Xwnuts'aluwum: T'aat'ka' Kin Relations and the Apocryphal Slave

by

Rachel Joyce Flowers
B.A., University of Victoria, 2012

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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This thesis explores representations of Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast within the discipline of Anthropology, with particular attention given to Hul'qumi'num' speaking nations on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. Through a critical engagement with ethnography, linguistic, archival and oral history sources, I offer a critique of the harmful concepts of war and slave as mistranslations from Hul'qumi'num' into English. The consequences of this mistranslation and lack of understanding permeate our social, cultural and political lives and relationships with settler society. By looking at the original Hul'qumi'num' words, our laws, and our stories about inter-village relations, I will provide a healthy alternative understanding to the apocryphal representations of Coast Salish nations in Anthropology. I will conclude this discussion with revival of traditional Hul'qumi'num' laws and practices of relationality and coexistence in marriage and exchanges.

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Dedication

To those who came before me, and those yet to come.

Acknowledgements

Chapter One: Shqwultun Thun S'aa'lh Tumuhw

'Au si'em nu siiyeyu, si'em nu sul'eluxw. Tl'im 'o' 'uy skweyul tun'a hwiyuneem. Rachel Flowers, thunu sne. Tuni tsun T'aat'ka' 'utl Leey'qsun. Joyce Thomas thun si'lu 'utl Skwxwumesh uxwumixw, 'i' Clifford Thomas thun si'lu 'utl Leey'qsun. Tsitsalu tseep q'u, huy ch q'u tsitsul si'em.

The way in which I introduce myself is how my si'lu taught me. The first thing we are taught to do is identify our village or house, our nation, and then our grandparents. In doing this, we are locating ourselves in relation to those who are listening to us speak. Those listening can make connections between themselves and the speaker, and understand wherefrom the speaker and their teachings come. The first step in opening a conversation is to identify any kin relations, connections, and potential links.

From an introduction such as this, we are revealing a number of things about ourselves. These opening remarks share an extensive history by identifying our family names, and house and village names. These names go all the way back to our First Ancestors and the sxwoxwiyam 'i' snuw'uy'ulh that are attached to these names, places, and people wherefrom we receive our identities as hwuhwilmuhw, people of the land. In his research on Coast Salish sense of place, Thom shares Abner Thorne's telling of the stories of four of the First Ancestors, "where they landed, what hereditary prerogatives they brought with them, and which communities they founded":

> *Syalutsa* was the first one to fall from the sky at Koksilah Ridge. He fell from the sky with two of the highest privileges of Coast Salish society, the *sxwayxwuy* mask and goat horn rattle. The published versions of these stories (Jenness 1935a;

Rozen 1985:186, 191) inform us that *Syalutsa*'s overuse of these powerful implements stopped the salmon from returning to the Cowichan River, which caused his banishment from Cowichan to Malahat. *Swutun* fell from the sky at a prominent rock in Swallowfield. *Suhiltun* dropped on a flat in Cowichan Valley and carried with him the regalia of a *seyowun* dancer and the teaching of red ochre, a mineral that is used as a paint in *seyowun* rituals. *St'uts'un* fell on Mt. Prevost and had a painted house that became the namesake of the Halalt community.

(Thom: 91-92)

Hwuhwilmuhw share an understory across Canada, our laws and teachings that derive from the land and observations of the natural world, inform who we are, our conduct with each other and our relations with the non-human world. Our understory, our snuw'uy'ulh and sxwoxwiyam connect us to s'aalh tumuhw. Snuw'uy'ulh is translated roughly into English as "our way of life," "our way of being on Mother Earth." It is our laws, our language, our governance, our culture and tradition, our sacred bathing holes; it is spirituality and all the teachings. "Snuw'uy'ulh was our way of life prior to contact. Worldwide Indigenous peoples had their ways of being on our Mother the Earth. We were self-determining nations" (Thomas, 2004). Snuw'uy'ulh is our version of self-determination; it focuses on collective rights of Leey'qsun people to govern ourselves in a cultural and traditional way based on the teachings of our Ancestors.

I would like to share a story that describes the original descendants of Leey'qsun; it voices one of our songs and assures us how we are connected to this land. It tells us about our relationship to our ancestral lands and to our neighbors. This is the foundation of kinship, the knowledge system that informs us how we relate in the world and our legal and social responsibilities to others and the non-human world.

The Leey'qsun mustimuxw descend from four ancestors; Thi'xuletse, Swin'leth, Swute'se', and Shulq'ilum who created the winter villages

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of T'aat'ka', Th'axel, and Th'xwemksen located respectively at Shingle Point, Cardale Point and Porlier Pass on Valdes Island. My identity is tied to this land, a fallen Douglas fir tree. A long time ago, s'aalh tumuhw, our land, was a tree standing upright whose top reached up to the Sky World. Our s'uleluxw descended from the sky, down this tree. As the high waters receded, the people called upon muskrats to gnaw the tree, as they sang songs for a month to keep up their spirits. The people were glad that the tree would fall, but hoped it would not break. They sang about it; "oh let it fall and not break. Many deer will live on the trunk and we will build our houses on it". When the tree fell, the top broke off and formed Awiksen, what is now known as Valdes Island, and Sqoe'te, Galiano Island.

(Boas 1891)

The relationship hwuhwilmuhw have with the world is mediated by our inalienable relationship with our lands. Our family line and the lands wherefrom they originate, is a partnership in which both humans and non-humans have reciprocal obligations and privileges. Hwuhwilmuhw have a responsibility to respect the land and achieve balance with both the natural order and social life. Moreover, we are given the privilege to attain power, by virtue of that reciprocal relationship with s'aalh tumuhw. This relationship with the natural world is recognized and demonstrated through food. When we collect food, we acknowledge the exchange that is taking place. Each family has access to specific lands and the resources thereupon; if we collect from other places, we recognize the title of other families by seeking their permission to gather or hunt on their lands, often in exchange for access to resources within our own family's territory. When we hunt or gather we make an offering to that animal or plant before taking anything from it. Hwuhwilmuhw acknowledge the sacrifice occurring on our behalf, and we take on a responsibility to ensure the return and success of anything we collect, in perpetuity. To our relations we have responsibilities and obligations based on reciprocity and respect; in this way our food is xe'xe', sacred. Just as we belong to our families

within a sophisticated kinship system, we do not own the land in a classical European sense; we *belong* to it as part of our relations.

Our sxwoxwiyam not only connect us with non-humans through kinship, but also connect us to place. In some of our stories, humans are linked to the landscape through transformation. Hwuhwilmuhw relationships to the land, non-human beings, the supernatural, and each other are embedded in the sxwoxwiyam about Xeel's, the Transformer. Coast Salish syuth are Transformation stories about the time Xeel's travelled the land turning many people, animals and their possessions into large stones, fish, animals and plants, found in the same places today. Hwuhwilmuhw have a unique connection to the non-human world; we are related to all living things. Our transformation stories provide us with social relationships between the descendants of ancestral figures and the places the stones are found. People who tell sxwoxwiyam are explaining hwuhwilmuhw genealogies; the stories and names link our people to the past, as reminders of good conduct, spirit power, and ancestry. Special places where an ancestor was transformed from or into a non-human connect families to their history and origins. The names and power of those ancestors who were transformed into non-humans or stones persist at those transformation sites, which belong to a particular community.

From observations of the natural world, how the land takes care of itself, and how its beings take care of each other, we developed our own laws. Hwuhwilmuhw have a responsibility to the natural world and to future generations not to disrupt the natural order, and not only to ensure that the lands and resources are still available to be enjoyed, but also to ensure that we have improved the conditions, that life on the land, in the sky and sea is abundant. How we organize ourselves in the context of that relationship is

rooted in our kinship. Power flows from the land, to the people. The wealth of the land feeds the people. As hwuhwilmuhw, kinship is about not only inter-personal relations, but also responsibilities and relationships with the non-human world, and how we come to know them. We have responsibilities to our ancestors to behave properly towards them. If ancestors are non-human, then humans are also responsible to them. In this context, to behave properly encompasses so much more than simply "good conduct"; the onus is upon us to uphold the honor of those who come before us, in our daily lives. These ideas can be expressed through our teaching of nuts'a'maat, that every thing is one, connected or related.

When Xeel's travelled through the land changing the world to how we know it today, many people were transformed into non-humans, plants, or stone after encountering him. Often, transformation was punishment for not behaving according to our snuw'uy'ulh. These stories demonstrate the connections between humans and non-humans and place. Our relationship to our plants, animals, and the land, confers upon us the responsibility to respect and care for them as our relatives. We must behave properly toward all our ancestors. Our first salmon ceremonies, for example, express our role as stewards of the land and its beings; each year when we take care to ensure the return of the fish, the ancestors of the people, we are protecting the future of our relations both human and non. Moreover, connection to the land and its beings is central to our spirit power and sacred practices that were given to us by those First Ancestors. We are people of the land, hwuhwilmuhw, we have an inalienable relationship to our lands and as such, we have responsibilities to our mother and all its beings.

When I began my studies in Anthropology I was under the impression that the discipline would offer a space to recognize the distinctive and shared histories and practices across different cultures based on respect, with particular attention to the historiography of Northwest Coast nations and Settler society. As a study of the ways in which people give meaning to their lives and the world around them, I assumed Anthropology would provide the tools necessary for me to articulate hwuhwilmuhw epistemology and ontologies in a way that would allow hwulunitum to comprehend our similarities and differences. My introduction to Anthropology was provided by two professors who demonstrated a level of respectful and critical analysis of the relationship between Anthropology and colonialism in Canada and the United States and its implications in the historic and contemporary social and political setting of British Columbia and Canada.

My expectations were met and even exceeded after completing my first year of studies with these mentors; subsequently, I could not accept any critique that did not meet this level of engagement. Following their intellectual genealogy, I pursued the work of Michael Asch and enrolled in a course with him at the University of Victoria. The work of these mentors convinced me that anthropology was worth pursuing and it would offer me the capacity to transcend barriers of communication that exist between hwulmuhw 'i' hwunitum mustimuhw. What I discovered through reading, attending lectures, and class discussions, was that research on Indigenous peoples, specifically Coast Salish, had not only already been done, but their representations of our nations, my community, my ancestors, was so egregious I do not think it is an overstatement to say the experience was traumatic. I concluded that standard of anthropology that I was exposed to and pursued in

my first year at University was the exception. The remainder of my undergraduate career was centered on another anthropology that I found unfamiliar and disturbing, while seeking refuge in the work and conversation of my previous instructors. At times when I challenged the perspectives in the discipline that I disagreed with, I was met with dismissive or often racist responses.

The dominant Anthropology I began to learn made claims of respect, but did not practice them. Primarily, these claims are of the rejection of ethnocentrism and of the imposition of preexisting categories onto others. However, popular introductory textbooks in Anthropology advance this claim while contradicting themselves later in the following chapters. For example, while critical of ethnocentrism and promoting robust data collection, *Culture Counts* describes the potlatch system of Native-American groups of the Pacific Northwest as an economic system that since it was banned from 1884-1951 has become merely a "symbol of tribal identity rather than a major element in tribal economy" (Nanda and Warms, 2009: 129). This claim is not only false, but it glosses over nearly 70 years of history and reduces one of the most important practices of the people of this area to a vestigial symbolic gesture.

Moreover, with particular significance for this thesis, the same textbook remarks on the history of forced labor as a key element of European expansion. They assert, "the most notorious example was African slavery, but impressing local inhabitants for labor, debt servitude, and other forms of peonage was common. Europeans forced both the peoples whose lands they conquered and their own lower classes into vassalage. Europeans did not invent slavery in general or African slavery in particular. For example, non-Europeans probably exported more than seven million African slaves to the Islamic

world between 650 and 1600" (Nanda and Warms: 293). This argument displaces responsibility, repeats the same argument that I identify in anthropology's representation of "slavery" among the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast that colonialism and imperialism is justified given a similar system was already in place, and that it is a practice common across cultures. It is an imposition of preexisting categories onto others that disregards the historical particularities of those cultures.

The erroneous representations I have identified in this textbook are a microcosm for the trajectory of unrefined anthropological method and theory. These false and harmful accounts of our nations have real and harmful consequences for the social and political life of our communities, and for our relationships with settler society and among each other. I began my undergraduate career thinking that anthropology could offer something useful for my community, only to find that I had to dedicate my time to undoing the harm it has caused and setting the record straight to uphold the honor of my ancestors and my family. That is what I set out to do in this thesis in relation to only a few concepts described in anthropology that have tangible repercussions in my own community, representations of war and slaves.

Chapter Two: Northwest Coast Anthropology

> "The object of our science is to understand the phenomena called ethnological and anthropological, in the widest sense of those words—in their historical development and geographical distribution, and in their physiological and psychological foundation. These two branches are opposed to each other in the same way as are biology and the so-called systemic "organology," or, as I have called it in another place, when treating on the subject of geography, "physical science and cosmography"; the former trying to deduce laws from phenomena, the latter having for its aim a description and explanation of phenomena. I tried to show that both branches are of equal scientific value."

(Boas, 1887:588)

The discipline of Anthropology regards itself as a sophisticated science of humankind, with a long intellectual history entangled in social, cultural, and political interrelations of ideas and thinkers. The discipline transcends conventional boundaries broadly encompassing field-focused research, while emphasizing analytic and interpretive methods of constructive understanding of human diversity and commonality through time. The Department at the University of Victoria explains that anthropologists study the cultural contexts that shape who we are; human histories and relationships; and connections with non-human primate relations. I believe that, if utilized strategically and ethically, Anthropology has the potential to open common ground for different peoples to share and exchange in ways that do not force one group to capitulate to the other.

Historic and contemporary approaches to understanding Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast are careless, deviating from appropriate and respectful methods in practice. While Anthropology strives to transcend power relations with its *object*, the

discipline continues to struggle with these relations by virtue of the limited capacity when a researcher is operating from many assumptions including, objectivity, evolutionary theory, and ethnocentrism. Some ethnographic study was so removed from the notion of building relationships with the people that it became known as "armchair" anthropology, wherein the ethnographer was entirely detached from the people written about. While there are multiple reasons why this form of research occurred in anthropology, it was largely a result of a call for objectivity of data collection. If the anthropologist was invested in, developed a stake or an understanding, of the native perspective, their view and data was deemed 'tainted' and they often were (and still are) accused of "going native". This speculative anthropology is specifically what Boas argued against, advocating for stronger empirical approaches bound in fieldwork that enquired into Indigenous peoples' perspective in "constructing categories of meaning and the production of cultural phenomena" (Pinkoski, 2011: 138). Finally, rejecting the practice of allowing Indigenous peoples to construct their own categories of meaning further contributes to the imposition of ethnocentric and Euro-American principles commonly including evolutionary theory.

Anthropologists have limited their lens of study by relying on the hypothetical-deductive thought experiment arguments of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century political theories, wherein society is either founded on protection against and abandonment of the original condition of man, or the advancement of cultures through an evolutionary teleology from the 'primitive' to 'civilization'. Boas appealed to Anthropologists to understand phenomena "for their own sake", refusing the aesthetic convenience of deduction, and to hear the Indigenous peoples' interpretation of their own phenomena in

their own terms, advocating for anthropologists also to learn the language of those with whom they work. Bunzl (1996) explains the methods offered by Boas that demonstrate his direct opposition to nineteenth century evolutionism. In "The Study of Geography," (1887) Boas contrasts two scientific methodologies: the physical and the historical. The physical deduces laws from phenomena, and the "single phenomenon itself" is insignificant other than its function as "an exemplification of a law". The historical method investigates the phenomena themselves, an affective impulse, "the mere occurrence of an event" triggered the desire to study its "true history." (Bunzl, 1996: 17). This distinction is derived from counter-Enlightenment figures such as Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilheim von Humboldt. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, they had developed a *Humanitatsideal* (ideal of humanity) in opposition to such French Enlightenment figures as Voltaire. In contrast to the conception of a uniform development of civilization, they had argued for the uniqueness of values transmitted throughout history. The comparison of any given nation or age with the Enlightenment or any other external standard was unacceptable. Each human group could be understood only as a product of its particular history, propelled by a unique *Volksgeist* (genius of a people).

With its origins in the epistemological and ontological premises of the Enlightenment, the discipline of anthropology was eventually perceived as the handmaiden of colonialism. Fabian discusses how the use of "Time in evolutionary anthropology, modeled on that of natural history, undoubtedly was a step beyond pre-modern conceptions" with significant political consequences (Fabian, 1983: 16). Specifically, he presents the concept of neutral time, "whereby in studying people

without history, of an unchanging primitive culture, temporal relations can be disregarded in favor of spatial relations" (Fabian, 1983: 18). Most importantly, is his contribution of *Typological Time*, wherein Time serves as a distancing device, categorizing elements of cultures or even societies as of the past, or primitive, savage or tribal (Fabian, 1983). In this way, anthropology's Object lived in a separate space and occupied a separate physical and typological Time, denying that Indigenous peoples are coeval with the civilized world. With exceptional social and political consequences, the majority of historical anthropological knowledge is gained under colonial, imperial and oppressive conditions, while being portrayed as neutral science.

Throughout the history of anthropology, the question of the origin of society and cultures has been a central theme for inquiry and debate. This debate expanded from a dichotomy between monogenic and polygenic theories of origin, to an evolutionary scheme and a variety of other theories including the structuralist approach. Monogenic ideas conform to a single origin for all humans, situated within a biblical framework. Moreover, it claims that humans are a divine creation, existing in a state of moral perfection (Fabian, 1983). According to the notion of degenerationism, humans have since declined from this condition to varying degrees and dispersed, marked by the fall of the Tower of Babel. From this fall, as punishment people were given different languages so that they could no longer communicate, even this simple explanation of language is starkly different from that of hwuhwilmuhw, who believe that languages were a gift and a responsibility. Alternatively, polygenic theories argue that humans have multiple origins; moreover, different races of humans were created independently. Ideas about human diversity and similarity grew increasingly conflicting when Europeans were encountering

different cultural groups through trade, exploration and colonization. While operating within a biblical framework, Europeans had new assumptions about the natural world; with rationality organized through the scientific study of man.

The great antiquity of mankind was established with the discovery of such archaeological sites as Somme River Valley of France and Brixham Cave. Of particular significance, Brixham Cave 1858, features deposits that show unambiguously stone tools in association with extinct animals (Gruber, 1965). In 1859 Charles Lyell interpreted the findings stating that the deposits demonstrate irrefutable evidence of humans present from tens of thousands of years before 4004BC. The realization that the earth and mankind is older than the explanation provided within the biblical framework unsettled contemporary conceptualizations of the origins of society and human diversity. Prevailing ideas about the relationship between so-called primitive and civilized peoples shifted following the revolution in ethnological time, which allowed new space to theorize about cultural diversity, how 'groups' are related and the origins of society (Fabian, 1983). Theorists reasoned that mankind began at the bottom of a grand scale of progress, and perhaps some contemporary societies that appear primitive, were stuck in the earliest stage of this universal development. This raises the dilemma of whether Europeans had a responsibility to help these primitive societies, and if they could even be civilized, known as the perfectibility of man.

For Boas, all phenomena are considered in historical formations, and thus have an empirical reality that requires extensive historical research over large areas (1920: 313-315): "stressing a strong historical focus on particular areas and in particular contexts, Boas' method advocated an empiricism in the collection or cataloging of ethnological

phenomena through a fieldwork method that attempted to contextualize phenomena, taking into consideration the accounts and interpretations of the people who produced the phenomena themselves- a method frequently referred to as being highly informed from the Native point of view" (Pinkoski, 2011: 150). Boas' ethnography transcends the assumptions with which Anthropology is replete by advocating for stringent methodology and empiricism. By thoroughly documenting the phenomena of a culture and allowing the space for the people to qualify their own traditions, Boas' robust ethnographic method circumvents ethnocentric interpretation. However, in undertaking the immense task of meticulously documenting a people and their culture, Boas did not understate the seemingly endless and complex nature of this endeavor. For Sol Tax, anthropology has two equivalent goals, to help a group of people solve a problem, and to learn something in the process. The struggle for the anthropologist is understanding how to negotiate a closely related theoretical world wherein the cultural divide separating the anthropologist and the native structures contemporary anthropological methods; but also provides opportunity for differences in categories, meanings, and values illuminating what each side is trying to understand of the other.

Sol Tax refuses to think or to say that the people the anthropologist is involved with are a means of advancing their own knowledge; and the anthropologist must refuse to think or to say that they are simply applying science to the solution of those peoples' problems (1952: 103-105). From an action anthropology approach, the anthropologist's motivation for research is directed by the knowledge and needs of the people for whom he works, rather than for advancing a theory through applied fieldwork. "The action anthropologist eschews 'pure science'. For one thing his work requires that he not use

people for an end not related to their own welfare: people are not rats and ought not to be treated like them. Not only should we not hurt people; we should not use them for our own ends. Community research is thus justifiable only to the degree that the results are imminently useful to the community and easily outweigh the disturbance to it" (Tax: 104). While Tax's Action Anthropology advocates not disturbing or harming the people he works with, it is not to say that the anthropologist must observe neutrally without affecting the *object*, quite the opposite. The action anthropologist must disclaim pure science in their methods, and become a more responsible scientist while developing a theory, by denying their role as an observer or participant. The action anthropologist is invested in the product, where the consequences are a burden upon their work, and conscience. It is from this position therefore, that the action anthropologist relinquishes any sense of "comfortable familiarity of objectivity, and the mantle of science as it is usually understood" (Tax: 105).

Whereas Boas pointed in the right direction for others, most anthropologists at the time were investing their energy in oblique trait lists, historical reconstruction, and inductive hypotheticals. Jacobs endeavors to draw attention to expressive aspect of sociocultural and socioeconomic life of the Pacific Northwest Coast, promoting some of the same values to "avoid culture-bound projection of Euro-American concepts, such as property ownership, onto another socioeconomic system" (Jacobs, 1964:53). However, in the previous paragraph Jacobs states, "[s]laves were the most valuable kind of property, and indisputably they were owned by any definition of property ownership" (53). He continues to comment that "some writers have been unable to handle Euro-American concepts with the elasticity required when extrapolating them for use upon somewhat

similar nonwestern social forms and cultural features" (55). His concern was the way in which researchers and informants set up defenses against criticism and disapproval of the "old ways" by altering their representations of the past if they claim that "slaves" were really only symbols of status rather than the Euro-American sense of the term, not the imposition of categories or meaning in discussions of Northwest Coast peoples. Moreover, Jacobs assumes the accuracy of his own perspective until it is proven false, "[n]o evidence indicates that a majority of slaves were essentially symbols rather than perspiring, self-deprecating, and despairing captive menials or that they functioned primarily as beloved servants like favored mulattos in antebellum plantation mansions. Data on Northwest Coast slavery are so fragmentary that it precludes clarification" (55).

The historiography shows that something ostensibly straightforward as translating a word from Hul'qumi'num' into English is more complicated and not exempt from these basic assumptions. As I will demonstrate in the next two chapters, the mistranslation of our concepts of social organization and relationality embedded in "slave" is the product of assumptions, unrefined ethnographic practice, and the imposition of Western paradigms.

> If we can understand Boas's work as part of an interruption to the dominant Kantian trope of universal history, himself as cognizant of and acting against the colonial authority, and his method as part of a pursuit to uncover subterranean and subjugated discourses, then I believe there is much to retrieve from his anthropology. I believe there is much to retrieve from political struggles against forms of bigotry, racism, sexism, and xenophobia and that it is important to remember those who stand up against power. I ask us to consider where we—as a discipline in our theory, method and practice—stand in relation to the present-day manifestations of this bigotry with respect to ongoing colonialism in North America and its structuring of contemporary anthropological methods

(Clemmer 2009 in Pinkoski: 159)

This move away from universal history and toward respectful anthropological methods and relations with Indigenous peoples that Pinkoski is recommending accomplishes two goals with respect to my discussion about Northwest Coast slavery. First, it creates space for the people to define their own practices in their own terms, what is now a subjugated discourse in the historiography, interrupting the constructed identities, such as "slave", produced in anthropology. Secondly, it advocates for the reflexivity of the researcher, to consider where they stand in relation to the historical and present phenomena they are considering, and how its common understanding is produced as part of an unrefined process as discussed above, but also a discipline with intricate connections to power, colonialism, and sexism. To understand particular histories Boas relies on culture history and complex interacting historical processes outlined by Indigenous voices, rejecting the notion of a single line of development of culture, the classificatory and typological assumptions preeminent in anthropology in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter Three: The Apocryphal Slave

Through the process of colonization, our identities became defined through imposed categories, boundary making and policies. Specifically for hwuhwilmuhw, that process was tangled up in the theft and privatization of our lands. Philosophical premises of the Enlightenment, political theorists like Locke, Marx, and Kant, concerned with land use and progress, are used to justify the domination and dispossession of Indigenous Peoples. In this thesis I introduce some colonial history of Hul'qumi'num' ancestral lands, a genealogy of Western thought that constructs the paradigms that come close to Indigenous epistemological frameworks as well as those imposed on us, and some of the Anthropological theory which these arguments are premised, with respect to the concepts of slavery and warfare. The next three chapters of this thesis engage in critical analysis of the concept of slave as it pertains to Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, specifically Hul'qumi'num'qun. I will problematize the (mis)translation of our language and the erasure of meaning embedded in our own words for our own practices. The imposition of the English language on hwuhwilmuhw and our cultures alters our own understanding of our practices and social structures. By returning to our own language to consider our own practices identified in ethnographic material as "slavery", I will demonstrate what this tradition actually looked like for Hul'qumi'num' nations, and ask where do slaves fit within a kinship based society? Finally, I will address the harms and purposes of representing Northwest Coast societies as slaves and warring, especially as it pertains to women and children. These modes of colonial thought are premised on the profoundly racist understanding of Indigenous peoples as so uncivilized that they did not constitute self-determining nations, or even societies, at the time settlers arrived in North

America. These notions permeate our own communities and inform our understanding of our own history of "slavery". Frequently, the Western version of slavery is referred to in relation to our communities and our history, circulated as a true and objective description of our nations.

The Hul'qumi'num' Village

Prominent anthropologist Wayne Suttles dedicated much of his career to the study of Northwest Coast societies, with particular attention given to Coast and Strait Salish peoples. He is considered the leading expert on the Salish culture area and the intellectual genealogy of many anthropologists of this area traces back to Suttles. He provides a clear example of how Northwest Coast societies are typically discussed in scientific terms that our people *survived* because of our successful subsistence activities, an *adaptation* to the local environment.

> …For a population to have survived in a given environment for any length of time, its subsistence activities and prestige-gaining activities are likely to form a single integrated system by which that population has adapted to its environment
>
> [Suttles 1960: 296]

Environmental determinism is also applied to our social and political systems such as potlatching and alliances. The quest for resources and prestige is what motivates the formation of agreements or alliances with neighboring tribes. Moreover, our societies are kinship based, wherein vast networks of social relations connect our people based on ties of blood and marriage; however, concurrently they are described as divided into three ordered strata: "titleholders," "commoners," and "slaves." (Donald 1997: 25). As Miller describes

Coast Salish peoples have long constructed and maintained complex personal social identities that connect them to a variety of other groups. These include immortal beings regarded as ancestral kinfolk, immediate affinal and agnatic relatives, a larger set of more distant relatives, households, and fellow members of "villages" that are sometimes many kilometers in length but that have few structures. There are also patterns of affiliation based on common occupation of water systems; respect for particular regional leaders, use-rights, and resource procurement areas; and the common use of particular languages and dialects

(Miller 2007: 17).

Northwest Coast societies are historically, and in some contemporary contexts, considered hunter-gatherers, reliant upon wild plants and animals for subsistence, while having few material possessions, and an uncomplicated social organization (Smith, 1941). Often discussed in evolutionary terms as "hunter-gatherers" (Elmendorf; Barnett; Smith; Suttles; Thom), the Coast Salish are said to have "ontology of dwelling" (Ingold, 1996: 121), that we resided on the land. However I would stress that we simply understand our relationship to the land differently, we are not only *in* places but *of* places. For Smith, Coast Salish hunter-gatherers' economically affluent and culturally complex way of life is "attained when they occupy environments endowed with abundant wild food resources" (Smith 2005: 38). Generally, salmon production is central to the evolution of Northwest Coast societies (Fladmark, 1975). Occasionally, Coast Salish peoples break the norm, where cultural progress is not limited to societies with farming economies (Smith; Deur and Turner: 2005). However, the development of social complexity of the Coast Salish is commonly attributed to our practice of food storage, subjecting us to a sympathetic assessment through culture ecology rather than discarding the conditions entirely.

Historically, Northwest Coast anthropologists, ecologists, and ethnobotonists focus on the interaction between dynamic environments and levels of social organization (Barnett 1952; Elmendorf; Hill-Tout; Jenness; Suttles 1962, 1968; Deur and Turner 2005; Vayda, 1961). Social organization of Northwest Coast "tribes" is commonly described as a function of man's ability to survive, which is inhibited by the food quest and the desire for wealth; these limitations are the subsistence economy which is determined by the prestige economy respectively, which maintain social stratification. The Coast Salish of Southern Georgia Strait and the Strait of Juan de Fuca are described as loosely organized (Suttles, 1951) and as "local groups with weak leadership" (Tollefson, 1996: 147) typically lacking "any principles which rigidly set one group off from another" (Tollefson, 1996: 327).

Suttles' view of Coast Salish "culture and the presence of dispersed, bilateral kin groups as a development related to local ecology rather than as the absence of a matrilineal clan system" provides a narrow interpretation of our nations (Miller 2007: 3). Sociopolitical organization identified by ethnographers includes: the household wherefrom production and consumption arise (Barnett 1955; Suttles 1960), the village as the largest local residence group (Miller 2007; Boxberger 1994; Thom 2010), or winter villages as "house clusters" without any cohesive polity (Barnett 1955: 243). In addition to the theme of incoherent structure, ethnographers often describe Coast Salish social organization in socio-economic and evolutionary terms. Specifically, the potlatch is viewed as a socio-economic system that enables the social network to maintain and equalize distribution and consumption of food and goods.

The culture of the Straits peoples is defined by Suttles as a "set of possessions which man uses in his struggle with his habitat and with himself" (Suttles 1974: 49). These possessions include a worldview based on the exploitation of the natural world for supernatural powers and food (50), and an organization, which he divides into four different forms: 1) the extended household 2) bilateral kinship system 3) marriage and 4) formal intergroup relationship (51). This interpretation of our worldview is strikingly different from the way I explained it in my Introduction and Chapter 1. Rather than a reflection of observations of order and balance in the natural world, our worldview is described as an *exploitation* of the natural world for our own benefits. Moreover, he divides our organization into four arbitrary categories, and tries to make each phenomena fit into these discreet boxes, whereas, in reality, these categories overlap and are interrelated and inseparable.

Suttles further divides these possessions into three categories of "acquired possessions", "learned possessions", and "inherited possessions" (53-55). The group of acquired possessions includes spirit powers that are gained through the aforementioned *exploitation* of the supernatural. Suttles goes on however to contradict himself by describing the results of these pursuits as "gifts" conferred by the spirits, exploitation and gifts arguably being incommensurable ideas. Learned possessions, comprised any medicinal (an exploitation of natural resources and wildlife) and practical information that was taught within family, the knowledge was "valued and thus kept secret" and "advice" which I will discuss later in more detail (54). Knowledge was rarely kept secret; it was shared with those who were ready to learn. Finally, the Inherited possession category includes names, rights to resource locations, privilege performances and

anything included as "family property" including material objects that go along with songs, dances and other activities. Inherited privileges including wealth are what Suttles uses to distinguish the upper class, which is the product of *exploiting* "owned locations" for fishing, hunting, and gathering for surplus food. Whenever Suttles seeks to elaborate on the ownership and access to specific resources such as clam beds, camas beds and others, he presumes whose they are and that they are inherited.

In terms of social and economic relations, Suttles waffles on the structure and pattern that he tries to develop for Coast Salish; locations and their owners are strict through lines of inheritance yet shift considerably, and many different owners claim rights of inheritance to one location (215). Later, he claims that multiple families occupied a single hunting or fishing site at a time, "throughout the year the family was the basic unit in production and in consumption"; however, the more "productive subsistence activities, the exchange of many kinds of possessions, the conducting of ceremonies, and defense from enemy attack required the cooperation of several families" (1974: 272). Suttles asserts that production and consumption were the duties of the family, but *more* productive and consumptive activities required several families. He wants both autonomy and cooperation at the family and community level. He claims that the distinction occurs when the activity is more productive, and implicitly more advanced, in the sense that its purpose is beyond basic subsistence and develops into production for processes of exchange in social and political relations. In this analysis of the modes of production Suttles relies on the assumption that the expropriation of labor produces a greater capital and determines our social organization. Moreover, Suttles explains that the village "functioned as a unit in defending itself against enemy attack.

And the village *might* function as a unit in potlatching. But there were *probably* no other funcitons of the village as a whole" (277: emphasis mine). The terms Suttles invokes to make his argument are equivocal; they are ambiguous non-committal explanations of phenomena rather than explanations provided by the people or empirical investigation of close renditions of truths.

Overall, Suttles' version of Coast Salish society says that families produced and consumed goods through the exploitation of the natural world in order to gain wealth, and sometimes they organized themselves into villages for the sake of defending themselves in case of war, and maybe on occasion they would redistribute that accumulated wealth. This wealth was reserved for the "chief" or si'em of the village, the high-class people category that Suttles identifies. Second-class people are really just low-class people who have become rich through production of material goods. And finally, low-class people are those "without advice, and therefore they did not know how to behave properly. They were people who had lost their histories" and were often called "poor people" or "nothing people" (1951: 302-303). It is unclear from some of his material if Suttles conflates the "low-class people" with "slaves"; he almost avoids the word entirely but creates an entirely separate category of slave when he discusses ranking of people and tribes.

The concept of *slave* is used to demonstrate several things about Northwest Coast nations. First, that we have social hierarchies, a feature of sedentary life essential in European notions of social and cultural complexity. Second, given that material conditions permit slavery, high trade and commodity production provided hwuhwilmuhw such an abundance of material, food, and prestige goods, that even *people* comprised part of our wealth. Third, the existence of warfare, a source for capturing slaves, demonstrates

our fierceness as warrior societies, that we were implacable in times of conflict. Fourth, to prove an unequal structural nature of relations that allows the conditions for possibility of domination by colonial authority; given how these people were already questionably free and self-determining agents before contact. The slave discourse relies on the slave trade, a practice that destabilizes the romanticized notion of Indigeneity, to demonstrate the development of a system that functions to eliminate the agency, "rights" and freedom of possibility of escape through the removal of slaves from their place of capture (Nieboer, 1900: 209; Drucker, 1951:111; Ray, 1938: 54). I will provide an overview of the range of representations of Northwest Coast slavery in Anthropology and explore how these reflect *constructed* social identities.

As a counter to the general representations of slavery, Nieboer attempts to problematize the broad use of slave and provides his own definition using a better lens. He states, "several theoretical writers speak of slavery, without defining what they mean by it; and we cannot avail ourselves of their remarks without knowing what meaning they attach to this term." Moreover, this is true for those being interviewed, "if an ethnographer states that some savage tribe carries on slavery without defining in what this "slavery" consists, we have ask: What may our informant have meant?" (Nieboer: 1900). In 1900, Nieboer was trying to explain an ethics of ethnography, but also the necessity of providing space for others to define themselves according to their own terms.

> First, every slave has his master to whom he is subjected. And this subjection is of a peculiar kind. Unlike the authority one freeman sometimes has over another, the master's power over his slave is unlimited, at least in principle; any restriction put upon the master's free exercise of his power is a mitigation of slavery, not belonging to its nature, just as in Roman law the proprietor may do with his property whatever he is not by

special laws forbidden to do. The relation between master and slave is therefore properly expressed by the slave being called the master's "possession" or "property", expressions we frequently meet with. Secondly, slaves are in a lower condition as compared with freemen. The slave has no political rights; he does not choose his government, he does not attend the public councils. Socially he is despised. In the third place, we always connect with slavery the idea of compulsory labour. The slave is compelled to work; the free labourer may leave off working if he likes, be it at the cost of starving. All compulsory labour, however, is not slave labour; the latter requires that peculiar kind of compulsion, that is expressed by the word "possession" or "property", as has been said before. Recapitulating, we may define a slave in the ordinary sense of the word as a man who is the property of another, politically and socially at a lower level than the mass of the people performing compulsory labour.

(Nieboer 1900: 6)

Nieboer is still operating from his own cultural understanding of slavery in order to develop a definition, and emphasizes that slaves are the property of their master, like any other possession. However, his description of the slave having "no political rights", is close to the Hul'qumi'num' understanding of skwuyuth but still limited to a *rights* discourse, rather than a conversation about access or sharing. Nieboer also stresses the particular kind of compulsory labor of slaves, which is required of them by law or obligation as the property of an other. Nieboer's deconstruction of the social and historical complexities of the word slave demonstrates the extent to which it is a broadly imposed ambiguous term. He endeavors to decipher a reified category of people toward more sophisticated ideas about social relations.

Slavery is a longstanding notion in the history of Western thought, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* being one of the leading texts on the master-slave dialectic as a structure of domination. Hegel's dialectic of master-slave is embedded in politics of recognition through social relations. Relations of recognition constitute subjectivity, and

Hegel insists that relations of recognition are mutual. His discussion of master-slave is asymmetrical recognition, whereby the *master* desires recognition, as a "being-for-itself" but cannot achieve individual certainty since their recognition is dependent on the slave. Hegel depicts a dilemma of pattern in relations of power and domination wherein the master is dependent on the recognition of the slave. This conversation in political theory though crucial is virtually absent in anthropology, and it is not one that I intend to address now. I will however, attempt to understand and explain the term within its cultural context, one of the main prerogatives in anthropological ethnography.

It is clear that the majority of research into slavery on the Northwest Coast is reiterating speculative anthropology. According to Donald (1997) a word for slave is found in all languages spoken within traditional Northwest Coast communities; an impudent claim given the diversity of languages, which forces "every traditional Northwest Coast community" to capitulate to a Western concept of slave. Nearly every language on the Northwest Coast is likely to have a word for a particular group of people that was translated to mean slave whether or not that language adheres to hierarchy or notions of exploitation. Donald does not examine or substantiate his claim any further through linguistic analysis or evidence, nor does he provide any insights from Indigenous peoples or native speakers.

Several ethnographies offer definitions of slavery; but none has taken the trouble to inquire whether their definition can be of any practical use in social sciences, the definitions they try to give are simply justified after the fact. In English, the word slave is a historical and contextual concept that comes from Medieval Latin *sclava* meaning captive. A slave can be expressed generally as a person who is not free, a person who is

the legal property of another, or indentured servants coerced into physical labor for their owners. We must, however, be careful to remember that man, being a *social* animal, no man is literally free; all members of a community are restricted in their behaviour towards each other by social rules and customs (Nieboer, 1900). Languages are embedded with our ontologies and epistemologies; it is an exercise in power and colonialism to redefine our concepts. These Hul'qumi'num' ideas must be appreciated in their own terms, rather than be reconciled with colonial comprehension. Our social organization is distinct with concepts that are not easily translated into English, and are also difficult to convert into very particular cultural understandings of social dynamics that were characteristic of settler colonies at the time of these (mis)translations.

Chapter Four: From Private Property to Forbidden Participants

Slavery among *hunter-gatherers* or *tribal* societies is often narrowly explained in naturalized terms, and the slaves featured in some "myths" of different communities are described as a normal part of the social and cultural setting. It is inferred that since slaves were present in old stories, at times of creation or transformation, that "slavery already existed when the world was made" (Averkieva, 1966: 116). As Donald notes, this argument is used as "support for the antiquity of Northwest Coast slavery" (Donald, 1997: 45). These interpretations suspend hwuhwilmuhw in the past, and position us as representations of archaic versions of humanity (Fabian, 1983). The contemporary lens on Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast needs to be shifted from its hegemonic focus, to include a wider range of understandings and even a reflexive approach to framing conversations about social systems that do not conform to Western notions of society. While some attempts are made to look critically at the self, anthropology's *object,* and the relationship between them, the dominant narrative about slavery and Northwest Coast repeatedly circulates the same outdated fallacies.

Discussions of Hul'qumi'num' speaking nations on the Northwest Coast commonly subscribe to the following paradigm:

> In the native view society was divided into worthy people, worthless people, and slaves. A worthy person was called si'em, a term that implies unblemished ancestry, good manners, extra-human support, and wealth. This term was used in reference for the head of a house, kin group, or local group (and so is sometimes translated "chief") and in address for any respected person, male or female. Some villages had separate segments occupied by *st'éxum* 'worthless people' and a few villages have been identified as altogether 'worthless people' (Suttles 1958). A slave (skwuyuth) was the personal property of his master. Slaves lived in their masters' houses and often worked with them, but they were socially nonpersons and mainly lived lives of drudgery.

Though the distinctions are presented as "in the native view", they are inaccurate translations into Euro-American concepts of value, master-slave, and property. The choice to describe our ancestors as worthy, worthless, and slaves, is an imposition of preconceived Western notions onto Indigenous peoples' ontologies, social organization and relationality; essentially, this representation is an apology for colonialism and domination. When the oppressed are defined in disparaging terms centered on Eurocentric measurements of value, their existence is dehumanized into something trivial. The concept of "worthy" does not exist in the Hul'qumi'num' language; we do not categorize worthy or worthless qualities, especially in relation to people. The worthy category of people are described as those who belong to a descent group called a house (Kennedy, 2000), as kinship-based societies, it is an absurd imaginary that any persons exist outside of a descent group, rendering them worthless or slaves.

Anthropologists identify women and children as the slaves (*less* than worthless people) of our societies by, a powerful discourse that fixes them at the bottom of a ranking scheme of worth. However, Indigenous peoples increasingly indulge in a historical dialectical relationship of superior and inferior classes of people, which is not our own view but one that is attributed to us discursively, deployed in contemporary social and political realms in the form of lateral violence. As McIllwraith notes, a slave is described as a person who "completely assimilates attitudes and values of his owner's group" and is upset when those local customs are ignored (McIllwraith, 1948: 373-375). In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon suggests that in contexts, such as Canada, wherein imperial rule is not reproduced through force alone, "the maintenance of colonial

hegemony requires the production of what he liked to call 'colonized subjects', the production of the specific modes of colonial thought, desire and behavior which implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination" (Coulthard, 2011: 26). This, I argue, is precisely the function of the apocryphal slave, as it is defined in Anthropology.

As described above, a slave was "the personal property of his master. Slaves lived in their masters' houses and often worked with them, but they were socially nonpersons and mainly lived lives of drudgery" (465). It is evident that this definition is full of problematic and inaccurate premises. Slaves as personal property is not a notion that fits within our culture, since we never regard people as property nor could they be "owned" by another person. Moreover, if slaves were *lower* on the social scale than "worthless" people were, lived lives of drudgery, and did not contribute to social fabric, why would they live in their masters' houses? As kinship-based societies each family, or multiple families, had its own house. A *house* is a social and political unit that informed a system of privileges and obligations, and each house has a head. Which house a person lives in shows to which family that person belongs. Donald explains that slaves existed "outside" of the social structure "as they were without kin group membership, slaves had no rights or privileges" (33). Where can slaves fit in a kin-based society with a decentralized form of sociopolitical organization based at the level of the household? If the house is used to distinguish families, and slaves are nonmembers, they should therefore not be afforded the "rights and privileges" of living in the houses of these family units, which is fundamentally equivalent to giving them a place within society. I will offer a more

detailed analysis of access to rights and privileges later in this chapter when I discuss skwuyuth.

Experts on Northwest Coast cultures discuss slavery in economic terms, in relation to hierarchical prestige systems, as it pertains to war, or they dismiss slavery altogether. Franz Boas offers one of the standard views of Northwest Coast slavery, remarking about Kwakiutl peoples:

> All the tribes of the Pacific Coast are divided into a nobility, common people, and slaves. The last of these may be left out of consideration, as they do not form part and parcel of the clan, but are captives made in war, or purchases, and may change ownership as any other piece of property.
>
> (Boas: 1897)

Boas explains the economic value of the slave in terms of production; they were acquired captives that produced the prestige of their masters. According to Curtis, slavery was a firmly established industry among Coast Salish societies:

> Slaves were captives taken in war and traded from tribe to tribe, and almost always the prisoners were women or children. They wielded paddles in their master's canoes, fished, gathered wood, cooked, and made baskets and other utensils, but they labored no more strenuously than the free members of the lower class, and in return they were well treated as members of the household… As concerns his labor the slave was no great asset, and the principal reason for the existence of the institution of slavery was that the possession of captives reflected honor and dignity upon their owners. A chief's influence was in direct proportion to the number of his slaves.
>
> (Curtis, 1913: 74)

In both of the above descriptions, slavery is somewhat symbolic in that it demonstrates the honor or standing of the master; moreover, it is expressed as economically unimportant, slaves could be "left out of consideration" since they were "no

great asset". Drucker echoes this perspective of slaves as insignificant, declaring that they had a social rank lower than dogs:

> That slaves were sometimes treated with kindness and given certain concessions made no difference in their class membership; they were still slaves, and as such belonged in a sphere apart from free…. As a matter of fact, the slaves had so little societal importance in the area that they scarcely need to be considered in problems relating to the social structure. "Society," in the native view, consisted of the freemen of a particular group. Slaves, like the natives' dogs, or better still, like canoes and sea otter skins and blankets, were elements of the social configuration but had no active part to play in group life. Their participation was purely passive, like that of a stage prop carried on and off the boards by the real actors. Their principal significance was to serve as foils for the high and mighty, impressing the inequality of status on native consciousness.
>
> (Drucker, 1939: 55-56)

Drucker equates slaves with inanimate objects such as canoes or blankets, which he says offer nothing to group life other than a reminder of social inequality. Drucker applies Eurocentric assumptions about ownership and possession to canoes and blankets, a highly problematic move, promoting ideas of passive participants and inanimate objects that do not exist within the "native view". I would like to elaborate briefly on canoes and blankets as metaphors to reinforce my point about Drucker's slave.

The canoe, snuxwulh, is an integral and active contributor to group dynamics and social life, and is vital to Hul'qumi'num' culture for reasons far beyond travel. For Hul'qumi'num' people, the canoe is alive. There are many teachings and protocols around the harvesting of a cedar tree that is being reclaimed for a new life as a canoe, the process of carving and caring for the tree as it is being transformed into a canoe, and the relationship between the canoe and the *house* to which it belongs. To depreciate canoes to

having "no active part to play in group life" is plainly false and insulting to hwulmuhw culture. Not only a vessel for travel, the canoe is the mechanism through which villages express social relations; in marriage proposals and times of war, the canoe is essential. When a man proposes to a woman, he has to carve a canoe, paddle to her village, and present the canoe as a gift in the proposal to her family. The tree is given a new life as a canoe once it is completed; for Hul'qumi'num' people, that canoe takes on the characteristics of the people who carve it and demands that people treat it not as an object, but as a living extension of our relations. Finally, the canoe embodies our teaching nuts'a'maat shkwaluwun; in order to pull together in the canoe, each person must be intimately connected with one heart and one mind, working together. Paddling in the canoe, each person is equal regardless of any social rank, and under the guidance and ultimate authority of the skipper. Moreover, when paddling the canoe, the people must look forward and keep their focus on where they are going. The canoe connects our people together as one, not only those in the canoe, but also by virtue of the canoe taking us to visit our relatives to affirm those relationships.

It is similarly difficult to adequately convey the importance of blankets for hwuhwilmuhw. Our blankets are made from inner cedar bark (hulixwtun) or wool (swuwq'wa'lh or pqulwut), materials derived from the natural world. Because we are related to the trees and animals that provide us with these materials, we are responsible to reciprocate to those beings, and take care of them. The sources for the materials to make blankets are xe'xe, sacred and spiritual beings that connect us to our *sxwoxwiyam*. Women make blankets, it is a spiritual process, and it connects the weaver and the

recipient of the blanket to the spirit world. The tools that each woman used were unique to her, and spindle whorls for example, connect her to the spirit world as she spins wool.

Building on the theme of identity construction is the notion of relationality that people and objects interact. On one level, objects inform peoples' behavior and affect our consciousness and how we represent our selves; (Mohl, 2011), alternatively, objects and people interact to establish symbols and meaning to materiality (Beaudry, 2011). Indeed, people attribute meaning to objects, which in turn define people, as part of a relational element of identity construction between people and things. Material culture occupies a relational and reciprocal space with people and society. Beaudry's approach to materiality recognizes that objects are salient to and entangled with the social life. Our blankets were used in daily life as a shell from the elements or in ceremonies such as marriage, for example, when the canoe is filled with blankets and the married couple is wrapped together in a blanket. Moreover, the blanket as a gift is one of the highest honors; wrapping a person in a blanket is synonymous to wrapping them with friendship, love, and respect. Effectively, given the vital nature of our canoes and blankets, their prominence cannot be simplified to ordinary objects without social or spiritual implications; similarly, nor can the social role, value and identity of skwuyuth be traduced.

While some Anthropologists make claim that slaves were "not a productive part of the economy" (Service 1963: 215) and the "economic value of the slave captured in war was so slight as to be non-existent," (Codere, 1950:105) others argue its critical economic importance. Whereas Nieboer would argue that the great function of slavery can be no other than a *division of labour* (1900). In Anthropology, one of the ways slaves

manifest as economically significant is in the accumulation of prestige since slaves are generally owned by "chiefs", "titleholders", or "masters". The "possession of slaves was prestigeful since it implied success at war or great wealth" (Drucker, 1939: 52). The work of Suttles (1960) provides the foundation for explaining prestige systems on the Northwest Coast as one of the functions of slavery. This system was manifest through the potlatch (stl'unuq) as a means of redistributing surpluses that some families accumulated through exchange, whereby wealth transforms into prestige. While some research describes the killing, freeing, or giving away of slaves as property and potlatch wealth, few discuss slaves as producers *of* potlatch wealth. Boas explains that the motive of the potlatch for individuals "is the limitless pursuit of gaining social prestige" (1970 [1897]: 335) while Suttles argues that, the drive for high status is a reaction of Northwest Coast societies as an adaptive system:

> But the drive to attain high status is clearly not the explanation of the potlatch. Nor is the production of surplus. Nor the cooperation achieved by the potlatching community. The potlatch is part of a larger socio-economic system that enables the whole social network, consisting of a number of communities, to maintain a high level of food production and to equalize its food consumption both within and among communities. The system is thus adaptive in an environment characterized by the features indicated before- spatial and temporal variation and fluctuation in the availability of resources. Values, drives, surpluses, competition, and cooperation- all of these may be as much effects as causes. The whole has *probably* developed through a process of variation and selection, within the limitations of environment and cultural means, that can be best described by the term 'cultural evolution'.
>
> (Suttles 1960: 62).

Suttles' argument about prestige and the stl'unuq engages in a naturalist evolutionary narrative. In this excerpt, Suttles reduces Indigenous peoples to a Darwinian

discussion in biological terms of *variation* and *selection* in relation to the development of the potlatch system. Moreover, his claim is presented in estimative terms, that the system is *probably* the result of interactions between people, their environment and cultural means, meaning culture ecology. According to this logic, a community's ability to satisfy its gastric needs, given the fluctuating environment and availability of food resources, is what determines their success in the pursuit of wealth and prestige. Moreover, this evolutionary model derives from Steward ecology, but is further refined by Fried's evolution of political society (Fried, 1967). A community's means of subsistence whether hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, or agriculturalists, determines their corresponding level of social structure as a band, tribe, chiefdom, and state respectively. Whereas for hwuhwilmuhw, the potlatch is a means of practicing 'uy ye' thut ch 'u' suw ts'its'uwatul' tseep 'i' nuts'amaat, being kind and taking care of one another because we are all connected, the stl'unuq is an expression of our social and kin obligations. In a short paper about Northwest Coast traditional economies, Garfield argues the economic value of slaves using cultural evolution:

> "The economic value of slaves in the productive system has also been neglected, and the tendency has been to consider slaves from the point of view of "prestige value" rather than as productive property and therefore basic economic assets. Yet it cannot be doubted that twenty-five or thirty slaves in a household, even in an economy based on food collecting, produced enough to make them highly profitable. Slaves made possible larger surpluses, more intensive exploitation of resources, and the *release of many individuals for specialized work or art*. Nowhere, least of all on the Northwest Coast, can slavery be adequately explained as just another device for acquiring prestige, nor dismissed as of little economic importance."
>
> (Garfield, 1945: 628, emphasis mine)

Garfield argues that the investment of slaves in gathering food and producing certain materials relieved other villagers from unskilled duties, allowing the opportunity for them to pursue and develop specialized work and art. In this way, institutions of art and philosophy, which occupy the highest level of Steward's telos, are only the result of assuaging concerns for enough food. This economic determinism is completely absent from our oral histories syuth, or "true history" about food and production; hwuhwilmuhw had such an abundance of food and resources, our suleluxw tell us you could walk across the river on the backs of salmon.

Indeed, Northwest Coast practices of slavery or the absence thereof, are repeatedly expressed in cultural evolutionary terms, "if slavery had continued, with economic benefits to the Coast Salish, in time they might have taken on more of the intricate culture of the Northern Indians" (Ruby and Brown, 1993: 173). The narrative that positions Northern tribes of the coast as superior to Southern, generally Salish, tribes carries through in representations of the slavery system and stories of war and even into discussions of artistic complexity. Discussions around art of Northwest Coast tribes often feature comparison of more intricate and elaborate Northern art and the simple and understated art of the Coast Salish. While I cannot speak to art of the Northern tribes, I can certainly explain briefly that Hul'qumi'num' art is a link to the spirit world, it has specific power, and our art has spiritual purposes acting as an interlocutor between the person and the spirit world, rather than visual representations of reality.

In addition to the slave's economic value as laborers for their owners to accumulate prestige and wealth in the potlatch, slaves were often "bought and sold" along the coast, "won and lost in gambling", highlighting their qualities as transferable property

but also the avaricious nature of their owners (Lutz, 2009: 90). Echoing the words of Suttles and Drucker, Lutz describes that goods in the Salish economy circulate in two distinct yet linked economies; food circulates in a subsistence economy where gatherers and heads of family have some control over distribution. Other goods, including *slaves* owned by individuals and families, circulated in a wealth economy, along with *blankets* and *canoes* (Lutz, 2009: 56, emphasis mine). Donald, like many others, argues that slavery was essential to Northwest Coast peoples, in providing both a labour force to process large amounts of fish and in activities like the potlatch and pursuits of status among titleholders. Donald's main efforts are to demonstrate the hegemonic relations and essentially violence and domination of the culture area, disregarding our epistemological and spiritual conceptions, perpetuating a common narrative of primitive man, and contributing to the production of 'colonized subjects'.

Northwest Coast slaves are often simplified to genetics and phrenology; slaves have particular identifiable and innate hereditary features that permanently separate them from society. The language used in these discussions is biological and centered around blood and the taint of that genetic material or line of descent rather than considering slaves as socially constructed phenomena. Indeed, Donald explains that slaves were distinguished from other villagers by their special haircuts or external markers; similarly, "slaves" were identified by their lack of external markers that were reserved for people of high status (33). Slaves "were prohibited from deforming heads of their children at all" (Ruby and Brown, 1993: 40), which is symbolic of high-status among some Northwest Coast societies. This exemption from head shaping is an example of this group of people not having permission to access certain practices. Slave blood barred wealth and power

acquisition but the "upper-class blood" of Coast Salish societies meant membership in a bilaterally figured line of 'freemen' with high social reputation and no trace of slave blood (Elmendorf 1971; Ruby and Brown 1993; Suttles 1987).

Whereas members of the wealthy upper class distribute wealth, and participate in secret societies, winter ceremonies and other "inherited" privileges slaves are not permitted to participate because they are unqualified for wealth distribution and have "no claim to recognized inherited privileges, and who furthermore 'had no advice,' that is, they had no private knowledge and no moral training" (Suttles, 1960: 297). While the taint of slave ancestry was most undesirable, Suttles explains that persons captured and enslaved could have their standing returned by a "cleansing rite" (Suttles, 1958: 503). Hwuhwilmuhw have many traditions of healing to take care of people, and I am certain that this is no exception, that we had means of 'washing' anyone who needed some sort of work. Those practices range in power depending on the magnitude of work a person needs done. Based on the information provided in Suttles' description of this "cleansing rite" and the "cleansing instrument", I am certain that this instrument is a rattle, maybe shulmuhwtsus, a copper or goat's horn rattle, but could also include a variety of other medicines that we use in cleansing. However, the point here is that there were practices that "cleansed" individuals from the "taint" of slave ancestry, and slave status could be transformed.

If the anthropologist rejects the label of slave they insist instead on using the term captive. The primary source for slaves is through raiding and war; moreover, the demand for slaves from titleholders was also met through a slave trade. Moreover, the purpose of war was principally for taking slaves and plundering (Curtis 1913; Garfield 1939; Suttles

1960). Many researchers talk about a slave trade that existed on the Northwest Coast. The extent of which is described in Russian fur trader reports in their observations of Northern Indigenous peoples. The slave trade is a result of the demand for labor that developed from needs of sedentary life such as the preservation of food, trade, and industry wealth (Ruyle, 1973). The needs and industry that slave labor was harnessed for included "building and repairing houses, making canoes, fishing, carrying water, cutting firewood, and other forms of drudgery" (Ruyle, 1973: 613). The tasks assigned to the slave were obligatory given the slave was under the power and authority of their master:

> A slave, being cut off from any prospect of escape and completely dependent on his master for his welfare and his life, would find it to his advantage to support his master loyally in warfare and in disputes with commoners. Thus, although it is undeniable that slaves gave prestige to their masters, the prestige functions of slavery were not independent of economic and political considerations.
>
> (Ruyle, 1973: 613)

It is most convenient to classify the concept of skwuyuth as slave or captive and to subsume them into a slave trade system, to further degrade an already dehumanized group of people. Certain peculiar features of our culture permit the existence of skwuyuth, which transcends the narrow conversations of hierarchies and economy. When we discuss slaves in terms of captives, it is crucial to point out that upon their arrival to the village, they were given two options: a captive (or slave) could contribute to the production of wealth and food for the village until they were returned to their home or they could integrate into the village through marriage or adoption.

Relative status is never absolute given that people can accumulate prestige to rise socially through distant or affinal kin. The support of kinsmen is an essential element in achieving high status, and often in our communities, if a person is lacking in their cultural

knowledge or practice, they were thrown into the thi lelum' and helped. Nobody is ever left to fall in 'ranking', especially in a kin-based society wherein the primary teachings are nuts'a'maat 'uy shkwaluwun 'i' 'uy ye' thut ch 'u' suw ts'its'uwatul' tseep. If a person was skwuyuth, they were still allowed to participate in some practices that were used to gain social status and ultimately wealth, such as siyowun. Our winter ceremonials prevent sickness and resolve conflicts in cultural principles by uniting the relationship between the initiate and his spirit, a practice that requires kin support and social validation of the relationship by others. Primarily, this practice is done to preserve a person's health, affirm their identity, and our connection to our suleluxw, our ancestors and the Old People. Secondarily, these winter ceremonials are a form of social control to resolve other social conflicts, whereby a person who is not conducting themselves according to our teachings, their behavior causes harm or is considered unhealthy, is thrown into the thi lelum. As these examples clearly demonstrate slavery was not permanent, status within our societies was fluid; wealth and privileges could be accumulated or lost.

The constructed social identity of slaves was comprised of people who were considered less than "worthless people", usually women and children, which is only one of the many narratives that contribute to dehumanizing our women and children. As Sproat comments on the value of women as demonstrated by the Northwest Coast slave trade: "whereas men were formerly worth more, in the 1860s women were more valuable because of their potential as prostitutes" (Sproat, 1868: 89-92). Moreover, de Laguna repudiates Indigenous women when he claims that ordinary sexual morality does not apply to the slaves (de Laguna, 1972: 470). If the history of this area tells that women

and children were *lower* than "worthless people" were, and their removal from their homes was normative, then it is convenient as part of a longstanding history that existed prior to colonization, that is deployed to justify the current violence and injustice to which women and children are subjected. I will conclude with a discussion of skwuyuth and offer another understanding of slave and slavery rooted in Hul'qumi'num snuw'uy'ulh.

From a basic linguistic analysis, the word skwuyuth [s-kwuyuth] has the root for the Hul'qumi'num' word meaning "prohibited, forbidden to", skwuyeem [s-kwuye-m-STA] and our word for "forbidding, warning not to", kwuyut [kwuye-t-PROG] (Peter, 1995). Semantics looks for the meaning and polysemy of a word. From my understanding, skwuyuth is a person who is denied access to particular aspects of social and cultural life that are reserved for si'em; in contrast to the definitions offered in Anthropology of skwuyuth as a slave captured or purchased as private property or a "low-class" person with little to no cultural knowledge (Suttles, 1974). However, skwuyuth was likely identified through a process whereby an antecedent concept (skwuyuth) is given a name (slave) through diachronic inquiry. This misinterpretation abolishes the true form of skwuyuth, it becomes ambiguous in many contexts and a product of semantic change, the adoption of an already existing word of the speaker's own language. "Slave" was given for the preexisting concept for a person who is forbidden to participate and denied access to particular aspects of social and cultural life that are reserved for si'em. A contrast between skwuyuth and si'em reveals some of the qualities of skwuyuth, and privileges of the si'em which skwuyuth are forbidden to

access. Si'em is a designation for highly respected, well-thought of, and important people within our communities.

Returning to the first example I provided at the beginning of this Chapter, the Handbook of North American Indians identifies the *highest* ranked people in our communities as "si?ém, a term that implies unblemished ancestry, good manners, extrahuman support, and wealth. This term was used in reference for the head of a house, kin group, or local group (and so is sometimes translated to "chief") and in address for any respected person, male or female" (Suttles, 1990: 465). These interpretations of skwuyuth and si'em are relational in the sense that they are each defined based on how they are not the other. The Handbook definitions of both ranks of si'em and skwuyuth are concurrently socially constructed and natural. The definitions are based on the behavior and conduct of individuals in relation to others, good manners, spiritual power and wealth, demonstrated through material and spiritual means, which comes close to what these words actually mean to us. The key discrepancy is the notion of the "unblemished ancestry" of si'em or the "taint" of skwuyuth ancestry, a biological argument used to naturalize socially constructed identities through genetic science. Whereas a slave is defined by their behavior as the obedient property of their masters, and by their lack of social and cultural knowledge or practices, if we shift to the hwuhwilmuhw concepts of si'em and skwuyuth this changes completely. It is clear these terms distinguish between people who have access to particular knowledge, social and cultural practices (dances, masks, medicines etc.) and the respect that flows from sharing those traditions, and those who do not have access to these traditions through social processes of denial. These social positions are not permanent however; social mobility was common given the

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ability for all members of society to participate in spiritual 'prestige'-gaining ceremonies and benefit from the support of their kin network.

Chapter Five: Representations of War and The Warrior

This Chapter examines the impacts of these representations of war and slave on the broader image of Northwest Coast Nations and my own community. Ethnographic representations of slavery and warfare on the Northwest Coast also subvert the ways in which hwuhwilmuhw tend to relate to each other and stories of war. I will address the harms of these representations contextualized within the dangers of "Warrior" discourse, and offer alternative interpretations of war and warriorism consistent with my own teachings. Common historical representations and contemporary dialogues seek to establish Indigenous identity through the construction of "warrior societies". These movements while extremely crucial and powerful as a means to demonstrate our identities as nations, are also limited to colonial definitions of warrior and nationhood rather than our own. Hwuhwilmuhw nationhood is not rooted in or restricted by Western terms of territorial sovereignty and nationhood. This section provides only one aspect of a complex discussion about war, a topic that is addressed in many disciplines, and extends beyond the limited scope of Anthropology. I believe the effects of these representations of women as *worthless* people or *slaves* and the discourse around warrior movements has the power to perpetuate existing structures of domination that function to devalue the lives and bodies of Native women.

Similarly to and tangled up in representations of slave, are inaccurate depictions and mistranslations of war and warriors in the Pacific Northwest, specifically of Southern Coast and Strait Salish peoples. Angelbeck and McLay (2011) argue that warfare on the Northwest coast is typically described as "intermittent, predatory", and opportunistic raiding often for prestige, food, and especially slaves (Ferguson 1983; Mitchell 1984).

This description compliments the existing understanding of our social structure in Anthropology by relying on similar founding assumptions of organization and cultural evolution. Suttles argues that hunger and starvation is what led groups to either make alliances or make war on groups with territories along inner channels or those whom owned salmon (1960).

Fort Langley Journals

The Fort Langley Journals reveal many stories of inter-village relations, including the frequent tensions observed between the local nations near the fort and Northern tribes. Often the Quw'utsun' are described in the journals as fierce warriors, while also portrayed as passive victims of violence. The *Journals* are inconsistent in their representations; they provide several examples of Quw'utsun warriors and their authority in the Salish community:

> Sunday 6th. Fine day – Several Indians up and down the river. The Cowitchins killed 2 Quatlands a few miles down. They are Just arriving from Vancouver's Island to kill and Cure Salmon for about 2 months- Kutchies trade 6 Skins. Report also Says the Cowitchins Killed 5 of the Kutchies, a weak tribe up Pitt's River. The poor tribes of this quarter Cannot attend to anything like hunting while their Powerful Neighbours from Van. Island are allowed to Murder and Pillage them at pleasure.
>
> (McMillan 1828: 67)

In this account, the Quw'utsun' are such a threat to the Katzie that they allocate a significant amount of time to defending themselves, or fulfilling the description of waiting in fear of potential violence, constantly expecting a raid or attack, to the extent that they can't go hunting. The attacks by the Cowichans on mainland people, while sometimes providing slaves, also served to intimidate the tribes into whose territory they were coming to fish (Suttles, 1998). This logic assumes a competitive nature of the

pursuit of food through demonstrations of power, rather than practices of sharing and relationality, which was the norm. On 1 August 1829, after a group of Cowichans came to camp near the fort, the journals reported that the Kwantlens, "having no great love for the Cawaitchins, or a desire of being at all in their neighbourhood," moved on upstream" (Suttles, 1998: 202).

The *Journals* clearly lack an understanding of the local Nations' relations of co-existence, sharing and overlapping use of land, which seems like common-knowledge now in modern discussions of the Northwest Coast inter-village relations. Given the ethnocentric lens, boundaries were attributed to nations through the recording of activities and observations of infringement and incursion onto other nations' territories or "neighbourhoods". The Quw'utsun' (including a number of nations from the Gulf Islands who were often classified as Cowichan or Chemainus) had a summer village along the Fraser River; it is located on Lulu Island near the mouth of the river. During the summer, Quw'utsun' people travelled to that village to fish, an activity still carried out today. Hwulmuhw mustimuhw do not subscribe to boundaries or territorial sovereignty as Euro-Americans do, our societies are linked through marriage and kin networks that preclude territorial divisions.

Anthropology predominantly considers warfare a common prehistoric and historic occurrence wherein "the Coast Salish are often portrayed not as warriors but, rather, as victims, subject to the preying of northern raiders" (Angelbeck, 1997: 260). Gary Coupland (1989) argues that Coast Salish warfare is primarily defensive, which is echoed in archaeology of the Northwest Coast that commonly records "defensive sites" along the coast, reinforcing the narrative of constant vigilance of raiding and war. Raids by

Northern Tribes are attributed to prestige-related aggression pursuit of food, women, slaves, and economic spoils at the expense of the passive Salish tribes. Coast Salish nations are "commonly depicted as victims of raids by the more aggressive, better organized, and (implicitly) more important tribes to the north" (Miller 2007: 3); against whom they could only try protect themselves and their villages.

> In the Northwest Coast culture Area, the Coastal Salish had to contend with the Kwakiutl, who often traveled as far south as Puget Sound on slave-raiding ventures. To protect themselves, they built highly sophisticated forts, one consisting of two plank houses within a stockade with tunnels leading to loopholes in the bank outside. Inside stood two poles upon which baskets of flaming pitch could be hoisted to light the surrounding area at night, and sharp sticks soaked in rattlesnake poison were hidden outside the walls in the grass.
>
> Suttles
> *Coast Salish and Western Washington Indians.* Part I
> (New York: Garland, 1974: p. 322)

This conclusion is seemingly a contradiction given the historical interactions between Hul'qumi'num' nations and settler society briefly discussed earlier in this thesis, and the following example paraphrased from *Terror of the Coast*. Though there was some distance between Hul'qumi'num' nations and colonial power for some time, the nature of their relationship was reinforced following an incident in the winter of 1852 at Fort Victoria. Two men were accused of the murder of a white shepherd, Peter Brown, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. James Douglas upheld the belief in forceful prosecution of Indigenous peoples who commit crimes against whites, to ensure the security of the colony. The Quw'utsun' also developed a reputation among other nations for being formidable warriors, not afraid to defend themselves when necessary. After an attempt to elicit the voluntary surrender of the suspected men, Douglas suspended all trade with Quw'utsun' and Snuneymuxw people, and issued threats and ultimatums to

their leaders. In the spring of 1853, Governor Douglas led a militia of over 100 soldiers and a small number of local volunteers into the Cowichan Valley to apprehend the suspects. After demanding the murderers be surrendered to him, accompanied by threats, the Quw'utsun' surrendered a man into Douglas' custody, he acknowledged the cooperation of the Quw'utsun' by giving them gifts to signify peaceful relations. The man exchanged for the life of a shepherd, was similar in social standing. In addition, Douglas presented gifts to the leaders to ensure an ongoing peaceful relationship based on trust, a protocol of the Coast Salish. Rather than following colonial customs, these actions followed traditional Hul'qumi'num' laws.

The motivations for fighting, if unrelated to access to food, are often along similar lines of retribution for the killing of a kin group or community member, especially if the victim was a titleholder, for territorial gain, or for the capture of women and children for slaves (Donald, 1997). Within our own communities, the Coast Salish peoples have a compromised image. Other communities reproduce the same narrative about the passivity of the Salish people, that we were raided in war and taken as slaves. Different people have a variety of perceptions about war. For some of us, war is described as uncommon and only a final resort, for others war is a point of pride and nationhood. When sharing stories about our lands and places in our traditional territories, many of our people speak casually of war as a means of revenge, retribution for those who were killed in our own village. When discussing our ancestral lands, many people will describe the sacred sites, old village sites and additionally speak of places where women and children were hidden during times of war. In one of Cryer's interviews with a Puneluxutth' man, Ts'umsitun, he pauses during his account of war between the Cowichan and the Comox to comment,

"Those old Indians had nothing to do but hunt and eat, so I guess they were always fighting!" and he repeated, "Always fighting" (Arnett 2007:142). This is certainly a loaded statement to deconstruct that echoes the notion of Indians always fighting, framed within Hobbes, where man is in a war of all against all, living in fear of others. The notion that we were always fighting assumes that we did not have practices of getting along, traditions of conflict resolution or institutions for entering into relations of peace, like Euro-American social contract theory. Whereas hwuhwilmuhw have many ways of resolving conflict to avoid violence, since peace and laws about sharing and access were the priorities of our people.

Conflict with the Yuqwulhte'x

The most frequent source of raiding and anxiety for the Southern tribes, were the Laich-Wil-Tach. Commonly referred to as Yuculta or Lekwiltok in ethnographic materials, the Yuqwulhte'x are Wakashan-speaking people from the southern Johnstone Strait (Angelbeck and McLay; Codere 1990; Curtis 1915; Duff; Galois 1994; Inglis 1964; Mauzé 1992; Suttles 1998). In the late eighteenth century this group "lived on Johnstone Strait beyond the Comox… By the beginning of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, the Lekwiltok had begun to assimilate some Comox villages and to raid others… By the 1840s they had expanded their territory to include Cape Mudge and Campbell River, replacing the remaining Comox, who had moved south into Pentlatch territory" (Suttles 1998: 174-175). The Laich-Wil-Tach Treaty Society is a treaty organization composed of three southern Kwakwaka'wakw nations, the We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, and Kwiakah

Nations based in Campbell River and Cape Mudge on Quadra Island (Laich-Wil-Tach Treaty Society 2010).

The standard account of the early nineteenth century, describes the Lekwiltok terrorizing Salish tribes living on the Fraser River, the Gulf Islands and as far south as Puget Sound. In several entries, the *Journals* seem to support the image of the Salish as helpless victims. McDonald wrote (10 March 1829) that "the dread of the Lekwiltok felt by the local people was 'incredible'" and that "At the very risk of Starving they will not appear in the main river in any Shape when the Yewkaltas are reported to be near, & that is not Seldom" (McDonald, 1829: 100). James Douglas referred to the *Yuqwulhte'x* as "decidedly the most daredevil, forward and saucy Indians" he ever encountered, "unreclaimed by the discipline or influence of the whites" (Gough, 2011:132). Following a series of conflicts and a particularly extended and destructive campaign by the Yuqwulhte'x, MacDonald writes on April 24, 1829:

> Indeed from the general horror at present of the Yewkultas by all the Indians we have to do with, I think the more we promote the ruin of that detestable tribe, the more effectually we secure the good faith of those nearer home, & convince them of the acquisition they have gained by the Establishment. In Short, tis my firm belief that even the *Complete annihilation* of this truly barbarous banditti would be no loss to the human race.
>
> (MacDonald, 1829: 111-112)

At the opposite end of the spectrum of representations of Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, are the Yuqwulhte'x, the fierce Northern warriors who dominated passive victims to the South. This story is so powerful it shapes the perception of Salish nations and Northern tribes, their relations, the sophistication of their nationhood as rooted in defense of territory and boundaries, for Indigenous nations and settler society

alike. In addition to the atrocious violence of this journal entry regarding annihilation and racism, MacDonald also refers to relationship building, and faith. Although framed in terms of annihilation or genocide, MacDonald talks about finding means to reach secured positive relations with the local Indians, "those nearer to home". However, McDonald privileges violent approaches to conflict resolution such as the successful defense of a territory or war, rather than resolving the dispute with other peaceful means. Secondly, MacDonald refers to securing the "good faith" of the local Indians, which is ambiguous in its interpretation of either simply gaining the trust of the local people, or their acceptance of their religious beliefs and therefore advancing the local Indians to a higher level of social evolution toward civilized man.

War and the defense of territory is privileged in Aboriginal rights law as the means of determining the rightful occupants of a claimed area. It is in this context that the story of "natives always at war" is critical in that it suggests we did not have ways of getting along to conduct ourselves in peaceful relationships with neighboring nations. The war narrative is so powerful that it becomes a necessity in the 1997 Supreme Court of Canada ruling; in defining the nature of "aboriginal title" under section 35(1), an aboriginal society must satisfy specific provisions to have their aboriginal rights recognized. *Delgamuukw v. B.C.* [1997] clearly lays out requirements for Aboriginal claims in reference to the four part test from *Baker Lake* for an aboriginal right.

The first condition says that
> the nature of an aboriginal claim must be identified precisely with regard to particular practices, customs and traditions. When dealing with a claim of "aboriginal title", the court will focus on the occupation and use of the land as part of the aboriginal society's traditional way of life.

Second,

an aboriginal society must specify the area that has been continuously used and occupied by identifying general boundaries. Exclusivity means that an aboriginal group must show that a claimed territory is indeed its ancestral territory and not the territory of an unconnected aboriginal society. It is possible that two or more aboriginal groups may have occupied the same territory and therefore a finding of joint occupancy would not be precluded.

For my purposes, the second principle regarding occupation of a territory to the *exclusion* of others is of particular interest. The first objective of this principle is to identify general boundaries. As many scholars have addressed, the issue of boundary making is imbued with overlapping claims contested by many nations, usually resulting in neighboring nations competing against each other (Thom, 2005). The second, is to establish the multifaceted requirement of exclusivity, where the Chief Justice concludes that occupation must be exclusive at the time sovereignty was asserted.

> The requirement for exclusivity flows from the definition of aboriginal title itself, because I have defined aboriginal title in terms of the right to exclusive use and occupation of land. Exclusivity, as an aspect of aboriginal title, vests in the aboriginal community which holds the ability to exclude others from the lands held pursuant to that title. The proof of title must, in this respect, mirror the content of the right. Were it possible to prove title without demonstrating exclusive occupation, the result would be absurd, because it would be possible for more than one aboriginal nation to have title over the same piece of land, and then for all of them to attempt to assert the right to exclusive use and occupation over it
> (Delgamuukw v. B.C., 1104:155)

The argument seems tautological, to prove aboriginal title, which is the exclusive use and occupation of land, you must prove exclusive use and occupation of land. What they are really asking is for Indigenous peoples to prove aboriginal title based on their ability to defend their territory from others, or to exclude others. One of the methods in common law to acquire sovereignty is through war, rooted in the thought experiments of political

philosophers Hobbes and Rousseau, not an Indigenous concept. As McNeil warns, "exclusivity is a common law principle derived from the notion of fee simple ownership and should be imported into the concept of aboriginal title with caution". Moreover, exclusivity is demonstrated by "the intention and capacity to retain exclusive control" (McNeil, 1989: 204). However, he argues that the presence of other aboriginal groups might actually reinforce a finding of exclusivity. For example, "[w]here others were allowed access upon request, the very fact that permission was asked for and given would be further evidence of the group's exclusive control" (204). Wallace J.A. explains the requirement of exclusivity as follows: if the plaintiffs claim exclusive occupation and use, the traditional occupation had to be to the exclusion of other organized societies.

The rules and tests set out in attempt to clarify overlapping claims and boundaries are inadequate in that they make assumptions and impose them onto Indigenous peoples and our worldviews. The principal error is beginning with territorial sovereignty; exclusionary and separate bounded containers that produce people, rather than people who actively form different groups that are connected by pre-existing links. Denying these links and capitulating to the courts or treaty process' notion of territoriality and boundaries forces First Nations against one another, so that we are complicit in the very structures and processes of domination that we oppose, colonization by drawing lines on a map through our homes. The sea lion hunt example that I discuss next demonstrates the mechanisms for sharing "property" between communities. The origin story of the sea lion connects the Penelakut and Lyackson villages through our privilege to hunt sea lions because of our shared sxwoxwiyam. This history emphasizes the link between our

nations through descent and alliance, and the importance of kinship in our understanding of sharing and access to privileges and resources.

Barbara Lane recorded the novel solution between Penelakut and Lyackson hunters to manage the jointly held sea lion hunting area in Porlier Pass. As Thom explains Suttles documentation of the practice of sea lion hunting which only the Penelakut and Lyackson knew the "secret and inherited ritual songs necessary to bring the animal under control" (Suttles 1951:110, 397). Thom describes that the Lyackson hunters camped on their "permanent lookout" on the south tip of Valdes Island, while the Penelakut hunters resided at theirs on the north end of Galiano Island. The following description of the hunt shows an underlying principle of respect towards another individual's ritual power and acknowledged rules for sharing jointly held resources, in the face of serious competition for an important resource (Thom, 2012):

> When the lookouts sighted a sea lion, they called to their camps and canoes were immediately dispatched. There were two men in each canoe, a 'captain' who steered and a spearman. As the canoes approached, the sea lion returned to the water and the chase began. If the first man who speared the animal were a *T'eet'qe'* [Lyackson] man, all the Penelakut canoes would have to abandon the chase and return home. If a Penelakut man struck it first, the *T'eet'qe'* were out of the running.
> As soon as the first man had placed his spear, he laid his paddle across the canoe in front of him, took a little stick-and beat on the paddle while he 'sang' (*si'win'*) to the sea lion to calm it and to make it surface again close to the canoes so that his co-villagers could also spear it.
> Meanwhile, the "losing" party paddled off some distance, and then laying their paddles across their canoes they took up sticks and sang to make the sea-lion wild, so that he would break away or at least be difficult to subdue. They tried to remain unobserved but the other group was aware of the practice for they did the same thing when the situation was reversed. Proof that such singing was effective was cited: if only one group went out the sea lion was always easier to

> handle.
> After several more of the victorious groups speared the sea-lion, they put their paddles across their canoes, beat on them with sticks, and sang to 'intercept' the song of the opposing group so that the sea-lion would not be 'rough'. They 'named' the tongue, and lips, and hands of their opponents in order to deaden the latter's singing and drumming.
>
> (Lane 1953:76-77)

This hunting practice is particularly interesting because it is based on sharing resources between two closely-related villages by providing equal opportunity to hunt the sea lion, while respecting the exclusive use and harvesting of the hunters who successfully spear one. Because this agreement is based on xwnuts'aluwum, the connection(s) that exist between these villages through marriage, that link provides access and sharing to both villages at the same time and place; rather than beginning the agreement with two separate entities that come together to figure out a way to share resources. This shared access to sea lion hunting persists today along the family lines that inherit the rights to that shared resource area.

Deconstructing Warrior Societies and Warriors with thu' stamush

In the section *Ethnographic Significance of the Journals*, Suttles tries to use linguistics to explain that the Coast Salish see war as a distinct state, the Hul'qumi'num' word translated to "make war" (xilux) is separate from "fight" (kwintul). The only significant distinction to observe is in the way these words are separate actions of either group-oriented or individualist action. Kwintul requires the involvement of two or more entities, whereas xilux implies an action that can be assumed by an individual and done to an other. One of the rules in the Hul'qumi'num' language denies the ability to say

"person A did X to person B". This rule negates any ability to gossip or speak on behalf of others, while forcing people to tell their own stories. So if people are fighting about land, we would say "ni' *kwikwuntal*utsstum thu tumuxw", the land is being disputed over, not "they are fighting over the land" [kwin-tal-uts-tuxw-m-PROG]. Moreover, we use the same concept of fight (kwintul) for a struggle with the self or the fighting going on inside of a person. I believe it is important to distinguish that the Hul'qumi'num' word stamush is not our word for warrior, but a word mistranslated into English as warrior.

I will address the general interpretation of the Coast Salish warrior as Anthropology defines it, followed by my own understanding of stamush and warriorism. Usually, the warrior is presented as a contradiction; he is "dominant, imperious, quick-tempered, and implacable" yet the he lives in fear of Northern Tribes (Amoss, 1978: 10). Suttles continues, referencing Barnett, to explain how the Native term for warrior (stamush) designates a distinct status. The warrior was a man who had acquired a vision power of a special class that made him dangerous, even to his own people. His vision power might command him to test his strength by leading a raid on some village for which any pretext for attack might be found. He was believed to be inspired by his vision power to acts of berserker-rage, killing at random, cutting off his victims' heads, and drinking their blood (Barnett, 1955: 268). Suttles explains that raids were "evidently organized by a single warrior and perhaps he alone did the actual fighting. He persuaded young men to go with him to distant settlements, approaching at night in order that he could creep into the settlement just before dawn" (Suttles: 376). The purpose of arriving in the village at night, was simply for coverage in the night, but also to limit the number of casualties since most people would be sleeping, therefore the warrior could get in and

find the person with whom they had a dispute, and leave. Any time we resorted to violence, it was conducted in such a way as to reduce the amount of bloodshed. However, Suttles reports the opposite, claiming that "the purpose of the raid was to take heads as trophies, to capture women and children for slaves, and to take any loot which could be transported. Sometimes a raiding party burned the houses and canoes of the victims. The heads were displayed on poles before the warrior's house" demonstrating power and success in war to other villagers and the extended community, to "make himself big" (1974: 376).

Our sxwoxwiyam speaks vividly about Leey'qsun warriors. When describing the head of our house, Theoleetza, our Old people say he walked around with blood dripping off the ends of the wool on his hat. Images such as this and the many histories of defending our lands are reminders of the spirit with which we uphold a sacred responsibility to take care of the land, and our ongoing struggle for freedom. However, this powerful and moving vision appeals to some problematic images when interpreted hastily. I believe this image is a reminder of our teaching to bear witness; that violence is known and remembered so it can be avoided. Moreover, members of the village *see* that this man is in a very particular mental, spiritual, emotional and physical space, due to the trauma of war. War was never concealed; it was always in plain view because it involved the entire community. As Suttles explains warriors rarely fought over territory, but rather they fought to "make themselves big" (1974: 377), it is a social demonstration, possibly of power, to one's village and the larger community. A Saanich informant explains to Suttles that a man did not always become a warrior to make himself big among his own people, "but had done so because he had been ashamed that the northern people had taken

their children as slaves; he had become a warrior in order to protect his people" (1974: 380). Interestingly, the warrior in this example is not prideful or dominating, but a sensitive character. It is easy to say he is the victim of violence and is desperately trying to defend his village; however, his motivation to defend his people is rooted in sacrifice of the self.

There is a clear delineation between hwulmuhw and Western epistemology, the mistranslation and inappropriate overuse of warrior is another example of this, by imposing Euro-American concepts on Indigenous peoples. However, there is certainly potential to reach an understanding of commonalities across cultures, whereby one group does not have to become the other. Stamush means those who take care of the land and the honor of our names. It is impossible to grasp our concept of stamush without first developing an understanding of our connections and responsibilities to our lands (the water, the trees, the rocks, the air and all its beings) and the sacredness of our names. In my Introduction, I tried to recount a very basic comprehension of our ontologies and epistemologies through kinship, to illustrate the complexity of our relationship to our land, saalh tumuhw. Moreover, our names are another record of our history; names connect our people to our past and the future. Access to certain names is a privilege that can only be claimed through direct lineage. In addition, our names indicate the privileges, inheritances, and access of that individual and their family, to particular resource areas, hunting grounds, masks, dances, songs, and responsibilities to uphold the honor of those belongings. Therefore, our notion of stamush is not that different from any other person who lived in the village, they had an obligation to their lands, the people, and to uphold the honor of their name. However, they were different in the way that they demonstrated

these obligations; sometimes this meant guarding the land. The warrior removes himself from his family and community into exile to prepare for war, and sacrifices himself, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally, abandoning their snuw'uy'ulh to defend the peace. To go to war is to abandon our laws and compromise our teachings, but also to defend the honor of our names. The warrior's actions and good deeds were always out of benevolence, not anger.

Our villages had one, maybe two, stamush, not a superfluity of fighters eager to defend or attack in war, "not every adult male was a warrior" (Suttles, 1951: 323). This is demonstrated in the records of the warriors mentioned as participating in the Coast Salish alliance in the Battle of Maple Bay (Angelbeck and McLay, 2011: 370-71). In the case of disagreements, and especially if there is a risk that a dispute can lead to war or violence, there are methods to resolve the conflict peacefully. The leaders of the villages involved in some sort of dispute get together, climb to the top of the mountains, and sit around a fire for however long it takes to resolve the issue. This could take days or months, but war was seen as unnecessary, and to be avoided since the primary responsibility was to keep peace. Hwuhwilmuhw did not walk around every day as warriors; it was after a calling from those who decide when and where any acts of war take place. War took a long time for a warrior and village to get ready for, hwuhwilmuhw consider war and violence unnatural phenomena, so before being exposed to and participating in something horrific such as this, warriors had to prepare themselves and their families. If there were a fight, it would be done in ways that limit the amount of harm and bloodshed endured by both parties. War was a cautious act, only a few people would go into the village, they would limit their vulnerability by taking few risks, and kill or capture only the offending

party or parties. For Hul'qumi'num' nations, war is not a means to an end, it is certainly not a glorified fight, and the objective is never to return with trophy heads. War is the last resort and a sacrifice. In a contemporary context, the word *warrior* is overused in relation to Indigenous nationhood, direct action, and normalized into nearly every aspect of Indigenous ways of being to such an extent that its significance is rendered meaningless.

There are some resources on warriorism in relation to Indigenous-state protests and legal cases about Indigenous rights and title and critical Indigenous feminist theory; however, the main sources of methodological research on "warrior societies" and warriors come from particularly the work of Taiaiake Alfred. I hope to dispel commonly held and widely circulated misconceptions regarding warriorism in relation to hwulmuhw people, simply because I do not believe it honors the true meaning of our concept of stamush which is essential for us to continue to uphold our sacred obligations to our lands, waters, the sky, and all its beings. In their 2005 article *Warrior Societies,* Alfred and Lowe define and trace the development of the contemporary warrior society movement. Warrior societies are "a means by which indigenous peoples take direct action against colonization and the history of their dispossession… Warrior societies are most accurately understood as attempts to express an authentic indigenous identity in the face of these false instrumental-to-empire identities generated by Canadians" (Alfred & Lowe, 2005: 4). They also identify the emergence of the modern warrior society in the late 1960s, with the rise of the Mohawk Warrior Society of Akwesasne and Kahnawake. This society was based on a commitment to revive traditional Kanien'kehaka teachings and language through land-based community practices of repossession and protection, as guided by the Great Law of Peace (Alfred and Lowe, 2005). These practices included the

denial of access, through barricades and roadblocks, removal by eviction of non-band members living on their reserves, and asserting continuity by occupying traditional lands. This category of warrior society and its practices is as defined by the Mohawk warrior society in the 1960s and a select few community members and elected band councilors. This discussion of warrior is limited in its scope, and neither acknowledges nor expands the role of women in these communities other than mentioning that one of the four main characteristics of Indigenous movements is its dependence on "the support and sanction of women in the community" (37). Moreover, the core composition of community-based warrior societies is young men that form a "loosely knit fraternity" (36), which perpetuates paternalistic power relations with women within our own communities as merely *condoning* action, and assumes the male-dominant role in taking measures to "repossess and re-assert jurisdiction over their territory" (39). Therefore, the empowerment that they are talking about is reserved for some, risking unjust exclusion and marginalization of those who do not conform.

Finally, I find the discourse around territory problematic. While it is essential to our nations to defend our lands from capitalist incursions and infringements on our rights, whether it is resource extraction, economic development, or any other endeavors, these things carry different meanings in an academic setting than a community-based movement. In the community, this means protecting your family, house, food-harvesting areas, burial grounds, trap-lines, transformation sites, spiritual sites, bathing areas, the air, the animals, the future generations, your *home* from any harm. However, in the academic setting, "to militarize and become active in defending the territory", means something quite different (50). It concedes to Western Euro-American concepts of property and

ownership, colonial ideas that do not exist in and into which Hul'qumi'num' epistemology cannot assimilate. Moreover, the warrior is reactionary to "patterns of negative interaction with the state and with settler society" and seeks to 'inhibit' destructive agendas, rather than create alternative resurgent politic forged in positive community-based empowerment. The occasion for hwuhwilmuhw to define themselves in their own terms and force the colonial structure and society to learn *our* concepts rather than assimilate ours into their worldview is overdue. Moreover, the time for us to define ourselves and our practices in contrast to Euro-American ones is over, no longer should we have to prove our ideas are equal to colonial beliefs, such as "property" and "ownership", we don't need external validation. Our concepts and ontologies stand on their own, and we need to imbue them with such authority.

My concern with warrior is its power to alienate people and communities; I would urge hwuhwilmuhw to rigorously consider the limitations and complexities involved in the theories and positions offered by the warrior movement in relation to their own teachings and sociopolitical location. Moreover, I believe a diversity of opportunities and possibilities are presented to us, if we conceive of warrior in a slightly different way. It is difficult to transcend the social relations that give rise to racial domination, class exploitation, and gender inequality without first disassociating from those harmful foreign constructions toward a hwulmuhw consciousness. For Hul'qumi'num'qun', the stamush (warrior) completely embodies our snuw'uy'ulh and sacrifices the self to protect those teachings, all our relatives and s'aalh tumuxw, before one can sacrifice that way of being, they must live those teachings. The stamush is not centered on the individual, because without the community to provide for and protect the warrior is nothing, he is

also subject to the community's standards of conduct as any other member would be. The stamush does not take anything; (s)he has a sincere and intimate respect for life because they are vulnerable to losing it. Hwuhwilmuhw emphasize the importance of conflict avoidance in which "proper training, education, and practical knowledge of social protocols is essential to uphold personal reputation and maintain peaceful relations (Miller, 2001: 62). If conflict or inter-community violence does occur, we have protocols and practices based on mutual respect and our snuw'uy'ulh, that provide us means to restore balance in our social and political relations. How can we approach the warrior differently, to reclaim our own forms of self-affirming practice and identity?

In his discussion of the recognition paradigm, Coulthard considers how Fanon shifts our attention to considering self-affirmative cultural practices that colonized peoples can engage to empower themselves, rather than relying on state or colonial structures to seek recognition or resolution. Coulthard argues that these practices are inherent to Indigenous peoples to develop an understanding of oneself and the conditions in which one lives (Coulthard, 2009: 35). The dynamic nature of oppression and colonialism has allowed for the transcendence of conventional forms of domination and dispossession, whereby, these conditions are now articulated through economics, culture, academic discourse, and competition for authenticity between communities. My point is to say that the limitations, adversarial and alienating nature of the warrior movement has potential to serve as an "engine of colonial aggression and injustice" in itself (Alfred, 2005: 133). By this I mean we should take care and caution in the way in which we choose to empower ourselves, tradition or warriorship should never be invoked as a resurgence of cultural practices if it may be used to justify relations of exploitation and

domination or oppressive conduct that transcends historical forms (Fanon, 1967). I believe we can breathe life into our traditional cultural forms in a way that consciously avoids replicating the structures of domination we seek to transform. The concept of warrior does not do this, but appears to trap us in the same box with a different label. If some of us are warrior societies, what are the rest of us? We *all* have a responsibility to take care of the land, and each other, it is one of our basic teachings since our lands and its beings are our kin. I do not believe that hwuhwilmuhw and hwulunitum perspectives are incommensurable, however I do believe we cannot use the language and philosophies of settler society to define ourselves. If we reconfigure their words in order to offer a place to begin understanding our concepts and laws, then we can open a conversation wherein we are not required to capitulate to them and they do not become us. Our languages are the most powerful and beautiful form of resistance we have, and I believe it is there where we will find our answers.

Chapter Six: Xwnuts'aluwum: A Battle at Maple Bay

We certainly have histories of war and slavery, but these stories are given so much weight that they become the grand narrative about the people of the Northwest Coast. While it is true, we certainly did have times of conflict and people were subject to capture and violence, it was not the norm. As I have tried to show throughout my thesis, the practices of skwuyuth and war, as they are described in the ethnographic and anthropological record, are misinterpretated due to the limitations of the Anthropological lens, and must be understood in our own terms. I must acknowledge that the explanation I offer is limited, it is a Hul'qumi'num' perspective of war and slave, and it is difficult to extract *one* small concept from our culture and explain it out of its context. I believe that it is crucial that these histories do not become the ideas that define us, we never identified ourselves based on these practices, they were exceptions in our way of life that values good conduct, respect, relationships, reciprocity and over all, responsibility. I acknowledge these parts of our history, but I want to raise my hands to stories of peace, wherein our own traditions that have and continue to foster relations with our neighbors are used to benefit our vast kinship network in the spirit of our snuw'uy'ulh. In this concluding Chapter, I will provide two brief examples of restoring peace following inter-village conflict and consider how these resolutions contribute to our understanding of nuts'a'maat and xwnuts'aluwum.

A story from *Two Houses Buried in Sand* provides a clear example of marriage as a means of resolving conflict and connecting villages following social protocols and laws of coexistence and kinship. Moreover, the well-known battle at Maple Bay in the Cowichan Valley is a primary example of alliance and how our kinship system is the

baseline for our laws and relationships. This story explains how the Quw'utsun' established peaceful relations with the Qhwimux nation after these villages raided each other multiple times. The Leey'qsun chief held a potlatch to celebrate the birth of his daughter's child with a Qhwimux man, whom everyone agreed would bring peace between warring nations (2009: 146). The guests arrived and the men symbolically *play* fought. Once the Leeyq'sun chief called it to an end, they stopped fighting to potlatch, exchange gifts, and share food, restoring peaceful relations. They shared and celebrated for a week, making friends with former enemies. The marriage and birth of a child, Charlie Tch-Ossier, brought peace between the Quwutsun' and Qwhimux.

The second example, the Battle of Maple Bay, is the result of the culmination of unprovoked and unwarranted attacks from the Yuqwulhtuxw peoples on Cowichan and other Hul'qumi'num' nations. These repeated attacks caused the leaders of the villages in the *Coast Salish* area to hold a council to discuss what measures should be taken to address the harms and unjust behavior of their neighbors. The villages gathered at T'aat'ka' on Lyackson, to decide how to proceed and who would constitute the alliance in opposition to the Southern Kwakiutl. As Angelbeck and McLay (2011) explain, each village had its own reasons to participate in the alliance, given their own experiences with the Lekwiltok. Those who attended the council, chose to follow nuts'a'maat shkwaluwun, to work together as one heart and mind to achieve a shared goal, and contributed to the organized attack against the Lekwiltok that took place in Maple Bay. Following the victory of the *Salish* nations, their tensions with the Lekwiltok were resolved by arranging a series of marriage alliances, which fostered lasting peace relations (Cryer, 1932b; Jenness, 1934-35; Angelbeck and McLay, 2011). These marriages were arranged

with strategically to ensure immunity from attacks for the families, altering the social and political relations between the Coast Salish and Lekwiltok.

When considering the battle at Maple Bay, the essential aspect of this piece of our history is its conception. The strength of the alliance between the many Coast Salish nations that participated in this battle, is a product of the regional kinship network that links these different nations and villages together into a cooperative alliances, the xwnuts'aluwum that ties these villages together creates the obligation and responsibility to help and take care of your relatives. The connected villages and affinal relations created through marriage, xwnuts'aluwum, were called upon in the events immediately preceding the battle to organize a large scale political alliance, whereby autonomy is retained in the different houses (or villages) while authorizing larger more formal unity.

After the Battle at Maple Bay, many Coast Salish formed affinal alliances with the Lekwiltok as per our protocols for establishing peace through potlatch and marriage. One such marriage was between a Cowichan woman and a Lekwiltok man, and "this important marriage reopened the Cape Mudge area for island Coast Salish people to fish and camp at for generations after the couples were wed" (Thom, 2005: 362). According to different Old People, the battle did not stop the feuding; the marriage that transformed former adversaries into kin ended the wars with the Yuwulhte'x. The Comox and Lyackson story shows how the relationships between nations take precedent over the fighting, especially when a child and marriage bring the families together, that link between families is what is called xwnuts'aluwum.

Xwnuts'aluwum and Reasons to Give: 'uy ye' thut ch 'u' suw ts'its'uwatul' tseep

In this section I provide an ego-less kinship chart of the Hul'qumi'num'qun' as inspired by the kinship studies of Dr. Sol Tax, and his major contribution demonstrating the kinship system of the Meskwaki. The charts of Tax's work were "ego-less; that is, they did not rely on a single person for their starting point but showed the kinship system generically, thus making them more useful for showing the relationships of many people simultaneously. This innovation broke with the tradition of kinship study started in the mid-nineteenth century by Lewis Henry Morgan, who had collected kinship terms from the point of view of a single speaker and thus needed separate charts for men and women" (Daubenmier, 2008:73). While Radcliffe-Brown argues that kinship is the foundation of social organization, and that those ties help people get along with each other and maintain their society, Tax argues that kinship ties are not causally related to social institutions, but rather that they interact to reinforce each other.

To be kind and help one another is to act proportionately in establishing relationships with others through exchange of not only gifts but also marriage partners (Asch, 2014). This affinal kinship chart demonstrates how significantly different the relationships between people are understood if the connections between them are results of an alliance rather than descent. The link between the two parties is a marriage; we refer to that connection between families as xwnuts'aluwum, two different families connected through marriage. Neither family is required to become the other and they maintain their autonomy while fostering an ongoing intergenerational connection of peace and exchange. The parents of the two people married are refered to as sk'wul'wus; this is where the exchanges of access to resources, gifts, names, wealth and partners occur across the families. Xwnuts'aluwum ensure the separateness of each family but

also their coexistence through alliance, with an understanding of the responsibilities and obligations that each family accepts upon that marriage.

Returning to *The Gift*, Asch succinctly recaps the first phase of gift giving is "associated with the initiation of a relationship, can be reduced to a simple choice: between giving and receiving, and refusing to give and receive: 'To refuse to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept, is tantamount to declaring war; it is to reject the bond of alliance and fellowship' (Mauss 1954: 11; quoted in Asch 2014: appendix 1). If the parties agree to give and receive, then the relationship is confirmed through ongoing reciprocal exchanges, for Hul'qumi'num' people this relationship is manifest from blankets to marriage partners and persists through generations. In this tradition, the relationship does not begin with separate containers of people, but rather a space that enables the coexistence or rejection of peoples. Our ancestors gave us our snuw'uy'ulh 'i' sxwoxwiyam along with responsibility to take care of those privileges, by living the teachings they gave us to build the nations and communities they intended for us. Our teaching nuts'a'maat shkwaluwun explains the interrelation that I describe and denies the possibility to begin a relationship with a singularity. If everything is one, then a preexisting relationship teaches us how to coexist with others, and maintain peaceful relations with our neighbors. Leanne Simpson explains this principle in her own terms, "my ancestors knew that maintaining good relationships as individuals, in families, in our nation and internationally was the basis for lasting peace. This was the foundation of bimaadiziwin or 'living the goodlife'" (Simpson, 2011: 109). This teaching is part of a strip that weaves Indigenous nations together, a common understory that connects us across Canada. This is to neither invoke a pan-Indian identity nor to argue that we share

uniform teachings, we are distinct, have particular protocols and practices that make us unique, but we do share some common understandings. The giving of gifts is one of those teachings. Whenever we take something, we must giveaway, whenever we are connected to someone we must giveaway, if we invite someone we must giveaway, if we are visitors we must giveaway; these exchanges strengthen links and relations with both the human and non-human world across nations. Intimately connected to nuts'a'maat shkwaluwun, is our teaching of 'uy ye' thut ch 'u' suw ts'its'uwatul' ch, be kind and take care of one another. I believe that nuts'a'maat is why Indians love to give gifts.

In our thi lelum, gifts are given to honor the time that others give as demonstration of respect, and to thank them for being witness to the work. Gifts are a means of taking care of the people, to distribute wealth when people come together to share in ceremony or an event. In Coast Salish protocol, a gift for speaking or being called to witness is a handshake, a gesture now a tradition that began during the time of the potlatch ban. It was unlawful for hwuhwilmuhw to gift blankets during the outlawing of the potlatch, so we gave coins. Every gift has a spirit and a story of how you come to receive it, creating a relationship from a time and place. These gestures are demonstrations of gratitude and respect, but also have the expectation of reciprocity and are intimately connected to taking care of each other. When a gift is given, the giver knows that it will come back to them at some time because the recipient entered an agreement to reciprocate. When a person accepts a gift, they are also accepting a responsibility that goes along with it, or often an invitation to a relationship or participation in an event. It is when gifts are merely tokenistic and lose their

sentimentality or spirit, that they are only displays, which alter the nature of the relationship offered to the recipient.

In Hul'qumi'num' we share a practice, lhuween, "when a person gives gifts to relatives at another village", which is closely related to our concept of health. Simply, to cure someone is lhewut, whereas lhuwunuq conveys an ongoing process of healing. This tradition is slightly different in its intention and the relationship wherefrom it arises. Lhuween is often associated with blood kin, when a father visits his daughter in her new village to bring her gifts. The nature of these gifts can range from food, a basket, blanket, a drum or inherited privileges or permission to a song. These gifts are generally transferred to the daughter to be given to her children. The act of giving is an expression of a relationship, it confirms the link between the two or more families, and obliges that connection to persist. Gifts have spirit that permits them to go where they are needed. Essentially, Hul'qumi'num' mustimuhw take care of and maintain the health of family and relationships through the exchange of gifts.

To make a trip to a village of one's sk'wul'wus (what Suttles [1960] refers to as co-parents-in-law) with the intention of giving them gifts is kw'ulwuseen "to paddle". This word specifically is used for exchanges between xwnuts'aluwum, different families connected through marriage, when one would nats'uwtxwum (visit) their relations. On these occasions, the traveler can expect the recipient of the gift to reciprocate with wealth in return. The central feature of these visits with affinal kin is the exchange of food and wealth, which reinforces and continues the relationship between the families. This established series of exchanges between two families who are connected through marrying their children to one another will often continue in the event of a spousal death.

The sk'wul'wus exchange wealth at the wedding but also continue to do so throughout the marriage. Should a death occur, the parents of the children married become tsixeem, "those who weep together", until the marriage is reconstituted (Suttles 1960: 62). The exchange is relative, if the amount of wealth offered is very great; the recipient is obliged to respond equally. The nature of gifts given is diverse, and the relationship is one of proportional reciprocity involving not only food, but also wealth and inherited songs. In this way, food and wealth are linked directly in two ways. First, the head of a house is responsible for the production and distribution of food, converting food into respect. Second, if a family or house accumulates a surplus of food, they are more likely to take it as a gift to affinal relatives and receive wealth in return, converting food directly into wealth. It is in this way that the relationship between xwnuts'aluwum is perpetuated and each family's sk'wul'wus become si'em.

What compels people to give? For Suttles (1960) sharing access to techniques and resources was "a form of intercommunity cooperation that *must have* made for greater efficiency in the exploitation of the environment" (302: emphasis mine). Suttles relies on estimative statements to support his claims of environmental determinism. He argues that because the availability of food was not always predictable, with shortages and surpluses, villages had to cooperate to create a "bank-like" mechanism to distribute and share resources (302). This is why sk'wul'wus exchange, if one brought wealth to their co-parent-in-law's village, they might receive food as a handshake (302). Though Suttles was close in his theory, he missed the point. For Hul'qumi'num' mustimuhw, the explanation is simple, that we need to take care of each other because we are all connected. For Hul'qumi'num' peoples, if a family is in need, you obligated to help

them. In this way, you are upholding your responsibility to your own family because helping others ensures that your family will receive help in the future. Moreover, by maintaining healthy and positive relations with neighboring communities, you are ensuring the safety and health of your own in perpetuity.

In the Western tradition, "giving" is not a common practice. The political philosophy that informs Western society's understanding of family, kinship and relations is that of Hobbes who offers an atomistic interpretation of the family, as the only institution within the state of nature. Man is isolated in the state of nature. In order to trust and live with their neighbor, families enter into social contracts. The Sovereign then enforces the agreements between families. Successively, that man must enter into agreements because there can only be one multitude of men, and a third party must enforce that contract since each family cannot trust the other. Within the discipline of Anthropology, we choose to follow the logic of 1877 in the work of Lewis Henry Morgan, when we agree that society is founded on territory and property, individuals and successive stages of integration, in this case, technology (Morgan, 1877). Indeed these stories are among the few that are privileged over schools of thought that share commonalities with Indigenous ontologies of relationality. These theorists are part of a subjugated history that I will briefly discuss and contextualize within an Indigenous perspective and sociopolitical practices beginning with a short reflection of Buber's concept of *I-Thou* (1970 [1923]).

Martin Buber provides a concise example of relational theory from a Western perspective that comes close to understanding Indigenous concepts of relationality. He discusses basic words such as I-Thou and I-It as words that establish a mode of existence,

rather than stating something that might exist. Buber explains, "when one says Thou, the I of the word pair I-Thou is said, too"; moreover, "when one says It, the I of the word pair I-It is said, too" (Buber, 1970 [1923]: 54). In this paradigm, whoever speaks these basic words enters into the word and stands in it, by saying I, a person means either of these two basic words. This is how man experiences the world, as It. You experience something, in an I-It relationship, "man goes over the surfaces of things and experiences them. He brings back from them some knowledge of their condition- an experience. He experiences what there is to things" (55). This experience is not participation, because the world does not participate in experience that is projected onto it, it has no concern for man's experience because relation is reciprocity.

Instead, Buber offers the word phrase *I-Thou*, when "I" is spoken, "thou" is expressed and the word *I-Thou* brings into experience as a word of relation, whoever says Thou, "stands in relation" (55). "I" and "thou" do not exist in isolation, but "I" brings about the existence of "you/it/(s)he". "Thou" and "it" exist in relation to "I", wherein "you" or "it" or "tree" can be inserted as the relational word. The world of relation arises in three spheres for Buber, life with nature, life with men and life with spiritual beings. In his discussion of the tree, he explains that as he contemplates the tree he is drawn into a relation, wherein the tree ceases to be an It, and the tree confronts him bodily, and the tree "has to deal with me as I must deal with it-only differently" (58), encountering the tree itself. The relationality in these word phrases, in addition to the recognition embedded in their semantics, is conveyed through Buber's inclusion of the "dash". The dash signifies the connection of entities. Rather than beginning with two separate entities,

Buber uses the word phrase *I-Thou* so that both entities are brought into existence and experience in the same breath in relation to each other.

The "dash" is the preexisting *link* that connects two different entities, and it is from *this* place that a constructive discussion of relationality and experience should arise. If we consider the dash from this word phrase as a metaphor for the lines in kinship diagrams, which signify lineages of relationality through descent or marriage; then we can begin to understand a complex ontology of relationality characteristic of many Indigenous systems of kinship and social organization. The dash then, is the preexisting link that connects different people and families together, rather than beginning relations with bounded entities that come into contact. If people exist in relation to one another, rather than in isolation as a false singularity, then the nature of our interactions is drastically altered. Conflict and antagonism are not givens nor are they close to possibilities if you are connected to others through blood or marriage within a large network of relations.

Marriage is one form of fostering and maintaining healthy and positive relations among Coast Salish nations. As Asch argues, the treatise on the origins of society advanced by Lévi-Strauss in *The Elementary Structures of kinship* (1969 [1949]), proposes that "for a society to exist, it is necessary for Self and Other to join in a common project in which it is essential for both to respect and maintain each other's distinctiveness and autonomy" (Asch, 2005: 426). This project is often understood as a concept of 'Treaty' with the potential to justly resolve political relations, or for Hul'qumi'num' peoples, xwnuts'aluwum. Lévi-Strauss considers marriage rules to be the central principle in the socio-political organization of a society, wherein the incest taboo

is the crucial factor around which society is established (Asch, 2005). The incest taboo is common to all societies, but varies in its social and cultural expression. As some of the kinship terms for Hul'qumi'num'qun' identify, there are those you can marry and those you cannot; the Self cannot marry the Self, we are obliged to find an Other to marry. Asch explains this relationship as "a form of dialectical connection between Self and Other" (430); "in order to avoid the restrictions imposed by the incest taboo, each party must ensure that the distinctiveness and autonomy of the Other is maintained. The result is not less than the establishment of society; thus society cannot be constructed by Self alone. It must always be the result of a relationship between Self and Other" (429).

Often, our marriages were arranged and only for people of high standing or authority, these families of similar standing arranged marriages strategically to resolve disputes or create alliances that would be beneficial in the future. This marriage or "common project" connects to parties into an enduring nation-to-nation or house-to-house relationship founded on the principles of peace, sharing, coexistence, and respect for each other's autonomy, what we call xwnuts'aluwum or 'Treaty'. Members of the groom's family made preliminary negotiations to the house of the bride, and the families exchanged property and privileges (Suttles, 1960). The bride's father gave inherited privileges to the married couple, for their children to access. These rights can include names or objects like masks and rattles, or access to resources under the family's jurisdiction. These exchanges persist throughout the marriage, and often continue should either of husband or wife die, when one of the families provides another appropriate spouse. The exchange of gifts and the inherited access to privileges connected different families together based on reciprocity, but also responsibilities to take care of all your

relations. Through exchanges and gifts, Coast Salish nations reinforced alliances within a large kin network which provided each nation with many privileges including a place to stay if you're travelling through, a guarantee of peace, or an ally during times of conflict.

I believe that decolonization is rooted in our language and culture; however, decolonization's focus on the reactionary 'undoing' of something, is too limited for our ambitions and needs. Hwuhwilmuhw are seeking to revive alternative traditional practices of sovereignty, in our relations with others, of subjugated histories, and of traditions that empower our nations without recreating power dynamics of domination or intimidation. Hwuhwilmuhw have an opportunity to engage in direct action that is also an affirmative gesture of Indigenous political philosophies, if these actions embody our own laws and uphold the honor and obligations of such laws and how they inform our reciprocal engagement with the human and non-human world. We have an opportunity to move beyond a decolonizing paradigm and a resurgent Indigenous politic that hinders the damaging effects of colonialism to one that honors hwulmuhw alternatives to it.

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