

Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development and the Changing Nature of our Relationships
Within the Ha'hoolthlii of our Ha'wiih

by

Clifford Gordon Atleo
Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2008

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Human and Social Development

© Clifford Gordon Atleo, 2010
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development and the Changing Nature of our Relationships
Within the Ha'hoolthlii of our Ha'wiih

by

Clifford Gordon Atleo
Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2008

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Indigenous Governance Program
Supervisor

Dr. Waziyatawin, Indigenous Governance Program
Departmental Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Indigenous Governance Program

Supervisor

Dr. Waziyatawin, Indigenous Governance Program

Departmental Member

This thesis examines Nuu-chah-nulth economic development and the changing nature of the relationships within our territories - the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih* - since Europeans first arrived and the occupation of our lands and waters by Settlers. I explore the implications of these changing relationships on Nuu-chah-nulth identity and our relational obligations within a worldview that understands that *Heshookish tsawalk* – “Everything is one.” I take a process-oriented perspective on identity beginning with the premise that *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is more powerful and significant than simply being Nuu-chah-nulth. The recent proliferation of controversial economic development activities within Nuu-chah-nulth territories has spurred my interests in these issues. The form of economic development has some key characteristics that concern me. The first is that the economic development projects under way are of a particularly harmful and unsustainable nature. The second is the emerging trend of Nuu-chah-nulth partnerships in these ventures, epitomizing what I characterize as Aboriginal economic development. Instead of opposing development that threatens our traditional and adaptive practices, we are now involved as proponents and participants. To my surprise, these trends are not merely recent manifestations, but go back all the way to the arrival of Captain James Cook on our shores in the eighteenth century. At the heart of my research is our historically extensive participation in the various coastal commercial fisheries that have dramatically declined in recent decades. The purpose of this thesis is to create greater understanding of our present predicaments, re-evaluate our sense of agency, and encourage further critical debate on the potentially harmful economic development projects that will allow us to re-evaluate and heal our relationships within our territories.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Dedication	vi
Chapter One – Introduction	1
Terminology	7
Changing Nuu-chah-nulth Livelihoods	14
Today’s Challenge: Aboriginal Economic Development	17
Methodology	25
Chapter Layout	27
Chapter Two – <i>Living</i> Nuu-chah-nulth-aht	29
The Nuu-chah-nulth-aht	29
<i>Living</i> a Nuu-chah-nulth-aht Life	38
<i>Living</i> Nuu-chah-nulth At Home	40
Nuu-chah-nulth Governance	42
Our Political Legacy	46
Chapter Three – Changing Nuu-chah-nulth Livelihoods	49
Dreams of a Life of Fishing	49
Pre-Occupation Nuu-chah-nulth Relationships with the Sea	57
Living With Our Animal Relatives	60
Colonial Pressures and Influences	64
Selling Our Relatives – The Industrial Hunt for Sea Otters, Whales, Seals, and Fish ..	66
The Rise and Fall of the Nuu-chah-nulth Commercial Fishery	68
The Implications so far: Hoquotist and Kwisahat	73
Chapter Four – Aboriginal Economic Development in Nuu-chah-nulth Territories	77
From Fishers to Farmers...of Fish	77
War in the Woods, Clayoquot Sound and the Central Region Agreements	86
Neocolonial Environmentalism	90
Chitaapii: When the Sacred is no Longer Sacred	94
Mining: A Dirty Business	97
Chapter Five - Conclusion	101
Thesis Summary	102
The Future	104
Bibliography	109

Acknowledgments

Many people are responsible for helping me complete this thesis. First, I would like to thank my fellow Nuuchahnulth who were kind enough to share their stories and wisdom. Kleco to Wickaninnish, Alan Dick, Chuuchkamalthnii, Sah'haa, Johnny Mack, Chaw-win-is, José Robinson, Marge Robinson, Emily Recalma, Doug Atleo, A-in-chut, Gordon Dick, and Ha'wiih'thlup. Extra thanks are extended to Chaw-win-is and Johnny Mack for their feedback and suggestions. Thanks also to Dr. Don Hall for his help with the facts and figures of Nuuchahnulth fisheries. I also want to thank my supervisory committee and the faculty at the Indigenous Governance Program: Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Dr. Waziyatawin, and Dr. Taiaiake Alfred. My supervisor, Dr. Jeff Corntassel, deserves special recognition for his tireless support and critical feedback. I want to thank Dr. Ana Maria Peredo for her support and encouragement as well as the staff at the Centre for Co-operative and Community Based Economy. I want to acknowledge the WSANEC, Lekwungen, and Secwepemc peoples for allowing me to live, learn, and work in their territories. Thanks to the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council for their support of my academic pursuits over the years, and especially the staffs at the NTC and Ahousaht Post Secondary departments for making it all possible. Thanks to the Indigenous Governance Program staff – Lisa Hallgren, Angela Polifroni, and Mick Scow for all their hard work and making the IGOV program and my experience smooth and enjoyable. I want to thank my fellow IGOV students, past and present for pushing me to become a better critical Indigenous scholar.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my family. I thank them for all their love and support. I could not have wished for two greater parents or a more wonderful sister. I love and appreciate you very much. To my nephew, Kashus, may you grow strong, compassionate, and generous like your parents. Thanks to Matilda, Ken, Priscilla, Noelani, Tristan, and Robert for being such an important part of my father's life, and mine as well. Kleco to my mother's family and the house of Nishaywaaxs. I will not forget my obligations in Kitselas territory. Thanks to Margo van der Touw for her support, encouragement, and gentle reminders to stay connected to home. Thanks to Nicole Cross, Dustin Rivers, and Joseph Isaac. The love and care they possess for their communities is a constant inspiration. And to Hilary Whetung Cole, words cannot express my eternal gratitude. Your love, patience, support, and wonderfully critical mind have made this experience more challenging, fulfilling, and enjoyable than I ever could have imagined.

Chapter One – Introduction

My Nuu-chah-nulth relatives tell me that the first questions we ask upon meeting someone new are, who are you and where are you from? Knowing the answers to these questions provides us with crucial context that helps us establish a respectful relationship. Knowing the answers to these questions allows us to proceed confident and secure. Therefore, allow me to properly introduce myself. *Uuklaasish Na'cha'uaht. Histukshitl Ahous. Maa-asuuk Tlakishpitl*. My Nuu-chah-nulth name is Na'cha'uaht. In English it means, “Everyone is watching you” and it was given to me by my cousin, A-in-chut, a hereditary chief from the Nuu-chah-nulth nation of Ahous.¹ A-in-chut's father, Umeeek is my uncle and my father's eldest brother. My father is Wickaninnish and he is the son of the late Elsie Robinson and Mark Atleo. I am from the House of *Tlakishpitl* (Whale fat), from Ahous. On my mother's side, I am Tsimshian. My mother is Edna Atleo (nee Bolton) and she is from the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations and the House of Nishaywaaxs. My maternal grandparents are the late Edward Bolton and Charlotte Bolton (nee Harrison). My Tsimshian name is Kam'ayaam – “Only Imitating Raven.” It is important that you know who I am as I offer this thesis, reflection, and critique so that I am accountable for my words. I offer them openly and with respect and humility. Not everyone will agree with what I write, but my hope is that we can all share our views respectfully, yet candidly so that our discussions are enriched and meaningful as we navigate our way together through constantly changing times.

I wish to comment briefly on the nature of offering critical perspectives within an Indigenous community. Toquaht legal scholar Johnny Mack writes, “My responsibility lay not in

¹ Although the name “Ahousaht” is most commonly used, this is somewhat of a misnomer as the “aht” as the end implies that one is from that particular place, therefore the correct term is “Ahous,” which I use here.

whether or not to render critique, but rather in how I deliver it.”² Mack has at various times been concerned about the political and economic activities in his community and recognizes the challenges faced by Indigenous people with dissenting opinions. Reflecting on his experiences he says, “Those few times that I have spoken up, I (was) dismissed as an arrogant troublemaker, influenced by the ideas of people whose experience is too remote to hold relevance to our situation.”³ Mack identifies three main impediments to developing an Indigenous critique that he calls the “calm waters complex,” the “callous warrior complex,” and the “convention complex.”

Mack describes these complexes:

The calm waters complex likely arises out of an unhealthy aversion to conflict, stemming from the social disruption of the residential school experience and the many social ills (incarceration rates, morality rates, alcoholism and addiction problems, communal and familial violence, etc—all outlined in the RCAP) that keep our collective and individual confidence low. The callous warrior complex arises out of the same situation but falls to the other extreme by responding with a visceral and unreflective forcefulness to what are often only irritations or vaguely perceived threats to one's position. The convention complex reflects the situation of someone who tries to walk between these extremes and offers more thoughtful and sensitive criticisms, but allows the normative and institutional apparatuses imposed by the settler society or developed under the hegemonic conditions of settler rule to circumscribe and thus neutralize its impact.⁴

I endeavour to keep these complexes in mind as I deliver my critique of Aboriginal economic development, and like Mack work towards developing a respectful Nuu-chah-nulth critique that is relevant to the communities we call home.

This thesis looks at the changing livelihoods of the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht since contact and the cultural implications of our current participation in various forms of economic development.

I recognize that the term “livelihood” is not without its limits and complications, but it is my

² Johnny Mack, *Academic critique as self-practice: Developing a Nuu-chah-nulth approach to Research*, (unpublished paper, 2010), 11.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

intent to broaden the scope of this term to encompass a richer understanding of our relationships with all of Creation and how Nuuchahnulth sustained their families and communities for thousands of years. I do not use the term in the way one might understand “jobs,” as simply an isolated aspect of contemporary living. At the heart of my inquiry are the changing nature of our relationships, the external pressures on those relationships, the principles that guide our decisions, and the implications of those changes and decisions. By livelihood, I mean how we live our lives, including our relationships with kin, community, and the animals and plants that feed us; I mean to understand how we live as Nuuchahnulth. Our relationships are reciprocal and include the responsibility on our part to ensure balance and true sustainability.⁵ It is my contention that by succumbing to a segregated view of life that includes work, leisure, school, play, volunteerism, and spiritual time, we open ourselves to the possibility of acting in ways contrary to our teachings of oneness, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. One example of this is the defense issued by the proponents of fish farms in our territories. It is stated that these fish farms, which were once vigorously opposed by Ahousaht fishers, now employ a high percentage of our people. We have arrived at a place where employment overshadows our responsibility not to harm the habitat of our sea relatives – wild salmon and other sea creatures adversely affected by the problems that come with intensive salmon aquaculture. Ironically and sadly, as the late *Tyee Ha’wiilth* of Ahousaht, Maquinna (Head Hereditary Chief Earl George) pointed out, “In the short period of a little more than a century, we have gone from using these things (land and sea life) for survival to being employees of large companies.”⁶ Those companies

⁵ The term sustainable needs some clarification. By “true sustainability,” I simply mean our ability to live in one place perpetually, without the need for incessant growth and unnecessary pressure on our ecosystem. I do not mean “sustainable development” as coined by the UN Brundtland Commission.

⁶ Earl Maquinna George, *Living on the Edge: Nuuchahnulth History From an Ahousaht Chief’s Perspective* (Winlaw: Sononis Press, 2005), 120.

may even talk about social and ecological responsibility, but at their core they are driven by growth and profit.

I am interested in the past, present, and future of the Nuu-chah-nulth communities from which I come. How do communities of self-sustaining people go from our own unique senses of health, wellbeing, and prosperity to unhealthy lifestyles and material poverty within a few generations? What does it mean to be Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and is it the same as it has always been or has it changed? How did our ancestors deal with changing times and livelihoods? How have our traditional values guided our decisions in the past? How might they guide us now? What are the implications of abandoning particular ways of living, rooted in our age-old values and responsibilities, and embracing newer, more destructive forms of economic development? I will address these questions as best I can, with the help of fellow Nuu-chah-nulth-aht – young and old – throughout the following chapters.

Although I grew up mostly in the city of Vancouver, I was exposed to the culture and traditions of my father's people from a young age, attending countless feasts and community gatherings. I spent summers with relatives on Vancouver Island and when I was old enough I went fishing commercially with my uncles and cousins. I remember speaking with my father about my fishing experiences and how things had changed from when he grew up on the boat. Perhaps not surprisingly, the work was harder in his day, but still, he always wanted to be fisherman, like his father. Admittedly, I had no such desires, but I do look upon my summers fishing on the west coast of Vancouver Island fondly. I learned a lot about myself, and life on the

water. I reflect on those experiences here, as well as those of many of my relatives who also lived as “saltwater people.”⁷

I also come at these issues from other perspectives as well, those of the political, bureaucratic, and academic. When I was in my late twenties and early thirties I worked for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) as a Treaty Process Manager. This experience exposed me to some of the internal political and bureaucratic workings of my father’s people, as well as the often-strained relations with the federal and provincial governments. Over my four-year stint with the NTC, I learned many things about the ideals and realities of community politics and development.⁸ I believe that this experience helps to temper any academic idealism of which I might be accused. One fact about our participation in the fishery that haunts me, and serves as a motivation throughout this project, is this: Prior to the commencement of modern treaty negotiations, and going back to a peak in the 1950s, there were more than two hundred Nuu-chah-nulth owned and operated fishing vessels.⁹ In 2004, it was announced that there were only ten left. Today, there are about seven and even less than that making a living through fishing alone.¹⁰ The decline is even more drastic when you consider that the Nuu-chah-nulth population has more than doubled over the same time period. And while commercial fishing is not strictly a traditional activity – certainly problematic in many ways, which I delve into below – it can be argued to be an adaptive practice that continues to connect us to a life on the ocean.

⁷ The term, “saltwater people” is a common one that I have heard at meetings and public events, expressed by coastal people to emphasize our connection to the sea.

⁸ It is noteworthy that I was fired from the NTC in 2005, primarily for expressing “political” views that they felt ran contrary to my position as a bureaucrat.

⁹ Don Hall, telephone interview, June 25, 2010.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Thirty years ago, despite the relentless impacts of colonization and technological change, you could still call the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, a “salt water people.” Our connection to the sea and sea life was maintained through persistent traditional and adaptive practices. Everyone had fish – frozen, jarred, dried, smoked – and access to plenty of other seafood that had sustained our people for thousands of years. Recollecting the harbour in Ahous, my cousin José remembers that every family had at least one fishing boat.¹¹ Today, more than sixty percent of Nuu-chah-nulth-aht live away from home and, perhaps more importantly, few people fish anymore. One is hard pressed to find a Nuu-chah-nulth fisher within one’s community, let alone one’s family. We often hire someone from outside the community to catch our food fish, simply because we lack the capacity to go get the fish ourselves – boats in some cases, and to a greater extent over time, knowledge.¹² Salmon, herring eggs, and other seafood are now rare “delicacies.” Even in communities where there is greater access to fish, as in the cases of Tseshaht and Hupacasath who fish the Somass River, many of our people are more concerned with selling their fish than they are preserving it for their own use. Times have changed, and within my lifetime I have seen my Nuu-chah-nulth people lose hold of our claim as “saltwater people.” Today, our communities partner with environmentally destructive and controversial fish farming and mining companies. These moves are deemed necessary compromises in the hopes of closing the socio-economic gap with other Canadians, given that we have been effectively removed from our traditional life ways and now require jobs like every other Canadian to survive. This represents a significant shift

¹¹ José Robinson, personal interview, Vancouver, BC, June 14, 2010.

¹² Even the term “food fish” is indicative of the segregation of the livelihood practices that I speak of. “Food fish” is now a legal term that arises out of Supreme Court of Canada cases like *Regina v. Sparrow*, that designate an Aboriginal right to fish for “food, social, and ceremonial” purposes that is distinct from strictly economic purposes.

away from political aspirations that were more about preserving unique ways of living than they are about fitting in or catching up to other Canadians.

Wickaninnish remembers when social assistance first came to Ahousaht. It was called “relief,” and it came in the form of canned meat, like Spam and Prem.¹³ When the federal Indian agents first dropped the cases of Spam on our docks the people laughed. They thought it was a joke. To outsiders, however, we seemed impoverished. The colonials thought we were backward and lacking in the individual acquisitiveness of their version of civilized people. They thought we were poor and in need of their charity. Well, we certainly were not poor and we did not need any help then, so long as the Settlers stayed out of our way. Today, however, many of us are poor and many of us do need help in order to meet our basic human needs. What happened? Wickaninnish says that when the laughter died down, eventually someone did take a case of the canned meat and, “It was like planting the first smallpox bug. A cancer took hold in our communities and never left.”¹⁴ Before I delve into who the Nuu-chah-nulth people are, our changing livelihoods, and the implications of Aboriginal economic development, for the purposes of greater clarity, I will provide a summary of the terminology that I use throughout this thesis.

Terminology

Although I am uncertain of its origins, the term **Aboriginal** is a very specific term in Canada defined by numerous legal cases and government laws. It includes Indians, Métis, and Inuit peoples and is tied to legal concepts such as Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights. It is also the

¹³ Ironically, we now joke about processed meats, calling fried Baloney “Indian round steak.”

¹⁴ Wickaninnish (Clifford Atleo, Sr.), personal interview, Port Alberni, BC, June 13, 2010.

favoured term of the government of British Columbia, I suspect for its narrowed definition and as a domesticating device away from initiatives like the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights. I do not use it interchangeably with other words like Indigenous, Indian or native. It is also worth pointing out that the term Aboriginal has been deployed by scholars Dr. Taiaiake Alfred and Dr. Jeff Corntassel as “Aboriginalism” that describes a particular posture taken on by otherwise Indigenous people that is co-opted and conciliatory.¹⁵

Ha’wiih is the plural term for our hereditary chiefs. The singular term is **Ha’wilth**. **Ha’hoonthlii** indicates all that exists within the territories of the Ha’wiih, including land, waters, people, animals, plants, and minerals. Ha’wiih are responsible for the care of all that exists within their respective Ha’hoonthlii. **Heshookish Tsa’walk** translates into “Everything is one” and is a foundational principle in the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview. **Iisaak** means respect.

I *try* not to use the term **Indian** unless referring to specific legally defined terms like Status Indian or *Indian Act*. From time to time, interviewees may use the term Indian as it has been commonly accepted in our communities, especially amongst the older generations. I use the term **Indigenous** when speaking generally of Indigenous peoples.

My use of **livelihood** is not without certain complications, but I feel it is a good entry point, to going beyond the narrower conceptions of employment, work, or jobs. I believe that it allows us to think of our relationships with all of Creation and our responsibilities, which might better be described as simply living a Nuu-chah-nulth life.

¹⁵ See: Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005 and Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, “Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism” in *Government and Opposition* 40, 4, 2005.

Mamulthnii is most commonly used in our communities to describe white people. It roughly translates into “people who live in boats/floating houses.” Today, it can be understood as our term synonymous with Settlers.

For my understanding of **neoliberalism**, I defer to Robert Young who defines it as the refinement of liberal economic policies, characterized by structural adjustments, trade liberalization, privatization, reduced social spending, increased foreign direct investment, emphasis on comparative advantage – usually cheap labour or cheap resources for export in the case of “underdeveloped” countries, and debt-servicing, all encouraged and enforced by Western institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹⁶ Maria Bargh also notes that neoliberalism is “defined as those practices and policies which seek to extend the market mechanism into areas of the community previously organized and governed in other ways.”¹⁷ This is critical, for it highlights the supplanting of our ways with foreign ways. Furthermore, it indicates our growing willingness to participate in many cases.

The **Nuu-chah-nulth** people are a group of interconnected communities, speaking a common language – albeit with significant dialectical differences in some cases – and shared cultural, social, and spiritual practices located on the west coast of Vancouver Island and the tip of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. Early historians wrongly labeled us as “Nootka,” which began with a misunderstanding when Captain Cook first anchored off our shores. I provide a more in-depth meaning of the actual word Nuu-chah-nulth in chapter two.

The **Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council** or the NTC for short is a political and service delivery organization that includes all of the Nuu-chah-nulth nations with the exceptions of

¹⁶ Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 44.

¹⁷ Maria Bargh, ed. *Resistance: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism* (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2007), 1.

Pacheedaht and the Makah in Washington State. The NTC began in 1958 as the West Coast Allied Tribes and incorporated in 1973 as the West Coast District Society of Indian Chiefs and changed their name to the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council in 1979.¹⁸

Quu’as’a is also written and talked about as Quu’as and Quu’as’minaa. It roughly translates as “real human being” and is used by Nuu-chah-nulth-aht when speaking specifically or generally about Indigenous people, perhaps not unlike the Haudenasaunee term Onkwehonwe, the Ojibwe term Anishinabeg, or the Cree term Nehiyo.

Wit’waak roughly translates into “Warriors.” The singular term is **Wiiuk**. According to Wickaninnish, the Wit’waak were the upholders of our laws. They also protected the people from outside threats.

Chitaapii is a mountain located within the *Ha’hoolthlii* of the Ahous Ha’wiih. It is also known to outsiders as Catface Mountain, located in Clayoquot Sound. Chitaapii was a place where Ahous warriors met and planned the war against Otsoos. According to Hayupinuulth, it is also the last known place a Thunderbird was seen swooping down from.¹⁹ Imperial Metals is currently partnering with Ahous to mine copper from Chitaapii. I will now elaborate further on the Nuu-chah-nulth people and what is to come in the following chapters.

Nuu-chah-nulth-aht: Saltwater People

I will now provide a brief overview of who the Nuu-chah-nulth people are and roughly sketch a picture of our values, principles, and worldviews. The Nuu-chah-nulth people or people “along the mountains,” as it is commonly understood, number approximately 8,000 and live on the west coast of Vancouver Island in what is now known as British Columbia, Canada. The Nuu-chah-

¹⁸ Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council website, < <http://www.nuuchahnulth.org/tribal-council/welcome.html>>.

¹⁹ Judith Lavoie, “Clayoquot band clashes over mining: Ahousaht cite need for jobs in allowing exploration for metals on ‘sacred’ land,” *Vancouver Sun*, April 16, 2010.

nulth people are closely related to the Ditidaht, also on Vancouver Island and the Makah in Washington State. All three closely related peoples share a unique whaling tradition that sets them apart from other northwest coast Indigenous peoples. Although the Nuu-chah-nulth have not whaled since the time of my great, great, great grandfather, Kiista, our relatives in Neah Bay captured a whale as recent as 1999. Suffice it to say, the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, like other coastal Indigenous peoples have had a strong historical relationship with the ocean. Nuu-chah-nulth communities moved with the seasons to harvest seafood travelling between the coast in the warmer months and moving in to calmer waters when it got colder. Even with the extensive Settler encroachment of the twentieth century, Nuu-chah-nulth people maintained strong relationships with the sea, whether travelling to the Pribilof Islands to hunt seals, gathering shellfish from our beaches or participating in the commercial salmon, halibut, and cod fisheries. I will get more into the evolution of these adaptive activities in a later chapter as well as discuss the values and principles that have informed our decisions, as well as the external influences that have effected those changes.

I wish to elaborate on some Nuu-chah-nulth words and concepts that are accepted in contemporary times as indicative of our particular worldview and value system. Perhaps one of the most common phrases reflecting a Nuu-chah-nulth worldview is *heshookish tsa'walk*, which means everything is one or everything is connected. Umeek stresses that this term is inclusive of all reality including the physical and metaphysical.²⁰ *Heshookish tsa'walk* is a fundamental concept to the Nuu-chah-nulth people constantly reminding us that all life, animate and inanimate, is connected and that none of our decisions are isolated. Chuuchkamalthnii prefers to

²⁰ Umeek (E. Richard Atleo), *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 45.

simply say that, “We are one.”²¹ In general terms, this is substantially different than the liberal, atomistic worldviews that would come with colonization. I am keenly interested in seeing Nuu-chah-nulth-aht continue to live with this understanding of interconnection, especially as the push for economic development increases in our territories, by Settlers and ourselves.

Another commonly invoked Nuu-chah-nulth word is *iisaak*, which basically means respect. *Iistaakstalth* means respectfulness. Ironically perhaps, one of the economic development ventures in Nuu-chah-nulth territories is called Iisaak Forest Products. Other similar Nuu-chah-nulth words/principles include: *ya’akstalth* (lovingness), *ha’hopstalth* (wisdom), *hopiitstalth* (helpfulness/caring) and *ap-haystalth* (kindness). Umeek states that the quality of relationships is very important and that, “It is good to be constantly reminded of the Nuu-chah-nulth teaching always to be friendly toward others. This teaching is more than an encouragement to smile at strangers or to shake hands when introduced to someone...it means, in practice, if someone comes to visit in your home, you are encouraged to be hospitable.”²² The relationship between principle and practice is critical here. I believe that our principles are envisioned to be unchanging, regardless of changing circumstances. Practices, on the other hand, are assumed to change over time, so long as they uphold our principles.

Nuu-chah-nulth people “clearly understood their roles and responsibilities...they were caretakers of the land and sea. They only took what they needed and nothing more,” reads a book published by the NTC.²³ The late George Clutesi from Tseshaht wrote on interconnection and intergenerational teachings,

²¹ Chuuchkamalthnii, telephone interview, June 9, 2010.

²² Umeek, 38.

²³ Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience*, 1996, ix.

Tales were used widely to teach the young...the importance of all living things, no matter how small or insignificant; and particularly to acquaint him with the closeness of man to all animal, bird life and the creatures of the sea. The young were taught...that there was a place in the sun for all living things.²⁴

Over time, it would seem that we have forgotten the closeness that Clutesi spoke of. I am speaking primarily of our willingness to engage in economic activities that threaten the health of our territories and the life within.

According to Umeek, the English word “potlatch” is derived from the Nuu-chah-nulth word *pachitle*, which means to give. Umeek states that Nuu-chah-nulth conceptions of generosity go beyond the Western romanticized images of Indigenous people, and that receiving is as important as giving.²⁵ Reciprocity and balance are central tenets of Nuu-chah-nulth life, an issue I will explore more deeply in chapter two.

Finally, I want to share a perspective on egotism and humility. Umeek tells a story about the failure of Ko-ishin (Raven) to accomplish a task due to his arrogance.²⁶ Only by humbling himself – transforming himself into a tiny, seemingly insignificant leaf – is he successful. Umeek writes, “Instead of being the greatest, he must become the least.”²⁷ Many Nuu-chah-nulth spiritual practices involve acts and rituals of humility, especially as we seek guidance and support from the spiritual realm. I have to be careful here, for I am not trying to draw a clear distinction between the physical and spiritual realms, certainly not historically. As Umeek has reminded us, *heshookish tsa 'walk*, everything is one.

²⁴ George Clutesi, *Son of Raven, Son of Deer: Fables of the Tse-shaht People* (Sidney: Gray's Publishing, 1968), 9-10.

²⁵ Umeek, 39.

²⁶ I use the male gendered pronoun, “his” because Umeek refers to Ko-ishin as “he,” but for all we know the trickster may be a “she.”

²⁷ Ibid 13.

I hope to cut through the stereotypical conceptions of Indigenous identity and get to the heart of what *we* believe are Nuu-chah-nulth ways of living. The stand I take on identity is one that is closely tied to those ways of living. Our actions, in all facets of our lives – including contemporary economic development initiatives, must be measured against our age-old principles. I contend that some of our actions may be inconsistent with the principles that we purport are fundamental to who we are as Nuu-chah-nulth-aht. To my surprise, this phenomenon is not as recent as I had expected, and that fundamental changes to our ways of living began immediately at the point of contact with the early Europeans. I feel that we have lost our way. My father, Wickaninnish, states that we are *Hoquotist*: “Our canoe has tipped over” and we are still in the water and disoriented.²⁸ How then, do we go about righting our canoes and restoring balance and fulfilling our responsibilities? After a clearer understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth worldviews in chapter two, I will look at our changing livelihoods and the ongoing impacts of colonization. I will then look at what I believe to be the most potent and insidious challenge our people have ever faced: Aboriginal economic development.

Changing Nuu-chah-nulth Livelihoods

Accurately determining pre-contact practices is difficult, if not impossible. Citing early colonial and Settler texts, Richard Inglis and James Haggarty refer to a number of anthropologists and historians that attempt to piece together traditional Nuu-chah-nulth life based on the early recordings of people like Captain James Cook and Mowachaht captive, John Jewitt. Inglis and Haggarty warn however that, “By assuming that these early descriptions reflect traditional

²⁸ Johnny Mack, “Hoquotist: Reorienting Through Stories Practice,” forthcoming in Hester Lessard, Rebecca Johnson, and Jeremy Webber, eds. *Storied Narratives of Contact and Arrival in Constituting Political Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

cultural patterns, anthropologists and historians have misinterpreted the magnitude and intensity of cultural change in the first decades of recorded history in Nootka Sound.”²⁹ Our lives began to change immediately as imperial powers like Great Britain and Spain vied for control over colonial trade. The interference of emerging colonial powers like Canada and the United States soon followed. Johnny Mack writes, “For 150 years, great efforts have been taken to change the way we relate to each other and the territory to which we belong. We would be wise to acknowledge that these efforts have been somewhat successful in their aims.”³⁰ Thus we are tasked with looking critically, not only at the Settler accounts, but also our own. This does not mean that I will dismiss out of hand any account, but that each one will be examined carefully. As previously mentioned, the disconcerting changes to our relationships within the *Ha’hoolthlii* of our *Ha’wiih* began much earlier than I had anticipated. At the same time, I do not want to discount the validity of the oral histories that reflect our perspective on the lives and lessons of our ancestors. In many ways, these may be the most accurate and relevant of all.

When I consider the often-repeated teachings of *heshookish tsa’walk* and *iisaak*, I find it hard to believe that a people who believe in the oneness of all things and respect could support, and partner with fish farms in Ahousaht territories. Equally baffling is how we could similarly partner with a mining company that seeks to dig for copper from Chitaapii.³¹ It is not my intent to vilify the decisions of my relatives back home, but I do seek to understand and offer a critical perspective intended to encourage further discussion and debate. How did we arrive at this point? As mentioned previously, there was a time not that long ago when all of our people survived

²⁹ Richard Inglis and James C. Haggarty, “Cook to Jewitt: Three Decades of Change in Nootka Sound” in *Nuu-chah’nulth Voices, Histories, Objects and Journeys*, Alan L. Hoover (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000), 92.

³⁰ Johnny Mack, forthcoming 2010.

³¹ Chitaapii is more commonly known by its English name, Catface Mountain, located in Clayoquot Sound.

through our relationships with the sea and all that it has to offer. In exchange, our Ha'wiih fulfilled their responsibility not to take more than was necessary and to give back by actively caring for salmon habitat and spawning grounds, ensuring the sustainability of all the sea life that our people depended on.

What we know for certain is that our people lived in our present territories for thousands of years. I do not pretend that our ways of living were Utopian, but I do agree with Chuuchkamalthnii when he says, "Our own ways of being and beliefs are one hundred percent appropriate to this place."³² Also, I do not pretend that our people always knew what was best or acted accordingly. Our stories are told and retold so that our people are constantly reminded of the right way to live. Our ways embraced constant flux and renewal, and certainly considered the darker sides of human nature that needed to be accounted for, especially as we developed our laws and customs. The tales of Ko-ishin and his misadventures are rife with lessons on proper conduct, and our historical stories are also full of true accounts of the mistakes of certain ancestors and the consequences that are remembered today. These improper ways of behaving included things like arrogance, greed, short-sightedness, and cruelty among others. Conversely, humility, generosity, foresight, and kindness were encouraged. Again, I was surprised to learn that many of the changes that I lament about our current collective behaviours have older roots than I originally suspected.

Inglis and Haggarty write that, "Traditional subsistence and settlement patterns changed early and dramatically." Of particular interest to me was the increased trade in sea-otter pelts.³³ I find this interesting because we are often reminded that use of sea-otter pelts was the exclusive

³² Chuuchkamalthnii.

³³ Inglis and Haggarty, 93.

right of *Ha'wiih*. So it is not surprising that we traded them, because the *Ha'wiih* would have controlled the trade with the Europeans, but the rate at which we started to harvest them is what is alarming to me. This represents an early shift in behaviour that would only be the beginning of our changing relationships within the *Ha'hoolthlii*. With the increase in foreign ships from Europe and America, trading became a year-round activity that disrupted “traditional economic patterns.”³⁴ Inglis and Haggarty note that, “The economic focus (at Yuquot village) became sea-otter hunting and supplying the vessels with fresh fish, meat, berries, and vegetables. Manpower was scheduled away from traditional economic pursuits, to guard the vessels and thus prevent other groups from having direct access to the trade.”³⁵ The disruption of these traditional patterns, combined with the subsequent shift in focus to other resources sought by the foreigners eventually resulted in the first recorded food shortages amongst our villages.³⁶ Substantial shifts in behaviour produced imbalances that would have long-term consequences for our people. These patterns of disruption and alienation from traditional activities would continue from the late eighteenth century until the present. This is one lesson that we still have great difficulty with, and the external disruptions have not lessened. In fact, they have only intensified and the current incarnation is what I call Aboriginal economic development.

Today's Challenge: Aboriginal Economic Development

Why am I concerned about Aboriginal economic development? First, allow me to explain what I mean by Aboriginal economic development. As indicated in the terminology section, Aboriginal has some very specific meanings and limitations that are important here. A-in-chut, my first

³⁴ Ibid. 96.

³⁵ Ibid. 103.

³⁶ Ibid. 103.

cousin, *Ha'wilth*, *Tyee* of our house, and current National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations recently stated in a meeting with Toronto's business elite, "We're open for business" and that we (Indigenous people) "are out on the land, in areas where there are natural resources to be harnessed and processed."³⁷ He also stated that partnering with the business community is preferable to "lurching from conflict to conflict."³⁸ It was only a short time ago when Indigenous people assumed the role as defenders of the land – albeit in ways misunderstood by environmentalists and others – and in opposition to development that harmed our traditional ways of life. Today, Aboriginal groups are involved in all kinds of contemporary economic development – usually in partnership with *mamulthnii* corporations – including fish farming, forestry, oil and gas extraction and transportation, and mining. Why the shift? There are many reasons, and I will explore them in greater depth in chapter four, but for now I want to focus on the language of economic development and how Indigenous issues have been framed in the public sphere as a starting point.

Understanding the rhetoric of Aboriginal economic development is difficult because whether one is a conservative, liberal, traditionalist, moderate, capitalist, or radical, the rhetoric utilized by everyone is eerily similar. Roughly, the generalized rhetoric states that we are all heeding the wisdom of our ancestors and working in the interests of our descendents. Knowing this requires that we dig deeper. First, I want to review the words of Clarence Louie and the writings of Calvin Helin, two prominent ambassadors of Aboriginal economic development in British Columbia. I will also look at several government and academic initiatives that support

³⁷ Adam McDowell, "AFN chief says natives 'open for business'" *National Post*, January 20, 2010.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Aboriginal economic development as a means of Indigenous community revitalization, before getting into some examples directly connected with Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and our territories.

Under the leadership of Clarence Louie, the Osoyoos Indian Band is held up as a model of progressive First Nation community development. Louie believes that, “that there is one and only one priority for spending in First Nations communities: economic development, or, more simply, wealth generation.”³⁹ According to Louie, “Economic development is how we hunt today. If you call yourself a leader, give all your people a chance at the dignity of a job, equal opportunity and the individual responsibility to earn a living.”⁴⁰ Louie laments the culture of dependence that plagues Indigenous communities and states that, “Native people, over the years, have fed into that system.”⁴¹ While the culture of dependence is certainly problematic, equating dignity with job attainment exemplifies just how far some of us have come in accepting the neoliberal values and practices that have spread around the globe. Louie’s blunt rhetoric makes him popular with right-wing Settler organizations like the Fraser Institute and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. Speaking on the success of his community’s businesses, Louie states simply, “It’s called the economy stupid!” He states further, “It’s time for native people to move forward and join the economy.”⁴² To his critics Louie replies, “There is no consensus in Indian Country. Business opportunities do not wait for consensus.”⁴³ Louie is not alone in Indian Country and there are many who seek to emulate his example. Again, if we look back far enough to the early contact period, this is not surprising, but it should be understood. People are no

³⁹ New Relationship Trust website. Accessed October 31, 2008. <<http://newrelationshiptrust.ca/about/2006-regional-engagement-process/chief-clarence-louie>>

⁴⁰ Calvin Helin. *Dances with Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self-Reliance* (Vancouver: Orca Spirit Publishing & Communications, 2006), 235.

⁴¹ New Relationship Trust.

⁴² Patricia Robertson. “A new native leadership calls for self-help” *Globe and Mail*. March, 20 2007, F2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

longer concerned about losing their lives, however. Today, most people are primarily concerned about losing their jobs.

Calvin Helin is another voice for economic development as an emancipatory tool for Native communities. Tom Flanagan⁴⁴ describes Calvin Helin as a pioneer of a “small but growing section of the aboriginal community that espouses self-reliance, open and democratic self-government, and progress through integration into the Canadian economy.”⁴⁵ In *Dances With Dependency*, Helin describes the history of Indigenous peoples in terms of “waves.” The “first wave” of pre-contact Indigenous prosperity and independence is followed by a “second wave” of early contact with European Settlers and a “third wave” of relations with the Canadian state characterized by dependence that continues today.⁴⁶ Helin proposes a “fourth wave” of opportunity that ultimately seeks to, “make the lives of ordinary indigenous people better.”⁴⁷ Like Louie, Helin selectively utilizes tradition and conveniently sets it aside when it does not fit. I question whether these actions are adaptive *or* assimilative. Is it possible for our actions to fundamentally alter who we are as quu-as-a?

Helin critiques the current Indian band council system as being pathologically dependent on federal money and in some cases undemocratic and corrupt. He suggests democratic reforms that call for transparency and accountability.⁴⁸ Nowhere in his recommendations does he call for a respect for or reinstatement of traditional Indigenous governing institutions. Instead he calls for

⁴⁴ Tom Flanagan, along with fellow editors, Terry Anderson and Bruce Benson recently published a book exhorting the benefits of private property and privatization for Aboriginal people, titled, *Self-Determination: The Other Path for Native Americans*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. This in combination with the recent decision by the Nisga’a Lisims government to allow for private property for the purposes of accessing money (debt) are consistent with a troubling trend in Indigenous Country.

⁴⁵ Tom Flanagan, “A Roadmap for Aboriginal Self-reliance,” *Fraser Forum*, September 2007, 29.

⁴⁶ Helin, 16-17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 255.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 260.

standard liberal democratization reforms, implicitly accepting the relevance of liberal political values and institutions. Helin also calls for “economic integration” in the name of “progress.”⁴⁹ When challenged on this Helin replies, “While it is possible that business development may negatively impact indigenous culture, the same question might be asked as to whether Chinese, Japanese, or Jewish people are less Chinese, Japanese, or Jewish because they engage in business?”⁵⁰ No, but Chinese, Japanese, and Jewish peoples as we know them today are connected with state governments that each have their own history of subordinating Indigenous peoples. I believe that Helin falls into the trap that regards Indigenous peoples simply as “minorities,” ignoring the more fundamental questions of legitimacy and justice. Finally, Helin calls for Indigenous participation in logging, mining, and oil and gas development. With their long-term devastating ecological implications this advice is completely unconscionable, but in today’s neoliberal climate, it becomes compelling for many of our leaders.

Numerous government and academic institutions also back up the messages of Louie and Helin and the machine of economic development. Published in 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) report called for a renewed relationship with Indigenous people based on respect, recognition, “justice, change, inclusiveness, cultural diversity and enlightened self-interest.”⁵¹ The RCAP report tried to recognize the problematic notions of “progress” and “development”⁵² but still struggled with the clash of worldviews:

Volume 2 addresses various means by which Aboriginal economies can be put on a stable footing though mixed economies that rely in part on *traditional* modes of

⁴⁹ Ibid. 171-172.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 171.

⁵¹ *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Volume 1: Looking Forward, Looking Back* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group Publishing, 1996), xxiii.

⁵² Ibid, 2-3.

harvesting renewable resources and through fuller engagement of Aboriginal *individuals* and institutions in *wage* and *market* economies.⁵³

A follow-up report states, “Recent progress in economic development gives rise to hope for a brighter future. But the challenge of turning pockets of progress into a broad transformation of economic life for Aboriginal people remains immense.”⁵⁴ The report maintains that Indigenous people “must be helped to...manage businesses in specific sectors – resource extraction industries, agriculture, communications, tourism, and so on.” The RCAP report also suggests that Aboriginal youth be educated to achieve, “proficiency in the skills valued by contemporary society.”⁵⁵ From my perspective the future of Indigenous communities is cast as nothing more than an incidental collective of competitive individuals working in the “modern wage economy.” Support for Aboriginal economic development also comes from certain people within the academic community.

Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt created the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development in 1987 and are primarily concerned with why some Indigenous nations are economically successful while others are not.⁵⁶ According to Cornell and Kalt, more important than access to resources are matters of jurisdiction, “de-facto sovereignty,” and the building of stable governing institutions.⁵⁷ They also speak of a “cultural match,” which is achieved when an Indigenous community’s governing institutions are consistent with its cultural

⁵³ Ibid. 4. *Emphasis added.*

⁵⁴ *Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Restructuring the Relationship.* Accessed August 10, 2008. <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/rpt/rel_e.html>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ This particular vein of research is now being carried out by the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona by scholars like Manley Begay and Miriam Jorgensen.

⁵⁷ Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt. *Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development Challenge in Indian Country.* 10-20. Accessed July 5, 2008. <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/pubs/pub_120.htm>.

values, thereby creating legitimacy.⁵⁸ They write, “A ‘nation-building’ approach to development doesn’t say, ‘let’s start a business.’ Instead, it says, ‘let’s build an environment that encourages investors to invest, that helps businesses last, and that allows investments to flourish and pay off.’”⁵⁹ From this perspective, a cultural match between an Indigenous nation’s values and its governing institutions is somewhat incidental to the priority of providing stable institutions that encourage capital investment. This is what I find so troubling about the more recent economic developments in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. Our actions have become less about our relationships to the land and sea, and more about making money and plugging into a global system that prioritizes markets over peoples and places. Even when you consider the recent trend of greenwashing and public relations efforts made by some corporations – including partnerships with Indigenous peoples - business in Western capitalist terms still remains focused on the illogic of incessant growth.

The 2007 Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples report, *Sharing Canada’s Prosperity – A Hand up, Not a Hand Out*, in my view epitomizes the fusion between global capital and compliant governments in a form we know as neoliberalism. “Despite considerable efforts by successive governments to improve the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people, many continue to lag behind the rest of the Canadian population when measured against nearly every social and economic indicator.”⁶⁰ Framing the problem in terms of socio-economic gaps shifts the focus of community resurgence towards a neoliberal development approach. The report suggests that,

⁵⁸ Ibid. 19.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 8.

⁶⁰ *Sharing Canada’s Prosperity – A Hand up, Not a Hand Out*. p. vii. Accessed July 7, 2008.

<<http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/abor-e/rep-e/rep06-e.pdf>>

Where the seeds of economic action have taken root, they have blossomed. Guided by visionary leaders, these communities made the leap to the modern industrial economy, often in a single generation. These remarkable successes... have changed the future of communities and contributed to the economic well-being of entire regions.⁶¹

By stating that successful Indigenous communities have “made the leap to the modern industrial economy” the Senate report dismisses thousands of years of Indigenous life and holds up the contemporary global economic system as inevitable.

The Senate report encourages Indigenous peoples to be “realistic” and to “take advantage” and “exploit” opportunities and resources. While leaders of previous generations spoke of community resurgence on Indigenous terms, more of today’s leaders embrace the principles of neoliberalism. Chief Roland Willson of the West Moberly First Nation states, “We allow business to be business. We try to keep politics out of business. Politics is the quickest way to wreck anything.”⁶² Chief Willson exemplifies another example of the segregation of our lives that has come with colonization. We have gone from interconnected Indigenous governance and relationships to the apparent necessity of separating business and politics. Perhaps most disturbing, the Senate report states, “the Committee heard evidence that there is a cultural shift towards integration taking place in many Aboriginal communities across Canada.”⁶³ I am reminded of an account during the allotment process in the United States that attempted to individualize ownership of collective Indigenous lands. Merrill E. Gates speaking on behalf of “Friends of the Indian” stated,

We have, to begin with, the absolute need of awakening in the savage Indian broader desires and ampler wants. To bring him out of savagery into citizenship we must make the Indian more intelligently selfish before we can make him

⁶¹ Ibid. vii.

⁶² Ibid. 9.

⁶³ Ibid. 5.

unselfishly intelligent. We need to awaken in him wants. In his dull savagery he must be touched by the wings of the divine angel of discontent. The desire for property of his own may become an intense educating force. The wish for a home of his own awakens him to new efforts. Discontent with the tepee and the starving rations of the Indian camp in winter is needed to get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers – and trousers with pockets in them, and with a pocket that aches to be filled with dollars.⁶⁴

The current concerns about Aboriginal economic development and imbalance in the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview have very old roots indeed. I will explore Nuu-chah-nulth perspectives on these issues, examining historical changes in livelihood practices as well as contemporary challenges in the resource extraction sectors that specifically affect Nuu-chah-nulth people and territories throughout the following chapters. Before I proceed, I want share a few words on my research methodology.

Methodology

I incorporate three methods in answering my research questions:

1. Personal Interviews;
2. Research and analysis of scholarly sources and;
3. Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge acquisition methodologies.

I interviewed fourteen people, including thirteen Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and one non-Indigenous employee of the NTC. They offered a variety of perspectives on the issues of Nuu-chah-nulth identity, changing relationships, economic development, and the future. Interviewees included elders, traditional leaders, band bureaucrats, students, fishers, and traditional harvesters. Four of the interview participants were Nuu-chah-nulth women. Although, I would have liked to interview more, I believe they provide an important perspective that is often missing from the

⁶⁴ Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003), 131.

male dominated field of contemporary commercial fishing. Interviewees came from Ahousaht, Cheklesah, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, and Tseshaht. Most of the interviews took place in Nuu-chah-nulth territory on the west coast of Vancouver Island, while others were held in Vancouver, and Victoria. Some were done using the telephone, and clarifications or follow-up also occurred via email correspondence. In conducting my research, I complied with Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council *Research Ethics and Protocols*, the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, and Indigenous Governance principles and protocols. Not surprisingly, I both agreed and disagreed with many of the things my interviewees said. Interviews were conducted informally and conversationally to allow interviewees broad latitude in providing input and shaping my research findings. Family members and close friends were included among my interviewees, which is not inconsistent with the ethics protocols, and certainly unavoidable with a project like this that hits so close to home.

Although scholarly research in this area is rather limited and new, there exists a growing canon on economic development in Indigenous communities. Additional research has been gleaned from government reports and policy papers as well as those commissioned by Indigenous communities and organizations. Even more limited are critical works on Aboriginal economic development, but they do exist as well as other non-Indigenous critiques of globalization and capitalism by people like David Harvey and Vandana Shiva. Economic development has its proponents as well with people like Dambisa Moyo, Hernando de Soto, and Amartya Sen. My intent, however, is not to present a “balanced” perspective in the naïve hope of being objective, but rather to critically engage all parties in this debate, and put forward what I feel is a distinctly Nuu-chah-nulth perspective. Anti-imperial and postcolonial scholarship

supports the taking of sides, fully understanding that simply striving for objectivity in times of hegemony merely reinforces that hegemony.⁶⁵

Finally, I engaged a Nuu-chah-nulth method of understanding as described by my uncle, Umeeek. This includes spiritual practices that present a departure from typical academic methodologies. For guidance on this process, I sought respected Nuu-chah-nulth elders and spiritual leaders to help me. This element of my work coincides with my assertion that *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is more than simply a set of criteria and primarily about our actions and responsibilities. I hope that this further grounds my research in Nuu-chah-nulth ways and extends the relevance of my findings to the Nuu-chah-nulth communities from which I come. In this way my work and actions can be of service to my fellow community members as well as facilitating personal and communal accountability.

Chapter Layout

Chapter two takes a closer look at *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht. Informed by the limited writings available by Nuu-chah-nulth authors and recent interviews with fellow Nuu-chah-nulth citizens, I layout my understanding of what it means to live a Nuu-chah-nulth life. This is critical because I am interested in how our drastically changing livelihoods and relationships over the generations have impacted our conception of ourselves and our place in Creation. Chapter three looks closer at those changing Nuu-chah-nulth livelihoods and relationships – specifically how our relationships within our territories have changed over time. Chapter four explores the realization of Aboriginal economic development in Nuu-chah-nulth territories. Specifically, I examine the

⁶⁵ See Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, eds. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-oppressive Approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press/Women's Press, 2005.

cases of Clayoquot Sound and the War in the Woods, The Ahousaht-Mainstream fish farm protocol, and the copper mine atop Chitaapii proposed by Imperial Metals. Finally, I discuss the implications of these issues and briefly discuss existing and potential alternatives.

Chapter Two – *Living Nuu-chah-nulth-aht*

The Nuu-chah-nulth-aht

When I was about five or six years old I remember visiting my father’s village for a potlatch. Although I would attend many potlatches in Maaqtosis over the years, this particular occasion would stick with me.⁶⁶ I do not remember who hosted it or why, but I do remember a run-in with the local Ahous children. The bullying got to the point where my younger cousin Devon had to run for my sister – who is six years older than me - to come to my rescue and shoo away my tormenters. The other children were knocking me down in the tall grass outside Thunderbird Hall.⁶⁷ I remember my hands stinging from something prickly on the ground, but what stung most, in retrospect, what resonated with me over the years, was when they called me a “half-breed.” I remember that I yelled at them, as the tears streaked down my face, “I’m not a half-breed! My mom’s an Indian too!” Of course, my mom is Tsimshian from the villages of Kitselas and Kitsumkalum, but that did not matter to the bullies. All they knew was that my mom was not from there. I probably looked like a “city” kid as well, even at the age of five. My uncle Johnny Mack remembers being young and on the reserve and wishing that his skin was darker. He would go outside with the intention of getting dirty to have browner skin.⁶⁸ I share these anecdotes to highlight the daily impacts that colonization has had on our collective and individual identities. Indigenous identity remains a contentious issue not only in Indigenous-Settler interactions, but

⁶⁶ Although Ahous has a number of small reservations around Clayoquot Sound, the main village for the past several generations has been Maaqtosis.

⁶⁷ I’d like to report that when I was sixteen, six foot one, and came back to play for the Ahousaht junior basketball team, most of the same boys were much shorter and no one was bullying me anymore.

⁶⁸ Mack, June 11, 2010.

also amongst ourselves in our own communities. This is something I was keenly aware of as I conducted the research for this thesis.

I spent most of my early years living in the city of Vancouver with my parents and my sister, like many other Nuu-chah-nulth families. At present, more than sixty percent of Nuu-chah-nulth-aht live away from home. This number is consistent across Canada amongst other Indigenous communities as well. This has occurred for many reasons, including the fact that our children were shipped off to church-run residential schools for generations. Lee Maracle stresses that even if you set aside the abuses that our children suffered, simply removing them from our communities induced tremendous collective trauma. She asks us to think of what a village would be like, absent of school-age children for eighty years. In many ways it would appear dead.⁶⁹ Additionally, having been removed from many of our traditional livelihoods, Nuu-chah-nulth-aht find themselves needing to leave home to go to school and find work. Many communities also report a lack of housing. This is due in part to a lack of capital funding but also, in some cases, because our reservations are so small and lack the suitable space. Douglas Harris confirms that west coast reservations in particular are small because the colonials believed that we did not need large land bases because we relied so heavily on seafood to live.⁷⁰ Consequently, the colonials rationalized stealing a higher percentage of west coast Indigenous land.

Despite growing up mostly away from home, I developed a strong sense of Ahousaht identity by spending summers on Vancouver Island with my relatives.⁷¹ Jim Silver reports a similar trend across Canada stating that, “There appears to be a great deal of movement back and

⁶⁹ Lee Maracle publically speaking on *Oratory* at the University of Victoria, February 18, 2008.

⁷⁰ Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law, And Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 45.

⁷¹ The term “Away from home” was developed at the NTC as an alternative to “off-reserve” or “urban.” The rationale seems to be that being away from home feels less permanent and exclusionary than off-reserve or urban.

forth between urban and rural communities, in a circular fashion, as opposed to a one-way flow.”⁷² At first I would just go to visit and have fun and then later when I was in my early teens I would begin to work on my uncles’ fishing boats. I have not come to know as much about my mother’s people until much more recently.⁷³ I now feel a great deal of pride and connection with both my Tsimshian and Nuuchah-nulth families and communities, but the focus of this thesis is on the changing livelihoods of Nuuchah-nulth-aht and the implications of Aboriginal economic development on our identity and relationship with our homelands. Hence, we proceed to my first research question: What does it mean to be Nuuchah-nulth?

When I asked Chuuchkamalthnii what it meant to be Nuuchah-nulth, he gently corrected me by responding, “First of all, I’m Nuuchah-nulth-aht.”⁷⁴ According to Chuuchkamalthnii and others, the “aht” is added to the end of the nation to indicate that we are from that place. The Nuuchah-nulth people live along the west coast of Vancouver Island, numbering approximately eight thousand people from more than a dozen different communities. The Nuuchah-nulth nations as we know them today are: Ahousaht, Ditidaht⁷⁵, Ehattesaht, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht, Kyuquot/Cheklesah, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Nuchahtaht, Pacheedaht, Tla-o-qui-

⁷² Jim Silver, *In Their Own Voices: Building Urban Aboriginal Communities* (Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 15.

⁷³ A brief note on my mother’s side of the family. My mother grew up in Port Essington in Tsimshian territory with seven other siblings. Although her father was from Kitsumkalum, her mother was from the neighbouring village of Kitselas. Because of the sexist nature of the *Indian Act*, her family lived with her father’s community, even though her mother was from Kitselas and the Tsimshian are a traditionally matrilineal society. We have recently reconnected with Kitselas and revived our house of Nishaywaaxs, that had been dormant for several generations. This is where I get my name, Kam’ayaam.

⁷⁴ Chuuchkamalthnii.

⁷⁵ Although many Anthropological texts identify Ditidaht separately, and indeed their language dialect is rather distinct, they are a member of the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council and are considered by most locals to be of the Nuuchah-nulth people. It is worth noting that there are dialect differences, albeit to a lesser degree, amongst all Nuuchah-nulth nations and regions.

aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht, and Ucluelet.⁷⁶ Most Nuuchah-nulth people also consider our relatives in Washington State, the Makah in Neah Bay, to be Nuuchah-nulth as well. “Ahousaht” is therefore incorrectly, but commonly used to describe a place. The correct usage is to state that I am *from* Ahous, and that I *am* Ahousaht. This also applies to Nuuchah-nulth, which is a place, and to be of that place is to be Nuuchah-nulth-aht.

I also want to begin with a breakdown of the name, Nuuchah-nulth, because it is vital to understanding who we are and how we conceive ourselves. Commonly, it is translated as people “along the mountains” or “all along the mountains and sea” according to the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council website.⁷⁷ Chuuchkamaltnii believes this to be too simplistic a rendition and instead offers, “People from the arc of mountains jutting out of the sea.”⁷⁸ This version makes the most sense when approaching Nuuchah-nulth territories from the sea, which indicates an important part of Nuuchah-nulth life. The Nuuchah-nulth-aht were a sea faring people. I cannot help but use the past tense here, for reasons I will share shortly, but if we are to engage these matters honestly, we cannot ignore the fact that we do not have the same relationship with the waters that we used to. Unique amongst Northwest coast tribes, the Nuuchah-nulth-aht were the only ones to hunt whales, travelling in dugout canoes beyond the horizon.⁷⁹ Chuuchkamaltnii also reminded me that each village had a mountain of its own. Every canoe that travelled out to sea for whales or other seafood knew exactly where to come home to with these large, unmistakable landmarks. The key landmark mountain in Ahous territory is Chitaapii.

⁷⁶ I say, “as we know them today” because many Nuuchah-nulth nations are amalgamations of older tribes. Ahous for example is comprised of people from communities previously known as Manhousaht, Kelthmaht, Piniit-thlaht, Qwaacwi-aht, and O-inmitisaht.

⁷⁷ Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council website, <<http://www.nuuchahnulth.org/tribal-council/welcome.html>>.

⁷⁸ Chuuchkamaltnii.

⁷⁹ Philip Drucker, *Indians of the Northwest Coast* (Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1963), 16.

For centuries, we were known in the history books as “Nootka.” According to Umeek, this was due to a misunderstanding between Captain Cook and the first Nuu-chah-nulth-aht he encountered. Umeek writes,

According to oral history, the Mowachaht, who have lived in Nootka Sound for millennia, found Captain Cook apparently lost in the fog just outside Friendly Cove. Since English was not yet a locally required language, they provided him with directions to safe harbour in the Nuu-chah-nulth language. The Nuu-chah-nulth phrase employed for the occasion, *nutkh-she-ee*, which sounds a little like “noot’ka” when shouted from a distance over the sea, means “to turn around.” As the phrase gives no indication of direction, one can imagine that it was accompanied by a chorus of arms waving in large circles to indicate the route.⁸⁰

The anecdotal version of this tells of the Mowachaht yelling at Cook that he was going to run aground, emphasizing the fact that Cook and his people were indeed strangers to this land. This would be the first of many misunderstandings. Now I want to share how my interviewees responded to the question: What does it mean to be Nuu-chah-nulth-aht?

According to Chuuchkamalthnii, to be Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is to share a common belief system and teachings. Nuu-chah-nulth-aht are taught to be friendly, generous, and hospitable. Chuuchkamalthnii spoke at length of the importance of greeting people in a friendly and open way. He advises, “Treat people like they matter. You may not know them or even like them, but greet them in a friendly way.”⁸¹ Umeek concurs, writing,

It is good to be constantly reminded of the Nuu-chah-nulth teaching always to be friendly toward others. This teaching is more than an encouragement to smile at strangers or to shake hands when introduced to someone today. It means that, in practice, if someone comes to visit in your home, you are encouraged to be hospitable. Usually, this will mean putting on the tea or coffee in between mealtimes or serving a full meal at mealtimes.⁸²

⁸⁰ Umeek (E. Richard Atleo). *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 1.

⁸¹ Chuuchkamalthnii.

⁸² Umeek (E. Richard Atleo), 38.

I am reminded of an instance when I was about twelve years old and home alone. Some relatives dropped by to visit as they were passing through town. I do not remember who it was, but I do remember not knowing what to do. I was accustomed to my parents playing the role of host. As we waited for my parents to come home, I think I finally got the point and asked if they wanted anything. Over time, I learned that even this did not go far enough. I have since learned not to ask, which still leaves open the possibility that a guest may feel that you are being inconvenienced in some way. The correct action is to simply put the tea or coffee on and look for some *upsqwii* (dried salmon) or preserved fruit to serve. It may seem like a subtle distinction, but so strong is the teaching of hospitality, that a good host leaves no doubt in anyone's mind and shares whatever they can so that their guests are well taken care of. I do not share this story simply to be self-deprecating of my family, or myself but to point out the subtleties in our teachings that are important. My relatives were patient with me and I was no doubt forgiven due to my young age. If this had occurred today, it would be seriously frowned upon.

Chuuchkamalthnii believes this generosity extends beyond one's home. He states rather vigorously, "Be generous! Don't ask, 'when are you going to pay me back.' Share! Give it up!"⁸³ Wickaninnish spoke of a how common it was for someone to land on our beach with a canoe full of seafood and invite the whole village to come down and share.⁸⁴ Rauna Kuokkanen, a Sami scholar, has written and spoken extensively of the concept of the "Gift" amongst Indigenous peoples and the importance of reciprocity for our survival. Kuokannen states, "The main purpose of reciprocity is to affirm the myriad relationships in the world. And from these relationships arises an acknowledged collective and individual requirement to act responsibly towards other

⁸³ Chuuchkamalthnii.

⁸⁴ Wickaninnish, 2010.

forms of life...a responsibility to remain attuned to the world beyond oneself.”⁸⁵ As expressed about the subtleties of being a good host, reciprocity must also be clearly understood. Kuokkanen draws a clear distinction between the gift paradigm and the exchange paradigm. The exchange paradigm of the market economy undervalues the gift paradigm, making it invisible and unrealistic. Kuokkanen states, “The exchange paradigm requires the value of what is given and exchanged be of equal value” and that gift giving in contrast is based on values of care, cooperation, and bonding.⁸⁶ To my way of thinking, an exchange paradigm assumes that the relationship of the exchange may not be long term. A fair deal is sought in case the parties never encounter each other again. In the context of Indigenous giving, as Kuokkanen asserts, giving and receiving and giving back may never end, and relationships are affirmed through time and generations.

This does not mean that there have not been breaks in our teachings though, as Mack reminded us, the colonials have been somewhat successful in breaking down our communities and teachings. I am reminded of another related example that is ongoing. At various potlatches or community gatherings food is usually served and two issues come up for me at these times. The first is a question of who should be served first. Recent history has the elders been served first, but I am told by a few people that this was not always the case. According to people like Chaw-win-is and Wickaninnish, we are supposed to feed the children first, for they are more likely to be restless and feel their hunger more acutely without the restraint that comes with age and teachings. This makes sense to me so why the change? I do not intend to engage in a debate about who is more right. I simply want to understand the impetus for change in our communities

⁸⁵ Rauna Kuokkanen, “The Gift as Economic and Environmental Justice” (speech given at the Redistribution of Wealth conference, Vancouver, Canada, March 7, 2010).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

and the implications. I do not want to suggest that elders are less important, but I do think the change indicates recognition that we are losing something. With each knowledgeable elder that passes away, we lose more and more stories, wisdom, and our language. At the same time, our children will live into the future as Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and they must be taught well. It is not a question of either one or the other. We must respect all our people, young and old, and at the same time be able to make decisions that make sense. It makes sense to me to take care of the children first, to ensure they are fed, and ready to observe our protocols, teachings, songs, and dances.

The second issue that comes up is also connected to the serving of food. Young adults are often asked to help serve food and elder members of the cooking team usually direct them to greater and lesser degrees of efficiency. I have observed many different qualities of organization, and one might think me callous for pointing out certain shortcomings, after all they are serving me food right? Allow me to explain. One phenomenon constantly irritates my father, and consequently now irritates me. At most feasts, after the servers have gone out and delivered plates of food to a majority of the people, someone from the host party will get on the microphone and ask for those that have not yet been served to raise their hands. This process is repeated and it can take as much as half an hour for everyone to be served if it is a very large gathering. At this point most people are eating their food, some have already finished and you have the remainder alternating their raised hands because they are hungry and their arms are getting sore. My father hates this. He believes that it is the host's responsibility to be organized enough to know who needs to be served and where they are. If the serving crew is less methodical, they can be all over the place, consequently making it harder to find the last few hungry souls. Like I said, such an observation may seem callous or strict but it speaks to the

importance of hospitality that removes all anxieties from the guests. In my estimation, it would be a very Nuu-chah-nulth thing to do as my father suggests. These are small and subtle examples, but I believe they underscore the “why” of many of our teachings, something I am inclined to be constantly curious about. Knowing why for me encourages a keener approach to living our teachings, and not just going through the motions of them.

Generally speaking, we are taught to be friendly, respectful, and hospitable to others, but Chuuchkamaltnii qualifies this with, “You have to respect people who act respectfully.”⁸⁷

Johnny Mack elaborates on this as well stating,

An important point to keep in mind is that *eesok* also entails a respect of self. For this reason, the principles of generosity cannot be said to legitimate a calm waters complex, where someone withholds their critical views for the sake of tranquility. Relations of respect do not equate with a calm waters rationalization of relations of peace at all costs.⁸⁸

Our friendliness is rooted in sound teachings of harmony, interconnection, and reciprocity but it is not unconditional. We are not obliged to bend over backwards for those who would treat us, and our territories with disrespect. I fear that the ongoing Christian missions and doctrine of turning one’s other cheek have contributed to the pacification of our people in the face of contemptible behaviour. I also understand that there is no “pure” Nuu-chah-nulth existence. Colonization has complicated everything, but this does not mean that we do not still strive to fulfill our ideals, living in a way that makes sense within our homelands. So what does it mean to live a Nuu-chah-nulth life today?

⁸⁷ Chuuchkamaltnii.

⁸⁸ Mack, forthcoming 2010. *Emphasis* and different spelling of iisaak in original.

Living a Nuu-chah-nulth Life

In the complex world of identity, especially the neocolonial world of Indigenous identities, nothing is straightforward. Johnny Mack agrees and warns against essentializing Nuu-chah-nulth identity. He does state however that, “Being Nuu-chah-nulth in earlier times was simply what you did with your life,” indicating an action-oriented element to Nuu-chah-nulth identity, and one less complicated with the notion of competing identities.⁸⁹ This is where I would like to draw the distinction between being Nuu-chah-nulth and *living* a Nuu-chah-nulth life. It is safe to say that we do not live as our ancestors did, but the question I ask is: Do we live with the same values and teachings?

Chaw-win-is believes that living Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is a daily process of renewal, where our proper actions are constantly being reinforced and our improper actions are being discouraged.⁹⁰ Our ways embrace action and renewal and this is reflected in our language. Several scholars have pointed out that many Indigenous languages are verb-oriented. For example, Blackfoot scholar, Leroy Little Bear describes Indigenous languages as, “process-oriented.”⁹¹ Either way, the point is that our language and our lives were more about doing than being. This opens the door to the idea that *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is more significant and vital to the regeneration of our communities than it is to simply *be* Nuu-chah-nulth. To be Nuu-chah-

⁸⁹ Mack, June 11, 2010.

⁹⁰ Chaw-win-is, personal interview, Mituunii (Victoria, BC), June 12, 2010.

⁹¹ Leroy Little Bear, “Jagged Worldviews Colliding,” in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste, pp 77-85 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 78.

nulth in contemporary times only requires state recognition and the possession of a status card.⁹² *Living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, on the other hand offers a conception of identity that I argue is both more inclusive *and* rigorous in its demands.

The process-oriented perspective on Nuu-chah-nulth identity that is offered by *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is inclusive because it centres the importance of acting appropriately over other criteria such as blood-quantum. Canada maintains a legacy of sexist policies with regard to Indigenous identities constructed as Indian status through the *Indian Act*. In summary, the *Indian Act* was utilized by the Canadian state to create further divisions in Indigenous communities and families by creating status and non-status Indians. It was sexist because it removed Indian status from status women who married non-status men. It did not remove status from men who married non-status women, however. Consequently, thousands of Indigenous women lost their Indian status, as did their children, while thousands of non-Indigenous women became status Indians by marrying status Indian men. The consequences of this have been devastating. An ugly reality of our involvement in this has been that many communities utilized the government criteria to reject their own people, especially in light of scarce resources. The federal government attempted to address this with Bill C-31 in 1985, a law that re-instated thousands of Indigenous women and children with Indian status, but the matter remains unresolved and before the courts.⁹³

⁹² Status cards are usually issued by local band or tribal councils on behalf of the government of Canada as proof that one is a status Indian according to the *Indian Act* and the policies of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. They, and the policies they represent are seriously problematic, but many Indigenous people use them for the purposes of access to vital social and education services, and exemption from various federal and provincial taxes.

⁹³ The most recent challenge has been brought forward by Sharon McIvor, a long-time Indigenous feminist activist from British Columbia. She recently received a favourable ruling from the British Columbia Supreme Court, and the government of Canada has agreed to make changes, but McIvor still plans to appeal based on the nature of Canada's proposed changes, which still do not go far enough.

While I believe that identifiable roots within an Indigenous family and community are important, it is clear to me that state control over these matters has only been divisive and destructive for Indigenous families and communities. Centering Nuu-chah-nulth identity on action and *living* creates the opportunity for a richer expression of identity that is rooted in a common worldview and principles that can help Nuu-chah-nulth-aht transcend many of the ills of colonialism. This is what I mean by the elaboration of a more rigorous conception of Nuu-chah-nulth identity. *Living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, closely observed, demands that we act according to our teachings. It demands that we act appropriately in our homelands. This leads to my next point, that of *living* Nuu-chah-nulth-aht at home, and Indigenous identity as a place-based phenomenon.

Living Nuu-chah-nulth-aht At Home

Critical to my understanding of living Nuu-chah-nulth-aht is an inseparable connection to our homelands. In the Nuu-chah-nulth language, we speak of the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih*. The *Ha'wiih*, or hereditary chiefs are responsible for everything within their territories, their *Ha'hoolthlii*. *Ha'hoolthlii* includes more than just land, however. It includes the lands, waters, air, animals, plants, people, everything. The concept of *Ha'hoolthlii* is closely related to the concept of *heshookish tsa'walk* – Everything is one. How we act and where we live are intimately connected. As Chuuchkamalthnii states, *our* ways are entirely appropriate for *our* homelands. By extension, our ways of living and our beliefs may be entirely inappropriate in another place. The logic also follows that the ways of being and beliefs of outsiders are likely inappropriate here. This is not to suggest that some things cannot crossover, but that what we had in Nuu-chah-nulth territories were ways of living that served us well for thousands of years. Yet

in the comparably short time span that Settlers have been here, they have brought us to the brink of collapse – socially, economically, and ecologically. Perhaps most importantly, our ways were not destructive to the unity within which we found ourselves. Our ways of living made sense for the sustainability of all creation within the realms of responsibility of our *Ha'wiih*. Since the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih* have been invaded and occupied, these understandings and ways of living have gradually broken down. The break down has not gone unnoticed, however. The late Tye Chief Maquinna of Ahous wrote, “We are open to other beliefs, because we know something about differences from those within our own nations. However, I think that the day is quickly passing when we are convinced that we can live two lives with different ways, styles, and beliefs.”⁹⁴ Parallel to this perhaps is the story of the *Kanien'kehaka Kaswentha* (Two-Row Wampum) as described by Taiaiake Alfred. The *Kanien'kehaka Kaswentha* was originally a negotiated agreement between the Haudenasaunee and Dutch traders in the early seventeenth century as a model for peaceful co-existence. Alfred writes,

The metaphor for this relationship – two vessels, each possessing its own integrity, travelling the river of time together – was conveyed visually on a wampum belt of two parallel lines (representing power) on a background of white beads (representing peace). In this respectful (co-equal) friendship and alliance, any interference with the other partner's autonomy, freedom, or powers was expressly forbidden. So long as these principles were respected, the relationship would be peaceful, harmonious, and just.⁹⁵

Unfortunately, the imperial governments, and later their Settler descendents, did not respect our autonomy and did interfere extensively. What I find compelling about the *Kanien'kehaka Kaswentha* metaphor is the respect for distinctiveness. One of course can argue that the early

⁹⁴ Earl Maquinna George *Living on the Edge: Nuu-chah-nulth History from an Ahousaht Chief's Perspective* (Winlaw: Sononis Press, 2005), 48.

⁹⁵ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, second edition* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76.

Settlers and their forebears had no respect for our distinctiveness and what they truly had was a grudging respect for our ability to defend ourselves and that we possessed knowledge that would benefit them in their trade wars with the other imperial powers. I am inclined to agree, and what I come back to is the necessity of reviving respect for our own ways of living, which will be a persistent theme throughout this thesis. At the same time, we can no longer afford to be afraid to question the Settlers' ways of being, especially when we consider how much damage they have caused in our territories. I will now get into our ways of being as understood through traditional Nuu-chah-nulth governance institutions and practices.

Nuu-chah-nulth Governance

By Nuu-chah-nulth governance, I am aware of the complications that may arise in speaking about them in English. Our elders are constantly challenged with the difficulty of translation, and consequently make comparisons that are crude at times and at other times may be wholly inappropriate. Here I am thinking of when someone says, "It was just parliament or like royalty." I do not doubt that there are often similarities between diverse groups of people, but I feel that we sell ourselves short when we simplify our understandings and ways into crude comparisons with Western institutions. All the evidence suggests that our coastal practices were unique and I will begin by attempting to explain one of the reasons why. The Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast benefited greatly from their relationships with the sea. Food was plentiful. A common refrain on the coast is, "When the tide is out, the table is set," indicating the plethora of seafood available from the foreshore, not to mention the rivers, and the sea. This access to plentiful, sustainable food allowed for some unique political, social, and cultural developments. Perhaps most visible to outsiders are the intricate and elaborate art forms that have been passed

down through the generations and now receive worldwide commercial acclaim. Socially and economically, consistent access to food led to an interesting approach to the matters of wealth and accumulation. First, as Chuuchkamalthnii has stated, people who provide for their families and communities are greatly esteemed. Second, hoarding was frowned upon. Nuuchah-nulth-aht are encouraged to be generous, and share their prosperity. Third, and this is connected to the institutions of Nuuchah-nulth communities, giving was formalized through the political, social and cultural institution of the “potlatch.” Similar to our “potlatching” neighbours up and down the coast, a chief earned respect not only because he worked hard to provide opportunities for his people, but also by giving away all that he had at the appropriate times.⁹⁶ Chiefs still hold great feasts and give away tremendous amounts of wealth, in the forms of food, money, and other gifts. Large families usually support these efforts, in addition to other members in the community. What I have not seen is a *Ha’wilth* give away all his or her wealth. I have even overheard the wife of a *Ha’wilth* say that she did not want her husband to host a particular ceremony because it would cost too much. This is not surprising I suppose, given the larger breakdown in our traditional institutions that have often relegated our *Ha’wiih* to symbolic positions lacking in real-world economic and political relevance. In the old days the “potlatch until your broke” practice worked because the communities functioned in a way that the *Ha’wiih* would never be left destitute. The giving would be reciprocal. Unfortunately, we cannot say that the same thing would happen today, although I would be greatly inspired and supportive if any of my *Ha’wiih* were to do this. Although the above points are relevant in my estimation, I do not want to suggest that all gatherings were about wealth re-distribution. Wickaninnish likes to

⁹⁶ I use “his” because *Ha’wiih* roles have traditionally been filled by men, and at this point I am speaking in an historical context but it is important to note that an increasing number of leadership positions, including that of *Ha’wilth* are now been filled by women. Kyuquot and Toquaht are good examples.

emphasize the simple act of a *Ha'wilth* gathering his people together to share the teachings and live the protocols. He remembers attending gatherings when only “rice and raisins” would be served. On these occasions the significance of meeting and sharing were paramount.⁹⁷

Politically and socially speaking, Nuu-chah-nulth communities were more stratified than many other examples from around Turtle Island. Typically, *Ha'wiih* married into the families of other *Ha'wiih*. A *Ha'wilth* also passed on his role and responsibilities to his eldest son, but this was not without exception. Wickaninnish reminds us that the important roles of leadership were passed on to the most appropriate people. The moral laws of the people demanded that leaders were wise, just, honest, generous, kind, and humble. It is important to emphasize the extent of *Ha'wiih* responsibilities here, and the differences from pre and early contact times and today. *Ha'wiih* were ultimately responsible for the health, wealth, and security of their people. To be born into a leadership role was an honour and a tremendous *responsibility*. I hesitate to say it was a burden, but the role of *Ha'wilth* definitely came with significant obligations that one was trained to fulfill from the womb and throughout their youth until they were ready. Today, this role has been largely tokenized, with the imposition of the *Indian Act* and a greater emphasis on liberal democratic principles and bureaucratic institutions. Some Nuu-chah-nulth communities still have *Ha'wiih* in active roles, but this is the minority and all Nuu-chah-nulth communities, in my estimation, struggle with how to reconcile traditional governance practices with the modern liberal democratic ones imposed by the federal and provincial governments.

While not wanting to get trapped into the practice of comparing our ways to Western ways, I do want to emphasize that we had our own concept of the Rule of Law. This is important

⁹⁷ Wickaninnish, 2010.

because when liberal democratic practices are argued for, they are often cast as more progressive than the misunderstood traditional practices. Wickaninnish states,

“Our history in Ahousaht includes chiefs that didn’t comply with those laws. Kau-nau-kum was a greedy chief, along with his wife. She was of the same ilk. The wit’waak warned them. They (Kau-nau-kum and his wife) were in the habit of taking – contrary to the teachings – things of value without asking and the wit’waak said, ‘you can’t do that.’ A chief was not above the law. When they (wit’waak) warned them (Kau-nau-kum and his wife) and they didn’t stop, they cut their heads off because the chieftanship cannot stand someone ignoring the laws of chieftanship.⁹⁸

It seems that the higher the position, the graver the consequences for transgressions of the law. Certainly, death would not be the punishment for theft, were it to be committed by a person in a lower position of authority and responsibility. Blatant transgressions of our laws and teachings could not be tolerated from those entrusted with the health and security of the community. So who makes the laws and who enforces them? The origins are not as clear, as we have demonstrated that identifying a pure Nuu-chah-nulth culture, untainted by colonialism is all but impossible, but we do have our stories, passed on orally and more recently through books that exist to remind us of the appropriate ways to behave and organize. As for the enforcement of the laws, that role fell primarily to the *wit’waak*, but they like everybody else were also accountable to our laws.

As previously indicated, in the practice of *pachitle*, a *Ha’wilth* never acted alone. He was aided in fulfilling his responsibilities by carefully selected advisors, thinkers, speakers, and specialists in various areas of expertise. Some people knew a great deal about hunting, others about fishing and the foreshore. We had medicine people and healers, and people with knowledge of all the plants and animals. Everyone had a role to fulfill. Some people have likened

⁹⁸ Wickaninnish, 2010.

our *Ha'wiih* to European royalty. I am reluctant to do so myself, but I do remember finding out about one role that I think is very interesting. While reading the transcripts of elders speaking about Nuu-chah-nulth *Ha'wiih* and governance when I worked as employee for the Tribal Council, I came across an entry that described a “court jester” type of character, whose role it was to make fun of the chiefs. I also gather that part of the intent was to ensure that the chiefs remained humble and never took themselves too seriously. Humility was a revered trait amongst Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, especially amongst the leaders. While the *Ha'wiih* were accorded great respect, measures were taken to ensure that this did not go to their heads and make them arrogant.

Our Political Legacy

Our traditional political and social institutions have been undermined and rendered nearly completely ineffective. As I have stated, certain communities have worked to keep alive or revive aspects of their traditional governance to varying degrees of success. In the vast majority of the cases, the elected chief and council exercise political authority while the *Ha'wiih* act in ceremonial or consultative capacities. The recent Maa-nulth final agreement is reflective of Canada's position on our hereditary leadership.⁹⁹ *Ha'wiih* are allowed to fulfill minority or advisory roles, but the official power and jurisdiction rest with the elected officials. At least this is how it plays out on paper. We will see how it plays out in reality. Our political legacy and contemporary political realities are important when we consider the impacts of economic

⁹⁹ The Maa-nulth Final Agreement is an agreement between the federal and provincial governments, that is considered a “modern-day treaty,” even though these types of agreements do not meet the international legal standard for an actual “treaty” and no where in these agreements is the actual term, treaty, used. The Maa-nulth are a group of five Nuu-chah-nulth communities that broke away from the main Nuu-chah-nulth negotiation group, when the larger group's Agreement in Principle failed to be ratified by all of the communities in 2001.

development for a number of reasons. First, our traditional decision-making and accountability mechanisms have been broken or abandoned and Canada has no interest in seeing them return. Second, the revival of certain aspects of our traditional governance practices is severely hampered by colonization. Not only are we challenged in remembering how we did things, but we are hard pressed to implement our traditional governance practices in a contemporary context, as suggested by the example of the *pachitle* and limited wealth redistribution. Additionally, small groups of leaders may have made decisions long ago, but they were all well raised and trained to fulfill their roles. We cannot make the same observation today, at least not on a wide scale. Finally, Ha'wiih'thlup reminds us of the devastating impacts of disease on our people. According to research by Huu-ay-aht,

It is estimated that there were over 25,000 Nuu-chah-nulth people when the maamulthnii arrived, just over two hundred years ago...During the century that followed, at least eight major varieties of epidemic diseases were introduced to the Northwest Coast region, including smallpox, malaria, measles, influenza, and typhoid fever...by the end of the 19th century, there were only about 3,000 Nuu-chah-nulth people remaining; representing a population decline of nearly 85 per cent.¹⁰⁰

Words cannot describe the trauma that our communities experienced in a very short period of time. We lost women, children, men, elders, leaders, warriors, healers, hunters, fishers, artists, historians, musicians; the list goes on and on and I can hardly fathom how anybody recovers from such tremendous loss. Ha'wii'thlup believes that our political legacy coming out of this devastation was the art of compromise.¹⁰¹ Quite simply, we learned to survive, by any means necessary. Our *Ha'wiih* were still responsible for the welfare of their people and decisions still had to be made but now under much different circumstances. We have partially recovered our

¹⁰⁰ Huu-ay-aht First Nations, "Kii'in Agenda Paper" in *Nuu-chah-nulth Voices, Histories, Objects and Journeys* ed. Alan L Hoover, pp 33-61 (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000), 39.

¹⁰¹ Ha'wiih'thlup, telephone interview, Vancouver, BC, July 5, 2010.

numbers, but the impacts of traumatic loss and the legacy of survival and compromise live on. Ha'wiih'thup believes that with our military power diminished, we had no choice but to adopt a posture that is still evident today: A strong front, followed by retreat and negotiation.¹⁰² As we shall see, this legacy has presented us with some troubling results, but ones that I clearly understand now. I do not write this to call my relatives down. I do not write this because I think our leaders should be blamed for all of our present circumstances. I appreciate the legacy that I have inherited, good and bad. I recognize the privileged position that I hold to be able to offer my critical and constructive perspectives. I write because I love my people. I want to see us strong and healthy again. I want us to reconnect with our territories and fall in love with them again. I want us to fulfill our responsibilities and live good Nuu-chah-nulth lives.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Chapter Three – Changing Nuu-chah-nulth Livelihoods and Relationships

Dreams of a Life of Fishing

I begin this chapter with a few brief perspectives on my family’s participation in the commercial fishing industry. This is a good entry point into a discussion about Nuu-chah-nulth ways of relating to the sea and the changes that have come with colonization, and because it is what I know and what I have experienced. It also gives us an important perspective when looking at what came before and what is yet to come. I spent a few summers during my youth fishing with my uncles, both trolling and seining, and one summer on my own as part of the “mosquito fleet” out of Ahous.¹⁰³ Here I also share the memories of my father Wickaninnish, and my cousin José Robinson. You will see some disconnection through the generations as well as some continuity. After these anecdotes, I back up further into a broader discussion of historical Nuu-chah-nulth ways of relating to the sea and attempt to chart the changes in our practices, the external and internal influences that helped shape those changes and discuss the implications for our people.

When my father Wickaninnish was young, all he ever wanted when he grew up was to be a fisherman. Born in 1945, he grew up on his stepfather’s fishing boat in the 1940s and 1950s. He was raised to be a fisherman, like his father and many of his brothers. He said that by the time he was thirteen he was already prepared to be the skipper of his own boat.¹⁰⁴ He was one of the elder siblings of a very large family, and fishing allowed him to become financially independent

¹⁰³ Mosquito fleet fishers used small punts or speedboats, and would travel shorter distances from the village on day trips. My own experience involved my uncle Harvey Robinson’s aluminum punt, rigged with wooden trolling poles. We would typically head out in the mornings and fish all day around Flores Island before returning to sell our catch to Huey, the mamulthnii owner of the Ahousaht General Store. My deckhand was Reece Mack.

¹⁰⁴ Wickaninnish, 2010.

by thirteen as well. Wickaninnish attended residential school like most of the other Ahousaht children, and on the occasion when he did think of post-secondary education and a profession other than fishing, he thought being a school teacher would be good so that he could still go salmon fishing during the summertime. After high school my father spent a couple of years in university but left early to work full-time. Even as he entered his twenties and started to raise a family he would pick jobs that he was not overly invested in so that he could quit in the summers and go salmon fishing instead. He was turned down for a loan to buy his own boat in 1976. That, in combination with his emerging doubts about the future of the commercial fishery convinced him to abandon the prospect altogether, and he fished his last summer in 1977. My sister was ten and I was four. I also suspect that my mother was not too keen on being married to a fisherman who would be away for several months of the year. After a few years of selling flooring, my father managed to re-connect to the life, however. In 1978 he started working for the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, an organization that during his day represented commercial Indigenous fishers in price negotiations with the fish processing companies and industry regulation matters with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.¹⁰⁵ He states, “I thought the next best thing to fishing was working with the fishermen.”¹⁰⁶ In the 1990s Wickaninnish began working as a consultant and negotiator for several nations during the early days of the treaty process - including Ahousaht and Mowachaht/Muchalaht. He has also been a delegate on the Pacific Salmon and Halibut Commissions and was a founding member of the West Coast

¹⁰⁵ The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC) was established in 1931 mainly by coastal Indigenous communities and addressed a number of issues, including fishing rights, the land question and also social issues such as Indigenous access to education and the right to vote in Settler elections. Source: <<http://www.nativevoice.bc.ca/about/htm>>. Although the NBBC persisted as a member-funded organization fighting for the rights of Indigenous fishers, the land question and related issues were passed over the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs in 1967.

¹⁰⁶ Wickaninnish, 2010.

Vancouver Island Aquatic Management Board. At present he is the elected President of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. Although my cousin José is several years my junior, you will notice that his dreams and aspirations were very similar to my father's.

When José Robinson was young, all he ever wanted when he grew up was to be a fisherman. He loved being on the water and relished the opportunity to get away from home and see the many parts of the British Columbia coast that most of us never do. Born in 1980, he is the only child of my aunt Beverly, one of my father's younger sisters. He grew up primarily in the main Ahous village of Maaqtosis but he also spent a significant amount of time in Snuneymuxw territory.¹⁰⁷ Since José was very young, the family has always regarded him as exceptionally intelligent, so it was no surprise when I learned that he decided to pursue a degree in economics at Malaspina University-College.¹⁰⁸ What did surprise me later was when I asked him about his summer fishing experiences and he revealed how much he loved them and how he was torn about his education and professional direction. After university, José worked in various jobs before he began a nine-month internship with the provincial government. He now lives in Vancouver with his expecting partner Jen and their son, Landon, working for the British Columbia First Nations Forestry Council. Not only did he love fishing, José distinctly remembers the disappointment he felt when our uncle Russell told him that there was no future in fishing and that he would have to go to university after high school. José elaborates,

¹⁰⁷ Snuneymuxw is the name of the Indigenous community located around the area now known as Nanaimo. Although José and his mother often lived in the municipality of Nanaimo, I am paying respect to the territories of the Snuneymuxw people here. It is also worth noting that many of my cousins would spend the latter parts of their youth in cities away from home, as their parents believed that they would get a better (academic) education in places like Port Alberni, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Victoria, and Vancouver.

¹⁰⁸ Malaspina University-College has since been renamed Vancouver Island University. I also realize that this sentiment perpetuates the notion that "smart" people go to university, which is accurate of how much of my family has felt about the subject in last generation or so. Today, of course I recognize many of the problems of "higher" education and believe that all our people should maintain a critical perspective on mainstream education as well as an appreciation for our own, millennia-old teachings and ways of living as equally valid, perhaps more so for this place.

I really liked it. I enjoyed being out on the water. I was never homesick. I know that I would still be happy if there were still a lot of fish. I know there is no way I would have gone to Malaspina ever, unless it was to get some sort of training that would help on the boat with the hydraulics or motors. I'm pretty sure I would be a fisherman if there weren't such a decline in the (fish) stocks. I still miss it. I still miss it a lot. Any sort of chance that I get to go food fishing and what not, I still try and get on the boat. It was more than just a job for me.¹⁰⁹

José's sentiments with regard to fishing are exactly how my father felt, and they suggest that if the federal policies regarding the management of the fisheries and Indigenous participation in them had not worked against us, he still would be out on the water, like our ancestors had been for thousands of years. It was more than a job for both my cousin and my father. It was a life. Interestingly, I would not share the same perspective.

When I was young, all I ever wanted to be when I grew up was rich.¹¹⁰ Like many city kids, I grew up idolizing professional athletes, movie stars, and musicians. Since I had no apparent talents in any of these areas I decided that I was going to have to use my brain towards other pursuits. I liked to follow the activities of high profile business people like Donald Trump (before *The Apprentice*), and the first technology magnates like Larry Ellison and Bill Gates. I read books on Japanese business management techniques and if you can believe it, I even sold Amway products for a little while.¹¹¹ I grew up with my parents and sister in East Vancouver. I liked to play street hockey, ride my bike, play baseball, basketball, and soccer and was what most people would consider a pretty typical suburban Canadian kid. I did not want to be a fisherman when I grew up. To the outsider, this might not seem like such a bad thing. I was

¹⁰⁹ José Robinson.

¹¹⁰ I should point out that this was mostly before the preponderance of billionaires, because I distinctly remember wanting to only be a "multi-millionaire."

¹¹¹ Amway was the world's largest multi-level network marketing company at the time. These are those companies where you have to recruit other salespeople to work for you and they have to do likewise for you to move up and make more money. Alas, my Amway career was a bust, with pretty much my only loyal customer being my mom.

surrounded by a multitude of choices, but quite honestly, I had no idea what I wanted to be. I fear that this is what more and more Nuu-chah-nulth-aht experience as they grow up. This is evidenced by the fact that most of us live away from home and most of us are completely disconnected from a life at sea.

Back to when I was in my teens, I admit to being curious about fishing though. This was mostly because of the stories I began to hear about \$100,000 sets and million dollar summers. My ears perked up soon enough and when I was thirteen I attempted to spend my first full summer out on the boat fishing with my uncle Harvey.¹¹² Unlike my cousin José, I did get homesick. I called it quits about three quarters of the way through the summer, and I am pretty sure my mother was happy and my father was disappointed. It is not that he was unhappy to have me back, but I know there is a part of him that hoped I would long for a life on the open ocean like he did when he was young. That summer I earned about twelve hundred dollars and the first thing I bought when I got home was a new pair of skis. I remember being so proud to be able to buy something so expensive - about \$400 - with money I had earned myself.

I tried fishing again the summer after I graduated from high school. This time I went fishing with my uncle Russell and aunt Marge on the seine boat Hayden Pass. José was there too, but he was only about ten or eleven and not yet a full working member of the crew. After a dismal season of little fish, little pay, and a few onshore shenanigans, I attended my first year of college and never looked back, until now. Although the type of fishing we did that summer was different – seine net fishing as opposed to trolling with lines and lures – my initial reflections did not match my father’s nostalgic enthusiasm. What I recollected as hard, backbreaking work, he

¹¹² A “set” refers to the single casting and retrieval of a seine net. Some fishers did indeed catch so many fish that their landed value went into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and took hours to bring in.

regarded as pure joy, not to mention the fact I benefited from certain technological enhancements that made our work easier than it was in my father's day. My fishing experiences initially ended up being fodder for my first year English writing course.

I think about my experiences differently in retrospect of course, and alongside those of my father and my cousin, I understand the draw of a life on the open seas. I remember how beautiful our coastal waters were, as were those of our Indigenous neighbours. I remember the smell of the saltwater air. I even remember coming home and noticing that the diesel city buses reminded me of the smell and sound of the fishing boat. Fishing was in our blood. We were saltwater people. I am afraid that we cannot say the same thing today. It is not as if we have completely lost our connections to the sea. Some of my fellow Ahousaht work for the fish farms in Clayoquot Sound after all, but I fear our relationships have been altered tremendously, almost beyond all recognition. There was something about the life of a fisher, being on the water, the preparations, the anticipation, the joy of the catch, the satisfied feeling as we steamed home with a boat load of fish. Today, the majority of our fishers walk floating platforms adjacent to net pens full of sickly Atlantic salmon. It is not the same. Still, I understand now why it is the choice of some, especially when they feel they have few other options. It is the predictable step in a series of back to back compromises that our ancestors have been forced to make as the Settler societies have grown and expanded, pushing us farther and farther to the margins of our own territories. It is the mark of a desperate people still struggling to survive. Now I want to step back even further and begin a greater recollection of Nuu-chah-nulth-aht changing relationships with the sea to better understand who we were, who we are, and who we are becoming.

Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, A Fishing People

Diane Newell writes, “Pacific Coast Indian men and women have always claimed aboriginal title, or rights, to their fisheries. They understood that they could not survive as ‘distinct societies’ without greater control over their economic destinies. The fisheries were and still are, I argue, a key to those destinies.”¹¹³ I believe this quote is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it attempts to state how important the fisheries were to coastal Indigenous peoples in 1993 – coincidentally around the same time that the British Columbia Treaty Process began in earnest. Just prior, in the late 1980s when the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council released its Ha’wiih Declaration and filed its comprehensive claim with the federal government, every village wharf was full of commercial fishing boats owned by Nuu-chah-nulth fishers, in addition to the scores of smaller boats of the mosquito fleets. At the peak of our participation in the various commercial fisheries going back to the 1950s, there were over two hundred Nuu-chah-nulth owned and operated fishing vessels. Today, there are less than seven.¹¹⁴

Second, I think it is important to understand how complicated our lives have become as we have tried to translate our ways of living with the sea into the legal and political discourses of Aboriginal rights and title in Canada. Paul Nadasdy argues that Indigenous participation in state-sanctioned discourses, such as those in land claims and co-management negotiations actually disempower Indigenous ways of knowing and being, despite the attempts to preserve Indigenous knowledge and ways of life.¹¹⁵ It is a tragic irony according to Nadasdy that Indigenous peoples, in efforts to preserve their unique ways of living, have to translate their aspirations into liberal bureaucratic terms in order to be taken seriously, consequently altering their ways of thinking

¹¹³ Diane Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada’s Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 3.

¹¹⁴ Don Hall.

¹¹⁵ Nadasdy, Paul. *Hunter and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003.

and living in ways that undermine those very same foundational worldviews that we have been trying to protect in the first place.

Third, I appreciate how Newell tries to make connections between our status as a distinct society and our economic destinies. It is not that I feel economics are unimportant, but I do feel that Newell may fall into the trap of segregating aspects of a complex and interwoven reality of Indigenous ways of living. Thinking in terms of economic destinies suggests that we might simply be able to transfer to whole new ways of living, for the purposes of our economic development. To be fair, Newell is examining a narrow scope of issues for the purposes of writing her book, not unlike what I am attempting to do here for this thesis. For example, my own term livelihood is also limited in several ways. I believe that the term can be interpreted broadly, but that it is hard to escape the confines that popular discourse places on such issues. It might commonly be understood that a livelihood simply equals a job. Contemporary society in particular, has focused on such things as jobs, leisure, service, spirituality, and so on. Debates get simplified into supposed dichotomies like jobs versus the environment, yet a true adherence to the principle of *heshookish tsa'walk* would prohibit this kind of segregation in a Nuu-chah-nulth worldview. Recent environmental attacks on the Ahous partnership with a Norwegian company that owns fish farms in Ahous territory, however, has been defended by Ahousaht spokespeople with the job creation rationale. According to some, Mainstream fish farms employ over sixty percent of Ahousaht people.¹¹⁶ One question I ask throughout this thesis is whether we are still truly adhering to the principle of oneness. I do not claim to be able to transcend certain limitations of my research, especially as it is being conducted and transmitted in English, but I believe that my awareness of those limitations is helpful as we look at these issues critically and

¹¹⁶ José Robinson and Sah-haa, personal Interview, Port Alberni, BC, June 13, 2010.

constructively. I will now attempt to paint a richer picture of Nuu-chah-nulth relations and ways of living within the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih*.

Pre-Occupation Nuu-chah-nulth Relationships with the Sea

Although it is difficult if not impossible to determine the exact nature of traditional Nuu-chah-nulth practices in pre- and early-occupation times, an examination of oral histories and contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth principles may give us a reasonably accurate understanding. Like many other Indigenous peoples, the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht had a strong oral tradition. Not only were stories told of our origins, and our interactions with the animals, and the adventures of Koishin, but our “records” were also kept in this way. The late Moses Smith from Ehattesah stated, “The longhouses were our government houses. The great dances and speeches took place in that house. There is no comparison between our government and the mumulthni idea of democracy.”¹¹⁷ Although the centuries of colonization have taken their toll on Nuu-chah-nulth ways, many Nuu-chah-nulth-aht still strive to keep our stories alive. Some of our elders still remember what they were taught when they were young and some of our young people today still seek out our stories and teachings. I do not want to suggest that these practices are pervasive, but they are sufficiently strong to merit use here. I have accessed these stories through recent interviews as well as through archival research. Furthermore, there is a small amount of literature written by Nuu-chah-nulth authors that will round out our understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth-aht and our relationships with the sea.

¹¹⁷ Nuu-chah-nulth Treaty Jurisdiction and Governance Mandate Working Group, *Hawilthpatak Nuu-chah-nulth: Nuu-chah-nulth Ways of Governance* (Port Alberni: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1999), 3-4.

The late Mowachaht Ha'wilt, Jerry Jack said, "One of the things the elders used to tell me is that fish and our resources are not just something for us. They are equals to us. We treated them as equals to us."¹¹⁸ Although Jerry used the English term "resources," I believe his overall sentiment rings true. We held a great deal of respect for salmon and other creatures because we fundamentally did not feel better than them. We did not hold dominion over them. We approached our food with respect, humility, and gratitude. I do not want to suggest that all Nuuchah-nulth-aht for all time have behaved this way. We have many stories of ancestors and teacher/tricksters like Ko-ishin that taught us how to behave properly, often through the telling of their own misadventures. It is important to remind people that we did not instinctually or always know the right thing to do. Like all the earth's people, we had to learn and we had to institute means to reinforce our lessons from generation to generation. Certainly our behaviours have changed since contact, but I think it is important to recognize a certain level of learned respect for oneness as a starting point.

Using the English language to express Nuuchah-nulth values presents significant challenges, but if we listen and read carefully, I believe we can understand our elders and their best intentions. Additionally, as a member of the present generation, we possess an interpretive responsibility as well. While it is appropriate to heed the wisdom of our ancestors, this does not mean that we forego our own responsibilities to think critically and act carefully, interpreting as best we can to keep our foundational principles alive and our communities healthy. For example, I think almost exclusively in the English language. This certainly has its limitations when

¹¹⁸ Nuuchah-nulth Treaty Jurisdiction and Governance Mandate Working Group, 23.

considering Nuu-chah-nulth ways of living, but it is not impossible.¹¹⁹ Terms like livelihood, sustainable, balance, and conservation are used widely, but sometimes uncritically, and it is important that we understand the nuances that make these ideas relevant to our present circumstances and true to Nuu-chah-nulth principles at the same time. Chief Maquinna wrote,

There is a name for “conservation” in the Nuu-chah-nulth language: *7uh-mowa-shitl* (“keep some and not take all”). This word pertains to careful use of the fishery. People knew how much they could use, and they didn’t ever use it all. They did have big feasts at the beginning and the end of the salmon run to celebrate the gift of the salmon.¹²⁰

Using my critical capacities and limited understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth and environmental ethics, I take it to mean that Maquinna is trying to say that our people did not greedily consume all the resources. I do not think he means conservation in the sense that modern Settler society has had to develop as a response to the incessant growth of consumptive capitalism. This goes to the heart of certain Indigenous-environmentalist tensions. The mainstream environmental movement is largely a Eurosettler construct that baffles many of the older generations of Nuu-chah-nulth-aht. They do not always understand why we would have to protect our environment from ourselves. As time has passed, however, the environmental ethic and the apparent need for it becomes more obvious to younger generations, especially those unaware of our traditional teachings and confused by the practices of current politicians.

Operating from a place of oneness, we knew that we could not take so much as to create imbalance. I do not doubt the conservationists’ good intentions, I am simply pointing out the absurdity of their necessity in the first place. If we all - Indigenous and Settler alike - lived with

¹¹⁹ I am being both an optimist and a realist here – optimistic that given our handicap of thinking in English, we can still understand enough of our teachings to make them relevant, and realistic in acknowledging that we have no choice for the time being, until we can relearn our languages.

¹²⁰ Maquinna, 74.

respect and recognition of our interconnection with all things, then we would not continue to create all of the problems we face to begin with – like overfishing, excessive logging, shameful waste, and the litany of environmental crises that are now plaguing the globe.

I think it is also important to point out the changing Nuu-chah-nulth-aht population over time. According to Chief Maquinna, there were over ten thousand people living in and around Clayoquot Sound at one time.¹²¹ The Huu-ay-aht estimated that there were approximately, twenty-five thousand Nuu-chah-nulth in all at the time of the Settler invasion. Compare those numbers with the eight thousand Nuu-chah-nulth-aht living today. Again, all of this is because the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht populations declined by as much as eighty-five percent in a very short period of time after colonial invasion and occupation. This simple fact alone dismisses the notion that Indigenous peoples did not have to manage their own behaviour in relation to harvesting species like salmon. The pressure on current fish stocks has come from persistent and intensive commercial and recreational fishing – mainly by non-Indigenous people. Add to that the destruction of habitats by logging in sensitive areas, and the sea lice problems created by fish farm proximity to salmon spawning streams and it is no wonder why salmon numbers have continued to dwindle over the years. Let us now look at these “resources” in a slightly different way. Let us look upon them as our relatives, in the spirit of *heshookish tsa’walk*.

Living With Our Animal Relatives

My favourite storybook when I was a child was George Clutesi’s *Son of Raven, Son of Deer*. It was not until I was older that I realized that Clutesi’s book was full of many other stories of the Tseshaht people, but when I was young, I always asked for the same story to be read to me –

¹²¹ Maquinna, 75.

“How the Human People got the First Fire.” Many of the stories that I have had the privilege to hear and read involve our animal relatives. Chaw-win-is says, “Animals teach us how to live right. The land teaches us how to live right.”¹²² I believe that our learning from animals is manifest in two key ways. First, we learn through simple observation of our animal relatives as they live their lives, go through their cycles of birth, life, and death. We also learn how they interact with all our relatives, every creature playing a part. Chuuchkamalthnii of Hupacasath tells me that when he was young he knew to keep an eye out for swallows on the river. Swallows are the harbinger of the Sockeye salmon. Sockeye swimming up the Somass River to spawn would often lose an egg or two. These eggs – *nictin* in our language - would then float to the surface and this is what the swallows would swoop down to eat.¹²³ Johnny Mack was also keenly aware of the seasons out at Macoah – home of the Toquaht nation – and spoke of the anticipation of the herring spawn, to which they responded by setting out tree branches to capture some of the herring eggs, and the arrival of the whales. We call herring eggs or roe, *qwukmis* in the Ahous dialect. The nations of Barkley Sound south of us, call them *tsiihk-muu*.

Second, we learn through our stories that are told from generation to generation that involve our animal relatives as key figures. This is important because it places them in a context that allows the listener/learner to appreciate the animals as equal to us, as late Chief Jack described. Placing ourselves on the same level as the animal people necessitates that we act accordingly, with respect. Again, I do not think this is by chance. Our stories were passed down from generation to generation to constantly remind us of our place within creation. All of this began to change with the colonial occupation, and only intensified with the forced removal of

¹²² Chaw-win-is.

¹²³ Chuchkamalthnii.

our children, first for residential school and then later as part of “sixties scoop” that continues today.¹²⁴ I would like to share a story here that exemplifies what I am talking about. It was told to my good friend Chaw-win-is, by her late grandfather, Cha-chin-sun-up-mit/Tuu-ta-mit.¹²⁵ It is the story of Chaastims (Mink) and it is told with her permission.

Chaastims (Mink) wanted to go visit his father up in the sky. He wanted to be a good son and take care of things up there while his father went on a vacation. His father was responsible for watching the fire in the sky, the sun. Chaastims assured his father he could watch the sun for him, not to worry. “Just go ahead and enjoy yourself and I’ll take care of things here,” he said.

So his father agreed and went maybe to Hawaii to smoke some cigars and relax with his feet up on its warm sandy beaches.

Now Chaastims was a handsome guy. You know how good-looking people can be sometimes...So Chaastims set himself about to watch the fire, taking pains to have enough wood and watching that the flames didn’t get too high. As time passed he grew bored of the constant effort and attention that fire tending requires. That was when he caught his reflection in a flame and was distracted by his own reflection—“Gee I really am handsome,” he thought.

As you may know, fires only take a moment of neglect before they are roaring and hungry flames leap out. Chaastims got scared, ran away and hid as the sun’s fire grew rapidly out of control. The fire ended up burning the whole chu-uk (island, now known as Vancouver Island) down! The land turned to ash, covering the whole island. There was only the sea left. Tuushkoh (Codfish) got so excited he swallowed the moon too.

Now remember, this was a haa-huu-pah¹²⁶ from the time before there were Quu’asminaa, just animals, winged ones, four-legged ones and finned ones. There were a few chiefs who led the people then and as soon as this disaster struck they gathered the animals together to strategize what to do next. You see, we didn’t like dwelling on what had been done and exasperating ourselves with why things happened – we simply needed to put our heads together to figure out the answer to the question ‘where do we go from here?’

¹²⁴ The Sixties Scoop refers to the phenomenon of removing Indigenous children deemed at risk in their birth homes, and living “in care” with a provincial ministry, agency, foster, or adoptive family. I take it was thus named as it reflected a policy that began in the 1960s. A truly scary thing I heard recently is that there are now more Indigenous children “in care” today than there ever were in residential schools. Indigenous families still struggle to stay together.

¹²⁵ As Chaw-win-is’ grandfather passed away earlier this year, we acknowledge his passing by not using his exact name for one year, thus the addition of “mit” to the two names he held.

¹²⁶ Haa-huu-pah are teachings, life lessons.

The Chiefs we remember today are Boo-ah (Halibut) and Tlaymupt (Woodpecker). They called all the people to gather around the shore. Halibut explained there was earth at the bottom of the sea. He called for volunteers to dive to the bottom to retrieve the earth while Woodpecker produced two cedar baskets for the volunteers to carry the earth in. Halibut told the people that once the earth was retrieved he would call the two fastest runners, the two qwayaatsiik (wolves) named Aykutupis and Astaasapii, and they would be tasked with running around the entire island redistributing the earth so the regeneration of the hahuuthlii could begin.

The first volunteer was Ahma (loon), but Ahma could not do it. Next came Chims (Bear). He growled he would get the earth. He seemed a logical choice as he was a great swimmer and very strong physically. He took the baskets and placed them on his shoulders and dove. The people and their chiefs waited and waited. They waited some more and then Chims popped up, shaking off water droplets off his fur and panting. The baskets, however, were empty.

Halibut called for another volunteer. This time Mowich (deer) volunteered. He is known to be a fancy-footed, having stolen back fire from the qwayaatsiik people at one time, so he took the baskets from Chims and dove nimbly into the water. The people waited and waited. They waited some more, then Mowich popped up, panting, almost out of breath. The baskets were empty and so this went on for a while with different people volunteering, from the strong to the clever.

Even many of the seabirds volunteered and each time they came up empty, without any earth in the cedar baskets. The people grew discouraged as the last few people were unsuccessful. They began to lose hope and started to move away from the shore, despairing.

Then, there was a little voice that piped up – Target Head Duck. “Excuse me!” he said, “I’d like to try.”

Boo-ah and Tlaymupt were fair and gracious chiefs and so offered him the same chance to retrieve the earth. Some of the people snickered as he precariously perched the cedar baskets across his tiny shoulders. Woodpecker and Halibut ignored their snickers and encouraged the little duck to go on. The little duck dove neatly into the water and the people waited and waited. They waited and waited some more. The people started to feel alarmed, surely he has drowned! He’d been gone for too long and the people were discouraged and began to cry. As they cried they began walking away from the shore, their last hope left at the bottom of the sea – or so they thought. Suddenly, Target Head Duck popped up and on his shoulders he carried two full cedar baskets of earth.

Boo-ah and Tlaymupt acted quickly and called forward the two fastest runners; the two qwayaatsiik. They then took a cedar basket each to redistribute the earth. The first one was named Astaasapii because he ran in one direction around the island, taking as much time as it takes for a cedar ember to burn on the longhouse fire. The other, Aykutupis, took the other basket full of earth and ran around the island in the other direction. Aykutupis took as much time as it takes for a drop of rain to fall from the longhouse eaves to the ground.

When they finished this, the earth began to regenerate. Eventually, everything grew green again. The animal people spent this time preparing themselves because they knew Cha-chin-sun-up (To Put the Land in Order) was coming – he was coming to turn some of the animals into people.¹²⁷

Every time I read that story I pick up something new – this is often the way with our stories. In the context of this thesis a number of points come to mind. First is the connection between the animals and us. Other stories remind us of a time before humans as if to remind us of our good fortune, and the responsibilities we have to express our gratitude for our time on this earth. The story of the earth burning and regenerating is also important. Today, the earth burns and human beings are responsible. Like Chaastims, our arrogance has failed us and others have suffered. I can only hope that the strong and the meek among us have the courage to do what is right to help restore balance or repair what has been destroyed.

Colonial Pressures and Influences

As previously stated, change began to occur almost immediately after contact and occupation. We cannot underestimate the impact of our dramatic population decline due to the various diseases that the European traders brought with them that our people had little to no immunity. Inglis and Haggarty also point to the immediate disruptions to Nuu-chah-nulth subsistence practices. In many respects our ways were ill suited to handle drastic change of this scale. I do

¹²⁷ This haa-huu-pah is where we find out where Chaw-win-is' grandfather got his name.

not mean to disparage our resilience because it is an encouraging fact that we are still here and that some of us still remember the old ways, and it is especially encouraging because some of our young people are seeking those ways and returning home. At the same time it is critical to understand how we have come to arrive at this place. At the top of the list has to be the diseases that as many as eighty-five percent of our people succumbed to. Simply interacting with the colonials also had an impact on our trade and subsistence patterns. Certainly, our generosity with strangers played into our predicament as well, not the least of which is the fact that we were accustomed to dealing with people with similar teachings of respect, oneness, and reciprocity. The colonials did not exhibit these traits in return. More contemporarily, our experiences with the Canadian state, residential schools, the churches, and Settler society have contributed to our present circumstances. I also do not want to discount our agency in these matters. At each point we made decisions. Some of them have served us well and others may have led us astray. I am concerned that at this point in time, a failure to fully understand the colonial legacy and present neocolonial reality will not serve us well in the future. The truth is that we have recovered somewhat. We have grown stronger and the circumstances have changed enough to give us a little breathing room, a little political and social space to perhaps make different decisions. As Chaw-win-is reminds me, “We choose which memories govern us,” and her grandfather reminded her, “We can choose to live in a different way.”¹²⁸

I began this project for a number of reasons. Chief among them is my reaction to what I feel are a number of egregious violations of our Nuu-chah-nulth principles and worldviews through some recent partnerships with non-Indigenous corporations exploiting our territories. The two examples that come to mind are Mainstream Canada, owned by a Norwegian company

¹²⁸ Chaw-win-is. The first quote regarding our memories is something one of her mentors, Lee Maracle told her.

that operates fish farms in our territories, and the recent initiative to mine copper from Chitaapii by Imperial Metals. I think part of my reaction was because I felt that these activities seemed so recent and obviously insensitive to our principles of oneness and respect – what with the dismal environmental histories of these types of industries in other locations around the world. What I did not realize was that the story goes back much longer, and is perhaps, a little more complicated. What I have come to understand is that change did begin a long time ago and it makes the present activities more understandable. This does not mean that I still do not oppose these types of economic activities, but I have a much deeper understanding as to why they occur.

Selling Our Relatives – The Industrial Hunt for Sea Otters, Whales, Seals, and Fish

All of our stories and experiences teach us to take what we need and no more. Actually, our stories and teachings go further and suggest that even if our needs outstrip what is available it is us who need to adapt. Excess need does not justify dangerously depleting a resource, and thus radically altering a delicate balance. As chief Jack reminded us, we are equals with our animal relatives and their health and welfare need to be considered just as important as our own. I am not trying to suggest that this is just out of some sort of pure or naïve altruism, as we may understand in contemporary society. It makes practical sense as well. Imbalance is against everyone's interests and wellbeing. It is always in our long-term interests to maintain balance and ensure the health of all of our relatives. Chief Maquinna wrote, "The people looked after all the resources they depended on. They also hunted ducks, and deer that came in, and the hair seal and the fur seal. So, there was dependence on other resources besides salmon. There were times when the people got pretty lean."¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Maquinna, 75.

As mentioned previously, the Nuu-chah-nulth-aht were unique in being the only known coastal peoples to hunt for whales. Whaling played an integral part of our culture and society, and was conducted by the Ha'wiih. My own great, great, great grandfather, Kiista was the last known Ahousaht *Ha'wilth* to hunt whales on the west coast. According to Chuuchkamalthnii, when Kiista landed one of the three whales he is known to have captured in his lifetime, a European on the beach asked in disbelief how he did it. It was a Blue Whale one hundred feet in length, and Kiista was a man of small physical stature. Kiista replied, "I was taught to believe that I could do it."¹³⁰ I appreciate these stories because they *almost* seem impossible to me. I am awed by the power my ancestors possessed, when they lived right, prepared exhaustively, and walked with humility and purpose. All the *Ha'wiih* who undertook this monumental task made great and detailed preparations. Umeeek writes of a time when Kiista almost lost a whale due to a moment of "disharmony and disunity" in his home.¹³¹ Although I believe ritual preparations were integral to the successful hunt, recent history, especially the disrespectful behaviour of the *mamulthnii* teaches us that the rituals may have also been more for ourselves in the long term. I believe that our rituals were just as much about maintaining harmony from within ourselves, to ensure patience and proper conduct. Our actions were very deliberate and we would do well to learn from our ancestors, especially in seeking remedies for our current social, political, economic, spiritual, and environmental calamities. I take a closer look at the fish farms and the copper mine, along with other economic activities in our territories in chapter four.

We know that our people participated extensively in the sea otter pelt trade, and I am told we also hunted seal as well, in some cases travelling up to the Pribilof Islands in the Bering

¹³⁰ Chuuchkamalthnii.

¹³¹ Umeeek, x.

Sea.¹³² Chuuchkamalthnii reports that we also had people participate in commercial whale hunting.¹³³ To me these indicate a substantial shift in our ways of relating to our relatives. Several Nuu-chah-nulth nations have been before the courts making a case for an Aboriginal Right to catch and sell fish but I think a reference to Kuokkanen's Gift paradigm/Exchange paradigm differentiation is appropriate here. Hunting seafood and mammals on an industrial scale surely represents a departure from our previous ways of relating to sea life. I should also point out that I do not believe the current legal case is meant to secure large-scale industrial-type access to the sea. Clearly, federal licensing regimes and management policies have fed a commercial fishery that does not respect our traditional protocols and ways. If it were up to us, I am led to believe that we would do it differently. I want to pick up where I started at the beginning of this chapter, with a deeper exploration of our participation in the commercial fishery.

The Rise and Fall of the Nuu-chah-nulth Commercial Fishery

I asked interview participants about their commercial fishing experiences, including their fond memories, their bad memories, critical reflections, and their hopes for the future. Again, I was a little surprised by what I heard but inspired at the same time. I begin with the fond memories. Most started at a young age. Wickaninnish says, "Fishing was just very much a part of our lives, something we grew up with. I fished with my step-dad from the time I was five years old."¹³⁴ Alan Dick, an elder from Tseshaht remembers going to get food for his family when he was

¹³² Maquinna, 61.

¹³³ Chuuchkamalthnii.

¹³⁴ Wickaninnish.

about ten years old, in a canoe that his grandparents made for him.¹³⁵ This would have been in 1931. José started fishing full summers when he was eleven. My cousin Emily Recalma (nee Amos) first remembers going out on her father's fishing boat when she was nine but remembers getting homesick and doesn't think she made it the whole summer. She fished full summers from the age of ten until she was eighteen. Emily is from a fishing family and she also married into a fishing family. Her husband is from the Qualicum First Nation.¹³⁶ A-in-chut first remembers fishing in a canoe with John Frank, Jr. in Ahous and later with our Grandpa Mark. My uncle Doug Atleo started fishing when he was about five or six years old as well. Like my father he proved quite capable at a very young age. His father, my Grandpa Mark told him that he could be a deckhand when he was strong enough to pull the poles up.¹³⁷ Uncle Doug managed to do this by the time he was nine or ten years old by jumping off the cabin on to the deck and using his body weight to pull the poles up.¹³⁸ I did not manage this until I was about thirteen! Everyone I spoke to remembers the excitement of going fishing from a very young age.

A-in-chut loved spending time with family when he went fishing with our Grandpa Mark, his father Umeek, and our uncles Doug and Keith (who now holds the name Kiista). Although he was aware that they were fishing commercially, it was the quality time with family that he recalls most. He also enjoyed being out on the water in our territories.¹³⁹ My Aunt Marge, who fished with her father Pat when she was younger and later with my Uncle Russell, remembers the

¹³⁵ Alan Dick, personal interview, Port Alberni, BC, June 13, 2010.

¹³⁶ Emily Recalma, telephone interview, July 9, 2010.

¹³⁷ Trolling poles are located on both the port and starboard sides of fishing vessel and are lowered and raised by a rope. They extend outwards from the vessel so that the fishing lines are separated from each other and less likely to tangle. They can be quite heavy, especially if they are made of metal.

¹³⁸ Doug Atleo, telephone interview, June 27, 2010.

¹³⁹ A-in-chut, telephone interview, July 7, 2010.

excitement of the coming seasons.¹⁴⁰ Emily remembers the best times were when her younger sister and she worked as deckhands on their father's boat. She remembers the bonding experience when "the old man went to bed" and she and her sister would sit out on the deck at night and drink tea (and smoke cigarettes). She also remembers the best times being when the weather was sunny and the waters not too choppy, The Tragically Hip on the stereo and the boat "high-rolling."¹⁴¹ Emily also remembers the excitement of delivering the fish. The work of securing the gear and scrubbing the decks sure seems light when you have a hold full of fish. I can attest to this personally, and it is especially sweet when you do not have to shovel the excess ice overboard.

Emily also remembers some negative experiences. Notable among them are some of the reactions she received from other fishermen. She felt uncomfortable when deckhands and skippers from other boats would say sexist and/or disparaging remarks about her and her sister. It was as if they could not believe that women could fish in such a male-dominated field. She says it was better when her and her sister were together though, and harder when either of them were alone.¹⁴² José says that "It took some getting used to – some of the attitudes and personalities on the boat."¹⁴³ A-in-chut also says that he didn't like the unhealthy and abusive behaviours exhibited by some of the fishermen. He was much happier when everyone was sober and healthy and happy. About the commercial fishing itself, there were two aspects that he did not like. The first was fishing in other people's territories. This is obviously connected to the federal licensing regimes that completely ignored the traditional territories of the coastal Indigenous nations. The

¹⁴⁰ Marge Robinson, telephone interview, July 9, 2010.

¹⁴¹ Emily Recalma. "High-rolling" is when the lines are full of fish and the deckhands are on a continuous cycle of checking the lines, cleaning the fish, icing the fish, and starting all over again.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ José Robinson.

second aspect that A-in-chut felt conflicted about was the industrial scale of the commercial fishery. He remembers how a large fleet of seine boats could clean out an area in minutes.¹⁴⁴ Emily admits to being naïve about the commercial aspects when she was a teenager, asking, “What else were people going to do?”¹⁴⁵ My Aunt Marge also reflects critically on those times, but mostly in retrospect. At the time, she recalls that her family worked so hard, and that her husband, when he was trolling, would fish from April until November trying make a living.¹⁴⁶ For most of us, commercial fishing was not making us millionaires, but the large industrial fleet was taking its toll on our salmon relatives for certain.

Eventually, Nuu-chah-nulth-aht participation in the commercial fisheries would dwindle down to where it is today, nearly non- existent. My father stopped fishing in 1977, me in 1991, my Uncle Doug in 1995, Emily around 1996, and José around 1999. Federal policy has had a great deal to do with the decline, not only of the fish populations, but also Nuu-chah-nulth-aht participation in the industry. Although the decline in the last twenty years has been dramatic, the policies that would negatively affect us go back much longer than that. It began with the federal licensing regime. Wickaninnish states,

There was a guy that was appointed by the Ha’wiih to be our first chief councillor (Paul Sam) who advised all of us, all our people against paying for a (fishing) license. He didn’t believe in it. He thought we would regret it. At the time it only cost us a dollar. His advice sure came true. Our people now – the way the license values are – you can’t afford to be a fisherman. Just getting in is prohibitive.¹⁴⁷

Wickaninnish also remembers the Davis Plan that in his view marked the beginning of a very rapid decline. He says, “That’s when they started buying back licenses. They devalued some of

¹⁴⁴ A-in-chut.

¹⁴⁵ Emily Recalma.

¹⁴⁶ Marge Robinson.

¹⁴⁷ Wickaninnish, 2010.

our licenses. If you didn't have ten thousand dollars of landings (fish), your license became a "B" and it had a sunset, which would mean it would disappear, it would be no longer after a period of time."¹⁴⁸ Regarding the halibut fishery Wickaninnish recalls,

Our guys had a history of fishing halibut but not to great volumes but they fished it as a bridging fishery between fisheries. Many of them got squeezed out of the halibut fishery licenses and a non-Indian investing ten thousand dollars into halibut gear who never fished halibut a day in their lives secured licenses because of the investment they made and our guys were left on the beach.¹⁴⁹

What these policies effectively did was commodify the industry even further and squeeze out the small operators. Fishing became prohibitively expensive, and investors stepped in and became what my father calls "armchair fishermen." Don Hall, NTC Fisheries manager concurs noting that beginning with bottom fish (halibut), there has been a gradual push towards a "privatization and consolidation" of the fishing industry.¹⁵⁰ The loss of a life of fishing has been hard on Nuu-chah-nulth families. Commercial fishing – albeit a complicated compromise – was in many ways our last strong connection to life on the water.

Don also states that, "Fishers are eternal optimists by nature" and the NTC has been leading a court challenge that began in the late 1990s out of frustration with slow and unproductive treaty negotiations. The Nuu-chah-nulth statement of claim was filed in 2003 and at the end of 2009 the British Columbia Supreme Court issued a ruling in favour of the Nuu-chah-nulth legal right to sell fish. Canada filed an appeal shortly after and while the legal wrangling continues; the judge also ordered a two-year period of negotiations. There has been one negotiation meeting so far.¹⁵¹ Don reports that lots of people have indicated a willingness to

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Dr. Don Hall, telephone interview, 25 June, 2010.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

get back on the water again. Wickaninnish believes that in many cases our people will have to relearn how to fish. Still, many of the people I speak with are optimistic about implementing the court ruling. They are excited about the prospect of a life back on the water. José comments, “People need to go out there and exercise the win on that decision. We need to get boats out there, and push the envelope and get people working again. There’s still a market for wild salmon, all kinds of seafood.”¹⁵² Maybe we have not lost our claim as saltwater people after all. Perhaps we can still get people out on the water again, on a smaller scale, fishing in a responsible way and working to prevent outsiders from overfishing as well. I am not convinced that a court decision can do this for us though. Some will remember the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in the *Marshall* case that recognized similar rights of Mi’kmaq fishers on the East Coast. The lobster fishers of Esgenoôpetitj met severe resistance when they tried to implement their rights. I believe that we should unite to re-establish Nuu-chah-nulth ways of living, but we should also be prepared for the fight that will eventually come when any Indigenous people seek to live an Indigenous life. This leads me to inquire as to what the impacts have been of not living Nuu-chah-nulth-aht.

The Implications so far: Hoquotist and Kwisah

As mentioned previously, to be *hoquotist* is when our canoe has been overturned and we are lost and disoriented. *Kwisah* means stranger. It means that a person is behaving crazy or that they do not have our values and teachings.¹⁵³ Sometimes this is said scornfully. At other times, it is said with compassion. Chuuchkamalthnii encourages us to be friendly and supportive and not too

¹⁵² José Robinson.

¹⁵³ Chuuchkamalthnii.

scornful or alienating, when speaking of our own people. Of course, all of this may also depend on the degree to which someone is acting crazy and how seriously others are offended or harmed. It is safe to say that acting offensively may only require a suggestion to act differently – in a way that is more consistent with our encouraged collective values, while doing harm may require more drastic measures. The impacts of colonization include more than disruptions to our teachings and the perpetuation of our values. Without a doubt, we have undergone tremendous changes to our physical health as well.

According to the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative, one in four Status Indians over the age of forty-five living on reserve have diabetes.¹⁵⁴ Most cases of diabetes (ninety percent) are of the type two variety, which usually occurs in older people. What is truly alarming is the higher rates among children as young as five years old.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, two-thirds of the Indigenous people diagnosed with diabetes are women – five times the average of their Canadian counterparts. Indigenous men are diagnosed with diabetes at a rate three times the Canadian average.¹⁵⁶ This study is ten years old, but there are no indications that these numbers have gone down. In fact, the study projects a three-fold increase in diabetes diagnoses in the next twenty years – by 2030. Why is diabetes a concern? For one, there are several serious health issues that arise in diabetic people – including increased rates of heart disease, hypertension, high blood pressure, stroke, depression, and lower limb amputation.¹⁵⁷ Diabetes was virtually unknown to our people just a couple of generations ago. What changed? With the emphasis on type two diabetes, the causal

¹⁵⁴ Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative. *Diabetes Among Aboriginal People in Canada: The Evidence* (Ottawa: Health Canada, 2000), 10.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 11. Type two diabetes was previously known as “adult onset or non-insulin dependent diabetes.” The growing prevalence of this type of diabetes among children has rendered these names obsolete.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 12.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 16-17.

factors are primarily are increased sedentary lifestyles and poor diet. Basically, we are less active than we used to be and we are eating too much refined *mamulthnii* food, high in sugar and carbohydrates.

My Aunt Marge remembers that when she was young they hardly ever ate candy or drank soda. She recalls, “We lived on seafood. With such a big family (Aunt Marge had 14 brothers and sisters), we couldn’t afford store bought food. It was good. I miss it.”¹⁵⁸ Wickaninnish states, “We ate all kinds of seafood growing up. We ate urchins, chitons, goose-neck barnacles, mussels, clams, octopus, seagull eggs, seal – hair and fur. Our way was just being active all year ‘round.”¹⁵⁹ My Uncle Doug adds, “My belief is that we ate very healthy, and not just seafood, but animals and birds and plants as well. We didn’t waste anything. White people didn’t think we lived right or healthy. All of our nations used to be healthy, but taking on their (*mamulthnii*) way of life has made us all sickly.”¹⁶⁰ Our people also used to access medicines from the *Ha’hoolthlii*. Alan Dick speaks of, “Medicines for long life, strength – It’s all out there, all around us, what we should do.”¹⁶¹ Chaw-win-is also recalls what her grandfather said about money and inactivity. Cha-chin-sun-up-mit said, “Too much money makes us crazy. We get lazy and we forget to work hard.” She also recalls her grandfather’s reaction to the growing trend of exercise gyms in the 1980s. He said emphatically, “My life was a form of exercise!”¹⁶² Clearly, our people are aware of our present state of *hoquotist*. We know that we have been led or led ourselves astray. Before I get to the discussion of how we right our canoes and begin paddling in

¹⁵⁸ Marge Robinson.

¹⁵⁹ Wickaninnish.

¹⁶⁰ Doug Atleo.

¹⁶¹ Alan Dick.

¹⁶² Chaw-win-is.

a good direction again, I have to address the issue of Aboriginal economic development and the specific manifestations of it in our territories. I will discuss the examples of the War in the Woods/Clayoquot Sound, the Ahous Fish Farm protocol with Mainstream, and the proposed copper mine atop Chitaapii in the next chapter.

Chapter Four – Aboriginal Economic Development in Nuuchahnulth Territories

From Fishers to Farmers...of Fish

“Ahousaht declares war on fish farms,” read one newspaper headline in 2002, shortly after the incursion of fish farms into Ahous territories.¹⁶³ Well, it was not much of a war, and it certainly did not last long. Initial concerns were raised about the environmental impacts of salmon farming in Ahous waters, specifically the negative impacts on the wild salmon that our people had depended on for thousands of years. Several *Ha'wiih* led the protests, including A-in-chut, and they even used a war chant that had been used in the eighteenth century war between the Ahous and Otsoos.¹⁶⁴ Adding to the resolve was the fact that a substantial number of Nuuchahnulth-ah and Ahousaht were still making their livings on the water. Since then, the trend has only gone downward, as it has for decades. It seems that over time, we have become less concerned about our relationships and more concerned about our jobs.

Speaking of fishing on the Somass River, Gordon Dick remembers arguing with his fellow fishers who would state that they were going to exercise their Aboriginal Right to fish. Gordon encouraged prudence and replied, “Yes we are going to fish and yes we are going to sell some, but we also have to protect the fishery for future generations. We have an *Aboriginal*

¹⁶³ David Wiwchar. “Ahousaht declares war against fish farms,” *Raven's Eye*, issue 5.9 (2002), 3. <<http://www.ammsa.com/node/25378>>.

¹⁶⁴ The Ahous war with Otsoos occurred sometime between 1800 and 1850 and lasted twelve years. We know this because the daughter of one of the chiefs was born the year the war began, and had her Aaytsulthla (coming of age ceremony) at the war's conclusion. The smaller Ahous tribe and its allies defeated Otsoos, which had been unwilling to share its salmon streams. The Ahous confederacy is now located where Otsoos used to be. See: Maquinna, pp 42-52 and Peter S. Webster, *As Far As I Know: Reminiscences of an Ahousaht Elder* (Campbell River: Campbell River Museum and Archives, 1983), pp 59-64.

obligation to protect the fishery.”¹⁶⁵ Gordon has participated in catching and selling fish since he was a teenager but his priorities have always been clear. First, he would give fish to relatives and elders. Next, he would preserve (can, freeze, dry, and smoke) his own fish for the winter, and only then would he sell the remaining fish. His participation in the selling of fish had two key elements that make his actions unique and noteworthy. He was always keenly aware of his Indigenous obligation to protect the fishery, and not overfish, and he was more than willing to not go fishing during years when the stocks needed to recover. On those occasions, he might supplement his family’s diet with game that he hunted. He also made sure to sell his fish at a premium price – twelve to fifteen dollars in the 1980s.¹⁶⁶ Now you might think this is simply the mark of a sharp businessman, but to Gordon’s way of thinking, he never wanted to devalue the fish. In comparison, some Tseshaht and Hupacasath fishers today sell their fish for as low as eight dollars in hopes of undercutting their competitors in the local market. Gordon also reports that people’s behaviours started to shift when Tseshaht and Hupacasath signed a “pilot sales” agreement with the federal government. He noticed more “cutthroat competitiveness” on the river, with fishers “corking” each other, as well as increased waste.¹⁶⁷ If a community member did not have buyers lined up, sometimes they would throw the fish away, instead of clean and share them with other community or family members. All of this was tremendously troubling to Gordon and symptomatic of a decline in traditional values.

Even though there were significant problems with the commercial fisheries, at least our ongoing involvement demanded that some of us care about the health and sustainability of wild

¹⁶⁵ Gordon Dick, telephone interview, July 10, 2010. *Emphasis* added.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* To “cork” someone in gillnet or seine fishing is when you set your net to block another person’s net, essentially catching the fish that they would have caught.

salmon. The removal of our traditional and adaptive practices has left us in an unenviable quandary. Do we stick to our principles – robustly interpreted principles of oneness and respect – or do we feed our families by any means necessary? Ahous spokespeople for their fish farm partnership claim that they are trying to do both. I believe that we are being forced into a choice between bad and worse. Let us take a closer look.

There have been two occasions when I have privately clashed with my cousin, A-in-chut over decisions that he has been involved with as *Ha'wilth*. The most recent was in 2006 when he gave British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell a Nuu-chah-nulth name and jokingly referred to him as “cousin.” I do not believe that Premier Campbell has earned the name. Prior to that I felt compelled to express my discontent when the Ahous Ha'wiih signed a confidential protocol agreement with Mainstream Canada, a Norwegian owned fish farm company, effectively partnering to allow open net fish farms operate in Ahous waters. I am a pretty non-confrontational person, but on these occasions, I was so viscerally moved that I could not keep quiet. Granted, most of my grievances were aired privately, via email no less, and directed only at A-in-chut. I do not remember everything that was said, but I do remember that he felt defensive citing his own involvement in the protests against the fish farms in 2002. Well, it was not long after that the Ahous *Ha'wiih* and the fish farm company signed a protocol agreement, allowing the fish farms to operate according to terms that were undisclosed – even from most Ahousaht. I have never seen the agreement, nor have most Ahousahts. Ahous *Ha'wiih* recently renewed the protocol agreement in January of this year in exchange for recognition of Ahous traditional governance, “economic benefits, training, education programs, salmon enhancement funding, employment, contracting and business opportunities.”¹⁶⁸ I say recognition of traditional

¹⁶⁸ Press Release, Mainstream Canada, Campbell River, January 19, 2010.

Ahous governance, because if I understand it correctly, this agreement is with the Ahous *Ha'wiih*, not necessarily the elected chief and council as representatives of the first nation. Few Settlers have been willing to deal directly with our Ha'wiih, so this would mark a departure from regular government and business practice when dealing with us. I can see how this willingness to deal with the Ha'wiih directly after decades of exclusion would be compelling for our traditional leadership, but I fear this partnership is not in the best long-term interests of our people.

Upon the recent renewal of the protocol agreement between the Ahous *Ha'wiih* and Mainstream, it was noted that, "Despite the controversy over fish farming, the First Nation (Ahous) is doing the best it can to eradicate its social and economic issues by bringing in an industry that many from the community can benefit from." Wally Samuel states, "Yes, we're caught between a rock and a hard place. But, right now it's our livelihood."¹⁶⁹ According to the *Westerly News*, the protocol guarantees that fifty-percent of the one hundred and fifty jobs at the thirteen fish farm sites will be filled by "B.C. First Nations."¹⁷⁰ Speaking through a press release regarding the new protocol, two *Ha'wiih* and a spokesperson for A-in-chut stated, "We find Fish farming is replacing the prosperity missing since the end of the commercial fishery."¹⁷¹ It would seem in this instance, we have conceded defeat in the wild salmon fishery and feel like there are no other alternatives. Our people at home need jobs. They need to feed their families. We have been starved into submission. It is truly a disgrace that we no longer fish, and now require work so that we can feed our families and buy food from the grocery store. I do not doubt the difficult position my relatives at home are in. The preceding chapters have documented the gradual and

¹⁶⁹ Stefania Seccia. "Ahousaht and aquaculture company celebrate protocol." *Westerly News* online, March 30, 2010. <<http://www2.canada.com/westerly/story.html?id=d9ec075f2f48-4e39-87ce-4b897a926551>>.

¹⁷⁰ Stefania Seccia. "Ahousaht First Nations under Fire in Two Protests in One Week." *Westerly News*, May 27, 2010. <http://wildernesscommittee.org/news/Ahousaht_first_nations_under_fire_two_protests_one_week>.

¹⁷¹ Mainstream Canada.

incessant removal of our people from our traditional and adaptive practices. I have to believe that there are alternatives, however. Surely, we can keep the debate on this issue alive and remain open to other possibilities that are in line with our principles and worldviews.

Chief Maquinna (Earl's son, Louis George who is now the of *Tyee Ha'wilth* of Ahous) acknowledges the criticism, not only from Settler environmentalists, but also other Indigenous communities. His response is, "I respect that hereditary chiefs have different views on fish farming in their territories. Likewise I expect that the view of the Ahousaht for their territory too will be respected."¹⁷² Chief Maquinna invokes *iisaak*, but in a very particular way, which I find increasingly common in response to dissenting opinions both from within and without Nuu-chah-nulth communities. In this particular case, I feel that we may be ignoring the other cornerstone principle: *Heshookish tsa-walk*. Certainly we can appreciate that what happens in the territories of the Ahousaht is relevant to our neighbours, especially regarding the specific concerns that arise from salmon aquaculture – namely sea lice infestations, pollution, escapement, and Atlantic salmon colonization.¹⁷³ Speaking of the dangers of fish farms close to her territory, Sah-haa says,

That's something that I could adamantly stand against. It's really concerning to me. You know you can have fish farms in Ahousaht territory but that's going to greatly affect Hesquiaht territory and that really bothers me because Ahousaht takes such a firm stand stating it, "employs sixty percent of our people." Well, It's also decimating everybody's fish stocks. They (Ahousaht fish farm spokespeople) are unwilling to hear anyone else's concerns. I feel as though they are bullying people. We don't get Sockeye anymore. They (fish farms) can be done on land, and they are far less damaging, but they are a lot more expensive, but how much are those companies making off our people? It's all about money. The people stand at potlatches and they stand at meetings and they talk about how important it (fish farming) is to our people as Nuu-chah-nulth. Well, I can't see that a lot of

¹⁷² Seccia, May 27 2010.

¹⁷³ Fish farms typically farm Atlantic salmon, as they are believed to be heartier than Pacific salmon. Many people believe that when Atlantic salmon escape their pens, there is always the possibility that they will colonize local salmon habitat.

our ancestors would have thought that that was okay, considering the environmental effects that it has on the things that are naturally there.¹⁷⁴

I completely understand that my relatives at home are struggling with a whole range of issues, not the least of which is to feed themselves and their families. The concerns that I raise are not meant to vilify my own people, but I still believe that I have valid concerns. Knowing what we know about our livelihood trends since contact, the impacts of ceaseless colonization, and the rhetoric of Aboriginal economic development, these outcomes become predictable. That being said, we remain responsible for what we say and what we do. For the uninitiated, I want to spend a little time looking at the business salmon farming and what the actual concerns are.

According to the BC Salmon Farmers Association, fish farming first began in China 3500 years ago and today about forty percent of the fish and shellfish eaten by humans are farmed.¹⁷⁵ In 1984, there were fewer than five fish farm sites in British Columbia.¹⁷⁶ Today, there are about eighty-five sites and in 2005 British Columbia fish farms sold 450 million dollars worth of farmed salmon to customers in Canada, the United States, and Japan.¹⁷⁷ It baffles me why we even need to farm salmon while resources are not spent reviving wild salmon habitat and stocks but according to the BC Salmon Farmers, wild salmon can only fulfill one-third of the demand for seafood. They also state that an increase of 23-32 million tonnes will be required to meet global demand by 2020. They conclude their online fact sheet with a reminder that salmon

¹⁷⁴ Sah-haa. Personal Interview, Port Alberni, June 13, 2010.

¹⁷⁵ BC Salmon Farmers Association. "Did you know? Facts about Salmon Farming." BC Salmon Farmers Association website. <http://salmonfarmers.khamiahosting.com/sites/default/files/factsheet_didyouknowfacts.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ Dale Marshall. *Fishy Business: The Economics of Salmon Farming in BC*. Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2003), 8.

¹⁷⁷ BC Salmon Farmers Association.

contain important omega-3 fatty acids that are essential to fighting heart disease.¹⁷⁸ So what is the big fuss about?

According to a brochure produced by the David Suzuki Foundation for food industry professionals, there are three main concerns with open net fish farms. The first is disease. “The densely packed conditions in which the salmon are raised require the use of antibiotics and other drugs to control disease, and traces of these substances are passed on to consumers (not to mention other natural predators when these farmed salmon manage to escape).”¹⁷⁹ These diseases include Infectious Salmon Anaemia, furunculosis, and sea lice. The second issue is that of farmed fish that escape their pens. “Over one million Atlantic salmon (the predominant farmed species) have escaped into BC waters, raising concern about disease transfer and the effects on habitat, breeding space, and competition for food (with wild Pacific salmon).”¹⁸⁰ They state further that, “When Atlantic salmon were first found in BC streams, (aquaculture) industry and government said they could not survive. However, DNA tests have now confirmed Atlantics are reproducing in this alien habitat and the juveniles are thriving.”¹⁸¹ The third issue is destruction of habitat and species. “These netcages – perhaps best characterized as floating feedlots – produce high concentrations of fish waste, including drug remnants and drug-resistant microbes, (that) pass through the netcages to suffocate and destroy life on the ocean floor.”¹⁸² Additionally, these sites attract predators like *Kakawin*, seals, and sea lions and salmon farm operators use guns and other loud deterrents to keep them away, threatening habitat and

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ David Suzuki Foundation. *Salmon Aquaculture* brochure, 2002. David Suzuki Foundation website. <<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/Aquabrochure.pdf>>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

migration patterns.¹⁸³ The fish farm industry refutes most of these claims of course. The Chief Executive Officer of Cermaq - the Norwegian company that owns Mainstream – states, “I feel some of the arguments they use are not really real...and in my view it seems at least that some of the arguments used against fish farming are not verified in this research.”¹⁸⁴ I am not qualified to get into a detailed debate myself, but I am reminded of the cases of cigarette company executives who swore they knew nothing about connections between smoking and lung cancer or George W. Bush and oil executives questioning the science on climate change.

It is one thing to hear or read about the negative effects of fish farming, but it is quite another to experience them first hand. My Uncle Doug Atleo was an engineer for the fish farm company in Clayoquot Sound for about a year.¹⁸⁵ He wanted to see what they were about and how they operated. What he discovered surprised and disturbed him. When I inquired as to what surprised him he told me that he had never seen two-headed and two-tailed fish before he worked for the fish farms. He was also shocked to see the condition of the fish, which had white/grey coloured flesh and would sometimes be full of sores in their stomachs. He says that about a week before harvesting the fish, they would be fed pellets to dye their flesh pink.¹⁸⁶ My Aunt Marge got one in her food fish. She said it was sick looking and that you could poke your finger into its mushy flesh.¹⁸⁷ According to the BC Salmon Farmers, “Wild salmon get their colour from eating other marine organism such as krill, which contain carotenoids. Farmed salmon eat those same

¹⁸³ Ibid. “Kakawin” is our word for Orca or Killer Whale.

¹⁸⁴ Seccia, 30 March 2010.

¹⁸⁵ The term “engineer” is used to describe the person on a fishing or packing boat that looks after the mechanics and hydraulics on the vessel.

¹⁸⁶ Doug Atleo.

¹⁸⁷ Marge Robinson.

carotenoids in their food.”¹⁸⁸ This must be what they are fed prior to harvesting. What I find disturbing is how unnatural all of this is, despite the claims of salmon farmers. Another aspect seldom reported is the potential negative effects on the salmon farm workers – half of which we learned are Indigenous. Doug looked at the chemicals that were being poured in to the pens to “stun” the fish prior to harvesting and discovered that they are toxic. He warned the workers that they should be wearing masks and other protective gear. Finally, Doug also spoke of certain attempts by the companies to mislead the public. He remembers one incident where the company reported that fifteen hundred Atlantic salmon had escaped. He heard the details on the news and knowing the site and pen, he believes that there were actually ten times the amount reported.¹⁸⁹ Doug is not against fish farms per se. He just wishes they would act responsibly, but he fears that money is more important to the companies than doing the right thing. As Sah-haa points out, these facilities can be run on land, but those operations are more expensive, hence cutting into company profits.

Certainly you can see the trajectory. First, we oppose these projects citing cultural and environmental concerns. We meet with company officials, tour their other operations around the world – including trips to Norway – meet with community members, all the while our fishing fleet has been on a downward spiral since the 1950s, we spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in court fighting for our right to fish, and our employment numbers decline rapidly. Not so suddenly, it is about jobs and socio-economic conditions and finally, we are partners in economic development. I am not interested in taking cheap shots from the cheap seats. I am Ahousaht. I have a vested interest. I want to contribute to the discussion. I want to do all I can to

¹⁸⁸ BC Salmon Farmers Association.

¹⁸⁹ Doug Atleo.

help, but I also cannot ignore what I feel to be right and wrong. As my cousin A-in-chut likes to say, we can be hard on the issues without being hard on each other. This is not to say that there are no consequences for our actions, as the story of Kau-nau-kum in chapter two illustrated, but there is a method of Nuu-chah-nulth problem solving that attempts to focus on the issues, and this is what I am attempting to do here.

I want to understand how we got here. I want to understand how we have come to make these decisions – choices between bad and worse in my view. I want to understand so that we can place accountability and responsibility where it belongs, respectively with our people, our *Ha'wiih*, the environmentalists, colonial governments, and the corporations. I also want to be clear that I do not come at this from a strictly naïve and urbane sense of contemporary environmentalism. I have as many neocolonial critiques of Settler environmentalists as I do for Settler governments and corporations, as we shall see in the next section. In seeking to understand how we have come to seemingly impossible positions, I do not want to shirk our responsibilities as Ahousaht and Nuu-chah-nulth-aht. Surely, we can breathe life into the age-old principles of *heshookish tsa'walk* and *iisaak*. Let us back up again, and look at the War in the Woods in Clayoquot Sound, the events that led up to those conflicts, and the aftermath to get a better sense of the trajectories I speak of in the cases of the fish farms and the proposed copper mine.

War in the Woods, Clayoquot Sound and the Central Region Agreements

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Clayoquot Sound was at the centre of many conflicts between Nuu-chah-nulth-aht, Settler governments, corporations, and environmentalists. In 1980, the logging company MacMillan Bloedel announced a plan to log Meares Island, known to the Tla-

o-qui-aht and Ahousaht as Wah-nuh-juss/Hilth-hoo-is. When the forest company barge landed on Meares Island, they were greeted by Tla-o-qui-aht elected Chief Moses Martin who said, “Welcome to Meares Island. This is our garden. You are welcome to visit but you will cut no trees here.”¹⁹⁰ Other Nuuchahnulth, as well as some non-Indigenous residents from the nearby town of Tofino supported Martin. Out of the ongoing conflicts grew a united “Central Region” of the Nuuchahnulth and a non-Indigenous organization called the Friends of Clayoquot Sound.¹⁹¹ MacMillan Bloedel applied for a court injunction to remove the blockade and the Nuuchahnulth responded with their own injunction application. After more than a million dollars and several technical victories in court for the Nuuchahnulth, the Provincial government requested an adjournment. Logging was prevented on Meares Island, but the conflict would arise again.¹⁹²

In 1993, the provincial government announced the Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision. Without consulting Nuuchahnulth communities the plan demarcated parks, buffer zones, scenic corridors, and logging areas – including 74% of the old growth timber in Clayoquot Sound.¹⁹³ This was unacceptable to Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht along with their neighbours and relatives from Hesquiaht, Ucluelet, and Toquaht who again sought a court injunction to stop the logging. They also enlisted the support of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and the New York based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). As part of a broad public relations and lobbying strategy, a

¹⁹⁰ *Restoring First Nations to the Land: Lessons from Clayoquot Sound* (Port Alberni: Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council and Natural Resources Defense Council, 2001), 7.

¹⁹¹ The five Central Region nations included Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, and Ucluelet.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* 8.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* 8-9.

delegation of Nuu-chah-nulth leaders traveled to New York and Washington, DC to make their case at the United Nations, and the United States Congress.¹⁹⁴

During the summer of 1993, thousands of protesters also traveled to Clayoquot Sound, and more than 850 people were arrested in what was Canada's largest act of civil disobedience at the time.¹⁹⁵ What is not well known is that non-Indigenous protesters were required to ask the Nuu-chah-nulth *Ha'wiih* permission to demonstrate on their lands. Wickaninnish believes that most of the environmental groups used the dispute to raise their profiles and increase their donations. Warren Magnusson and Karena Shaw write, "Clayoquot was an important moment in the development of the international campaign against logging in the world's temperate rainforests; for a long time it was the international campaign's poster child."¹⁹⁶ Magnusson and Shaw also write that, "Clayoquot stands out as an important instance of a type of political campaigning that is sure to become more and more common: campaigning *within the global market*."¹⁹⁷ Of all the environmental groups involved, including Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Sierra Club, and Greenpeace, NRDC remained the most respectful of Nuu-chah-nulth protocols and wishes. It is interesting to note that of all the big groups, from a strictly environmental perspective, NRDC might be regarded as the most "moderate." Moderation from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective meant that NRDC was willing to respect and adhere to Indigenous protocols and wishes.

The British Columbia government, once unresponsive to Nuu-chah-nulth leaders, was now offering to meet and negotiate a settlement. After forty days of negotiations in the spring of

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. 11.

¹⁹⁵ *Restoring First Nations to the Land: Lessons from Clayoquot Sound*, 9.

¹⁹⁶ Warren Magnusson and Karena Shaw, eds. *A Political Space: Reading the Global Through Clayoquot Sound* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), viii.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 9. Emphasis in original.

1994, the government of British Columbia and the hereditary chiefs of the five Nuu-chah-nulth nations of Clayoquot Sound signed an interim measures agreement (IMA). The IMA created the Central Region Board (CRB), comprised of five Nuu-chah-nulth members, five local non-indigenous members and two co-chairs, one appointed by the province and one appointed by the Nuu-chah-nulth. The CRB, by a process of “double majority” – a majority of the board plus a majority of the Nuu-chah-nulth members – was to approve all development proposals in the sound. The IMA also created the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound, which issued its first report in 1995.¹⁹⁸ The Scientific Panel, which included Nuu-chah-nulth members, presented a dramatic departure in forest practices focusing on “ecosystem integrity” and incorporating Nuu-chah-nulth principles of sustainability.¹⁹⁹ For once, Nuu-chah-nulth felt included in the decision-making processes in their territories and people were optimistic.

Not everyone was happy, however. The logging companies were severely restricted from their usual practices and many of the environmentalists had been advocating for a total preservation of what they had cast as “pristine wilderness.” While both environmentalists and the Nuu-chah-nulth are against the ecosystem destruction that is characteristic of clear-cut logging, the Nuu-chah-nulth had expressed their belief that forestry could take place in a responsible manner. Wickaninnish clarifies, “We never opposed logging. We believe that resources are there for our benefit. But they are not there for our abuse; we have to take care of them.” Wickaninnish states further, “We think there should always be old growth. How? You find out the rate at which trees and forest areas develop and you keep your harvest at a rate that allows for the development

¹⁹⁸ *Restoring First Nations to the Land: Lessons from Clayoquot Sound*, 11-12.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 13.

of old growth areas to replace the ones you are cutting.”²⁰⁰ This view was also shared by the Scientific Panel, which recommended a 300-year cycle in logging practices. When contrasted with the current industry practice of “tree-farming” which sees the cutting of trees that are only 50-60 years old, the stark differences between Nuu-chah-nulth and Western conceptions of “nature” and their respective places in it are only too evident.

Neocolonial Environmentalism

Again, many of the environmentalists did not agree with the actions taken by the Nuu-chah-nulth and the fragile relationships of convenience began to break down. In his book, *The Intemperate Rainforest*, Bruce Braun challenges the “binary logic” of environmental debate in British Columbia between “pristine nature” and “destructive humanity” and calls for a “critical postcolonial environmentalism” that sincerely incorporates the interests of Indigenous peoples.²⁰¹ By dichotomizing the problem in this way, contemporary Indigenous peoples are erased from the landscape by governments, corporations, and environmental groups. In attempting to refute stereotypes of the “ecologically noble Indian,” Paul Nadasdy writes, “Environmentalists have their own agenda, which is often more in tune with that of other Euro-North Americans than with the interests of (Indigenous) people.”²⁰² Nadasdy concludes with,

They (Indigenous people) are simply people with a complex set of beliefs, practices, and values that defy standard Euro-North American schemes of categorization. To be sure, they sometimes make use of environmentalist rhetoric,

²⁰⁰ Wickaninnish (Clifford Atleo, Sr.), “Land, Science, and Indigenous Science: Tales from a Modern Treaty Negotiation Process” in *Science and Native American Communities: Legacies of Pain, Visions of Promise*. Keith James, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 160-161.

²⁰¹ Bruce Braun, *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada’s West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 2.

²⁰² Paul Nadasdy, “Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism,” *Ethnohistory* vol. 52, no. 2 (Spring 2005), 292.

because it confers on them a degree of legitimacy and power in certain political contexts. But in my experience, they seldom do so cynically; more often they genuinely believe that their own practices are more environmentally benign than those of the dominant Euro-North American society. Their claims to this effect must be considered on their own merits, rather as part of a larger general debate over their ecological nobility.²⁰³

A key part of our recovery is redeploying our own ways of being and living, and that our perspectives in our territories must come first. Sure, we can have allies, but from our point of view, they are still guests in the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih*, and must act accordingly.

Braun argues that the “erasure” of Nuu-chah-nulth interests was not only perpetuated by the provincial government epitomized by the 1993 Clayoquot Sound Land Use Plan, but that environmental groups also “tacitly” accepted the erasure by choosing to focus explicitly on the “*quantity and quality* of lands preserved.”²⁰⁴ According to Braun, despite the rhetoric of support for indigenous rights, environmental groups were contributing to the “continued imprint of colonialism,” by conflating natural wilderness and authentic Indigenous practices that are traditional and absent of the taint of modernity.²⁰⁵ Edward Said wrote, “The struggle for geography” was not only about “soldiers and cannons,” but also about “ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.”²⁰⁶ Neocolonialism in part then, is the domination of one set of ideas over others, in this case, Settler conceptions of nature and Indigeneity over Nuu-chah-nulth conceptions. In this regard then, the logging companies, the government *and* the environmental NGOs are all guilty of perpetuating imperialism.

How capitalist enterprises and liberal governments are implicated in globalization is comparatively straight forward, but the inclusion of environmental NGOs requires a more

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Braun, 8, *emphasis in original*.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 8.

²⁰⁶ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 7.

detailed analysis. Braun writes that this process is more than the mere acceptance of government jargon such as “protected areas, buffer zones, and scenic corridors,” but extends to how the environmental debate is framed, how the “wild” is conceived, and how Indigenous authenticity is judged based on its proximity between nature and modernity. Braun points to a book titled, *Clayoquot: On the Wild Side*, published by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee in 1990 that helped shape the focus of the debate. With over 160 pictures of pristine forests and text describing a “virgin landscape lost in time,” Clayoquot Sound is presented as “a place devoid of human history.”²⁰⁷ Braun notes that when the Nuu-chah-nulth are mentioned in the book, it is through the lenses of “tragedy” and “pre-modern purity.”²⁰⁸ There is no mention of the Nuu-chah-nulth as a vibrant, living people today. This maneuver relegates the Nuu-chah-nulth to the impossibility of living in a frozen conception of the past or risk the loss of their Indigeneity in the eyes of environmentalists and perhaps society as a whole.²⁰⁹ Magnusson and Shaw write, “The environmentalist tendency to represent the area as ‘wilderness’ and frame the issue of logging in terms of ‘wilderness preservation’ was often offensive from a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective.”²¹⁰ I want to be careful here, for in some ways, I am also attempting to hold our people to an historical standard. While I wholeheartedly agree that we should not succumb to external pressures about who we are, and how we should act, I do believe that we should revive our own ancient principles that are just as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. I am talking about reviving historical principles, not necessarily historical practices. Perhaps

²⁰⁷ Braun, 73-78.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. 83-88.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 94.

²¹⁰ Magnusson and Shaw, 9.

Gordon Dick's priorities vis-à-vis the catching, sharing, storing, and selling fish on a small scale are reflective of an appropriate adaptation.

Far from uninhabited wilderness, Braun points out that some archaeologists have estimated the pre-contact population on the west coast of Vancouver Island to be as high as seventy thousand.²¹¹ This is even higher than our own estimates, but even those more conservative estimates dwarf current population numbers - that include Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples - and bring to light the effectiveness of traditional Nuuchahnulth "resource management" capabilities. As stated previously, Wickaninnish believes that Nuuchahnulth people possess both the principles and motivation to implement sustainable policies and practices. Specifically, attacking the Western conception of the "park" he states,

I always make my environmentalist friends back home a little nervous by saying that I do not like parks. I do not like parks because they are intended to protect land from people. What does that say about us? It says that we cannot manage the land to promote biodiversity while also meeting our needs that, in effect, we cannot manage ourselves. We believe that people have a role to play in "natural" places. People are a part of nature, and without them as integral parts of places rather than as brief visitors, environmentalists are diminished in health and wholeness. So we say, "Of course we can live in harmony with wild lands. Our ancestors did."²¹²

Wickaninnish points out the difference between Indigenous worldviews and environmental approaches that are designed to work within the prevailing liberal framework. Ruptures in the fragile alliances between Nuuchahnulth-aht and environmentalists would crop up in 1994 with former Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council chairperson, George Watts, "accusing the environmental movement of 'neocolonialism,'" and in 1996 with the Nuuchahnulth "banning" of Greenpeace

²¹¹ Ibid. 83.

²¹² Wickaninnish, 2001, 162.

from the Sound.²¹³ Since then, relations have only gotten worse, but in my view, for more complex and troubling reasons. I will now look at the proposed copper mine atop Chitaapii.

Chitaapii: When the Sacred is no Longer Sacred

In 2006, Ahous Tye Ha'wilt Maquinna²¹⁴ stated, "The destruction of Catface in the end will never be worth it."²¹⁵ Maquinna was referring to the proposed copper mine atop Chitaapii, also known as Catface Mountain in Clayoquot Sound. Maquinna said that the mining company had been courting Ahous support since 2000 with promises of consultation and economic benefits. Chitaapii is of "great historical and sacred significance."²¹⁶ Initial opposition was twofold, the cultural significance of Chitaapii to the Ahousaht, and what has been cast as environmental concerns over the dangers of open pit mining in such a sensitive area. Prior to 2006, a majority of Ahous members voted against the project but as the years have rolled by, the companies have been patient and the economic conditions have worsened for the Ahousaht.²¹⁷ Exploratory drilling began in 2008 with the support of Ahous. Imperial Chairman and Director, Pierre Lebel, described the change we are sadly growing accustomed to, stating that while he was initially discouraged from pursuing the "Catface asset" he has since come around, in defiance of environmentalists and on the side of Ahous elders. Lebel stated, "We heard from the elders who said, we have no hope, we have no self esteem, we have no jobs for our young people, we have

²¹³ Braun, 107-108.

²¹⁴ This Maquinna (Lewis George) is the son and heir of the late Chief Earl Maquinna George cited in previous chapters.

²¹⁵ Denise August, West Coast Vancouver Island Aquatic Management Board website, 5 October, 2006. <http://www.westcoastaquatic.ca/article_Ahousaht_Catface1006.htm>.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ I write "companies," because what began with Doublestar and Selkirk Minerals, who had acquired mining rights from another company, is now going forward with a company called Imperial Metals.

drug abuse, alcohol use, physical abuse, there's 15 to 20 of us piled into housing with no plumbing." Lebel concluded with, "On that basis, I have said, we will not turn our back on this obligation. We are miners and we have a social obligation to do that job. If this community wants this development to take place, we will not shy away from that, even if it means protests and so forth (mostly by non-Indigenous environmentalists, like Friends of Clayoquot Sound)."²¹⁸

"Lebel says the Ahousaht have since viewed other mine properties to get a better sense of the operations, have formed committees to work and have stood side by side with the mining company supporting this project as their own project."²¹⁹ We can see the continuity of change from the time the first imperial traders arrived at our shores and the political legacy that Ha'wiih'thlup speaks of. Reminding ourselves of this legacy allows us to understand why we are where we are, but it also compels us to engage it critically, and to decide if we should continue along the same path. As Chaw-win-is' grandfather said, we choose the memories that govern us and we can choose to live differently.

I do think Chitaapii represents an important departure for Nuu-chah-nulth livelihoods though. As unnatural as fish farming is, one can argue that it does keep some of us connected to the sea and sea life, however corrupted the new relationship may be. A-in-chut feels that with the copper mine, "we're taking a big leap."²²⁰ I agree and it is not because I am trying to essentialize specific practices as being Nuu-chah-nulth and others as not. I believe that our practices can adapt and change over time so long as they do not violate our principles. So the test is how our practices measure up against our principles. It could be argued that we began to violate our

²¹⁸ 250 News website, 7 June 2010, *Catface Mine Controversial But Will be Pursued*.
<<http://www.opinion250.com/blog/view/16539/3/catface+mine+controversial+but+will+be+pursued>>

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ A-in-chut.

principles when we first began to sell our relatives on a commercial scale and that now it has just become normalized. When I think of our participation in commercial fishing though, I think of those who appreciated the time with family, the hard work ethic, and the fact that most of us were just trying to get by. I do believe that overharvesting became a problem and we were not immune to the greed that others felt. Most of the people I have spoken with have found something redeeming about life on the sea, and our constant battles with DFO over management and the sustainability of the fish and Indigenous fishers. Supporting the copper mine on the other hand for me represents a completely different way of relating to the *Ha'hoolthlii* of our *Ha'wiih*. Human beings can maintain a sustainable relationship with fish. Copper on the other hand is finite, and the damage we do to Chitaapii may be irreversible.

Allow me to describe what I feel is the ethic of economic development and consequently, the ethic of Aboriginal economic development. Consider the term "resource extraction." We extract minerals out of the earth and we put nothing back. We take and we do not reciprocate. Not only that, but with mining there is the issue of additional toxic material that must be stored somehow and the record of mining companies around the world is abysmal on this issue. We can harvest fish sustainably. We can harvest trees sustainably. We cannot harvest copper sustainably, so why do we do it? We do it because something has become more valuable to us over time: Money. We have been robbed of our traditional livelihoods and now we are contemplating the robbing of minerals from Mother Earth. Why? Because there are world markets now, and they determine the value of things like gold and copper, and right now "precious metals" are up, so there is money for exploration and drilling. Think about another aspect of mining. They take and take and take and when everything that can be taken is exhausted, they leave. I do not care that

mining is not a traditional practice. I care that it seems to completely violate our principles of oneness, responsibility, and reciprocity.

I concede that I could be wrong and that I need to learn more about this issue. A-in-chut shares the perspective of one of our elders who said, That mountain provided for our chiefs and our people (in the past). Maybe it will provide differently now.”²²¹ I remain unconvinced. Global capitalism, and the modern market economy have no future. It is unsustainable, and yet those of us with dissident perspectives are accused of being unrealistic. Rauna Kuokkanen says, “One sometimes hears critics arguing that the gift economy is a ‘pie in the sky.’ The real pie in the sky, however, is the current system with the creation of phantom wealth. What is more absurd than the fact that we live on a finite planet with finite resources yet the dominant economic system is based on endless growth and increased consumerism?”²²² Absurd indeed, and yet our people have been forced into a position that they feel leaves them few other choices. I can only hope that we have the resolve and foresight to craft our own future, based on our own values and beliefs and that we abandon this project of Aboriginal economic development that is only pulling us farther and farther away from our beautiful, unique Nuu-chah-nulth ways. As with the fish farm issue, I am compelled to share my research on mining.

Mining: A Dirty Business

“One of mining’s biggest challenges is the prevention of harmful and lasting negative impacts on our water resources and aquatic ecosystems. Mines liberate millions of tons of toxic metals from the earth’s crust and if they are not properly managed they can find their way into waterways,

²²¹ A-in-chut.

²²² Kuokkanen.

wildlife, and into our bodies.”²²³ Mine effluent is usually stored in tailings ponds and according to MiningWatch Canada, “Mining projects can fundamentally alter landscapes, waterways, and communities forever. Beyond the life of the mine, some projects will require ongoing care and maintenance indefinitely – “in perpetuity.”²²⁴ In Canada, tailings ponds no longer need to be artificial either. “It is illegal under the *Fisheries Act* to dump toxic material into fish-bearing waters. However, in 2002, the government amended the Act’s Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (MMER) to allow lakes and other freshwater bodies to be re-classified as “tailings impoundment areas,” thereby allowing mining companies to get around the general prohibition.”²²⁵ I do not know what the plans for Chitaapii are, but the Ahousaht involved with the project seem reassured that mining can occur without endangering our watersheds. Imperial is not above polluting fish habitat in other parts of the province, however. Imperial Metals proposed to dump waste in Quarry Creek and Trail Creek for their Red Chris project, eighty kilometres south of Dease Lake (Tahltan territory). The proposal to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in 2008 was challenged in Federal Court, and earlier this year ruled that the mine could go ahead, despite certain mistakes made by the federal government in this case regarding public input into the review process. There remain significant questions about the environmental review processes overall, with many projects being submitted in sections “small enough to slip under the threshold for triggering a comprehensive review under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act,” thus avoiding a full review.²²⁶ It is no secret that mining companies constantly lobby governments to

²²³ MiningWatch Canada, *Mining Day on the Hill: What you should know about mining and Canadian mining companies before November 24th*, <http://miningwatch.ca/sites/miningwatch.ca/files/Mining_the_Hill.pdf>.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ MiningWatch Canada, “Canada’s Valuable Fresh Water Is Not for Dumping Toxic Wastes - with Background” Press Release, November 28, 2008 <http://www.miningwatch.ca/en/MMER_coalition_formed>.

reduce the amount of “red tape” they have to go through. In addition to the regulatory issues, they have a poor history of corporate citizenship.

Organizations like MiningWatch Canada have been documenting the environmental and human rights abuses committed by Canadian mining companies for more than a decade. “These abuses most often occur in the global south where government controls are weak to non-existent and may be poorly designed or not enforced; where corruption and internal conflicts occur; and where that is an urgent need for socially just and ecologically sound economic development.”²²⁷ Examples of these abuses include the burning of people’s homes and mass evictions of villagers in other countries. Many of those villages are Indigenous villages. I am not suggesting that Imperial or any other company would do that here, but it does challenge our principle of *heshookish tsa’walk*. If everything is connected, can we in good conscience support a company, or an industry more broadly, that commits these atrocities to other poor Indigenous people living in other parts of the world? The same can be said of the fish farms that use ground fishmeal to feed Atlantic salmon here in British Columbia. That fishmeal comes from sardines and other species in places like Chile, negatively affecting their Indigenous capacity to access fish for food. I could go on, but I am sure you get the picture.

Something that I have not yet revealed is that my father Wickaninnish, briefly worked for Selkirk Metals – the company that owned the mining tenure before it was taken over by Imperial Metals. His role was that of liaison between Ahous and Selkirk. When I heard the news I was torn. A few years ago he suffered a heart attack and the time required for him to rest kept him absent from work for quite a long time. A few opportunities cropped up here and there but none

²²⁶ Craig McInnes, “Not much for environmentalists to celebrate in decision,” *Vancouver Sun*, 22 January 2010. <<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/technology/much+environmentalists+celebrate+decision/2471320/story.html>>

²²⁷ MiningWatch Canada.

of them worked out. Then, when he began work as a liaison three days a week, I was happy that he found work, but torn because I felt so opposed to the idea of mining Chitaapii. When I asked him if he was satisfied that the mine could be done responsibly, he said yes, and that he was not concerned that there would be any harmful run off that would endanger our salmon streams.²²⁸ I am still torn, but I hope that I have expressed my concerns in a multi-faceted way that goes beyond a simple dichotomy like “environment or jobs.” I hope I am able to bring to the table a more thorough review of economic development, while at the same time expressing a love for our own ways, rooted in our own teachings that respect unity in creation and relationships of reciprocity. I am glad that the global economic crisis hit in 2008 and that Selkirk lost market capitalization, and were no longer able to continue, and that my father was subsequently elected as president of the NTC. But it is now 2010 and Imperial Metals, aptly named are here and the mining exploration continues. The contemporary reality as far as Nuu-chah-nulth livelihoods are concerned is that our people are far too often faced with impossible decisions between bad and worse. I believe that we have recovered enough from the plagues that decimated our people and the ravages of colonization. My cousin A-in-chut often recounts our grandmother telling him that now is the time to turn the page and for us to start living and writing new, healthy stories. Let those stories be rooted in our ancient ways, still relevant and let us not act *kwisaht* – like crazy strangers without good teachings.

²²⁸ Wickaninnish, email correspondence, July 11, 2010.

Chapter Five - Conclusion

Gordon Dick is my brother in law. He is married to my sister. I am pretty sure that I am related to most of the people I interviewed for this project in one way or another. We share the same blood with each other and with our ancestors, going back thousands of years to the beginning. It is pretty amazing when I think about it that way. Our relations are important to us. My father has made a point to introduce me to relatives on every occasion and at every gathering possible since I was young. He would say sternly, "It's important for you to know who your relatives are. These people here are your close relatives." He would gesture with his fingers to show how close he meant. Sometimes I would think, they are not that close, in my head doing the math. They must be like my fourth or fifth cousin I would think. To my father they were close. My cousins are really my sisters and brothers and my great aunts and uncles are all my grandparents. Like other Indigenous peoples I suspect, relations and relationships are profoundly important to Nuu-chah-nulth-aht.

I want to share something with you that Gordon shared with me about his "Old Mom." Old Mom is his maternal grandmother, but Gordon was raised extensively by his Old Mom and Old Dad (Alan Dick), hence their names. When Gordon was in his teens he would set a small net over night down where the Tseshaht band office is now located. He would wake up early before school to check the net and gather the fish. As he walked up the hill towards his house, Old Mom would be standing on the deck waiting to ask him how he did. Gordon would respond, "Thirty today." Old Mom would meekly ask, "Can I have one?" Gordon would laugh and say, "You can have as many as you like Old Mom!" Old Mom would reply, "Only one or two." Gordon would smile and say, "Do you want me to cut them for you?" and Old Mom would say, "Oh no, I can

do it.” Gordon also told me that Old Mom and Old Dad were likely to have two freezers full of fish, but this was their ritual, and they in turn would share with the rest of the family.²²⁹ It is about relationships. We share. We act generously and kindly with our relatives and we honour our relationships. I have learned a lot over the course of this project. Allow me to summarize and provide some concluding thoughts and hopes for the future.

Thesis Summary

In chapter one I told you why these issues are important to me. I intended to convey a sense of urgency I feel over the preservation and perpetuation of Nuu-chah-nulth ways of being and living. I told you who we are and where we come from, who I am and where I come from. I wrote about the beautiful things I appreciate about our unique ways of relating and our worldview. I also told you about the changes Nuu-chah-nulth-aht have endured since the invasion and occupation of our territories. I recounted our tremendous losses, and the subsequent trauma we experienced. Finally, I introduced what I believe to be a particularly dangerous and insidious form of neoliberalism: Aboriginal economic development. We learned how it has grown in influence through corporate, government, and academic circles and how Indigenous peoples are increasingly being asked to participate in the exploitation of our own territories.

In chapter two we learned more about what it means to *live* a Nuu-chah-nulth life. Chuuchkamalthnii shared his perspective about our name, and what it really means. This enhanced understanding has increased my appreciation, not only for who we are, but also for the richness of our language. We are the, “People from the arc of mountains jutting out of the

²²⁹ Gordon Dick.

sea.”²³⁰ It is a good name, rooted in action and a way of life unique to us. We learned of the admirable traits of a well-taught Nuu-chah-nulth-aht that people that we still remember. We are to be generous, kind, open, humble, loving, responsible, and respectful. We are also supposed to be vigilant, aware of our laws and our responsibilities, our sacred obligations. We got a glimpse of Nuu-chah-nulth governance that still struggles for legitimacy after decades of colonial and government impositions. We understand now a little more clearly, our social and political legacies. I hope we have a better understanding of why we do the things we do, both good and bad. Our awareness of this fact can only help us as we attempt to rebuild.

In chapter three we looked at our changing livelihoods and changing relationships. We began with my family’s experience in the commercial fishing industry. We heard how they relished a life on the sea with relatives. We also heard some critical reflections on the industrial scale of the fisheries and the poor management practices of the federal regulatory bodies. Gears shifted to capture a better understanding of how our ancestors related to the sea and sea life. I was surprised to learn that despite the stories that we still carry with us, our relationships began to alter with the arrival of Settler society, and how our traditional subsistence patterns became disrupted almost immediately. The legacy of colonization and the ongoing reality of neocolonialism become readily apparent when we chart our drastically changing livelihood practices. We learned that we are in fact *hoquotist*. Our canoes have overturned, and we are lost and disoriented. We also learn that some of us seem to be *kwisaht* – acting crazy, like strangers without our teachings.

Chapter four presented the dark spectre of Aboriginal economic development, especially its manifestations within the *Ha’hoolthlii* of our *Ha’wiih*. We learned about growth of fish farms

²³⁰ Chuuchkamalthnii.

in our territories and how we have come to follow a pattern of resistance, followed by negotiation and participation. A key element to understanding Aboriginal economic development is how it involves the full participation of Indigenous peoples who have been starved into submission. We looked at the legacy of the War in the Woods and the subsequent Clayoquot Sound agreements and the rise of our participation in development. At the same time we are reminded of our drastically dwindling participation in our own traditional and adaptive practices. We also learned of the complicated relationships with environmentalists and the reality of neocolonial environmentalism, reminding us that we have to re-root ourselves in our own teachings and principles. Finally, we looked at the proposed copper mine atop Chitaapii and the business of mining. I remain resolute in my claim that Aboriginal economic development is a potent and seductive force to be reckoned with, but that some of us have not forgotten the old ways. More importantly, perhaps, some of us have not forgotten the old teachings and principles. We still remember what it means to *live* Nuuchahnulth and this knowledge will help us shape our collective future.

The Future

I asked interview participants about their hopes for the future. My father, as Don Hall suggests of Nuuchahnulth fishers, is an eternal optimist by nature. I remarked to my partner Hilary on more than one occasion that I thought my thesis was really depressing. In presenting most of my research findings I have constantly struggled with how to conclude my talks with a sense of optimism, because I, by nature, am not an optimist. I was, however, inspired throughout the interview process. Certainly, I heard our people express grave concerns about how bad things have gotten, but I also heard our people express hope and a dormant but not yet extinguished

fighting spirit. This fighting spirit also has roots in our teachings and history, and it is not something we need to feel ashamed of, especially when it is about fighting for our lives and ways of living.

My father also wants to “re-awaken our fishing spirit,” but we still have a long way to go.²³¹ José expressed concerns that despite the legal victory that affirms our right to fish, there might not be anyone left who knows how.²³² The truth is that we will have to re-learn, like we must re-learn a lot of things, including our teachings and our languages. Don Hall shared the experience of meeting a Nuu-chah-nulth-aht at one of our villages recently who had just purchased a new boat with their residential school settlement money with the sole purpose of getting out on the water again, suggesting a connection that has not yet been lost entirely. Fishing is still in our blood and along with fishing, when done properly, with respect, comes a deeper connection to our obligations and ways of relating to the gifts that the Naas (the Creator) has given us to sustain and protect.

Chaw-win-is’ grandfather told her, “Those things we did in the past would be good today.”²³³ I believe that he was expressing in his own subtle way, that many of the things we do today are crazy and reflect a lack of Nuu-chah-nulth teachings, and that our ancestors had developed sound ways of relating to our territories. For her own part, Chaw-win-is said she was working hard to “withdraw from consumer society” and make the changes her grandfather spoke about.²³⁴ When I asked Wickaninnish what he thought the biggest threats to Nuu-chah-nulth-aht

²³¹ Wickaninnish, email correspondence, July 11, 2010.

²³² José Robinson.

²³³ Chaw-win-is.

²³⁴ Ibid.

today he replied, “Colonialism, the *Indian Act*, English (laughter), and technology.”²³⁵ He particularly lamented the lack of attention to family values and teachings and the obsessive way in which the younger generations are embracing technologies that are impersonal to him, like email and Facebook. He emphasized, “Being human really necessitates a need of love and family values.”²³⁶ I could feel my father’s passion for our language and ways, and also a frustration at our current inability to relearn and live them.

Ha’wiih’tlup expressed a concern that we are not “breeding any type of resistance or critical capacity” and that this was unlikely to happen until there are too many of us and we are too poor; until we have nothing left to lose. He believes that there is a lifestyle that our people have grown accustomed to, even in poverty, a level of comfort with just barely making it. But he warns that there may come a time when we are pushed over the edge and a grassroots movement will develop, not from a “political group with a political agenda or a tribal group with a tribal agenda,” but something more organic.²³⁷ A-in-chut agreed that there is a need to re-Indigenize, to re-establish our teachings and ways, and ask, “Do we want to reconcile our values with the rest of BC, Canada, the world?”²³⁸ He states, “I feel strongly that we need to take back our Indigeneity,” and has a sense of optimism rooted in our youth who must, “re-ignite the old protocols and take back their birthright.”²³⁹

Wickaninnish concluded his interview with,

My hope for the future is that somebody wakes up to the reality of nature being the supreme gift from the Creator, that warrants looking after and that we not be

²³⁵ Wickaninnish, 2010.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ha’wiih’tlup.

²³⁸ A-in-chut.

²³⁹ Ibid.

so arrogant to believe that fish farming is going to be the solution. My hope for the future is that our language thrives...and that every member of our community understands so that we are not translating our language, and that we hang on to the teachings that are so important, and they're not that many. When you think about the power of respect, iisaak, how far that goes...you respect self, you respect others, you respect everything, wow. And heshookish tsa'walk. Those are chieftain teachings. And my hope for the future is to enlighten modern society about our values, about our ways, so that they can apply it, because at no time have I ever heard a white politician say that they're in it for the purposes of ensuring that seven generations down the road our people are going to benefit from the same things. They just carry on with their bonehead policies about a sixty-year turn around for harvesting forests...stupid. My hope is that our people can generate an enthusiasm for who they are as a people, which includes the language and absorbing all the teachings that we have. The importance of our chieftainships and respecting them and respecting others and that our songs stay vibrant and alive, enriched by new songs.²⁴⁰

I like the idea of keeping alive our old songs and enriching them with new songs. I like idea of keeping alive our old stories and enriching them with new stories, rooted in the same powerful principles that have served us well for thousands of years. We do not have to do everything the exact same way we used to, but it behooves us to adhere to the ancient principles, to be mindful of the old protocols, and to breathe life into them again. I asked José what he thought of us going whaling again, now that the whale populations have finally recovered from the debacle of commercial whaling that nearly wiped them out. Whaling is a truly unique Nuu-chah-nulth practice on the coast, and a powerful expression of who we are. José could not help but grin, somewhat self-consciously, and there was a glimmer in his eyes. He replied,

It's funny you should say that. It's a conversation I've had privately with people. We could work with young people – give them a sense of pride in the community. I'm all for that. I would completely support that and it's been something I have been thinking for awhile. I think it could be done and I think it should be done again. We just need to go and do things and not worry about what the government is going to say, or what the media's going to say. Once you do something, eventually people move on and forget about it, and we're not headlines, and life goes on and it becomes normal...We can just get Louis (Maquinna) and Shawn

²⁴⁰ Wickaninnish, 2010.

(A-in-chut)...the permission of our Ha'wiih is good enough. I always thought we should have never stopped fishing. We didn't need the courts.²⁴¹

I am with you brother. We can do it, and we can do it right, observing the old protocols, preparing in the right ways, our ways. Outsiders will more than likely not understand but it will not matter for we will have grown strong again, strong enough to take back our birthrights, strong enough to live good, respectful, and responsible Nuu-chah-nulth live.

²⁴¹ José Robinson.

Bibliography

- A-in-chut. Telephone interview, July 7, 2010.
- Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative. *Diabetes Among Aboriginal People in Canada: The Evidence*. Ottawa: Health Canada, 2000.
- Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, second edition*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Alfred, Taiaiake. *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005.
- Alfred, Taiaiake and Jeff Corntassel. "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism," in *Government and Opposition* 40, 4, 2005.
- Atleo, Doug. Telephone interview, June 27, 2010.
- August, Denise. West Coast Vancouver Island Aquatic Management Board website, October 5, 2006.
<http://www.westcoastaquatic.ca/article_Ahousaht_Catface1006.htm>.
- Bargh, Maria, ed. *Resistance: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism*. Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2007.
- BC Salmon Farmers Association. "Did you know? Facts about Salmon Farming."
<http://salmonfarmers.khamiahosting.com/sites/default/files/factsheet_didyouknowfacts.pdf>.
- Braun, Bruce. *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Brown, Leslie and Susan Strega, eds. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-oppressive Approaches*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press/Women's Press, 2005.
- Chaw-win-is. Personal interview, Victoria, BC, June 12, 2010.
- Chuuchkamalthnii. Telephone interview, June 9, 2010.
- Clutesi, George. *Son of Raven, Son of Deer: Fables of the Tse-shaht People*. Sidney: Gray's Publishing, 1968.
- Cornell, Stephen and Joseph P. Kalt. *Sovereignty and Nation-Building: The Development*

Challenge in Indian Country.

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/pubs/pub_120.htm>.

David Suzuki Foundation. *Salmon Aquaculture* brochure, 2002. David Suzuki Foundation website.
<<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/Aquabrochure.pdf>>.

Dick, Alan. Personal interview, June 13, 2010.

Dick, Gordon. Telephone interview, July 10, 2010.

Drucker, Philip. *Indians of the Northwest Coast*. Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1963.

Flanagan, Tom. "A Roadmap for Aboriginal Self-reliance," *Fraser Forum*, September 2007.

Flanagan, Tom. *Self-Determination: The Other Path for Native Americans*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

George, Earl Maquinna. *Living on the Edge: Nuu-chah-nulth History From an Ahousaht Chief's Perspective*. Winlaw: Sononis Press, 2005.

Hall, Don. Telephone Interview, June 25, 2010.

Harris, Douglas C. *Fish, Law, And Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Ha'wiih'thluup. Telephone interview, July 5, 2010.

Helin, Calvin. *Dances with Dependency: Indigenous Success Through Self-Reliance*. Vancouver: Orca Spirit Publishing & Communications, 2006.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations. "Kii'in Agenda Paper" in *Nuu-chah-nulth Voices, Histories, Objects and Journeys*, Alan L Hoover, ed. Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000.

Inglis, Richard and James C. Haggarty. "Cook to Jewitt: Three Decades of Change in Nootka Sound" in *Nuu-chah-nulth Voices, Histories, Objects and Journeys*, Alan L. Hoover, ed. Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2000.

King, Thomas. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003.

Kuokkanen, Rauna. "The Gift as Economic and Environmental Justice" (speech given at the Redistribution of Wealth conference, Vancouver, March 7, 2010).

- Lavoie, Judith. "Clayoquot band clashes over mining: Ahousaht cite need for jobs in allowing exploration for metals on 'sacred' land," *Vancouver Sun*, April 16, 2010.
- Little Bear, Leroy. "Jagged Worldviews Colliding," in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, Marie Battiste, ed. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.
- Mack, Johnny. Personal interview, Victoria, BC, June 11, 2010.
- Mack, Johnny. *Academic critique as self-practice: Developing a Nuu-chah-nulth approach to research*. Unpublished paper, 2010.
- Mack, Johnny. "Hoquotist: Reorienting Through Stories Practice," forthcoming in Hester Lessard, Rebecca Johnson, and Jeremy Webber, eds. *Storied Narratives of Contact and Arrival in Constituting Political Community*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010.
- Mainstream Canada. Press Release, January 19, 2010.
- Magnusson, Warren and Karena Shaw, eds. *A Political Space: Reading the Global Through Clayoquot Sound*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Maracle, Lee. "Oratory" (lecture given at the University of Victoria, February 18, 2008).
- Marshall, Dale. *Fishy Business: The Economics of Salmon Farming in BC*. Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2003.
- McDowell, Adam. "AFN chief says natives 'open for business,'" *National Post*, January 20, 2010.
- McInnes, Craig. "Not much for environmentalists to celebrate in decision," *Vancouver Sun*, January 22, 2010.
<<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/much+environmentalists+celebrate+decision/2471320/story.html>>
- MiningWatch Canada. "Canada's Valuable Fresh Water Is Not for Dumping Toxic Wastes - with Background" Press Release, November 28, 2008.
<http://www.miningwatch.ca/en/MMER_coalition_formed>.
- MiningWatch Canada. "Mining Day on the Hill: What you should know about mining and Canadian mining companies before November 24th,"
<http://miningwatch.ca/sites/miningwatch.ca/files/Mining_the_Hill.pdf>.
- Nadasdy, Paul. "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism," *Ethnohistory* vol. 52, no. 2, Spring 2005.

- Nadasdy, Paul. *Hunter and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003.
- Native Brotherhood of British Columbia website. <<http://www.nativevoice.bc.ca/about.htm>>.
- New Relationship Trust website. <<http://newrelationshiptrust.ca/about/2006-regional-engagement-process/chief-clarence-louie>>.
- Newell, Diane. *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-chah-nulth Experience*. Port Alberni: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1996.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Treaty Jurisdiction and Governance Mandate Working Group. *Hawilthpatak Nuu-chah-nulth: Nuu-chah-nulth Ways of Governance*. Port Alberni: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1999.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council website. <<http://www.nuuchahnulth.org/tribal-council/welcome.html>>.
- Recalma, Emily. Telephone interview, July 9, 2010.
- Restoring First Nations to the Land: Lessons from Clayoquot Sound*. Port Alberni: Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and Natural Resources Defense Council, 2001.
- Robertson, Patricia. "A new native leadership calls for self-help" *Globe and Mail*. March 20, 2007, F2.
- Robinson, José. Personal interview, Vancouver, BC, June 14, 2010.
- Robinson, Marge, Telephone interview, July 9, 2010.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Volume 1: Looking Forward, Looking Back*. Ottawa: Canada Communication Group Publishing, 1996.
- Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Restructuring the Relationship*. Accessed August 10, 2008. <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/rpt/rel_e.html>.
- Sah'haa. Personal interview, June 13, 2010.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Seccia, Stefania. "Ahousesht First Nations under Fire in Two Protests in One Week."

Westerly News, May 27, 2010.

<http://wildernesscommittee.org/news/Ahousaht_first_nations_under_fire_two_protests_one_week>.

Seccia, Stefania. "Ahousaht and aquaculture company celebrate protocol." *Westerly News* online, March 30, 2010.

<<http://www2.canada.com/westerly/story.html?id=d9ec075f-2f48-4e39-87ce-4b897a926551>>.

Sharing Canada's Prosperity – A Hand up, Not a Hand Out. p. vii. Accessed July 7, 2008.

<<http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/abor-e/rep-e/rep06-e.pdf>>.

Silver, Jim. *In Their Own Voices: Building Urban Aboriginal Communities*. Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2008.

Umeeek (E. Richard Atleo). *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004.

Webster, Peter S. *As Far As I Know: Reminiscences of an Ahousaht Elder*. Campbell River: Campbell River Museum and Archives, 1983.

Wickaninnish. Email correspondence, July 11, 2010.

Wickaninnish. Personal interview, Port Alberni, BC, June 13, 2010.

Wickaninnish (Clifford Atleo, Sr.). "Land, Science, and Indigenous Science: Tales from a Modern Treaty Negotiation Process" in *Science and Native American Communities: Legacies of Pain, Visions of Promise*, Keith James, ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

Wiwchar, David. "Ahousaht declares war against fish farms," *Raven's Eye*, 5.9, 2002.

Young, Robert J. C. *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

250 News website, 7 June 2010, *Catface Mine Controversial But Will be Pursued*.

<<http://www.opinion250.com/blog/view/16539/3/catface+mine+controversial+but+will+be+pursued>>.