed to lead to the eventual disappearance of people able to claim original status to the land and resources.

Furthermore, adherence to the *Indian Act* “band” system of registry and “reserves” means the “band” has no legal standing in court if it wants to assert inherent rights. How the Yale “band” for example, will be able to defend its treaty in court will be interesting to see. In the meantime, most of my dissertation teachers were of the opinion that returning to our tribal affiliations would help address many of our contemporary challenges. For example Otis Jasper suggested finding a way to eliminate the elected chief system in favor of a more traditional *Sí:yá:m* system:

¹⁴¹ McIvor v. Canada (Registrar of Indian and Northern Affairs), 2010 BCCA 168.

¹⁴² Those who have status according to section 6(2) of Bill C-31.

¹⁴³ Those who have status according to section 6(1) of Bill C-31.

¹⁴⁴ Those who have status according to section 6(1)(c.1) of Bill C-3.

If we could in some ways eliminate the elected chief system, elected chief position in our communities, I think that has to be an option for how we move forward. Can we eliminate this chief and counsel system in Soowahlie? Create a *Sí:yá:m* system, not just an independent *Siyá:m* system either. It has to be tied into a bigger system, as long as into bigger system then I think it offers more of a future more of a strength of bringing our communities together. If just *Sí:yá:m* system in our own community then still going to have fractions and family divides. (01-17-2011:4)

This is what Carlson found in 2006 when he reviewed the *Sí:yá:m* system that had been in place in Shxw'ōwhámél for 13 years:

[W]hile the vast majority of Shxw'ōwhámél people strongly felt that the *Siyá:m* System marked a significant improvement over the earlier DIA-style election process, and in particular that it had significantly reduced the feeling that certain individuals and families were marginalized from the political process, nonetheless people felt that the system of Indian Bands associated with particular reserve land bases and associated membership lists crippled the functioning of traditional *Stó:lō* extended family governance. (2007:9)

If Shxw'ōwhámél were perhaps tied into a larger *Sí:yá:m* system beyond their own community, as Otis suggests, there might be significant improvement in ensuring everyone is adequately represented, whether on reserve or off, and no matter within which “band” one happens to be “registered.”

From lessons learned from earlier attempts at “amalgamation” or joining together to unify *Stó:lō* communities, just how we define ourselves becomes critical. We have seen on two earlier occasions that when we join based upon our “band” identity the union will eventually implode, as it has done on two separate occasions already. If it will fare better under unification based upon our tribal affiliations is yet to be seen, but is certainly something many of my dissertation teachers spoke strongly about (Otis Jasper, Ken Malloway, Corky Douglas, Joe Hall, Ovide Mercredi, and Dave Schaepe). June Quipp was hesitant as she feels we should build strong healthy communities before we attempt to build a nation and has legitimate concerns that community issues are often drowned out when at larger tables:

Communities get drowned out when become a nation, I guess depends on how our leaders are. When meeting as a nation and not just a community. I have a really hard time with Nation meetings because I really feel they don't benefit us yet. (12-28-2010:7)

June's hesitancy and concerns are legitimate and highly reflective of the shortcomings of earlier attempts at amalgamation. Added to this are all the usual trappings when *Indian Act* elected chiefs are the only ones present and "governance" is equated with service delivery via Indian Affairs devolution policy.

Time for Change, Time for Courage

From my dissertation teachers I have learned that good leadership in contemporary times requires courage. Even though after six generations of leadership it is all we currently know we need courage to step away from the *Indian Act* and all its colonial trappings and courage to try something different. What that something is I think can only be identified by gelling our past with our present to plan for a better future. All my teachers have shown tremendous courage. They each have faced colonial challenges not of their or their ancestors making and yet faced them and overcame them with dignity and a willingness to lead and help others.

Especially my female dissertation teachers have shown tremendous amounts of courage. Trish in her ability to stand up in court and speak her sovereign mind (see Chapter 8). Margaret Commodore, a *Stó:lō Sí:le* displaced by both her residential school experiences and her marriage to a non-Status man, overcame all of this and drew strength from her relationships with her own grandmothers (Hayden 1999). Almost in spite of her displacement, she accomplished great things in the Yukon territory, serving four terms as an MLA, the Minister of Justice for one of them and the Minister of Health and Human Resources for another. She established the Women's Directorate and worked to improve the lives of non-status Indigenous women. "Well looking back on my whole life I think I had a lot of nerve and didn't know it because of kind of things that I did" (01-06-2011:6). Not necessarily nerve, I would say courage.

June Quipp works endlessly and tirelessly within her community to improve the lives of its members, something she does whether she is an elected *Indian Act* official or not. On too many occasions she has personally stood up to colonial oppression to protect her people and our rights. I admire her bravery and hope I can do the same. She shared with me several experiences where she personally challenged DFO officers trying to remove salmon, government officials trying to bully her with scare tactics, and RCMP trying to remove Cheam babies:

One time I wasn't even on council, somebody phones [a Cheam community member] and said "they [children and family services] are taking my baby can I use your name?" I said sure, I thought as a reference. Next thing I know this mom is banging on my door with her baby and said Xyolhemeylh [the children and family service agency] is right behind me and want to take my baby. Of course its late Friday afternoon, seems that is when they like to do these things and too late to call anyone. I asked "are you sure?" About an hour later they [social worker and RCMP] did show up. They said "we are here to take the baby." I told them "I don't think so, do you have a plan in place for this baby?" I said "tell you what Leanne [Cheam councilor] has portfolio for family and children you can call her". The social worker called Leanne and told her "you better tell her to give us the baby" and Leanne said "oh, that's my Mom I can't tell her what to do?" So the social worker told me she better phone the chief then, I told her go ahead that's my brother. Finally the social worker said "You're not going to give us the baby are you?" I said no. She asked if the baby is in safe care and I said as far I am concerned yes.

(12-28-2010:11)

As well as courage we need to begin developing our capacities, both human and material, especially our youth. As Ovide explained:

That is why in my opinion if we want to maintain our sovereignty as a people, we have to not only find courage we have to develop capacity develop our young people to be strong enough to say this is our land these are our resources.

(07-22-2010:7)

To do this we need to know who we are and where we came from. As Corky so aptly put: "I mean anyone can be elected to a leadership position in their community; but to be a true leader you need to know who you are and where you come from" (12-30-2010:2).

Once our leaders truly know who they are and where they come from, I think they will feel more at ease in letting the *Indian Act* go. By knowing their own history, connections to territory and ancestry they will come to see a better way of doing things:

Indigenous governing principles are based on respect, humility, honesty, and courage, what I mean by courage is to be able to recognize who you are as a people and begin sitting down and talking with the other leaders based on who you are, as a Pilalt leader a *Ts'elxwéyeq*w leader, start thinking about it in those terms.

(Corky 12-30-2010:3)

Defining Self-Determination

Corky's definition of self-determination was inextricably linked to knowing who you are: "Self-determination to me is going into a situation with other levels of government knowing who you are, which balances the negotiation scale, creates more level playing field" (12-30-2010:4). Joe recommended self-determination incorporate our cultural practices: "I like literal translation, ability to govern and operate our lives using the values that are important to us. In that case a lot to do with embracing cultural practices, but using in way that fits into contemporary life as well" (02-28-2011:1). As well Otis implies that we need to define the concept of self-determination for ourselves: "[self-determination] is not a term I necessarily use in part because I don't have my own definition for it" (01-17-2011:10).

Re-Claiming Tribal Affiliations

Corky Douglas, Joe Hall and Otis Jasper all expressed a desire to move away from the *Indian Act* and instead return to our tribal alliances based upon shared territory and ancestry. As mentioned by Mr. Hall, "band" identity has no footing in court, no inherent rights are attached to something that has been created by the Department of Indian Affairs. It would also improve current colonial induced divisions:

Tribal organizations, I think need to return to tribal groupings that existed before colonial governments coming in and saying okay you are a band and you are a band and before church came in and said okay we recognize you as a leader and you as a leader. That is where splits have occurred. (Joe Hall 02-28-2011:7)

Joe Hall also sees the Federal government and its funding regime as a major impediment to working collectively. He remembers when he was chief of Tzeachten asking the chiefs of Skowkale and Yakweakwioose if they would be interested in amalgamating

Many years ago, I tried to convince, wasn't topic of the day but I tried to get Skowkale, Yakweakwioose and Tzeachten to amalgamate as one identity. I talked with Steven and Frank and asked "why are we three *Indian Act* bands? Why can't we start the ball rolling?" That will bring in Squiala, well before Squiala became commercial power, get tribe back together and operate in that fashion. Well each band gets 40 to 70,000 and they say oh that's a lot of money and we don't want to share that. Well its not a lot of money never was and never will be. (02-28-2011:7)

I can't help but wonder if he may have gotten a different response if he approached the chiefs' wives to see what they think?

Corky also expressed a desire to return to our original tribal affiliations:

You know for years I have been saying we have to start recognizing who we are as the original tribes in order to get self-government, inherent self-government something that belongs to us, that was never given to us and can't be taken away. (12-30-2010:2-3)

Otis expressed a desire to use tribal affiliations as a way to reduce the number of *Indian Act* elected chiefs and therefore false divisions among the *Stó:lō*:

I think the biggest reason why is with the label of chief it basically solidifies or enshrines a line of division so this is one community and this is another community and you create isolation among communities. This prevents nationhood, prevents a true tribal sense. We can understand and respect the land base today, but if we continue to maintain those land bases and those borders we aren't going to build that true tribal or nation identity. (01-17-2011:5)

Otis Jasper suggests implementing a new decision making process that reflects who *Stó:lō* are as opposed to continuing to abide by a foreign system:

In trying to build strength in community and bring those families together its almost an impossible way and that creates the need for our community to develop our own ways of decision making, our own models. We are not always going to make the right decisions, but we need to make our own decisions in our own ways and what works for us. And learn from those decisions and look for our way forward. Maybe it ends up being a voting system, but until we actually have our own ways of decision making in place we are handicapped or at the mercy of INAC and *Indian Act* policy. (01-17-2011:3)

What exactly "our own ways" would look like in leadership and decision making needs to be explored further.

Ovide recommends we begin acting like we are sovereign, acting like the land is ours, perhaps begin to develop meaningful partnerships with foreign countries and investors:

While we may not have wealth right now ourselves we are going to go to another country and we want them to invest in our traditional lands and we want joint ventures with them and we are going to create an economy that is absent right now. But how many people are willing to

do that? The powers that we need to do that do not reside in Canada, not with them. The power resides within us. But only way we can give it effect with good results for us is if another foreign power wants to develop with us, clearly we can't rely on Canada to do it, or the Americans. (Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:7)

It becomes profoundly apparent that until we begin to govern under our own system we will continue to be a "colonized people."

Chapter 11.

Returning to “*All My Relations*”: The *Stó:lō* and Good Governance

Democratic? Anarchistic? What Are You?

Within *Stó:lō* territory there is a mountain whose name translates into English as “what are you?” The mountain is so named because coming from one direction it looks like a woman but coming from the other direction it looks like a man. I think this mountain has many good teachings, especially in terms of acceptance and the importance of perspective. I mention it here as a reminder that we may not always have to label everything in order to understand it. In terms of *Stó:lō* governance, for example, I have yet to find a label that accurately describes the complex and fluid manner in which *Stó:lō* have and do govern ourselves.

As advised by Dr. Monture “if you want to know something about your people, look to your language.” So I did. I looked high and low and could not find one single *Halq'eméylem* word or concept that had to do with “government” or “controlling” the masses, or “exerting ones power over others,” or directing the “affairs of the state.” What we did have as far as I have come to understand it so far, are formal governing principles found in *syuwá:lelh* and *sxwōxwiyám* and our formal governing structure(s) were our *Xwelmexwáwtxw* (Longhouse) gatherings and practice of sacred ceremonies. Not surprisingly, both our governing principles and structures have been heavily attacked by various colonial practices and policies, it is no wonder I had a difficult time identifying them after six generations of colonial oppression.

Governance *Stó:lō*-style

I have been taught that what “governance” really requires is a complete paradigm shift and redefining of concepts related to good governance. After six generations of

colonial rule that has suppressed and subjugated *Stó:lō* ways of being, it is not going to be easy to make the necessary paradigm shifts. For example, a return to our governing principle of “all my relations” as expressed through our belief in *shxweli* (see below) is required. This means coming to see this governing principle as just that and therefore so much more than a simple tokenized closing comment. In fact it requires a true commitment to who we are as *Stó:lō*, or *Xwélmexw* people which means a stop to the tokenization and abuse of culture in which we currently participate whenever we sing, dance and otherwise display our culture to serve a colonial agenda.

Governance to Indigenous peoples was not about power and control as defined by the colonial society. Within this definition we will only find the complete annihilation of who we are as *Xwélmexw* people. Let us not look to the “common” response of colonial dependency: “It’s all about leadership and what form does it take? If you want to do worst thing possible, take Canadian governmental system and replicate it” (Schaepe 01-07-2011:6-7). To model a colonial style of governance is not the answer, it would serve to further sever us from our *Syewá:l* (ancestors) and *Syuwá:lelh* (laws). As already laid out by Dr. Monture and Mohawk Mother:

Colonialism is about, among other things controlling the lives of the individuals who comprise the people. When, for generations, a people have been controlled, their ability to make decisions and advance change is impaired. In order to shake up our communities and get them thinking as communities again, relying on themselves instead of bureaucracies, all that needs to be done is to shift the pieces so the “common” answer, depending on the colonizer, is no longer available. It is out of this chaos that the change will come. (1999:161)

In order to make the necessary paradigm shift, we need to redefine certain concepts and terms and re-center our own laws and epistemologies that are pertinent to good governance. A re-defining of *Stó:lō* power in relation to spirit, the people, *lets'emót* and the power to act as one, and the power of our *Sí:le* is required. A re-centering of our governing principles found in our *syuwá:lelh* and *sxwōxwiyám* and our governing structures found in our *Xwélmexwáwtxw* gatherings and ceremonies is a good place to start.

Spiritual Power

Perhaps the biggest difference between colonial defined governance and Indigenous governance is the role spirit plays and the power of *Stó:lō* spiritual beliefs. As mentioned in Chapter 9, *Xwélmexw* people believe we have seven spiritual entities residing in each and every one of us, although to varying degrees depending on the individual. For traditional leadership their connection to spirituality was key to their ability to lead and govern. Contemporarily, aside from Tom Sampson and Ovide Mercredi, the role of spirit did not necessarily come up among my dissertation teachers. However, there are good reasons for this¹⁴⁵ and does not mean that spiritual power is no longer important to good governance and *Stó:lō* leadership.

My own experiences throughout this journey including my experiences with *mílha*, meeting Stone *T'xwelátse* and teachings from *sxwōxwiyám* have informed me unequivocally of the importance of our spiritual beliefs in our desire to maintain our unique identity as *Xwélmexw* people. This is also in keeping with the *Stó:lō* law: "*Eykws hakw'elestset, te:wes te siyólexwalh*" or "*It is Good to Remember the Teachings of Our Ancestors.*"

***Qwóqwel* and the Power of Persuasion**

Paramount to *Stó:lō* ontological beliefs is the respect afforded to individuals and their personal autonomy. We see this in our parenting styles, our individual spirit, as well as in our teachings to look after what is yours. "Power" therefore in terms of leadership was in part determined by skills in oration and the ability to achieve *lets'emót* through what is often referred to as "the power of persuasion." *Lets'emót* speaks to the ability of the people to be of "one mind and one heart" in order to accomplish great things, to achieve this required the skill of *Qwóqwel* (ability to speak to the people) from a highly respected person (i.e., *Siyá:m*) but ultimately the final decision to be a part of it or not is left to the individual to decide. The gift of oration, or *Qwóqwel* is still highly regarded among the *Stó:lō*. Currently it is largely contained within the Longhouses but needs to be

¹⁴⁵ For example the Church influence in creating the "good catholic" *Stó:lō* and residential school effects.

included in all realms of life. As mentioned by Otis Jasper, it is an important part of contemporary leadership:

Ideally what you want to get to is that speaker who isn't bringing his own perspective to tribal or nation table but based on dialogue at home, based on community wishes, thoughts and concerns, they bring that voice. There are gifted speakers in our communities, gifted speakers in our families. (01-17-2011:4)

When *Stó:lō Sí:yá:m* speak from their heart, connected to their ancestry all the *Stó:lō* tend to listen and pay close attention. When leaders speak from a colonial reference such as from the *Indian Act*, or talk treaty as outlined by BCTC, or from an agenda set by colonial interests they lose their power of persuasion, their gift of *Qwóqwel*. One of the greatest gifted speakers among the *Stó:lō* is *Xwelixweltael* (Steven Point) but his power, his gift of speech is dependent upon his source. For example as shared by Dave Schaepe:

Steven was talking in his Lieutenant Governor position and I think those are prepared speeches. I was thinking he is such a great speaker would be good to hear what he has to say. He starts off, reading and going through it and you can tell it is not his voice. He stops, clears his throat and his head goes up and he closes his book on that prepared speech and he speaks as he does. He told that story about the relationship between museums and Aboriginal people and his sitting in and the demonstration. It was great. I don't think there is a record of that speech but it was great. Great to see him snap out of that transition - especially someone gifted with speech and speaks from the heart, those weren't his words. Powers that be probably weren't thrilled he didn't stick with the script. (01-07-2011:11)

Power Is in the People

Another difference between colonial governance and *Stó:lō* governance is in relation to the role that the people play. Under the *Indian Act* for example, the people have very little say or power over their own affairs. This is in stark contrast to Indigenous, including *Stó:lō* governing principles where there is a common belief that power resides in the people. As mentioned by Trisha and many others:

What has been reaffirmed is the fact that the solution lies with the people. Change will come not from institutions but from the people. It is just that simple. Being self-determining is simply about the way you choose to live your life every day. And from the people comes my hope...

(Monture-Angus 1999:158)

I heard that good governance involves listening to the people from *Siyolia* (June Quipp): “stay grassroots, we get so busy we forget who we are and what we are there for. Make sure people know you hear what they are saying. Even with your own family, I find I try to figure out if I really hear what they are saying (12-28-2010:1). And from Margaret Commodore: “I know from going through four elections as an MLA, the kinds of things I had to do and be accountable. I had to be there for the people that I represented and to me those were the most important things in my job. I am here because the people asked me to be here, therefore I am responsible to them“ (01-06-2011:1). Even when the people are angry they need to be heard by their leaders. As Margaret shared with me:

[There] is always someone in the office getting mad and people ignore them. When getting sworn in, I said you are going to have people coming in and are angry and you have to listen to them. They are angry for a reason. I used to get really angry because people were really unreasonable, but you can't take it out on them. You have to find out why they are angry. (01-06-2011:4)

If power resides in the people, which I believe it does, then the health and well-being of every single individual becomes important to the health and well-being of the nation. Pre-mature deaths weaken us as a people. For example some teachings from *Sí:le* teach us to give children a small job to do so they know they are important and needed (Yómalot), speak to our youth, hug them and let them know they matter and if they ever contemplate suicide to come and talk to you first, so you can remind them that they matter and we need them (woman cited in Monture-Angus1999:161) and do what you have to ensure our Elders have their traditional foods of wild game, salmon, wild berries, roots and plants so to keep them healthy and prolong their stay with us.

Governance *Stó:lō*-style begins with the people and the strength of individuals, as strong individuals means strong families, which means strong communities and nations. Thus strong individuals begin the foundation for good governance. As Dr. Monture shared:

Aboriginal law is not something that is distant, professionalized and removed from the people. I think it is one reason why Aboriginal ways do not involve relationships where authority is exercised over the people. In fact, the people are the authority (1999:160).

The Power of *Stó:lō* the *Sí:le*

That women play a central role in the health and well-being of our people cannot be denied. We must shed the colonizer's definition of Indigenous women. We were not placed here to serve men, we were not placed here to be submissive and cater to male-dominated societies. That is a colonial myth perpetrated by religious dominations that essentially brainwashed us as we were being traumatized by their brutal acts of colonizing. If you look to our origins, to our territory, there is no denying the central and crucial role that women play in not only our well-being, but in our continuity as a people and in our ability to govern in a good way. There are too many to recount, but here alone are the few used in this research journey.

Lilheqi left a powerful man to return to us to watch over us, our river and our salmon. This tells me with no uncertainty that *Stó:lō* women play a central role in governance and until we do again we will continue to suffer. As well the salmon came from *Swanese't*'s Salmon Wife, so as we treat the salmon is how we treat our wives. Even a great warrior, *T'xwelátse* was turned to stone for mistreating his wife, the message is on the wall. He and his teachings were left in the care of the women in the family. Meaning women know how to live together in a good way and even when you mistreat us we will still look after you (well maybe not the younger ones, but the older ones will). For us to learn from Stone *T'xwelátse* we need to learn to listen again to *Sí:le*, and the older women in our families. *Swanese't* would not have survived his journey to the Sky world without the teachings of his grandmothers. As with *Swanese't* wives come with "gifts" that make us flourish as a people. Lastly, perhaps *Williléq* was such a great leader because, not only did he marry powerful women, he was born in balance already as his twin was female.

***Stó:lō* Governing Principles**

Redefining "power" to once again be in accordance with *Stó:lō* ways of knowing will greatly assist in our ability to begin abiding by our *Stó:lō* governing principles found in our *syuwá:lelh* (words from our ancestors, or *Stó:lō* laws) and our *sxwōxwiyám*.

***Sxwōxwiyám* and Governing Principles**

"Our Constitution is Written in Stone."

~ *Xwelixweltel*

While a “Constitution” is a foreign concept, I think it is useful especially as many may not be able to make the complete paradigm shift in what constitutes good governance *Stó:lō*-style. To frame the work and teachings of *Xexá:ls* within the concept of a “Constitution” may help many begin to make the necessary mental, emotional, spiritual and physical shift. Below I provide five examples of many:

Transformation	Sxwoxwiyam Summary	Teachings/Laws
Hatzic Rock, <i>Xaytem</i> Transformation Rock located in Mission BC	Three <i>Stó:lō</i> <i>Sí:yá:m</i> had the gift of writing and were asked to write the <i>Halq'eméylem</i> language down, they did not do as asked and were transformed to stone	Everyone has responsibility to share his/her gift with the people
<i>Lilheqj</i> , Mt Cheam Located in Agassiz, BC	<i>Stó:lō</i> woman who cared about her people so much she was transformed into a mountain so she could forever watch over the people, our salmon and our river	Importance and prevalence of women to well-being of the people, the fish and the river; territory identification; roles & responsibilities of women
Stone <i>T'xwelátse</i> , 600lb granite stone currently located at <i>Stó:lō</i> Research & Resource Management Centre	A man was transformed to stone for mistreating his wife	Women as caretakers even for those who harm others; importance of doing things in a good way; You cannot govern if you do not have a relationship with those (including resources) that you govern; respect your wife
<i>Xelhálh</i> – Fraser River near Lady Franklin Rock	Injured person; woman who did not share her first catch of salmon with the people was transformed to stone	Importance of sharing
<i>Tamiho:y</i> – mountain in <i>Ts'elxwéyeqw</i> territory	“Sleeping Chief” – has male and female body parts	Man and woman co-exist in one entity; Man and woman both needed for balance

This is of course a small list of hundreds of possible examples. They are the ones I have used for this current project and are chosen from many possible examples.

Lastly, there are important characteristics in having our laws reified through transformational power. Our laws are from the very territory that they govern, and remain universal and unchanging over time. These laws therefore are applicable to all people now living in *S'ólh Téméxw* and perhaps more importantly, they do not change over time. In contrast colonial laws have been imported from another territory, such laws change constantly and are applicable to only certain people at certain times and are accessible to a few.

Syuwá:lelh Are Stó:lō Laws

Our *Stó:lō* laws are taught to us through *syuwá:lelh*, the words of our ancestors. In *syuwá:lelh* we find how best to be in the world, how to relate to each other, our environment and care for our resources and *sxex̌o:mes*. To live by *syuwá:lelh* may require a complete paradigm shift for some of us, especially those who feel they are somehow benefitting from the ways of the colonial society. But we are lucky as to abide by *syuwá:lelh* is still a choice available to us, soon this choice may no longer be available. While it is still a choice we can achieve self-determination and self-government in ways that ensure our survival as *Xwélmexw* people. But it is not going to be easy; it is not that if we pick the right book off the shelf we will have access to *syuwá:lelh*. Even when we do access *syuwá:lelh* there is no guarantee we will know what to do with it, we are colonized creatures after all. Until we do the hard work of decolonization we will miss the meaning in these words.

There are many reasons why re-centering the laws and teachings of our ancestors will not be easy. This knowledge and way of being in the world has been harshly attacked by the colonial process. This process resulted in many of our people being traumatized and resorting to alcohol in response to a complete sense of hopelessness and helplessness brought on by the forces of colonial governments and genocidal colonial policies. In our time of weakness and despair, missionaries and various religious sectors preyed upon this weakness, offering us salvation if we converted and gave up the pagan ways of our *Syewá:l*. Many of us weary and near death agreed. This combined with the residential school system worked to divide the “good Catholic” *Stó:lō* from the “bad.” Within two decades we went from almost all our Elders speaking our own languages to a handful. This loss of language meant we were severed from our ancestry and therefore our laws. Many *Sí:yá:m* even burned their own *sxex̌o:mes* and regalia to show allegiance to the new faith. In this way many *syuwá:lelh* have been put away and put to sleep. It is time to wake them up.

Some will come back to us via our children who bring with them the knowledge of our ancestors; some will come back to us through our dreams, our visions and spiritual quests. If we listen with the right ear, many *syuwá:lelh* have been preserved through ceremony and *mílha* and many more are returning through song and dance of *Sihílhex̌es*. Most imperatively, as long as we have access to our territory we have access to our *syuwá:lelh*; our laws and teachings come from *S’ólh Téméxw* and the

land, the water, the air and the mountains and all living things found therein: “People (of all races) sometimes think that Aboriginal cultures have been destroyed. This can never be true. The songs, the language, the ceremonies all live in the land” (Monture-Angus 1999:158).

Thankfully cultural and language revitalization is not only still a choice, it is fulfilling. This work we must all be a part of as *Syuwá:lelh* is found within our *Stó:lō* languages. We must “wake” this language up and bring it back into memory: “If we spent as much energy on recovering our languages as we do in having coffee at Starbucks we would get it done” (Ovide Mercredi 07-22-2010:11).

Like most Indigenous peoples, the *Stó:lō* come from an oral tradition. Meaning our knowledge, our stories, our history and our laws were not written down, at least not on paper. Rather they were retained by our *Siyelyólexwa* (Elders, collective) through *sxwōxwiyám* and *syuwá:lelh* and were to be kept in one’s memory and “written” on our hearts. As we return to all my relations we often have to start with baby steps. We may need to rely on the written transcripts of our *Siyelyólexwa* who have been recorded. It will then be up to us, the people, to breathe life back into them and thus ensuring our future generations can learn from them as originally intended.

Some *syuwá:lelh* have already been recorded and I have used them throughout my dissertation. They are not a complete list and I do not promote they be “codified” in any shape or form, not at all. I also do not assume that my interpretation will be the same as others. But they are a starting point for me as I continue on my own journey of being self-determining and honoring our ancestors:

<i>Xaxastexw te mekw’stam</i>	Respect all Things
<i>Eykws hakw’elestse, te si’:wes te Siyolexwálh</i>	It is good to remember the teachings of our ancestors
<i>Ewe chexw qelqelít te mekw’stam loy qw’ esli hokwex yexw lamexw ku:t</i>	Don’t waste/ruin destroy everything, just take what you need
<i>S’ólh Téméxw te ikw’elo. Xolhmet te mekw’stam it kwelat</i>	This is Our Land and we have to take care of everything that belongs to us
<i>Lets’emót, lets’ th’á:lá</i>	To be of one mind and one heart
<i>Shxweli</i>	We are all related
<i>Óyó:lwethet</i>	To be totally independent and doing the best one can

“All My Relations” Is a Stó:lō Governing Principle

“Self-government is really very simple to obtain.
All it requires is living your responsibilities to your relations.”
~ Patricia Monture-Angus

Teachings from Stone *T'xwelátse* tell me you cannot govern people or things to which or to whom you do not have a relationship. From Lyons and Deloria we are reminded

...it is one's individual and shared responsibilities to the natural world that form the basis for indigenous governance and relationships to family, community and homelands. These are the foundational natural laws and powers of indigenous communities since time immemorial.

(as cited in Corntassel 2008:122)

For the Stó:lō our concept of “all my relations” is bound by our belief in *shxwelí*.

Shxwelí

According to Stó:lō ontology, we are all related including our relatives the fish, the finned, the winged, the rooted, and the four legged. For example one of several *Halq'eméylem* words in relation to spirit is *shxwelí* which is our spirit or our life force. Stó:lō ontology tells us that all life is imbued with *shxwelí*, that is all life has spirit. *Naxaxalhts'i* shares the teachings from Yómalot (Rosaleen George) when he asked her “what is a *shxwelí*?”

I've never forgotten her answer, and I always tell people I think it's probably the best way to explain it. She put her hand on her chest and she said, “*Shxwelí* is inside us here.” And she put her hand in front of her and she said, “*Shxwelí* is in your parents.” She raised her hand higher and said, “then your grandparents, your great-grandparents, it's in your great-great-grandparents. It's in the rocks, it's in the trees, it's in the grass, it's in the ground, *Shxwelí* is everywhere.” So I kind of understood that. And I'm still trying to put that together. What ties us? What ties us to the sturgeon? It's *shxwelí*. The sturgeon has a *shxwelí*, we have a *shxwelí*. So we're connected to that. (Naxaxalhts'i, 2007:104)

The governing principle of *shxwelí* teaches us to respect all life because we are all connected. It teaches us how to connect to spirit, to land, to territory, to “all my relations” in a very real and literal sense.

Óyó:lwethet Is a Stó:lō Governing Principle

Governance therefore is not so much about finding a label to describe it; it is about a description of a certain “way of being” especially in terms of relating to all one’s relations. While there is not one single word in *Halq’eméylem* that can possibly describe all this, we do have a word for independence: **Óyó:lwethet** which is to be totally independent, to be doing the best one can (Galloway 2010:1104).

Stó:lō Governing Structures

It is in *Xwelmexwáwtxw* gatherings and the practice of sacred ceremonies that *Stó:lō* laws and governing principles are verified and passed to future generations. This includes gatherings for *mílha*, naming ceremonies, burnings, memorials, and sacred ceremonies such as *sxwó:yxwey* to mark the passing of birth, puberty, marriage and death. There are too many sacred ceremonies and gatherings to do an exhaustive list. Each of these gathering and ceremonies have their own protocol and history that is carefully preserved and observed. While it is usually the men who perform the ceremonies and conduct “the work” for the gathering, it is the women especially the *Sí:le* who dictate what is to happen and how it is to happen. They are careful to ensure every protocol and minute detail is adhered to as any change can have significant impact.

It is during these gatherings and practice of ceremony that *lets’emót* is achieved and important tenets of *Stó:lō* culture, traditions and kinship ties are practiced and verified. All gatherings occur in *Xwelmexwáwtxw*, or Longhouses that sometimes seat over a thousand people. Longhouses include dirt floors so our most precious relative is always present and providing energy. There are no recording or electronic devices used or allowed. The people sit according to their kinship ties with the men in the front and women and children in the back for protection. Every gathering includes a meal that is provided by the host community and/or family doing “the work.” There is protocol to be followed from the planning and preparation, to the time of arrival, during the ceremony or “work” and until after the people leave.

Naming Ceremonies

For example during naming ceremonies *Stó:lō* history, kinship ties and ties to territory and *sxex̄o:mes* are brought out “on the floor” for all the people to know,

question, verify or dispute. Witnesses are called and tasked with remembering the events of the evening to pass to those who could not attend, all the people back home or should someone in the future have questions or want to know what happened. In the very act of the “calling of witnesses” *Sí:yá:m* roles are verified as only the most highly respected leaders are called upon to witness. Gatherings include *Xwélmexw* people from all over *S’ólh Téméxw*, the “floor keeper” is tasked with knowing not only who all the *Sí:yá:m* are from other communities, but knowing their ancestral names which are used when called to witness. If the floor keeper does not pronounce it just right, the witness will remain seated until it is called out correctly. Forgetting to call a *Siyá:m* as a witness is seen as an offense and the family doing the work is frowned upon for forgetting or worse, not knowing. Alternatively not calling a particular *Siyá:m* as a witness on purpose is a way the *Stó:lō* people publicly pay for mistakes they have made.

Witnesses will often take the floor to speak to those receiving names reminding them of their new responsibilities, how they are connected to the land and related to the people. Any disputes or contention about the name, or the current name carrier are also brought to the floor to be addressed and resolved. *Lets’emót* is achieved even in contention as all the people there are focused upon and giving their attention to the work being done and the teachings being passed. The gift of *Qwō:lqwel* is highly respected during these times as the manner and way in which the speakers address issues and pass teachings is exceptional.

During naming ceremonies kinship ties are verified, roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out; during memorial ceremonies ancestors are respected and their *syuwá:lelh* remembered; during puberty ceremonies young men and women are recognized for moving into young adulthood and reminded of their new responsibilities, during marriage ceremonies relationships are solidified and families are bound together. And on and on the list can go, there are too many *Stó:lō* ceremonies to provide full details, suffice to say that they are our only form of true *Stó:lō* governing structures that incorporates past present and future generations. They are how we live the “Sacred Cycle” (*Qwul’sih’yah’maht* 2011).

The SENĆOŦEN have a word that helps encapsulates *Stó:lō* governing structures. “CELÁNEN” which means that which is one’s birth rite, and includes teachings that come from the land you are from:

When this teaching came out Creator gave us word for it – *ĆELÁNEN* - that's our birth right. "*Cha laya*" means where you are from. *ĆELÁNEN* means teaching in land from where you come from. *ĆELÁNEN* then was taught to us, from the very beginning "neth chayla" this means at very beginning. Here are things we knew, we knew who the leaders were the Lo'lh, Sellqwayin, Seesa, Hexwhaxw. We were also given a special language, was not a language that came from English, Spanish whatever it came directly from the creator, Sh kwales. Same in language in *Stó:lō* country meaning Creator. The Creator gave us the language whatever language that people come from, language was given to us by way that we learned over the centuries, we didn't learn from another human being. We learned from first parts of creation.

(*tesalaq* 03-20-11:3)

All these things were given to us so our vision would always be clear about our future. And had to be crystal clear to us this is who you are and this is land you come from and here are your relatives, human and other parts of creation. We had to know that.

This is a form of self-government. Because if you couldn't do these things how can you manage land or resources if you had no relationship with it. That is what self-government is about. That is what economic development is about. Its about social discipline, knowing when there is danger, knowing when to fight for your life. Only certain things you got to protect yourself against. Human are probably most cannibal people in world, kill and destroy everything in sight. They lack discipline, as humans we have no discipline. We are capable of terminating, extinguishing everything and not even regretting it, that's the way we are now.

So this was vision and teaching of our people, vision they had for us, this generation. Know this and you will survive, know this and it will always be there for you know these ceremonies and it will always be your spiritual guide. Know it and you will live.

(*tesalaq* 3-30-2011:7)

Chapter 12.

From *Stéxem* to *Smelá:lh*

I started this journey wanting to know more about the *Stó:lō*, good governance and self-determination. So it would not seem overwhelming, I wrapped my journey in the teachings of *Xexá:ls* and the power of transformations. What I have learned has by far exceeded all my expectations and changed me in ways that I am grateful for and in ways I am still figuring out. This journey has been much more complicated and complex than I ever imagined it to be; but I now understand why. There is much at stake.

We as a people are at a crossroad. We can continue the path of self-destruction that the newcomers to our land have put us on. We can choose to ignore our teachings and who we are as a People. This will allow us to participate in our own demise and continue clear cutting, polluting and exploiting. Or we can decide to abandon this path of destruction and return to the one so carefully laid out by our ancestors. It is really that simple. How difficult is it to abide by *syuwá:lelh*? How difficult is it to return to “all my relations” in the way we conduct ourselves and relate to our natural environment?

The challenge is in knowing who you are. This requires that you know who your ancestors are. When you know who your ancestors are it is easy to then follow the path they have carefully laid out for you through *syuwá:lelh*. We won't recognize our *syuwá:lelh* until we have gone through the painful process of decolonizing. To decolonize our minds, bodies, heart and soul is not an easy undertaking, but it is necessary. Once we do this *syuwá:lelh* is everywhere. Our ancestors did what they had to do to survive. Should we not be held to the same standard?

Under this colonial regime and the *Indian Act* we are not surviving, we are aiding and abetting our own demise. We no longer need the *Indian Act* to be recognized as the original people of this land. We have our ancestral names, our *sxwōxwiyám*, and our *syuwá:lelh* that clearly define who we are, how we got here, what is ours, how to protect it and care for it.

What does Indigenous governance look like? It is found in the way we conduct ourselves as individuals, in the way we relate to and care for all our *sx̱ex̱o:mes* and our territory. Our *sx̱ex̱o:mes* includes our Indigenous languages, our relatives the two-legged, the four-legged, the winged, the finned, and the rooted and our family gift of ceremony. I believe every family has been given a *cexwte'n*¹⁴⁶ a ceremony, a gift to be used in a certain way at certain times to help the people. This is *Stó:lō* governance. Every individual has been gifted with *swia'm* an individual “gift, talent or power.” This is *Stó:lō* governance.

Our territory is brimming with stories¹⁴⁷ both *sqwélqwel* and *sxwōxwiyám* that teach us how to live in this world without depleting, exploiting or disrespecting the *shxwéli* that exists everywhere. Our greatest source of power is found in our natural world and throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*. Our “constitution” is ever present and available for all who now call *S'ólh Téméxw* home; it has been carefully laid out for us to follow. This is a form of *Stó:lō* governance.

Óyó:lwethet

Self-determination is found when we breathe life into our language, our teachings, our *syewá:lelh*. To live *syuwá:lelh* is to be self-determining. To respect all things, to care for what is yours, to honor the teachings of your *Syewá:l*, to take only what you need; all of this can result in a life of independence, a life of doing the best one can or *Óyó:lwethet*. I believe every human being is born with a gift. It is our responsibility to figure out what our gift is and to then share it with the people. This is self-determination.

¹⁴⁶ This is the Hun'qumi'num term given by Old Pierre (as cited in Carlson 2010:69).

¹⁴⁷ By 2001 there were over 700 Place Names recorded (see *Stó:lō Atlas* (2001) Plate 45a by Albert Sonny McHalsie).

My Swóqw'elh

My journey has also taught me this: to truly govern ourselves according to who we are as *Stó:lō* people and in order to truly achieve *Óyó:lwethet*, that is independence and self-determination we need to weave with these things:

- (1) Our Ancestral names
- (2) Our Indigenous languages
- (3) Our *Sí:le* and The Power of Woman
- (4) Our Connection to *S'ólh Téméxw* and our Territory
- (5) Our *Syuwá:lelh* and the caring for *Sxexo:mes*
- (6) Our *Stó:lō* spiritual beliefs

Our Ancestral Names

For the *Stó:lō* there is pride and responsibility in the carrying of names. Most carry an English name that tells us little about the person, but our *Xwélméxw* name(s) tell us everything. Some are “pet names” used to show endearment, some are names that describe a person’s gift and others are ancestral and have been passed from generation to generation from time immemorial. How ancestral names are decided upon, passed down and to whom they are given are all important. There is protocol to follow and the process can take years. This process to be followed is both an act of good governance and an expression of self-determination.

Name-carriers do not take their responsibilities lightly and must learn to carry these names in a good way that honors those who carried it before them. Within our ancestral names we find our history, our *sxexo:mes*, and the ways in which we are tied to territory. They are deeds and they are title, but never meant to be written or codified, rather they are meant to be lived and experienced.

Our Indigenous Languages

The first time I heard my own language being spoken I literally started to cry, and at the time I did not even know that the language being spoken was *Halq'eméylem*. How does one explain this? I think it was my intuition, my ancestry speaking to me, telling me there is love to be found in *Stó:lō* languages. Who we are is embedded in our worldview

and the easiest way to understand this worldview is through our own language. We can still come to understand it in English, but it is more difficult and less fulfilling.

Learning our own language is not a difficult task, nor a chore, it is an inherent right and a responsibility. Many of our *syúwél* spoke up to five different languages, can we not learn two? To revitalize our languages is exciting work, it can be as simple as calling *Llilheqi*, *Llilheqi*. English words are too simplistic and categorical to capture the meaning and worth of our people and our place in this world. Within our *Halq'eméylem* names and language are ties to family past, present and future; within our languages are laws and teachings of what is important and why. Why would we not want to revitalize this?

This exciting work is already underway. I want to share a *Sqwélqwel* of how easy and exciting it can be. For *Halq'eméylem* there are only a handful of fluent speakers left, one was *Ts'ats'elxwot* (Elizabeth Herrling) who recently passed. She had been instrumental in teaching and working to preserve our language. Her passing was a very sad day for us all. When *Ts'ats'elxwot* passed on, I was teaching a First Nations Studies course at the local university and the students were required to learn how to do something from within the *Stó:lō* culture. They had free reign to decide for themselves what that would be. On the day services for *Ts'ats'elxwot* were being held, presentations were being given in my class.

As things tend to go, one of my *Stó:lō* students named Ramona Flores was presenting that day and she had chosen singing as something she wanted to learn to do that semester. She stood in front of the class with her hand drum and began to sing. And she sang her entire song in *Halq'eméylem*! I could not stop my tears if I wanted; they poured down my face for the entire song. Thankfully after I explained to my students my sadness in the loss of one of our Elders and how heartening it was to hear this young *Stó:lō* woman singing in our own language, they totally understood.

Our *Sí:le*: The Power of Woman

"I came to win, to fight, to conquer, to thrive.
I came to win, to survive, to prosper, to rise, to fly.
Get ready for it!"¹⁴⁸

That the roles and responsibilities of women to the *Stó:lō* people is central to our ability to overcome adversity and prosper as a people is one and the same as our intimate relationship to *S'ólh Téméxw*. This is self-determination defined. The role of women in the health and well-being of the *Stó:lō* cannot be denied. My research journey from start to finish has been gently guided by women, even when I did not know it. It started with my own daughter *T'émq'ethelmot* and includes women from thousands of years ago through *Sth'ó:qwi* and *Lílheqi*.

My daughter Jade was born in 1999 and was named by her father after the precious stone found in our territory. It just so happened that Jade is also the Chinese name of my Chinese grandmother from Jamaica, Blossom Hall. When Jade was five she was given the name *T'émq'ethelmot* by *Ts'ats'elxwot* and Christine Point; it is the *Halq'eméylem* name for precious stone. From the time Jade was born it was crystal clear that my first born daughter was a very old soul. Her eye is marked as a tell-tale sign of her previous life; what that was I am not entirely sure.

She began communicating to her father and I when she was six months old and has not stopped talking since. She was 18 months old when she came to me and asked for a "husband." Three times I sent her away and three times she came back until I finally told her I would find her one. When *T'émq'ethelmot* was ten years old I had been working on my PhD for four years. Jade commented on how long I had been working on it and yet had not told her about it. In all honesty I did not think a child would be interested. However, after I explained it to her she said it sounded real good and then advised me to remember to talk to the young people, too, so to be sure and get the "updated" version.

¹⁴⁸ Nicki Minaj.

It is this very advice that makes me adamant about living my research findings. In the last three months alone there have been four *Stó:lō* youth suicides. I believe we can save future young lives by abiding by *syuwá:lelh*.

Sxwōxwiyám tell us in no uncertain terms that women are powerful caretakers. Stone *T'xwelátse* was left in the care of the Elder women in his family. *Lílheqi*, her three daughters and three sisters left *Kwelxá:lxw* and sit as central reminders of woman's central role to watch over *Xwélmexw*, *Sth'ó:qwi* and the *Stó:lō*. Minnow Girl through her own strength and ingenuity was the sole survivor of a famine that wiped out her entire people. Great *Sí:yá:m* such as *Willéq* the fifth and *Swaneset* accomplished great feats for the people through marriages; the gifts their wives brought ensuring their people thrived and flourished. In almost all *sxwōxwiyám* and *sqwélqwel* a prominent figure is *Sí:le*, especially *the Sí:le* or Grandmothers whose advice and guidance ensure survival. *Siyolia* and Margaret are two such examples of several throughout *S'ólh Téméxw*.

My story of women does not stop with this dissertation. I look forward to continuing to document and honor more of the women *Sí:yá:m* of the *Stó:lō*. From this journey I plan to continue to share my own gift with the people, my ability to listen, to learn and to speak two languages even though both are in English. That is I have been told by Elders that I am good at taking what they say and helping people understand it. This is an odd form of translation, but translation nevertheless. I attribute this gift to the fact that I have learned to live in “both” worlds, a skill that began as a child being shuffled back and forth between White foster homes and the “rez” and was further nurtured by my desire to obtain an education (via Western universities) but to do so without losing my identity.

Our Connection to *S'ólh Téméxw*

I would like to share another *sqwélqwel* that speaks to the importance of territory to our health and well-being. As an undergrad student I knew I needed to move away from my community if I were to succeed at obtaining a Bachelor's degree. There were always family and community responsibilities that would take me away from my ability to study and attend class, so in my third year of my undergrad degree I transferred to Simon Fraser University and moved to Burnaby. I totally engrossed myself in my studies and refused to come home for anything, no matter how important. In my fourth year around November I was ordered home by my father for a family dinner. I agreed, as my

father rarely ordered me to do anything and besides, I needed to eat. I asked a friend to drive me so I could study there and back.

On the way there I was reading and studying diligently, hardly raising my head. But at some point in this drive home, I remember looking up just as we were entering *Ts'elxwéyeq̓w* territory (of course at the time I did not know this) and when I looked up I saw the most incredible mountains (today I can name them; then I had no clue) and instantly began to cry. My tears totally confused me and I decided that maybe I was missing my family more than I wanted to admit. Today I know I cried because of what those mountains mean to me (not to say that I was not missing my family, because I was). When I finished my degree I moved back home to *Sq'ewqéy̓l* (Skowkale) and continued on with my real education. That is learning about my territory and the *Stó:lō* people. Reconnecting with my territory healed me in unexplainable ways, it filled holes in me I didn't even know I had. Through my Master's degree and the implementation of *Qwí:qwélstom* I learned the importance of the *Stó:lō* people. But it would not be until my Doctorate degree that I learned the full extent of the importance of *S'ólh Téméxw*.

After this research journey I want to see *Lhewá:Imel* revived and released; I want to know the *sxwōxwiyám* of the old *Ts'elxwéyeq̓w* villages and learn the stories of the mountain ranges that speak to me. I want clear-cutting to be seen as the crime that it is, it is the rape of Mother Earth and it is wrong. It hurts my entire being to see it happen and makes me cry as we are now the ones doing it.

Our *Syuwá:lelh* and Caring for *Sx̓ex̓o:mes*

Syuwá:lelh is not meant to be written down, at least not on paper. *Syuwá:lelh* is meant to be lived, written on our hearts so we can breathe live back into it. I believe that if we abide by our own *Stó:lō* laws that we can protect and care for what is ours. Without *syuwá:lelh* we do not even know what is ours. A "gift" is a precious thing to be cared for and looked after, treated with respect. To do all this we need to know our *sx̓ex̓o:mes* and re-claim our relation to it. This is not going to be easy, so many of us are completely disconnected from our ancestors, our territory, our languages and our relatives, we may not even recognize them anymore. But I think we will "feel" it and we will know. I want to share another *Sqwélqwel*.

In April 2009 I was asked by the Native Education Centre if I would deliver a workshop for the *Stó:lō* Lands Management department for *Stó:lō* communities

developing their own land management code (read: how to “legally” exploit, deplete and rape reserve lands). I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to ask these communities to really think about what they are doing and to see if they could do it while abiding by our own *Stó:lō* laws. Well I might as well have been talking a foreign language. Granted I did not know then what I know now, but I at least wanted to explore a few of our *Stó:lō* laws and begin discussion on how they might apply to our contemporary “land management regimes.” Of the communities represented at this workshop only one seemed interested, the others were either non-*Stó:lō* people hired by *Stó:lō* communities to develop their land codes, or *Stó:lō* people with no desire to “go backwards” they wanted to “advance” through economic opportunities that would become available via a land code.

It was odd but there really was no room for these *Stó:lō* laws in this “*Stó:lō*” Lands Management workshop. I think I would have fared better if I knew more about the *Indian Act*. In fact the non-*Stó:lō* lady who did know all about the *Indian Act* seemed very proud of this knowledge. It was then and there that I became acutely aware that the “Indian-Agent” was still very much a force with which to be reckoned.

Now that my dissertation journey is complete I am even more adamant about bringing *Stó:lō* laws back to life. The disconnect that I experienced in the Land Code workshop is one that is sure to be repeated; however, what I have to look forward to is the abolishment of the *Indian Act*. Perhaps then more *Stó:lō* will be willing to look to “our own ways.”

Our *Stó:lō* Spiritual Beliefs

It is within our spiritual powers that I find the most hope in our ability to transform our current colonial prisons into being a whole people again, our spiritual transformation is to abide by our *syuwá:lelh* and ensure the survival of our future generations. The *Stó:lō* ontological beliefs are immersed in spirit, it cannot be severed or disconnected, it is everywhere. We are people of the *Smilha'áwtxw*, of *milha* teachings and respect, this is too powerful to ignore. To be a good *Stó:lō* person is to be spiritual, to be mindful of our seven spiritual entities to be respected and nourished. When we do this we are who we were meant to be, and it can never be taken from us. This is self-determination. I hope we are ready for it.

While my research journey for this dissertation is coming to an end, my journey as I move toward reclaiming my *smelá:lh* identity and becoming *Óyó:lwethet* is just beginning. The *Stó:lō* describe *smelá:lh* as someone who is worthy, that is someone who knows his/her history and where s/he comes from. *Semelá:lh* (plural) are often identified by the *swóqw'elh* they wear, a hand woven blanket that tells a story. My dissertation represents my story, my *swóqw'elh* and my current understanding of what it takes to be *Smelá:lh*. While this is very much a personal journey, it is also collective in that I envision others sharing and learning from my journey, just as I have learned from others. I share my understandings personally, for my family, for my community and for my nation; I hope others will join me (us) in our collective movement toward independence and freedom.

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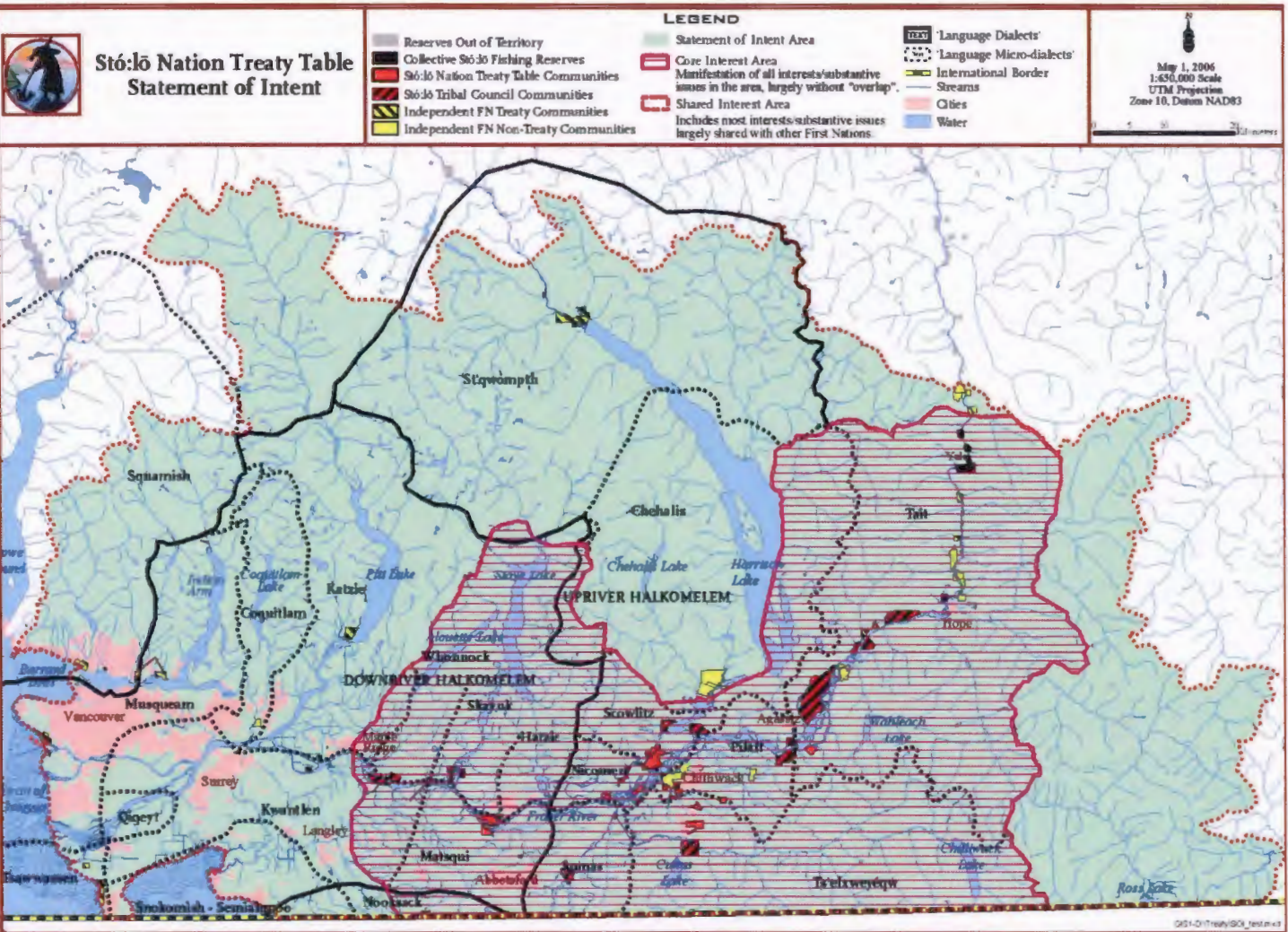
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Appendices

Appendix A.

Map Stó:lō Bands in Treaty

The six bands in treaty are located in solid red. Map provided by Dave Schaepe and Stó:lō Resource and Research Management Centre (SRPMC).



Appendix B.

Map of Area Claimed in Yale Treaty

Map Provided by SRRMC.



Appendix D.

Threshold Criteria for Cost Award

Advance Costs Awards: Threshold Criteria and Cost Order Conditions

Threshold Criteria	Issues	Case Reference
Impecuniosity	Party seeking advance costs cannot genuinely afford to pay for the litigation; No other realistic option exists for bringing the issues to trial;	Okanagan Indian Band (SCC)(para. 40)
Prima Face i Meritorious Case	Case is of sufficient merit that it is contrary to the interests of justice for the case to be forfeited on the basis of lack of financial means of the party seeking the award	Okanagan Indian Band (SCC)(para. 40)
Public Importance	Issues transcend individual interests and have not been resolved in previous cases	Okanagan Indian Band (SCC)(para. 40)
Special or Exceptional Circumstances	There must exist special circumstances sufficient to satisfy the Court that the case is within the narrow class of cases where this extraordinary exercise of powers is appropriate.	Okanagan Indian Band (SCC)(paras. 36, 41, 46)
Cost Order Quantum and Structure		Measures/Conditions
Scale of Award	The usual award would be party and party costs.	William v. AG Canada (BCCA)(paras. 94-95,125)
Incentives to Economy	Court should consider whether partial reimbursement is appropriate if plaintiff is successful at the end of the case.	William v. AG Canada (BCCA)(paras.95, 125)

Note. These materials were prepared by Jacqueline L. Ott for the Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia course, Aboriginal Law: Procedural and Dispute Resolution Issues, October 2006. © Jacqueline L. Ott, <http://www.cle.bc.ca/Practice%20Points/ABOR/Practice%20Issues%20Before%20the%20Courts%20-%20Advance%20Costs.pdf>, Retrieved November 9 2010

Appendix E.

Rowbotham Application

(Excerpt from original kept on file with author):

Two branch test for *Rowbotham* application (*R. v. Rushlow*):

1. whether the presence of counsel is essential for the conduct of a fair trial; and
2. where legal aid is unavailable, whether the accused is financially unable to engage counsel

Relevant factors for first branch of test:

- **seriousness of the charges**
- likelihood of imprisonment
- **length and complexity of the proceedings**
- complexity of the evidence
- procedural, evidentiary and substantive law that applies in the case
- likelihood of especially complex procedures such as a voir dire
- expected length of trial
- **accused's ability to participate effectively and defend the case**
- personal abilities of the accused such as education and employment background
- ability to read
- facility with the language of the proceedings

Charter Violations

Section 7 of the Charter reads: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice"

Section 8 of the Charter reads: "Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure."

Section 11(d) reads "Any person charged with an offence has the right (d) to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal"

Section 12 reads: Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

Section 35

(1) The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

I have a responsibility to fish; you see it as a crime and as a result of this:

I have been appearing in this courtroom for this trial for over six years.

I had my picture wrongfully posted in crimestoppers next to violent offenders.

My ability to gain employment has been severely compromised as a result of this.

My freedom was violated, I was arrested and detained.

My security of person was violated, I was anally and vaginally searched – all this as a result of fishing, doing what I have always done and will continue to do.

Seriousness and Complexity of Case

I, *Kwitset Tatel* have an inherent, as well as constitutionally protected right to fish within my territory and to do so according to my Stó:lo laws, customs and traditions. The Stó:lo people have been doing this since the river first appeared in *S'olh Temexw* and the arrival of our ancestor, the first salmon. This means we have been fishing for thousands, thousands of years.

We have always fished, the fish are an integral part of our culture, customs and traditions, our fish are an integral part of who we are as a People. Crown keeps referring to this as a standard “regulatory” offence; there is nothing regulatory about this! We are talking about my life and the life of my grandchildren. But I can't expect you or Finn to understand this, the fish are a “resource” to you, to me they are a gift, a relative and a responsibility. To you they can be bought and sold, exploited and raped, their waterways destroyed all in the name of capitalism. This country has made billions of dollars because of the care and respect that my ancestors have shown this most sacred gift. You have taken it, without consent, without consultation and without care for the impact your actions are going to have on future generations.

When all the fish are gone you will simply move on to the next “resource” to be raped and exploited. But what will happen to me? What will happen to my grandchildren's grandchildren? They will not survive as a People without our relative, without our most sacred gift.

Prosecuting the Stó:lo people for fishing is like prosecuting us for breathing; this my friend is serious, but I don't expect you to understand.

What is going on here in these courtrooms is wrong and one day you will see the wrongness in what you are doing. How can we in 2011 still have laws on the books to which only Indigenous peoples can be charged? This is serious, or does this court not care about such things as racism and systemic discrimination?

There are better ways of resolving these conflicts, your own constitution tells you that my right to fish is recognized and affirmed, or does this constitution mean nothing to you?

Your own constitution tells you I have a right to a fair and impartial trial – so far nothing about this has been fair and certainly not impartial – there is a script that all these fishing charges follow and that script is written to ensure I am seen as a criminal for a human cultural behavior. That script is written to protect the crown and illegitimate government actions, but I don't expect you to see this as serious or to even want to attempt to even the playing field, why should you? You are winning after all and you have nothing to lose; I have everything to lose.

I will never plead guilty; that is tantamount to turning my back on the life that my ancestors so carefully laid out for me; but I don't expect you to understand. Your worldview is so different from mine. You have all the power, I have none. You have all the resources, expertise and knowledge to argue your points within a framework that has been built upon the oppression and prosecution of my ancestors and continues with me.

I have nothing, I have stood before you time and time again crying and destitute, asking only for a competent lawyer who can see that what is happening here is wrong.

Crown dares to suggest that I might not be quite poor enough to warrant a competent lawyer at the Crown's expense – this after I have told you time and time again that I am destitute, my ability to gain employment has been severely compromised by the very actions of this same Crown, me and my children have been homeless, have gone without food. I can not become any poorer.

Crown dares to suggest that this case is not serious or complex enough to require a competent lawyer – of course Crown is going to say this – these are after all simply “regulatory” offences to him – he has prosecuted thousands of them over the years and has made a very decent living by doing so.

But how dare he refer to them this way when only “Indians” are charged with this “regulatory” offence? When White people do what I have been charged with it is called recreational or commercial, when I do it - it is called a crime. The courts must begin to look at these issues – this is serious and it doesn’t get any more complex.

Presence of Counsel for Fair Trial

I am not able to properly understand the complexities of this case – for example the issue of court jurisdiction over my cost award application when I have always argued you don’t have jurisdiction and now you are telling me you don’t.

And just to be clear I am not arguing that it is only my defense that is complex, the offence itself is complex as there are issues of racism, systemic discrimination and the very legitimacy of the way in which these cases are prosecuted is under question.

The voir dire – what is that? Are we still in it? When/How does it end? I am not able to understand the complexity of it – for example my Elder is an Expert and apparently there is something within a voir dire to determine relevancy but I highly question my ability to make best and proper use of this process in fact I actually became quite offended at this procedure.

When I was on the stand Crown asked me a question that required me to speak for all Stó:lo fisherpeople without first consulting them, I am not a mind reader I can not speak for all Stó:lo fisherpeople. I believe a lawyer would have objected to such an absurd question, if I had a lawyer. This impacts my right to a fair trial.

Accused Ability to Participate Effectively

For the past two years I have not been able to properly prepare for court. I have barely been able to get myself here and I have not been able to put in the time necessary to argue or even properly defend myself. My destitution means I am busy finding a roof for my kids and food to feed them, literally, I have not had time to properly put my mind to this case. I arrive here hardly prepared and many times I have had to “wing” it because I am ill-prepared. When one is in survival mode there is not time for anything else. This has impacted my ability to properly defend myself.

Many times throughout this trial I have been overwhelmed by emotions and have cried too many times to count. It is very difficult to maintain my composure and rationale when I am overcome by such strong emotions. This has and will continue to impact my ability to properly defend myself.

You can see that I could enter a guilty plea, pay a fine and be done with this. Something I am sure this court would appreciate and even feel relieved. Yet, I won’t. What does this tell you, that despite a very heavy price that I am paying I refuse to do this, this is not because I am a stubborn person or even because I do not like Finn or what he is doing to my people, I am doing this because I believe in protecting my way of life.

I am requesting a judicial stay in proceedings or an adjournment until I have competent legal representation.

Appendix F.

Hanging of Louis Victor

Chilliwack Progress. January 23, 1895

Louis Victor's Last Words

"I shake hands with everybody and I know now that I am going to Heaven. Farewell." The black cap was then placed over his head and immediately afterwards, his response, "Oh, Lord, have pity on me!" to the priest's final prayer was distinctly heard. Then at about 8:15 o'clock the signal was given by the sheriff, the bolt was drawn, the drop fell; the black flag was half-masted, and in the eyes of the law the murder was avenged. Not a movement of the body was noticeable. After hanging a sufficient time it was cut down and placed in a coffin. The spectators then dispersed and the doctors made the usual post-mortem examinations, finding the neck completely dislocated. The customary inquest was then held by Capt. Pittendrigh, and a jury, having D. Box as foreman, returned the verdict of death by hanging, according to law. It remains only to add that prior to the confirmation, by the Dominion authorities, of the death sentence, Victor had the benefit of the ministrations of Fathers Demeau and Thomas. Since all hope of reprieve was gone Father Demeau, who was a missionary priest having spiritual charge of all Roman Catholic Indians located between the mouth of the Fraser River and Yale, has been in constant attendance upon him. He states that Victor passed a sleepless night and partook of very little breakfast that morning. To the last he maintained in his protestation of innocence of the crime for which he forfeited his life.

As a side accompaniment to the dread tragedy of execution it may be mentioned that whilst the majesty of the laws was being vindicated within the precincts of goal a sad scene was witnessed outside. Gathered in front of the gaol was a group of Cheam Indians composed of six men, two women and a 10 year old boy, waiting for the body of the law's victim. Among them were Victor's wife, brother and young son; also Chief Joe. Patiently they waited in a drizzle of snow that had commenced to fall, until at length Father Demeau appeared and gave them the details of the execution. Grief was depicted on all faces, particularly on that of the grief stricken wife, whose tears flowed freely as she stood bereft and forlorn. Eventually about 9:30 the coffin containing the body was brought out, placed in the gaol rig and driven down to the Fraser, where, near the Lulu Island bridge, a boat was in readiness to receive it. There it was covered by an Indian mat and sail, and tonight it will be placed on the steamer Transfer to be taken up the river for burial in an Indian cemetery at Cheam.

(Original kept on file at Coqualeetza Archives)

Appendix G.

1868 Whonock Petition

Petition of the Whonock Indians December 1868

Memorial of the undersigned Indians of the Whonock Indian Village.

To his Excellency Frederic Seymour, the Governor of British Columbia.

...Governor Douglas did send some years ago his men among us to measure our Reserve and although they gave us only a small patch of land in comparison to what they allowed to a white man our neighbor, we were resigned to our lot, consequently your memorialists build new houses, cultivated the land to raise potatoes for themselves and their children, and make if possible, some money selling the overplus.

Some days ago came new men who told us by order of their Chief they have to curtail our small reservation, and so did to our greatest grief; not only they shortened our land but by their new paper they set aside our best land, some of our gardens, and gave us in place, some hilly and sandy land, where it is next to impossible to raise any potatoes; our hearts are full of grief day and night, and in fact we have been many days without being able to sleep.

Your memorialists hope that such orders did not come from your Excellency, whom they have been accustomed to regard as their great Father. They cannot believe that such (an) act as this could be approved by their first Chief the Queen whom yourself did represent to them as being so gracious and so well disposed toward her children of the forest.

They therefore humbly pray your Excellency to listen to their request and give to them the same patch of land marked before by orders of Governor Douglas.

Kolasten
Slapken
Tseeatlah
Sltemtem
Saykwlatza
Skerhaham
Saaha
Skwayaten

Source: British Columbia. Colonial Correspondence. P. Durieu, F503/2. Durieu to Seymour. 6 December 1868. Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Appendix H.

1874 Petition

The 1874 Petition

To the Indian Commissioner for the Province of British Columbia:-

The petition of the undersigned, Chiefs of Douglas Portage, of Lower Fraser, and of the other tribes on the seashore of the mainland to Bute Inlet, humbly sheweth:-

That your petitioners view, with a great anxiety, the standing question of the quantity of land to be reserved for the use of each Indian family.

That we are fully aware that the Government of Canada has always taken good care of the Indians, and treated them liberally, allowing more than one hundred acres per family and we have been at a loss to understand the views of the Local Government of British Columbia, in curtailing our land so much as to leave, in many instances, but few acres of land per family.

Our hearts have been wounded by the arbitrary way the Local Government of British Columbia have dealt with us in locating and dividing our Reserves. Ohamiel, ten miles below Hope, is allowed 488 acres of good land for the use of twenty families; at the rate of 24 acres per family; Popkum, eighteen miles below Hope, is allowed 369 acres of good land for the use of four families; at the rate of 90 acres per family; Cheam, twenty miles below Hope, is allowed 375 acres of bad, dry and mountainous land for the use of twenty-seven families: at the rate of 13 acres per family; Yuk-Yuk-y-yoose, on Chilliwack River, with a population of seven families, is allowed 42 acres: 5 acres per family; Sumass, at the junction of Sumass River and Fraser, with a population of seventeen families, is allowed 43 acres of meadow for their hay, and 32 acres of dry land; Keatsy, numbering more than one hundred inhabitants, is allowed 108 acres of land. Langley and Hope have not yet got land secured to them, and white men are encroaching on them on all sides.

For many years we have been complaining of the land left us being too small. We have laid our complaints before Government officials nearest to us; they sent us to some others; so we had no redress up to the present; and we have felt like men trampled on, and are commencing to believe that the aim of the white man is to exterminate us as soon as they can, although we have always been quiet, obedient, kind, and friendly to the whites.

Discouragement and depression have come upon our people. Many of them have given up the cultivation of land, because our gardens have not been protected against the encroachments of the whites. Some of our best men have been deprived of the land they had broken and cultivate with long and hard labour, a white man enclosing it in his claim, and no compensation given. Some of our most enterprising men have lost part of their cattle, no other place left but the thickly timbered land, where they die fast. Some of our people now are obliged to cut rushes along the bank of the river with their knives during the winter to feed their cattle.

We are now obliged to clear heavy timbered land, all prairies having been taken from us by white men. We see our white neighbours cultivate wheat, peas, &c., and raise large stocks of cattle on our pasture lands, and we are giving them our money to buy the flour manufactured from the wheat they have grown on the same prairies.

We are not lazy and roaming-about people, as we used to be. We have worked hard and a long time to spare money to buy agricultural implements, cattle, horse, etc. as nobody has given us assistance. We could point out many of our people who have, those past years, bought, with their own money, ploughs, harrows, yokes of oxen, and horses; and now, with your kind assistance, we have a bright hope to enter into the path of civilization.

We consider that 80 acres per family is absolutely necessary for our support, and for the future welfare of our children. We declare that 20 or 30 acres of land per family will not give satisfaction but will create ill feelings, irritation amongst our people, and we cannot say what will be the consequence.

That in case you cannot obtain from the Local Government the object of our petition, we humbly pray that this our petition be forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Province, Ottawa.

Therefore you petitioners humbly pray that you may take this our petition into consideration and see that justice be done us, and allow each family the quantity of and we ask for.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

Peter Ayessik, Chief of Hope
Alexis, Chief of Cheam
Swalasset, Chief of Katzie
Celestin, Chief of Langley
Basile, Chief of Whonnock
George, Chief of Matsqui
Ketakalem, Chief of Sumas
Sam, Chief of Lackaway
Ialempkalem, Chief of Squeam
Bill, Chief of Tlaltwaas
Modest, Chief of Schuye
Joseph, Chief of Kwawkwawapilt
Tahoulacha, Chief of Yukyukwioose
Etienne, Chief of Squahla
Capt. John, Chief of Scowlitz
Bob, Chief of Chehalis
Charley, Chief of Squatits
Auguste, Chief of Ohamil
Bernard, Chief of Aywawwis (Union bar)
Lucien, Chief of Kuthlath (Yale)

And 25 other chiefs from Squamish, Sliammon, Klahoose, Tsawwassen and the Lillooet and Thomson tribes.

Source: British Columbia, Provincial Secretary. Letters received (1874) No. 510. See also, B.C. Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875. Victoria: 1875 pp. 137-138.

Appendix I.

Ditchburn Letter, Dated August 29, 1913

In your letter of the 17th of April last (1913) you asked me to state the methods I considered it would be well to adopt with a view to the discontinuance of the potlatch practice amongst the Indians.

As Section 149 of the *Indian Act* deals very clearly with this matter I would say that the time is opportune for this clause to be put into force, and that all Indian Agents and Dominion Constables in the employ of the Indian Department should be informed that the section of the Act pertaining to the potlatching or the giving or receiving of presents as defined by said section must be rigidly observed. They should be instructed, in the first place, to notify the Chiefs of the various Bands in their agencies that the Department intends to stop this pernicious practice. If this is done I am satisfied that it will have a very beneficial effect.

Although the section above referred to has been on the statute books for a number of years I presume that those in charge of Indian Affairs in British Columbia in the past have had their own good reasons for not insisting that it be put into force. I may say that I am informed by numerous missionaries that there are a great number of the younger Indians throughout the Province who would be only too willing to give the custom up, but cannot do so owing to the influence of the older people; that if the Department issues the decree that potlatching is to cease it will give them their excuse for helping to put it down, or, in other words, not taking part in them.

The potlatch has baneful effects on the Indians in several respects, notably:-

A great deal of time and money is wasted that might be otherwise utilized in the improvement of their habitations, and surroundings; it necessarily brings large gatherings of Indians together who have to live in unsanitary and crowded conditions, much sickness and very often death following in the wake of these celebrations; at such gatherings it is not an unusual occurrence that considerable liquor finds its way to the Indians.

You have already notified Agent Halliday of the Kwawkewlth Agency along this line of action referred to. All other agents as well as the Constable should also receive such instructions.

I am of the opinion that it would also be advisable that the Attorney General of British Columbia should be notified as to this proposed line of action and request that the Provincial Police Force shall cooperate in this work.

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, Western Series, Volume 3629, File 6244-2. Public Archives of Canada

Appendix J.

Chilliwack Progress December 18, 1901

On the little tract of land owned and occupied by an old Indian named Joe, there has been rising a strange looking building. The builders have taken all summer to rear it. Its architecture is not of the Egyptian, Norman nor Gothic style, but is nevertheless quite ancient. Not more antique is its style of architecture than the purpose for which it was built. With one foot in the greave "old Joe " has scraped and saved for years in order to procure money sufficient to build this dance house.

Last week about two hundred Indians congregated at the invitation of Joe, and had a great feast and dance. These retrogressive performances are periodic with the natives, and no amount of persuasion and inducement by their most respected missionary will prevent them from indulging the whim. However lightly we may regard their practice it is a matter of no levity with them. They claim that ages ago, the great Spirit gave them this disposition to dance, or as they call it the "yowen" while under the influence of Yowen they claim they cannot resist his power over them and must do just as he wills, whether it be to dance, to feast, to "potlatch" or what else. During these periodic visits of the spirit the older Indian may often be heard while walking along the road, or going about his work waling in a weird voice, some ancient air of his long departed forefathers. It is expected that many meetings will be held during the winter in the dance house here, and needless to say, this brings sadness to the heart of the Missionary. This spirit is abroad amongst the Indians of our valley now, rumours of their congregating in other parts reaches our ears from time to time. In fact it would seem that the Spirit's influence is not confined to the benighted Indian but some of the whites are similarly affected.

Source: Chilliwack Progress. December 18, 1901. (page 4) Sardis News Notes

Appendix K.

Chilliwack Progress November 26, 1902

The Indians congregate frequently at the dance house of old Joe, near Mr. Crankshaw's, to perform their feast-dance in response to the prompting of the spirit they call "Yowen"...

Old Joe, the Indian near Mr. Crankshaw's, gave a potlatch one night last week, or rather one morning as the affair was postponed, and dancing and feasting engaged in all night till the Constable left. As soon as the officer of the law was out of the way, old Joe, "Potlatched" ten blankets and a number of Indian manufactures to his friends. These fellows are growing bold and should be dealt with summarily by the law. Another great "Feast" is to be given by Uslick, about Christmas time. They announce these affairs as feasts, but they potlatch on the sly. It is reported by one who knows that they have strong drink also.

Source: Chilliwack Progress. November 26 1902. (page 4) Sardis News Notes

Appendix L.

Letter to Simon Pierre

Department of Indian Affairs to Simon Pierre, 30 December 1914.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 15th instant adverting to the petition of the seventh September last, signed by a number of Indians of the New Westminster, Kwawkewlth and Cowichan agencies and forwarded to the Department with your note of the 10th of that month, on the subject of the potlatch.

I may say in connection therewith that a great deal of thought has been given to the matter of the potlatch, and the Indians can depend upon it that the Department has considered the subject with a perfectly sympathetic mind, viewing the matter from all points, and that nothing has been done that is not in the best interests of the Indians.

There may possibly be some misconception in the minds of the Indians as to the scope of the restrictive legislation. The law prohibiting the potlatch is comprised in sub-section 1 of section 149 of the *Indian Act*, which reads as follows:-

“Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourage either directly or indirectly another to celebrate any Indian Festival, dance or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying or giving back of money, goods, or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles takes place before at, or after the celebration of the same, or who engages or assists in any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for term not exceeding six month and not less than two months. Provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the holding of any agricultural show or exhibition or the giving of prizes, for exhibits thereat.”

It is clear that the purpose of this enactment was to stop the degrading practices of mutilating dead or living animals and also to terminate the wasteful practice of giving presents which tend to impoverish the givers and eventually the whole community. Sports or amusements which do not interfere with the serious business of obtaining a livelihood are not objected to by the Department, so long as they are properly conducted. It is not the intention to countenance any dances which, owing to their objectionable features, have been declared illegal.

The Department feels that in trying to keep the Indian in line with the advance of civilization, it should have the support of the chiefs and principal men of the different tribes in the Province. It is only a question of time when all the Indians of the Province will see this matter in its proper light. And in the meantime in its efforts towards improvement the Department will be glad to have the support of the more enlightened members of such bands as are still backward in the matter.

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, RG 10, Western Series Black, Volume 3629, File 6244-3. Public Archives of Canada

Appendix M.

Petition Supporting Anti-Potlatch Law

We the undersigned Chiefs and principal men of the Stulo, Sechelt, Squamish and other Indian Tribes make the following statement:-

- (1) That the *Indian Act* should be amended so as to prevent Potlatches, dances and other Pagan ceremonies carried on from time to time by some of the Indians in this vicinity, and provision made for imposing a penalty on those who take part in such festivities.
- (2) That a number of the Stulos of the Lower Fraser, and Pagan Indians from other bands have held such dance or potlatches almost continuously during the winter, from December last until the beginning of March of the present year.
- (3) That such gatherings tend to demoralize the Indians and incur very heavy expenses which they can ill afford to pay, the loss of valuable time and also, these gathering are very often the cause of the spread of contagious diseases amongst them.

Besides it is recognized fact that the Indians who attend such festivals do not become civilized or adapt themselves to the changing conditions caused by civilization, as rapidly as those who do not; and it makes our hearts feel sad to see the little boys and girls with their faces painted, attending such places in company with their parents, and participating in these festivities.

- (4) That these same ceremonies or festivals were shown to be superstitious, by the initiation of two dances which proceed on the assumption that some of them have been dead or in a trance for several days, according to the Indian belief.
- (5) That the number of Indians participating in these gatherings is increasing every year, to the great detriment of civilization and progress amongst them
- (6) That the undersigned Chiefs and principal men of the bands aforesaid, being very grieved at this state of affairs, earnestly pray that the *Indian Act* be amended, and carried into effect, in order that this regrettable superstitious practice may, if possible, be abolished, and we the undersigned, your humble petitioners, will ever pray.

Signed by some 85 or so Chiefs and "principal" men of Coquitlam, Langley, Katzie, and Cheam bands.

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, Western Series, RG 10, Volume 3629, File 6244-3. Public Archives Canada

Appendix N.

Petition in Favor of *Milha*

Coast Salish Petition in Favor of the Indian Dance, Katzie Reserve, 1914

We the Indian Chiefs and Sub Chiefs and main men of the various Indian tribes of the Province of B.C. hereby make our plan and petition to the Government of Canada in regards to our Native Custom as Indians and children of the forest, that we want our old custom to stand by without not alteration whatever, and we strongly submit the following reason.

1st. God created us here and it was the Almighty that put us here, and it is our fashion, each nation has dance of their own, and no one stops them. The Indian Dance is our Native dance, which has been followed up from time Immemorial up to this point.

2nd. It is indeed that we paint our faces red, but it is our Ancestors fashion. And that's why when the first white people saw us Indians, we were call redmen.

3rd. The Indian Dance does not interfere with no religion whatever, nor it don't disturb no man or person, nor it don't harm no body.

4th. Peoples don't understand our Custom says that we spend all our earnings and waste our money away for nothing. But this is not so. What we spend is to be returned back sometime in the future.

5th. We know it is the Missionary is against our Custom, but this don't interfere with them, for we don't invite them or any of them to spend their time with us in our fashion and it is them that's petitioning the Government to stop our custom. While they do not understand us, we are Indians and they are whites. Indians don't understand white man's fashion and white man don't understand our fashion, and they can't live as Indians does.

6th. We Indians don't dance our dance all the year round. But just for a short space of time from 2 to 3 month. But not every night and when we this is over its over. We don't dance any more until the next year.

7th. We want to be protected by the Government that there will be no intoxicant to be brought among to where there is a gathering of Indians, as this has been done by whites or by non residence Indians has intoxicants hid somewhere for sale or to be given away just to raise trouble or disturb the Indians. As this is the only trouble that occurs among some places by white and non resident Indians and they should be punished heavily.

We earnestly pray to the Government of Canada to take consideration of our plan and petition as the Government knows this is our own and it is our fashion. We did not imitate it from no nation but our own and we don't see where we have harm anybody to be stopped. There are people reporting saying some sever words against us and what we've' done harm to them we don't see. Therefore we can't see why we should be prohibited as we don't harm or interfere with nobody or don't harm no nationality. But we dance our dance among ourselves and in a peaceful manner and it is ours.

This petition was signed by Chief Johnny of Musqueam many others of the Musqueam village, several Chiefs of the Squamish tribe, Chief Hary Joe and others from Tsawassen, and several from Saanich, Cowichan, Chemainus, and Nanaim. It was also signed by a delegation of Kwakiutl Chiefs from cape Mudge, Campbell river, and Salmon River. Old Pierre Peter, Simon Pierre, and Frank Pierre of Katzie were the only Stalos to have signed petition.

Source: Department of Indian Affairs, Western Series, Volume 3629, File 6244-3. Public Archives of Canada.