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Our Mandate

This journal represents an attempt to explore issues, ideas, and problems that lie at the intersection between the academic disciplines of social science and the body of thought and political practice that has constituted Marxism over the last 150 years. New Proposals is a journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry that is dedicated to the radical transformation of the contemporary world order. We see our role as providing a platform for research, commentary, and debate of the highest scholarly quality that contributes to the struggle to create a more just and humane world, in which the systematic and continuous exploitation, oppression, and fratricidal struggles that characterize the contemporary sociopolitical order no longer exist.

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Cover: Salmon drying near the Fraser River, 2002. Kimberly Linkous Brown photograph.

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Special Issue
Indigenous Nations and Marxism

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Introduction

Indigenous Nations and Marxism: Notes on an Ambivalent Relationship

Charles R. Menzies

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The relationship between Marxism and Indigenous nations is an ambivalent one. For every story of a successful engagement we can find a story of a failed relationship. Neither has the track record of various Marxist, Socialist, or Social Democratic political parties been all that remarkable. Nonetheless, it does seem that the analytic reach of Marxist inspired theoretical concepts and frameworks should have some salience for navigating a path toward decolonization autonomy.

Marxism retains an incisive core that helps understand the dynamics of the world within which we live. Marxism points to the inherent contradictions of our social formations; it highlights the ways in which power is structured through ownership; it puts the spotlight on the function of states in the accumulation of capital and the redistribution of wealth from the many to the few.

Understanding how those with power operate is of critical importance and Marxism provides an analytic lens through which to examine how power operates. On the global scale it provides a way to tease out the linkages between media corporations, oil rig operators, and vested government officials. At the local level it gives one a clear understanding of how business works (not in the MBA cheerleading sense) and facilitates intervention and engagement with businesses desiring to develop and appropriate Indigenous land.

For all of this, it is the ambivalence of the relationship that predominates. Indigenous peoples have encountered many strangers and outsiders who have

arrived with offers of support, collaboration, and cooperation. Early European merchant traders arrived into Gitxaana's traditional territory in the late 1700's. They made promises and entered into agreements. For a while the relationship seemed beneficial and then the reality of disease and deception was revealed. In the early days of British Columbia's resource economy union organizers recruited Aboriginal peoples to the trade unions on the basis of a shared working class experience. Aboriginal peoples joined labour unions in fisheries, forestry, longshoring, and milling. Many became prominent leaders within the labour movement of the day and participated within the large social democratic and socialist milieu. Yet the issues of indigeneity—the difference that came from being a colonized people—would eventually rise up and become an obstacle in the path of cooperation as trade unions dominated by non-aboriginal newcomers struggled to accept the historical difference that made their union brothers and sisters different. In the last decades of the twentieth century environmental crusaders arrived on Indigenous land in BC. They forged alliances with Aboriginal peoples in their struggle to preserve sensitive ecosystems, valued animals, of special places. But when Indigenous communities didn't fall in line they found themselves being castigated for not being 'Indian' enough. Throughout most of the last two centuries entrepreneurs and government officials have also come calling with their own promises to similar effects. In this host of visitors Marxists theorists and political activist don't really look all that different.

It is, however, our contention that there is something different about a Marxist approach that merits the attention of Indigenous organizers, activists, and political leaders. First, Marxism provides a political analysis of the ways in which power in our contemporary (and historical) society is delayed and hidden in everyday interactions. Marxism also provides a theory of political action that has as its end goal the achievement of a society that respects difference, honours collective relations, and places a priority on humane relations between people. The papers collected in this special issue point to areas where Marxist theory can illuminate and advance the place of Indigenous peoples in our world.

In “Can the Sled Dog Sleep,” Frank Tester takes us into the workings of the colonial transformation of Canada’s north. He does this through the simultaneous critique and deployment of post-modern/colonial theories. Tester shows us how these supposedly liberatory theories ultimately fail: “the interrogations of postcolonial theorists do not offer us the liberation they seek precisely because the very thing they celebrate—the emergence of cultures and difference from the oppressive tracts of colonial enterprise—is what the new capitalism successfully cannibalizes in its consistent and omnipresent quest for capital, an *essential* category for social and cultural analysis.” It is a cruel irony for academic cultural theorists, who may see themselves engaged in an act of empowerment of Indigenous peoples, to have in fact participated in a new and deepened form of subjugation.

Kim Brown challenges another variant of post-modernist theory that plays fast and loose with notions of authenticity. Brown’s paper “Highliners and Money-makers” documents through a careful ethnography the multiplicity of ways in which catching AND selling salmon is an integral aspect of being Sto:lo; both today and in the past. Brown’s paper is important for documenting that change does not mean the loss of destruction of culture; but more importantly she opens a space for understanding the ways in which social class is tied to notions of being Sto:lo in ways that anti-Marxist theoretic have overlooked. For some writers an authentic ‘Indian’ is one locked in an imaginary past in which the exchange of fish for benefit was not an ‘Indian’ practice.

Brown shows us how state regulation and Indigenous resistance create a space for the continuance of the Sto:lo as a people.

In “They Had a Deep Respect for the Earth” Dorothee Schreiber turns a critical eye to the problems of teaching about Indigenous peoples in university environments where her students, though well intentioned, enact and reinforce dominant racist practices. Drawing from the Marxist inspired tradition of anti-racist pedagogy Schreiber is trying to come to terms with whether it is actually possible to do the type of teaching she wants without eliciting naïve racism from her students: “How come they use guns if they *love nature*? Aren’t the traditional ways of life *disappearing*? Could we please have workshops on basket weaving, pit-cooking, and how to color wool with plant dyes? Why didn’t the Natives realize that the fur trade would lead to *the demise of their culture*? How can *urbanized* Natives claim to be *traditional*? Why are they so *messed up*?” This is not a new problem, but it is a vexing one for committed and concerned teachers—be they Indigenous or otherwise. The strength of Schreiber’s paper lies in revealing what goes on in the classroom. She is to be commended for her courage to persist.

Marxism emerges from the same cultural history as does the naïve and insensitive questions of Schreiber’s students, the post-modern theories that reject the Sto:lo-ness of commercial fishing, or the misguided approaches of post-colonialism that finds more of interest in the discursive play of sled dogs than in the reality of their slaughter in a colonial occupation. The difference, however, is that Marxist theory and practice emerged in opposition to these dominant society notions and ideologies.

This is, of course, not to say that the deployment of a Marxist framework is unproblematic. We have already discussed the ambivalence of the relation with Indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, Marxism has value and potential as an emancipatory framework and as an interpretive tool. In the struggle to take back what is rightfully ours Indigenous peoples have much to gain from appropriating a European intellectual tradition whose object is to transform and unsettle the power holders of that very society.

Can the Sled Dog Sleep? Postcolonialism, Cultural Transformation and the Consumption of Inuit Culture

Frank James Tester

University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the application of postcolonial theory to a commission of enquiry into the colonial history of Inuit in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) Region of Nunavut Territory. While the colonial history of the period 1950-1980 has been the focus of the commission, much attention has been directed at the fate of Inuit sled dogs. There are many reasons for this focus. If anything typifies the movement of Inuit from a world impregnated with ritual, relationship and meaning to one of impersonal, secular commodity relations, the fate of Inuit sled dogs is it. The replacement of the sled dog with the snow machine—what Sartre would call a ‘practico-inert’ manifestation of dead, and in this case imported, labour—was as existentially significant an act as one could imagine. The use of postcolonial theory in examining these transformations is explored. How the commodity has been treated (or largely ignored) by postcolonial theorists is examined and the claim made that in much postcolonial theorizing, the transformation from cultural to commodity forms, the role of the commodity, the nature of consumption and the role of community in the transformation from one form of capitalist production (and the logic that accompanies it) have often been overlooked, underplayed or aligned with what is heralded as fresh theoretical turf in an undeserving, celebratory way. Reference is made to the work of Spivak, Bhabha, Said, Derrida and precursors to postcolonial theory, particularly the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Fanon.

KEYWORDS: Inuit, sled dogs, truth commission, commodity, labour, postcolonialism, Spivak, Bhabha, Sartre, Fanon, capitalism, transformation, colonialism.

In October of 2008 I submitted to the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, a report dealing with the death of sled dogs in the Qikiqtani (Baffin) region of Nunavut Territory, Canada. It was based primarily on archival records and my ‘close reading’ (Derrida 2002) of these documents written, in the 1950s and 1960s, by government officials, agents of the State and the colonial administration of the region that is now Nunavut Territory. My ‘close reading’ of text pays attention to the methods, contexts, objectives and assumptions within which texts are written. The Commission’s mandate was to hold hearings and to report on the slaughter of Inuit dogs, “relocations and other decision-making of the Government up until 1980, and its effect on Inuit culture, economy and way of life” (Qikiqtani Truth Commission 2008). While many aspects of Inuit life in this period are

of concern to the Commission, the killing of Inuit sled dogs, in which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have been implicated, figures prominently in the work of the Commission. The fate of sled dogs and the claim that the RCMP deliberately slaughtered dogs as a means of confining Inuit to settlements in the 1950s and 1960s received considerable attention at hearings held in communities of the Qikiqtani region.

Much happened during this period, resulting in the move of Inuit from extended-family hunting camps to consolidated settlements commencing primarily with the construction, in 1956, of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line. The DEW line was an American cold war initiative of radar stations stretching across the Canadian Arctic. Some Inuit found employment in the construction of these sta-

tions, were accommodated in wood frame houses, fed Qallunaat¹ food and given an intimate introduction to Western material culture. Along with changing economic and other circumstances, this experience challenged camp life as a dominant cultural form.

By the late 1960s the process of consolidation in settlements under the watchful eye of the RCMP, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) managers, teachers, social workers and administrators, was nearly complete. At the same time, approximately 30 percent of the population had been sent to southern sanatoria for treatment of tuberculosis and to residential and federal day schools that, in many cases, removed Inuit children from their families. The fox fur trade, sustaining Inuit economy since the introduction of the first HBC trading post in the eastern Arctic in 1911, collapsed. In the early 1960s Inuit were given the right to purchase alcohol. Settlement councils and representation in the Northwest Territories Council and federal governments introduced Inuit to Western ideas about democracy (Tester and Kulchyski 1994). Commencing in the late 1960s, the efforts of Greenpeace, the 1976 appearance of Brigitte Bardot on the ice off Newfoundland, and the subsequent European ban on the import of hooded and harp seal pelts had a devastating impact not only on the Inuit economy, but a relationship between Inuit and seals that constituted the soul of much of Inuit culture (Pelly 2001). Why the fate of sled dogs might receive so much attention in the midst of this turbulent sea of change is a legitimate question.

The moment of Inuit social history upon which the Commission has focused is a period of intense colonial rule. The archival record makes it abundantly clear that Inuit were not only subject to colonial relations of ruling—a civilizing mission—they were co-joined in a project wherein Canada colonized the high Arctic—and not just the high Arctic—in the name of sovereignty, commerce and industrial possibility. Ironically, these developments take place principally in the 1950s and 1960s as Canada is supporting the decolonization of British territory

internationally, and moving toward completing its own constitutional sovereignty with a greater degree of separation from the British Crown. The Commission, at the time of writing, has not yet finished its report on this tangled history and the fate of sled dogs. Dealing with this complex web of relations will be no easy matter.

A report on the killing of Inuit sled dogs, at a moment when the treatment of text—particularly colonial documents—has given rise to a theoretical explosion called postcolonial studies, raises complex questions about the nature of 'truth.' The Qikiqtani commission was a *truth* commission. The Canadian residential school experience, coast to coast, is being examined by another truth and reconciliation commission. From the Canadian Arctic to Colombia and South Africa, there have been and are in progress, truth commissions whose mandates are, simply put, to 'get to the bottom of things'; to get at 'the truth' by "privileging the voices, testimonies, oral histories and stories of victims" (Bickford 2007:998). The paradox is that at an intellectual moment celebrating hybridity, indeterminacy, pluralities and one marked by ambivalence, many Indigenous and colonized people are using *truth* and reconciliation commissions to advance a factually determinable account of historical experience. Squaring this simple observation with the foundational writings of Derrida, Baudrillard, Lyotard and others, and especially the postcolonial variants of post-structural and postmodern theory articulated in the canonical texts of Edward Said, Homi Bahbha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, is a challenge.

Postcolonial studies embrace a wide domain of 'in between thought': in the interstitial tissue between cultural and literary studies, between theory and practice, between State and self, between communities—both geographical and virtual—and a globalized world, between the personal and the public. A plurality of meaning and a swirling indeterminacy of text are both characteristic and possible in an intellectual movement determined to break the dualisms, essentialism and fixed categories of Enlightenment (and not just Enlightenment) logic. Between literary and cultural studies, where culture is often claimed to be both made and demonstrated phenomeno-

1 The term Qallunaat is often used to refer to 'white folk' from southern Canada, although it is sometimes used for anyone who is not Inuk, including someone who may not be Euro-Canadian.

logically, and where the focus is image, page, words, symbols, phrases and thought—"the blank part of the text" (Derrida 1976:93)—postcolonial plurality and indeterminacy have a home. It is when the 'in between space' speaks to a new humanism and transformational politics that familiar categories of class, race and gender, tied to the familiar phalanx of capitalist means of production and colonial relations, suggest the necessity of a familiar interrogation. The struggle to address fundamental Marxist categories, important among them the commodity, including the commodification of labour, while challenging the machine-like trajectory of these categories and concepts in the making and interpretation of history is the theme of much of Spivak's work, particularly her essay, 'The Politics of Interpretation' (1982). In 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), dealing with the representation of 'the subaltern' in Marx and other theorists, Spivak dispatches these machine-like categories *en route*.

Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Maley, in a comprehensive overview of the many challenges and conundrums raised by postcolonial studies, speak to the matter.

One way to orient postcolonialism would be to place it between Marxism and existentialism, because many of its practitioners fuse political radicalism with a fundamental reconception of the self, in what Fanon called a stretching of Marxism, and others have termed a new humanism or a revolutionary psychology. ...In terms of political orientation, postcolonialism is a site of radical contestation and contestatory radicalism. ...In an important sense, postcolonial theory marks not only the return of the repressed, or the return of the native, but the return of class as a marker of difference. [Moore-Gilbert et al 1997:3]

This is a path trod most deeply by Sartre in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1976), attempting to return agency to his interrogation of an ossified Marxist orthodoxy; an interplay, evident in popular form from his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). Fanon's analysis of the internal contradictions of Africa's post colonial leadership is strongly suggestive of postcolonial themes emerging in the writing of the 1970s (Young 2001). Theorists

like Fanon speak to the cultural legacy of colonialism, dissecting its logic and, in the process, projecting the normative agenda of making space for voices and ways of being that, it is claimed, were neither heard nor recognized within the confines of Enlightenment logic and the structuring of the colonial experience upon which it was—and is—premised. I use the present tense, suggesting that a globalized world, where diverse cultural products play an increasingly important economic role is, for many, still a colonial experience—albeit of a different type. What is bothersome in the mostly literary and cultural variants of postcolonial theory is not so much what is embraced, but what is discarded. In many cases, it can be argued that the reading of Enlightenment logic and the portrayal of the vice of colonialism underlying the assumptions of postcolonial writing involve questionable assumptions about what lies at the heart of Enlightenment thought and colonial enterprise.

My focus in what follows is on how the commodity has been treated (or largely ignored) by most postcolonial theorists. My concern is that the transformation from cultural to commodity forms, the role of the commodity, the nature of consumption and the role of community in the transformation from one form of capitalist production (and the logic that accompanies it) have often been overlooked, underplayed or aligned with what is heralded as fresh theoretical turf in an undeserving, celebratory way. My attention is directed to transformations taking place in Inuit culture in the 1950s and 1960s. Harvey (1990) relates transformations from one form of capitalist production to another in the modern era, to a crisis of accumulation emerging in the 1960s, and to the exhaustion of a long list of solutions proffered to deal with recurring crises of accumulation since the 1830s. Globalization and the commodification of culture are solutions ushering in what Fredrick Jameson (1991) calls "the cultural logic of late capitalism." What I believe Jameson underplays, however, is a contemporary form of industrial production that rivals anything Dickens documented at the root of the industrial revolution; a form now located offshore and out of mind. Cultural expression has also become a commodity accounting for an increasingly important portion of the surplus and accumulated

capital essential to keeping capitalism afloat in a post-modern age.

The transformation of the unique relations of hunting as a cultural expression to those of a culture characterized by commodity relations (a transformation, never complete or without resistance) is central to the colonial experience of Inuit. The relationship between Inuit and their dogs was not a commodity relation. Dogs were a draught animal, assisting Inuit in moving from one location to another. They were essential to the hunting of seal, muskox and polar bear. They were seen as assistants and companions for hunters on long and often arduous hunting trips. Unlike the snow machine, what happened on the land was effected in large measure by the relationship that developed between a hunter and his dogs. The bond was an existential one. The care given to pups and the essential role of dogs in Inuit culture is well-documented (MacRury 1991). Dogs had use, but not exchange value. There was no market for their sale. They were sometimes given to others as gifts demonstrating friendship or familial solidarity.

The snow machine that increasingly replaced dogs in the 1960s was, by comparison, a 'thing'; a mystification made elsewhere by unseen hands in unknown circumstances. No degree of personality directed at its presence could affect its performance. It came with a price and could be sold for one. Its purchase required amounts of cash previously unnecessary to Inuit survival. It required for its maintenance, mechanical skills, as opposed to skills of personality and persuasion passed down for generations from one Inuk to another. In the face of disaster, its body provided neither warmth nor sustenance. It didn't require feeding, the skill of the hunter or recount, at every moment, the spiritual tie that bound Inuit to place, time, and other life forms on which they depended. If anything typifies the movement of Inuit from a world impregnated with ritual, relationship and meaning to one of impersonal, secular commodity relations, the fate of Inuit sled dogs is it. Within the confines of settlement living the snowmobile, which makes it possible to travel back to one's traditional territory in a reasonable length of time and with reasonable effort, makes sense. The snowmobile makes settlement living more feasible and settlement living makes the snowmo-

bile more necessary. The replacement of the sled dog with the snow machine—what Sartre would call a 'practico-inert' manifestation of dead, and in this case imported, labour—was as existentially significant an act as one could imagine.

The fate of Inuit sled dogs in the presence of wood frame housing and consolidated communities as a modern form, the discipline of the RCMP directed at community life and the replacement of sled dogs by snowmobiles, are hugely important dimensions of attempts to assimilate Inuit to Euro-Canadian culture. However, in detailing this historical regime, it is a mistake to essentialize the role of the RCMP—and not just the RCMP—as 'Other.' What complicates an examination of claims that the RCMP deliberately killed Inuit sled dogs to trap Inuit in the fledgling settlements developing along the Arctic coast is the changing role of the RCMP in relation to Inuit labour and commodity production. The role of the RCMP and others as 'Other' changes with the nature and form of commodity production in which Inuit are engaged, and with the needs of commerce and the State. Prior to the 1960s when fox trapping was still seen as a viable occupation meeting the trading needs of the HBC, the archival evidence makes it abundantly clear that the RCMP went so far as to chase Inuit away from HBC posts and missions in an attempt to maintain the trapping economy and to prevent the development of 'post Eskimos' (Damas 1993). Healthy dog teams were essential to this policy. The role of the RCMP with respect to Inuit dogs changes as commodity production in the Inuit economy shifts to a considerable degree from trapping foxes to a more conventional, settlement-based wage economy. Colonial agents not only twist, but are twisted by these changing relations.

It is therefore no surprise that the fate of the sled dog emerges as the most important focus of a truth commission examining this intense colonial period of Inuit social history. Colonization is about the commodification of labour and life in which texts—the law, policy directives and portrayal of 'the primitive'—have only a partial role to play. Colonization is a totalizing exercise fraught with contradiction involving a transformation of forms and relations

from the cultural, symbolic and spiritual to the economic, practical and secular. In theorizing this turn, the ways in which postcolonial theory treat the commodity are of considerable importance.

My argument is also that in interrogating colonial rule—then and now—postcolonial theory is largely given to critiquing forms of domination within the Enlightenment project that were neither as omnipresent nor as lacking in spaces for ‘Otherness’ as we are given to believe. Enlightenment logic is inherently contradictory and fragmented. Making capitalism work was often dependent on attempting to silence or civilize ‘the Other.’ This was particularly true where ‘the Other’ was engaged in, or aspired to forms of commodity production, consumption and accompanying social relations and cultural practices challenging the factory system and ideas about what constituted a proper, useful and modern commodity form. The Luddites were dealt with accordingly. North American auto workers, as the behemoths of the industry have fallen from grace, have received different but, none-the-less, effective treatment. As Mike Davis documents in *Late Victorian Holocausts* (2000), in the 1800s, the textile industry of India and the social relations that supported it, in the commercial interests of the East India Company, bent on importing cotton from India and exporting cloth back to the country, had to go.

The diversity of ideas as to what should happen regarding the fate of Inuit in the eastern Arctic during the period in question is illustrative, at one level, of a profound lack of unity and sense of purpose within the Canadian State, even during a period of high modernism otherwise thoroughly impregnated/imbued with the idea of progress and a technical mastery of nature and social relations. The ultimate objective, a totalization with capital accumulation at its core, is not in question. How best to get there, at historical moments where different commodities might be best served by different cultural forms and relations to production, was another matter. ‘The primitive’ is thus both celebrated and denigrated as, for example, when the RCMP encourage Inuit camp life, travel, live and eat like ‘the Other’ or, conversely, find Inuit relations to their dogs, once they have moved to town, to be an anathema to modern living.

As noted, in the 1950s Inuit are chased out of town by the RCMP and encouraged to retain their dogs and Otherness as fox pelts meant a living. Increasingly in the late 1950s and 1960s, other State actors—social workers, clergy, economic development officers—contradict RCMP directives. In town, the RCMP and increasingly Inuit discover Inuit dogs as menace and face their Otherness as a liability. Janitors are needed for schools, heavy equipment operators for air strips and clerks required for checkout counters at The Bay. Getting an education, the Christian faith and health care deemed to put a dint in statistics embarrassing to the march of modern medicine, locate Inuit in terms of place, space and resources, so as to make assimilation appear necessary and inevitable.

Other State agents play similarly contradictory roles even *within* the logic of racism and State oppression. Between the end of the First World War and the early 1950s, changes to game laws in the Canadian Arctic that oppressed Inuit hunters were based on racist assumptions and bad science. Nevertheless, they were intended to keep Inuit ‘out of town,’ off relief, and living subsistence and traditional lifestyles; in other words, functioning as ‘the Other’ for as long as possible during the modern era. There are times when ‘the Other’ is ‘okay’; the same being true for Scottish Highlanders and crofting, a feudal relationship to land and production that survived until the ravages of the Crimean and Napoleonic Wars, the demand for woolen clothing and the factory system made sheep more valuable to Clan Chiefs than crofters. How modernity has treated culture cannot ultimately be understood apart from the commodities—their production and consumption—from which capital derives its surplus. As the colonial experience of Inuit suggests, what is sometimes celebrated as the end of colonialism doesn’t mark the thundering of difference, unsuccessfully oppressed by Enlightenment logic, so much as it points to the exhaustion of one form of capital accumulation (the commodity as a material form) and the imperative of replacing it with another (the commodity as a cultural product).

Resistance to the contradictory civilizing mission of the Canadian State has always been a part

of Inuit culture and practices. In the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to impose game laws and other regimes without Inuit consent were met with defiant behaviour, letters and petitions written by Inuit dealing with the imposed logic unfolding around them (Kulchyski and Tester 2007). The petition of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights claiming that greenhouse gases, originating primarily with the United States, are impacting all aspects of Inuit culture, continues a tradition of petitioning for Inuit rights (Knox 2009). Difference thundering then as it does now, suggests that the 'post' in postcolonial may be seriously overrated. Inuit, celebrated and oppressed as primitive stalwarts of the fur trade are now lauded for their cultural product, displayed on stage at Vancouver's 2010 Olympic Games, and simultaneously oppressed as the social and environmental costs of capitalist relations of production melt their homeland.

The solution to one crisis of accumulation, originating in the success, for working people, of the social compact of the post-war years and cultural transformations made possible by an electronic revolution, are what some postcolonial theorists, of which Jameson's work is illustrative, regard as revolutionary. Morton, in documenting Spivak's response to Dirlik's contention that along with Said and Bhabha, she diverts attention away from the machinations of global capitalism by focusing on culture, notes her subsequent development of a criticism of the privileged position of Western diasporic intellectuals writing the postcolonial. Spivak, more than many postcolonial theorists, takes class and the oppressions of class seriously. However, the "restless process of self-criticism and revision" (Morton 2003:137) characteristic of postcolonial writing leaves critical assessment of it open, in turn, to an uncommon volume of criticism and counter-claims. Determining exactly what has been said is complicated by a proclivity, in much postcolonial writing, to refuse to say any 'thing,' consistent with a commitment to undermining fixed categories and allowing a plurality of meaning. The interrogation of ideas is affected accordingly.

Commodity forms and the social relations that both make and are made by them follow us from

one historic moment to another. The social compact of western-European states is associated with social transformations including decolonization and the rise of social movements, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and attempts to humanize and moderate the rapacious capitalism of previous decades. The electronic era—a post-modern age replacing steel with 'the chip' as the centre of capitalist production—includes elements that have broken free of the yoke of Fordist production. At the same time, these elements often re-introduce sweat-shop conditions, and have embraced the diversity and plurality that the micro-chip facilitates in all walks of life and all forms of production. This suggests that postcolonial studies must be concerned with material as well as cultural change. The resulting plurality and fluidity of forms and ways of being are what it is claimed challenge the so-called binaries and essentialism of the Enlightenment project.

But what has changed? By way of illustration, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) travel business is now a multi-million dollar industry. I am not convinced that celebrating the diversity of the postmodern or postcolonial, suggesting that we have moved beyond Enlightenment logic, is appropriate to describing an economy or culture that now celebrates the commodification of cultural (and sexual) diversity with the same commitments that guided the logic of the fur trade in the last century. The relationship to commodity production with its potential for anomie, distraction, alienation and abuse remains. There is more continuity than difference in this transformation. While, as a LGBT person, it is nice to have a place to go and reassuring to be able to be oneself in that space and while the product may be a cultural one, it still extracts a surplus, as did the purchase of a 1952 Chevrolet. Our postmodern or postcolonial consumption—where suppression of sexual orientation is an attempt to colonize the body—and the form of that consumption (a cultural experience), does nothing to liberate us from the great threats of the moment; a mound of social (exploited labour at offshore resorts) and environmental (carbon emissions from aircraft) costs threatening to overwhelm both global ecosystems and the social relations that depend upon them. The LGBT travel industry con-

tinues the same relations and perpetuates many of the same problems characteristic of the travel industry in general.

It is impossible here to do justice to the works of many postcolonial theorists who, in different ways and to different degrees, address (or largely fail to address) the relations I have attempted to illustrate. In what follows, I focus on the work of Homi Bhabha. The same interrogation can be applied to the theorizing of Lyotard, Said, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida and others. Of these, Derrida's intellectual space is perhaps the most ambivalent and controversial. Bernstein makes the following astute observation.

There is nothing in Derrida's writings that seeks to rule out the importance of critical theoretical and empirical research into the structural dynamics of society and politics. On the contrary, such an endeavor is what his own questioning of boundary-fixing demands. Nevertheless, his neglect in dealing more directly and explicitly with political and societal institutions in their historical complexity does have the consequence of making his own understanding of society and politics sound rather 'thin.' [2006:93]

As someone intimately familiar with the archival record documenting relations of ruling in the North, at first glance, Bhabha's observations on the illusion of binary and essential categories constructed by colonial texts, fit in all directions. Colonial regimes never entirely 'Othered' those they colonized. They couldn't afford to. If assimilation succeeded it ran the risk of undermining what kept the colonized in a place of 'dominion over'; the necessity of maintaining power and control by insisting that European civilization was unique and only for the civilized to give away.²

In the early 1950s, Joseph Idlout was a very successful Inuit trapper and trader operating in the area of Pond Inlet. What was Joseph Idlout's alignment with the HBC and the Arctic fur trade all about? Was he 'the Other' or does film maker Doug Wilkinson emerge as the curious 'Other' in his film, *Land of*

the Long Day, focusing on the labour and culture of Idlout and Inuit camp life? Similarly, in the western Arctic, were Ike Bolt and Angulalik, Inuit Arctic traders and merchants, dupes and fools of a capitalist system or good examples of Sartre's cultural boomerang, where the negative (in this case an uncommon generosity that defied business logic) is reclaimed as an asset to be used against colonial minds and practices? Was Marjorie Hinds, a stern disciplinarian and 1950s welfare teacher serving in many communities of what is now Nunavut, a nasty agent of assimilation or should we take her mid-50s arguments for the provision of education to Inuit children in their camps where they could continue to learn to hunt, trap and sew, seriously? On the other hand, what was she doing in 1953 rounding up Inuit in Inukjuak, Arctic Quebec, for the trip north to Resolute Bay and Craig Harbour where they played a role in asserting Arctic sovereignty and suffered greatly (Tester and Kulchyski 1994)? The interrogation of history, sleeves rolled up, texts, film, interviews, artifacts and memory in hand, isn't very kind to binary or essential categories for describing either the colonial agent or the colonized.

Bhabha's angle on liberation is to argue that colonial logic forced binary and essentialist categories and totalizing logics on colonized people, thereby reinforcing their differences. The oppressive structures are never totalizing, the postcolonial project being to affirm and acknowledge a multiplicity of difference to break the power of binary and essentialist structures (Bhabha 1994). Not unlike Said, whose interrogation of the colonial is perhaps the most brilliant, clear and trenchant, my reading of Bhabha suggests that he applies to the colonizer an essentialism that he denies was never true for the colonized. And at this point, I suggest that his project goes off the rails because he fails to rigorously interrogate both the production of commodities and forms of consumption that mark a passage from what I call insecure capitalism (modern or colonial) to secure capitalism; the kind of production and consumption that fuels what Harvey, writing in *The Condition of Post Modernity* and *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, and Fredrik Jameson in *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, call the postmodern period.

² A similar idea is advanced by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire* (2000:126). Hardt and Negri express this more in terms of an idea; that "civilization was endemic to the European race and theirs alone to give away."

Within the confines of the nation state, capitalism's insecurity is noted by the power of labour and restrictions placed on capitalist expansion. In a postmodern world, globalization removes the most important insecurities, turning the entire planet into a considerably less-regulated and restricted playground for capitalist expansion. And as we know, what appears within capitalist logic to be secure turns out to be anything but.

Postcolonial theory can also be understood as a response—a need to make sense of—transformations like our passage from the fur trade and sled dogs to the snow machine, Inuit art and sleeping out on the ice in an igloo as cultural variations on the logic of conventional commodity production. But the interrogations of postcolonial theorists do not offer us the liberation they seek precisely because the very thing they celebrate—the emergence of cultures and difference from the oppressive tracts of colonial enterprise—is what the new capitalism successfully cannibalizes in its consistent and omnipresent quest for capital, an essential category for social and cultural analysis.

Writing in *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri put it this way:

Postmodernists are still waging battle against the shadows of old enemies: the Enlightenment, or really modern forms of sovereignty and its binary reductions of difference and multiplicity to a single alternative between Same and Other. The affirmation of hybridities and the free play of differences across boundaries, however, is libratory only in a context where power poses hierarchies exclusively through essential identities, binary divisions, and stable oppositions. The structures and logics of power in the contemporary world are entirely immune to the “libratory” weapons of the postmodern politics of difference.... [Postmodernists] tumble unwittingly into the welcoming arms of the new power. From this perspective the celebratory affirmations of postmodernists can easily appear naïve, when not purely mystificatory. [2000:142-143]

And while my argument is a parallel one, I suggest that it is not simply contemporary structures and logics of power that postmodernists have missed. It is the consumption of culture and cultural difference as

commodities that the contemporary logics of power have warmly embraced.

As a contemporary foundation for the liberation of Indigenous people Bhabha's propositions—his equation of the binary with hierarchy, and his negation of the nation state and national movements as a basis for liberation (something he shares with Derrida)—from my vantage, fall flat on their face. Nunavut Territory is a geography defined in parallel with the territories of the South that concern him. I am not blind to the ways in which the decolonized nation states of the South have been drawn into relations that perpetuate the hierarchies and oppressive relations characterizing colonial rule—and more. Nunavut is no exception. But I fail to see the possibility—or reality—of a libratory politics in the terrain of fluidity, hybridity and cultural difference that Bhabha invokes to interrogate and criticize modern ideas of community, defined in terms of space, class relations and national identities. Bhabha (1994) states:

As a category, community enables a division between the private and the public, the civil and the familial; but as a performative discourse it enacts the impossibility of drawing an objective line between the two. The agency of the community-concept ‘seeps through the interstices of the objectively constructed, contractually regulated structure of civil society,’ class relations and national identities.³ Community [defined by Bhabha as culture and performative discourse] disturbs the grand globalizing narrative of capital, displaces the emphasis on production in ‘class’ collectivity, and disrupts the homogeneity of the imagined community of the nation. ... Binary divisions of social space neglect the profound temporal disjunction—the translational time and space—through which minority communities negotiate their collective identifications. [230-231]

This lofty, aesthetic and idealist take on community ignores the relationship between geographical location, place and culture, characteristic of Inuit identification of home with landscape and particular places and spaces as the substrate in which not only culture, but material life, politics and socio-eco-

3 Citing P. Chatterjee, ‘A response to Taylor’s “Modes of civil society,”’ *Public Culture*. Fall 1990 (Princeton University Press), p. 130.

conomic relations are grounded. The identification of culture, spirituality and identity with a specific physical location is characteristic of Aboriginal people internationally. In New Zealand, it explains the fact that despite the individuation of title and as a result of inheritance and the refusal to cede one's place and identity to market logic, many tiny pieces of Maori land now have thousands of names on the title. The struggle for Nunavut—the fact that Inuit wanted a territory—the importance of which is also evidenced by Indigenous land claims internationally—is I suspect, testament to the impossibility of a 'culture that floats' providing a basis for resistance that addresses the anomie and violence accompanying what colonial powers and their agents did (and continue to do in different ways, with different tools and different products in mind) to Indigenous lands and people.

The commandeering and control of place has been essential throughout human history, to all forms of resistance to dominant socio-economic orders. As Harvey notes:

Movements such as the Seattle general strike of 1918 (when workers effectively took control of the city of nearly a week), the St Petersburg uprising of 1905, coupled with a long and detailed history of municipal socialism, community organization around strike action (such as the Flint strike of 1933), through to the urban uprisings of the United States in the 1960s, all illustrate the point. [1990:236-37]

At the same time, while control of space is essential to resistance and the making of different socio-economic forms and relations, redefined space remains vulnerable to capitalist forms that individualize title and reduce space to a commodity *prima facie*. Recent moves by the Nisga'a Tribal Council in British Columbia Canada to individualize title to certain lands that are part of their settlement with the Crown, illustrate the difficulty alternative forms encounter when confronting the persistent and international power of capital.

Community and community in relation to space are also essential to resistance. One need only look to the Alberta Tar Sands and the resistance of the Cree community of Fort Chipewyan, or the development of a gold mine 40 kilometers from the Inuit commu-

nity of Baker Lake to appreciate the importance of community as the potentially threatening and unstable 'Other'; as having potential for opposition (as well as compliance) in struggles over commodities and the relations to power accompanying their extraction or production. Community, geographically defined and easily recognized as the binary 'Other,' provides for Inuit and other Indigenous people, a foundation for the "recognition of cultural presence" (Bhabha 1994:8), however defined.

Recognition of cultural presence in hopes of breaking the binary assumptions and essentializing of colonial regimes appears to be the objective of Bhabha's theoretical journey. But Bhabha and other postcolonial writers may be too late. The train left the station some time ago and picked up new freight along the way. Sartre's interrogation of need and the dialectic of Otherness in the making of colonial and comparable relations is far richer ground for conceptualizing resistance which recognizes the social construction of the commodity and the successive relations thus engendered, as central to human struggle, including for recognition of cultural presence. In Volume 2 of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre develops a scenario involving the web of relations into which workers in the Magnitogorsk steelworks of the former Soviet Union were drawn, where meeting their needs through the exercise of their labour depended on the nature and efficiency of labour located elsewhere, including within their own communities. This would be true where not everyone, for example, was capable of dealing with the increased complexity of modern settlement living. (Who can fix the vent, furnace or space heater?) Increasingly, Inuit interests become significantly allied with those of the Qallunaat leadership in the new settlements concerned with the efficient operation of the place, as the ability of the HBC to supply snowmobile parts and of the State to supply trades people who can repair furnaces, pumps and windows is also of concern and of interest to Inuit. The following observation by Sartre in Volume 2 of *Critique* increasingly applied to the Inuk worker struggling to survive in the new settlements. "In order to be able to accomplish the task leadership had prescribed for him, he expected of others *exactly what the leadership expected*

of them: the maximum—the *optimum* variant”(158). Elsewhere, Sartre notes that the relationship of Inuit within their own culture is one where: “The Other is the Same, in the sense that he is subjected to the same dangers. In the Other who dies, I read my own death. In the other who works, my work” (435). The expanding role of commodities in altering these relationships is critical to understanding the dynamics of the colonial experience.

What has changed? Plenty. In the late 1950s James Houston working in Kinngait (Cape Dorset) and Peter Murdoch, working in Arctic Quebec, introduced Inuit to commercial print making and promoted soapstone carving as art forms with commercial value. These are long-standing illustrations of how the artistic expression to which cultural sensibilities give rise are commodified and enter a chain of relations from which postmodern surplus is achieved. Whether the recognition and accolade directed at Inuit art is indicative of something called postcolonial relations is another matter.

Inuit art has, in some cases, become a delightful expression of contemporary relations: the family captured by Annie Pootoogook, riding an all-terrain vehicle; a village, the lights of its many tiny homes twinkling at the viewer miles out on the ice, documented in print and imagination by Kininginak Pootoogook. The birds and animals of classical Inuit art are increasingly disturbed by the commodities of contemporary, everyday Inuit life. The commodification of culture is everywhere to be found, starting with the whaling industry in the 1800s and progressing to Inuit art in the late 1950s, followed by the sport hunting of polar bear and muskox in the following decade. A glance at *Up Here* magazine, published in Yellowknife Northwest Territories, confirms that spectacle (drop in from Japan for a one-night display of northern lights in Iqaluit) and cultural experience (spend a night in a real igloo wrapped up warmly in caribou skins and nourished by bannock and Arctic char) are cultural commodities upon which many enterprising and talented Inuit depend for a living. The Inuit sled dog remains iconic in this transformation being *the* unavoidable reality and symbol of a loss of culture and Being from which contemporary Inuit culture struggles to recover through forms

of both resistance and accommodation. My observation on this passage is not a romantic lament. It is only by way of acknowledging that the white fox furs that generated tokens at the HBC with which to purchase flour, tea, sugar, matches and ammunition in the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s, but that were, at the same time, laden heavily with non-market and existential relations, have given way to culture that is still commodity, laden with threatened non-market and existential relations. In ways that count, not much has changed. Otherness remains a reality of capitalist relations of production and it is these relations, and not just the culture to which they give rise, that require interrogation.

But this is ‘Up Here.’ Down there, in the barrios of Managua, the squatter camps of Maputo, the sprawling lanes and alleyways of Arusha, the export fee zones of Mexico, relations to the commodity are a curious mix of touristic voyeurism and sweat shop labour rivaling anything seen in the England of Charles Dickens. With its attention to cultural hybridity, a contingent politics, diversity, and a berating of totalizing logics as colonial remnants having failed under the crush of resistant and diverse voices that refused to be silenced, where does the postcolonial celebration of difference take us?

Epifanio San Juan Jr., a prolific Filipino scholar and cultural critic, has much of relevance to say. He cites Aijaz Ahmad in addressing the postmodern sensibility. Ahmad (1992) is trenchant in his criticism of Said’s *Orientalism* for ignoring how Western texts about the non-Western have been received, adopted, modified, overthrown and reproduced by the intelligentsia of colonized countries as social agents driven by their own contradictions, commitments and locations of class, gender, religion and geography. The necessary libratory potential of such texts escapes him.

Postcolonial doctrine assigns ontological priority to the phenomenon of cultural difference between colonized and colonizer. The articulation of such difference in “in-between” spaces produces hybridization of identities: “It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community

interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha 1994:1-2). Since capital ethnicizes peoples to promote labour segmentation, hybridity and other differential phenomena result (Wallerstein 1991). But for Bhabha, ambivalence arises from the post-structuralist “*difference* of writing” that informs any cultural performance, not from encystment and historical social catalepsy (Memmi 1965). ... In the discursive realm of floating signifiers and exorbitant metaphors, the objective asymmetry of power and resources between hegemonic blocs and subaltern [a reference to racialized minorities in the metropolises] and in the “third world,” as well as the attendant consequences, disappears. [San Juan Jr. 1992:6-7]

And speaking to an asymmetry of power and resources, Inuit of Nunavut have the highest rates of domestic violence in the country (14 times the national rate), the highest rate of young male suicide in the world (10 times the Canadian national average), a housing crisis that is the worst in Canada—approximately 50 percent of all Inuit homes are overcrowded compared to 7 percent nationally—and an official unemployment rate of about 17 percent while unofficial rates can be 50 – 70 percent in some communities at certain times of year (Tester 2006). While the accuracy of statistics can be debated, they most often point to what is ‘more or less true.’ It is, for instance, ‘true’ that Inuit are poorer than most Canadians. These are truths—realities—the Qikiqtani Truth Commission is going to some length to explain through an examination of a colonial history mediated through the relationship of Inuit to the fur trade, the industrial experience of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line and the consolidation of Inuit in settlements. Addressing relationships revealed by the statistics I have cited and positing alternatives, means interrogating and addressing historical relations of production and consumption in Inuit culture. Hardt and Negri (2000) put it this way: “In the context of state terror and mystification, clinging to the primacy of the concept of truth can be a powerful and necessary form of resistance. ... Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will” (155-56). While truth may be hard to achieve, approximating it by exploring and remembering how history has been experienced, remains a worthwhile objective.

There is, as I have elsewhere reported, no evidence found to date in the archival record that the RCMP had a deliberate and articulated policy of trapping Inuit in the colonial relations of ruling characteristic of settlements developing in the eastern Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s by killing their dogs (Tester 2008). It is this claim upon which an RCMP investigation of the matter has focused, and in finding themselves to be without fault, they have missed the point (RCMP 2006). Sled dogs died as Inuit relocated to settlements, their unchained dogs, and even unattended dogs in harness, seen as a menace to health and safety. And in a few cases they were, as children—and others—were mauled and killed. In some settlements the HBC had no chain in stock with which to tether dogs. For some Inuit struggling in the early 1960s on cash incomes of as little as \$400 a year, chain was expensive. A lack of means to feed dogs, their owners now having relocated long distances from hunting grounds, meant that some had little choice but to leave their dogs loose to scrounge food. Some RCMP, unsympathetic to and failing to understand the chaos and cultural confusion confronting Inuit, took their mandate to shoot loose dogs literally and without question. Others were not so inclined. The result was that, in addition to dogs shot elsewhere, about 500 dogs were killed in two communities of the Qikiqtani region between 1966 and 1967 (Tester 2008). Without dogs and without access to snow machines—something that necessitated having cash that many older, Inuktitut-only speaking Elders would not have been able to earn in settlements catering to the language and other skills of the young—some Inuit, and likely those most intent on preserving their culture and way of life, were indeed trapped in town.

But other things happened. Earlier, in the winter of 1961-62, about 700 of 900 sled dogs in Cumberland Sound of the Qikiqtani region died of distemper. On this occasion, the RCMP and other colonial agents mounted a heroic, and largely futile, attempt to inoculate dogs and to find replacements hoping, initially, to keep Inuit in their camps. Fearing starvation, they evacuated many Inuit to Pangnirtung. The colonial Mountie, wanting Inuit ‘out of town’ so they would not become ‘dependent’ and thus

contributing to the maintenance of a traditional, land-based way of life, was 'Othered' by those wanting Inuit 'in town' where they could be assimilated and modernized.

The recall of these complex and contradictory experiences before the Qikiqtani Truth Commission can be seen as the Inuit equivalent of a collective oral missive directed not simply at the RCMP, but successive generations of Inuit and Qallunaat alike. It is, if you will, a gift from Elders to those of us who, in the presence of environmental, social and cultural practices threatening our survival on the planet, need to remember and reconstruct different ways of mediating our needs and conceptualizing 'the Other,' and our relationship to Others; to interrogate the commodity and relations to which it gives rise, like never before in human history.

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Highliners and Moneymakers: Understanding Accommodation and Resistance in the Sto:lo Commercial Fishery

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Abstract: Sto:lo fishers maintain that they are the original commercial fishers. However fisheries regulations enacted in 1888 pushed commercial fishing for the Sto:lo to margins outside the law. The Sto:lo continue to fish and engage in the commercial activity of fishing. Programs arising from a new Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy adopted in 1992 provided for a commercial opportunity after 100 years of fishing outside the margins of the law. Sto:lo fishers continue to fight for an Aboriginal right to fish and continue to protest regulations that turned the everyday economic activity of fishing into a criminal act. Questions and conflicts arise over the place of this legally sanctioned commercial fishery as it relates to Sto:lo tradition. Some writing on this subject, describe the outlaw fishery as one of resistance to regulation. Others maintain it falls outside the realm of tradition in particular as regards capital accumulation. As a part of my discussion I seek to describe how the legal commercial fishery is as much an act of resistance conducted within the bounds of tradition as the outlaw fishery. Additionally, I seek to demonstrate that capital accumulation as a result of participation in the legal, commercial fishery is indeed embedded in tradition.

Keywords: Aboriginal right to fish, Indian Food Fishery, commercial fishery, Pilot Sales Program, resistance, accommodation, capital accumulation

Introduction

In early July of 2002, the prospect for a sales agreement was bleak. By mid month it would be determined—no agreement would be signed. The sale of any salmon caught by an Aboriginal person would have to be conducted in the shadows.

Flash forward to early July 2003; a sales agreement is signed. Sto:lo fishers would be able to sell their catch without the fear of prosecution and without the fear of losing their boats, trucks, nets, totes and fish. Fishers awaited word as to when the river would be open for fishing under the newly signed sales agreement. But on July 28, 2003 the word they got was “NO.” The prospect of a legal, in-river commercial fishery was gone when Judge Kitchen ruled

that, among other things, the Aboriginal fishery was a race based fishery and therefore illegal under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹ Fisheries and Oceans responded by withdrawing the agreement.

Flash forward again as new agreements are negotiated each year.

Collected oral histories refer to stories told by Elders of a time when the Sto:lo went to the river to fish whenever they needed. Sto:lo would fish any time of day, any day of the week. Sto:lo Elders talked of their parents trading with the members of local

¹ *R. v Kapp et al.* 2003 BCPC 279 (Kitchen Prov. Ct. J). The ruling was reversed by appeal on June 27, 2008 – *R. v. Kapp* [2008] 2 S.C. R. 483, 2008 SCC 41.

non-aboriginal communities for goods they could not produce. A Sumas Band Elder spoke of his parents regularly trading and selling fish with the local farmers to obtain eggs, butter and milk (Silver 2002). June Quipp from the Cheam Band notes, “As far as I can remember my dad was in the business to buy and sell fish which he passed on” (Aboriginal Fisheries Journal 2000:3).

However, in the years subject to intense regulation, federal mandates have determined how, when and where Aboriginal peoples could fish as well as the disposition of their catch. Fisheries regulations implemented in the 1880s banned the sale of Aboriginal fish and resulted in the creation of the categories of “food fishing” and “commercial fishing.” These categories became firmly entrenched in the industrial fishery at the mouth of the Fraser River and were actively contested by the Aboriginal peoples fishing in the upper reaches of the river.

Additional regulations in 1888 contained more comprehensive controls over fishing as well as penalties for violations. Protected in the regulations was an Aboriginal right to fish for food. Specific language contained in the regulations upheld the food fishery declaring that “Indians were to, at all times, have liberty to fish for the purpose of providing food for themselves, but not for sale, barter, or traffic” (Canada 1888). This cast in stone the concept of a separate fishery for food and a separate fishery for commerce. While simultaneously accepting and rejecting their place in the margins of this fractured fishery, Sto:lo people have consistently maintained that their Aboriginal right to fish could not be divided into these false categories that separated the economic and social components of their way of life. Rather, they have fought to keep intact the social and economic aspects of the fishery by sharing fish with family and friends as part of ceremonies and by selling and trading fish with the newcomers to their land. Ultimately, this paper documents and argues that sale, exchange, and gifting of salmon are all intrinsic aspects of a Sto:lo fishery. There is no one more unique or authentic practice. Because sale and commercial fishing practices are often presented as somewhat less than authentic this paper pays particular attention to the ways in which commercial

fisheries practices are inherently as Sto:lo as the so-called food fishery.

Setting the Stage

Sales agreements arising out of a new Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy developed in the early 1990s provided for the legal sale of in-river, Aboriginal-caught salmon for the first time in since 1888. The first opportunity to fish under the agreements was in 1992. The Pilot Sales Program was a component of the new Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy adopted in 1992 and arising out of the Sparrow case (*R v. Sparrow* 1990). It provided for the legal sale of salmon caught under negotiated agreements and allotments. Initially the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) did not mandate the number of bands needing to sign an agreement before fishing could take place. However as the program continued, signing thresholds were set with Fisheries and Oceans requiring all 24 Sto:lo Bands to sign. For a number of years the Sto:lo did not participate in the program because the band signature threshold could not be met, many bands refusing to sign because they maintained the agreements represented an infringement on their Aboriginal right to fish. The agreements are no longer referred to as Pilot Sales Agreements. They are now wrapped in the new title of Economic Opportunity Fishery Licenses and signature thresholds are no longer enforced.

Sto:lo fishers such as Ken Malloway and Lester Ned maintain that they are the original commercial fishers and that their Aboriginal right to fish includes the right to trade, sell or barter their catch. For these men and others like them the agreements are seen as a means of legally continuing their traditional commercial fishery, albeit constrained by regulation. This paper respects this longstanding Sto:lo view through a detailed consideration of the fishery within its historical and contemporary trajectory.

Prior to 1992, commercial fishing was conducted in the shadows of the law. An examination of the Aboriginal business of fishing illustrates the historical tensions created through the reckoning and regulation of Aboriginal fishing practices (Bierwert 1999). Describing a river fishery conducted outside of the law, Bierwert writes:

Fishing legally has meant fishing in prescribed places within the enforced hours with limited technology, cutting off the noses and dorsal fins of the cats [to mark them as Indian fish]... In fact fishing has long exceeded these limitations and involved a variety of renegade practices (keeping alive a considerable knowledge of the river), and hauling contraband (unmarked) fish in sacks or plastic garbage bags for sale to dealers. [Bierwert 1999:224]

Distinguished here is the cultural practice of fishing from the business of fishing under legally negotiated sales agreements. The practical business of fishing includes discussions of profit and loss, crew payments, capital expenditure, overhead, preparation for the prospect of legally sanctioned commercial fishery and even the preparation for the prospect of illegal commercial fishing. In essence, Sto:lo commercial fishing takes place within a space bounded by tradition and state regulation; a space shaped by the inherent hegemony of the colonial and post-colonial situation. It is on this space that I concentrate my discussion of Sto:lo commercial fishing. By drawing on past field work I seek to illustrate that while the calendar of fishing has changed what shapes the Sto:lo fishery has not been altered by time.

Sto:lo responses to regulation and government interference into their way of life have ranged from overt acts of rebellion to the simple act of feeding one's family. Relying on Roseberry's (1996:79) call to explore hegemony not as a finished monolithic ideological formation but as a problematic contested political process of domination and struggle, I address the Aboriginal right to fish as conducted under the auspices of negotiated agreements or government licensing requirements and how this fits within a context of accommodation and resistance. Explored is how the right to fish as conducted under the auspices of negotiated agreements can be viewed as mechanisms of cultural reproduction. In his discussion of livelihood and resistance among peasants in Peru, Gavin Smith (1989) describes how the connection with the prehistoric past and present ways of life reflects not just the production of a livelihood, but the political protection of the conditions necessary for the continued reproduction of a way of life.

Smith (1989) demonstrates that acts of resistance and rebellion cannot be viewed as outside the creation of culture. These acts must be viewed as a mechanism of cultural reproduction or more specifically the protection of a livelihood which is interconnected with a social identity that must be viewed in connection within the specific history/prehistory and economy as well as within the context of a global history and economy (Smith 1989).

The Sto:lo, Tradition and the Aboriginal Right to Fish

The complex relationship between the river's salmon resource and the Sto:lo people has been observed and described by ethnographers, archaeologists and historians. For thousands of years before Europeans arrived in British Columbia, Aboriginal economies depended heavily on the prolific salmon migrations into their territories; this resource being processed and used for personal consumption, trade and ceremony (Newell 1993:3). Ethnographic and archaeological data support the importance of salmon in the Sto:lo diet as well as its importance in Aboriginal economies (Barnett 1938; Chisholm et al 1983; Crosby 1907; Duff 1952; Fort Langley Journal 1827; Hewes 1947; Kew 1992; Hill-Tout 1902, 1904; Lamb 1966). Historical accounts refer to a time when Sto:lo fishers actively sold their catch, first to operators of the Hudson's Bay Company saltry, and later, to commercial canners (R. Carlson 1994; Duff 1952; Crosby 1907; Fort Lanley Journal; Kew and Griggs 1991; Lamb 1966; M. Smith 1947; Suttles 1960, 1987; Teit 1900; Ware 1977, 1983).

Very early ethnographic sketches of Coast Salish people, of which the Sto:lo belong, provide detailed information of villages, place names, material culture, fishing, hunting, social order, kinship terminology, and marriage customs. Notes Wilson Duff, the Sto:lo were divided into a considerable number of local groups or 'tribes,' each of which claimed a stretch of river-bank or an important tributary (1952:19). Extended family relationships were important carrying with them access rights to resources and responsibilities towards those resources. Identification was with family first above band. The family constitutes the corporate/economic unit. The concept of band iden-

tity is a by-product of the creation of reserves and the implementation of the Indian Act. This view seems to be held by the Sto:lo themselves:

It's hard to use the concept of "my band" because this was all our living room. Here, from one end of the river to the other because we're back and forth Hunting and fishing, traveled different places. The designation of bands was a European concept. [Personal communication, Sto:lo fisher from *Shxw'w'hamel*]

This difference between the Sto:lo and the state as to the collective unit of power and action poses problems as regards the fishery in that communal licenses were issued to the individual bands as part of the new Aboriginal Fishery Strategy. Band offices then issued designation cards to band members for fishing. Further complicating the issue was the fact that in the courts Aboriginal rights are considered communal rights, shared by all members of an Aboriginal group rather than being specific to an individual person. How resource issues are settled then becomes problematic when identification is with family first rather than the band. It is further complicated by the fact that family lines cross band lines.

Writing on Coast Salish peoples, Wayne Suttles identifies a specific form or social organization of property holding kin-group (1963:513). It was this group or its head, rather than any of the residential groups, who owned the most important ceremonial rights and the most productive natural resource or fishing sites. Both Duff and Suttles discuss the concept of social rank among the Coast Salish. According to Duff, social rank was measured in terms of respect (1952:80). Those respected individuals who also possessed exceptional skill as hunters or fishers were called *siya:m*. *Siya:m* were usually of upper-class lineage, having had access to special training due to their high class status (1952:81). Suttles focuses on the concept of class among the Coast Salish (1955, 1958, 1960, 1963, 1974, 1987). According to Suttles, within most communities there seem to have been three distinct social classes. The majority of the community were identified as high class, a somewhat smaller group indentified as low class and a still smaller class often occupying its own section of the community (1987:17). Notes Suttles, this lower class consisted

of people who "had lost their history" and hence had no claim to the most productive resources of the area, in particular fishing sites (1987:17). As explained by Ken Malloway, the fact that some contemporary Sto:lo fishers had gained some measure of wealth from the salmon fishery was simply a reflection of a past class system that existed prior to white settlement.

The emergence of the industrial fishery in British Columbia and the subsequent regulations that followed to ensure the steady growth of the canning industry worked to alienate the Sto:lo from the resource on which they had long relied. When British Columbia joined Canada in 1871 changes in the Aboriginal fishery were imminent, as the first salmon-canning factory appeared that same year. By 1919 there were 97 canneries on the coast from the Fraser River to the Nass River, on Vancouver Island and in the Queen Charlottes (Pearse & Larkin 1992:151). Initially there was no government regulation of any kind over Aboriginal fishing (Newell 1993:46). Reuben Ware refers to this period between 1858 and 1880 as a time of non-regulation and protection of Aboriginal rights with no restrictions (1983:12). According to Newell regulations were minimal so as to allow growth of the salmon-canning industry (1993:46). The government acknowledged the role of Aboriginal people in the growth of the salmon-canning industry and regulations indicated in particular that they had the right to carry on their traditional fisheries (Newell 1993:46).

An Era of Regulation Emerges

When examining the implementation of fisheries regulations it is important to consider how regulation altered traditional economic patterns and hindered the development of new ones. As described by Newell, the salmon canning industry represented a new economic opportunity compatible with traditional economic activities (1993:65). Aboriginal fishers were, initially, the backbone of the emerging canning industry. However, by the late 1880s Aboriginal people were being seen as a major obstacle to cannery profits and fisheries officials were pressed by cannery owners to introduce new regulations to license the industrial fishery. Direct competition for fish between commercial canners and Aboriginal

domestic fisheries was evident by the turn of the century (Notzke 1994:45). The 1888 regulations were designed to reduce the competition between Aboriginal fishers and cannery owners and required that the fishers acquire licenses to fish commercially. This fishing was to be conducted only in tidal waters. It was under this new regulation that “the economic use of salmon by Sto:lo and other Aboriginal peoples was outlawed” (Glavin 1993). Subsequent regulation saw significant restrictions on Aboriginal fishing. As the needs of the canneries escalated, so did the restrictions on Aboriginal fishing. Aboriginal peoples lost control and management over the fisheries as new waves of regulation were continually introduced and the number of fishing days were significantly reduced. Beginning in 1962 the number of allowable fishing days would continually be reduced to the point when in 1980 no fishing was allowed from the end of June to mid July (Brown 2005).²

The restriction on allowable fishing days was only one of the ways Sto:lo fishers were assaulted by fisheries regulations. Fisheries officers would enter the homes of Sto:lo fishers to count the number of fish caught and processed as well as stopping them in town to search their car trunks for fish (Douglas 1985). Equally troubling to Sto:lo fishers was the requirement that all salmon taken under the Indian Food Fishing (IFF) license (the only license available to in-river Aboriginal fishers) be marked by the licensee after capture enabling Fisheries officers to immediately determine the circumstances under which the fish had been caught (Brown 2005). This was particularly important if the fish were found in the hands of non-Aboriginals. Other restrictions included a limited transportation area for Aboriginal-caught salmon. Imaginary boundaries were established throughout Sto:lo territory over which Aboriginal-caught salmon could not be transported. Again, this restriction was designed to curtail the sale, trade or barter of in-river, Aboriginal-caught salmon.

As early as 1888 various Sto:lo chiefs protested government interference in their fishery (Dyck 1994). Protests would continue throughout the 19th, 20th

and into the 21st centuries. In 1968 Aboriginal people pressed for an end to the federal regulation of their fishing rights and in 1971 demanded an end to Fisheries officers seizing fish from their homes. Hostilities escalated when in 1983 Aboriginal fishers decried the use of raids on their homes in an effort to lay poaching charges. In 1986 violence erupted between Fisheries officers and Sto:lo fishers on the Fraser at Gill Bay when Sto:lo fishers protested the closure of the river and set their nets. In 1988 Aboriginal fishers from various bands headed to the Fraser River at Rosedale with plans to defy the regulations governing the so-called Indian Food Fishery. The protest was part of a coast wide protest fishery marking the 100th year of regulation creating the separate food fishery and effectually diminishing traditional Aboriginal economies (*Globe & Mail* 1988). Protests and arrests would continue when in late May of 1989, Melvin Malloway was arrested near Yale after exercising his Aboriginal right to fish. Malloway’s nets, boat, motor, trailer and catch were seized (*Chilliwack Progress* 1989b). In all, about 90 percent of the 280 charges laid by Chilliwack Fisheries officers in the summer of 1989 involved Aboriginal fishers setting their nets when the food fishery was closed (*Chilliwack Progress* 1989a).

Highliners, Moneymakers, and the Aboriginal Right to Fish

Sto:lo fishers such as Ken Malloway and Lester Ned have been fighting for an Aboriginal right to fish and the right to a legal commercial fishery for many years. Both are known in the Sto:lo communities as successful commercial fishers and both are leaders in the cause of the Aboriginal right to fish. In his capacity as the first Fisheries Portfolio holder for the newly formed Sto:lo Nation, Lester Ned has fought for an Aboriginal right to fish that includes the ability to legally sell salmon. As a member of the first negotiation team, Lester pressed for agreements that would allow Sto:lo fishers an opportunity to make a living off the fisheries resource. As a fisher who sold his catch in the years prior to the initiation of the sales agreements in 1992, Lester Ned has worked to secure a fishery free of arrest and the possible loss of fish and equipment. This is very important to Lester Ned

2 The number of allowable fishing days continues to fluctuate from zero to three depending on the conservation needs determined by Fisheries and Oceans.

whose capital investment of \$160,000 is great when compared with that of most Sto:lo fishers.

As has Lester Ned, Ken Malloway has fought hard for the legal right to sell his catch also participating in the negotiations in 1992 when the first sales agreement was implemented.³ Ken Malloway began fishing on his own as a teenager, and he has always sold salmon.⁴ Even as a teenager Ken Malloway was outspoken regarding an Aboriginal right to legally sale salmon. Since that time, Ken Malloway has continued to fight for the Aboriginal right to fish, a right that he maintains includes the right to sell his catch. Quoting Ken: “I don’t make any bones about selling fish. I always have and always will. I’m not the first, my father wasn’t the first, my grandfather wasn’t the first” (*Chilliwack Progress* 1988b).

Ken Malloway’s fight has resulted in thousands of dollars in legal fees and the loss of nets and salmon. In February of 1989 Ken was set to appear in court on charges of illegally selling fish. His defense hinged on the constitutional right to fish; the challenge based on the evidence that natives historically sold and bartered fish as recorded specifically in the Fort Langely Journals (1998), and that as a result, natives have an Aboriginal right to fish.

Highliners in the Canyon

Ken Malloway has been referred to as a “highliner” by Fisheries and Oceans officers. Highliner is the commercial fishermen’s term for their own elite, the skippers and crews who bring in the biggest hauls. Ken has fished all his life, primarily in the Fraser Canyon in the stretch of the river five miles above Yale identified by Duff as Sto:lo fishing territory

(1952). His mother’s now-abandoned dry rack can still be seen in its spot at Lady Franklin Rock, which marks the “official” entrance into the canyon. Ken’s stories of fishing in the canyon make clear that it isn’t just about the money (to be made); it is about a way of life and sharing that way of life with future generations.

As a teenager, Ken would hop the CN freight train that made its way from Chilliwack through the canyon. The run through the canyon was Wednesday and Saturday and according to Ken “you had to be ready, have all your fished packed up the hill, because you never knew what time the train would be coming through.” The payment for train passage into the canyon was six sockeye. Over the years Ken Malloway earned enough to purchase a boat, upgrading when funds permitted until he acquired the boat he now operates which is a 20 foot, flat bottom aluminum craft—a current investment of approximately \$20,000 including motor (Brown 2005).⁵

Nearly two thirds of the Sto:lo fishery is conducted in the Fraser Canyon in the stretch of the river located five miles about Yale (Duff 1952). Three families were repeatedly mentioned as canyon highliners: Commodore, Jimmie and Malloway. According to Ken Malloway the number is four: Commodore, Jimmie, Malloway and Malloway (Brown 2005). A number of years ago he set out on his own, operating his own boat with his own family crew. While this may appear as a break in family ties, it is not. Kinship ties form the base of Sto:lo social order and this fact is reflected in way that the canyon fishery is conducted by families such as the Malloways. The nuclear family often makes up fishing crews. Extended family members were also relied upon as crew. But more importantly, family ties provided access to prime fishing spots and in some cases were essential to the ability to participate in the fishery. Ken fishes with his immediate family who work as paid crew while the remainder of the siblings in this very large family fish with his brother Melvin Malloway. Ken describes the role of family in fishing:

3 At the time of my fieldwork in 2002, Ken Malloway was co-chair of the BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, manager of the Sto:lo Fisheries Committee and a member of the Fraser Panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission.

4 Ken told me stories of how as a teenager, he made enough money by selling salmon at \$2.00 each to purchase a number of cars he hoped to eventually “fix up.” The cars began to clutter his mom’s front yard and after repeated requests from his mom to “do something about the cars” had gone unheeded, she had the cars hauled away. Kenny smiled as his told me, “I had some real classics, woulda been worth a lot of money today.”

5 Ken Malloway purchased his current boat in 1991 prior to the launching of the Pilot Sales Program in 1992. A new motor was purchased in 2002.

You should really get a picture of my brother Melvin's boat. He's got an accounting of everyone's catch painted all around the boat. I don't know what he's going to do when he runs out of room. Paint the boat and start over, I guess.

Ken notes that some of his siblings did fish with him at times or he would fish for them. On one occasion in the summer of 2002 when I fished with Ken, one of his sisters and his stepdaughter made up his crew. For the most part the crew worked while Ken talked of fishing in the canyon over the years. Numerous times his sister would have to remind him of the task at hand as newly caught salmon were being returned to the river, a distracted Ken neglecting to pull them from the net.

This more leisurely approach to the fishery was in sharp contrast to the Pilot Sales Program fisheries. Fishing under the sale agreements resembled that of the industrial fishery at the mouth of the river. Openings were generally shorter with fishing being conducted around the clock to make the most of the short time on the river. With the decreased number of hours available for fishing, nets were "hot-picked" or checked and emptied more frequently. Landing and counting sites had been set up at various points along the river to comply with the terms of the Pilot Sales Program. This meant that fishers had shorter distances to travel to offload and dispose of their catch as buyers lined up on the fishing grounds to purchase fish. According to Ken Malloway, even though the openings were shorter, the prospect for good numbers were good if one fished hard enough. The prospect of making large sums of money in one weekend were also very good. It was reported that one fisher made over \$30,000 one weekend handling over a dozen nets. The discussion centered on the fisher's ability to buy a new minivan, a new boat and outboard, and send his family on a shopping spree (Bierwert 1999:252). While the fisher was not identified, Ken acknowledged that the discussion was probably referring to him. Notes Ken, "I bought my wife a new van and took my kids to the Edmonton Mall. I bought her another van the next year, 1994. She's still driving that one." He went on to comment on the perception within the community of his wealth, simply stating, "You've seen my truck, it's

a piece of shit." When questioned on the number of nets he fished, Ken snidely remarked, "Well if you believe the rumors, 23." Ken explained that he would, at times, fish for other family members leading to the rumors of excessive fishing.⁶

When considered in the context of a family fishery, the prospect for large cash hauls must be viewed in a light similar to that of the industrial fishery at the mouth of the river. As explained by Ken Malloway, on an exceptional weekend—good year, good allocation—his brother Melvin would make \$70,000. It must be remembered that several family members are involved and the money generated from the fishery is divided among the family members. As Ken notes, "Melvin's boat launch resembles a village, our family is so large." While Ken's family crew may be considerably smaller than his brother Melvin's, expenses in the form of gas, lodging, and food are factored into the bottom line when calculating the real income from the sale fishery. While for Ken Malloway fishing in all years is a business, however it was in the sales agreement years that the fishery took on the appearance of a business.

Bona Fide Commercial Fisherman

The business of fishing need not be separated from the Sto:lo tradition of fishing whether conducted illegally in the shadows of night or legally in the light of day. Lester Ned jokingly refers to himself as a bona fide commercial fisherman because he holds a commercial license. Lester Ned operates a thirty-foot gillnetter (bow picker) just below the Mission Bridge under an A-I (Area E) Aboriginal commercial license he has held for about 25 years and for which he pays \$380 annually to maintain.⁷ Lester Ned estimates

6 In 1996, Ken Malloway faced three charges of fishing more than one additional net on three different occasions in 1995 (*Chilliwack Progress* 1996). Ken noted that this was an attempt on DFO's part to discredit him and that other similar charges were laid against other canyon highliners. This charge and those laid against the other highliners were dismissed two days before each of the scheduled court dates.

7 Notes Dennis Brown, these licenses were issued in response to Aboriginal claims of marginalization in the fishing industry. As a result Ottawa introduced a special Aboriginal-only salmon license category (2005:72).

the value of this boat and license at approximately \$160,000. Lester's capital expenditures in his boat and processing facility are the exception rather than the rule among the Sto:lo fishers in the area above the Mission Bridge where the majority of the Sto:lo reserves lie. In addition to fishing under his A-1 commercial license, Lester also fishes under the Sumas Band's communal food-fishing license.⁸ Lester's position in the fishery is unique for a number of reasons in addition to his A-1 commercial license. In 1986/87 DFO approached Lester Ned about relocating his fishery from Devil's Run to avoid the further taking of co-migrating steelhead. He agreed to relocate from Devil's Run if DFO would allow him to operate a drift net above the Mission Bridge. In an effort to save the wild steelhead, DFO agreed to do so on a trial basis and Lester was issued a license to drift above the Mission Bridge.⁹ Prior to 1990 Lester fished his traditional spot at Devil's Run, the traditional fishing spot for the Sumas Band community when participating in Aboriginal fisheries. In contrast to the family fishing exhibited by the very large Malloway family and other canyon highliner families, Lester Ned fishes alone and outside of Sumas territory.

Lester's entrepreneurial approach to the salmon fishery is clearly evident. However, for Lester fishing is a Sto:lo activity integral to his identity as Sto:lo. Lester Ned frequently reflects on fishing at his family site at Devil's Run, where his father fished before him. He considers it an obligation to provide salmon to band Elders and others who are not able to fish.

8 "Food fishing" is a term Lester takes great exception to, contending that the separate designations of food and commercial are government constructs holding no validity to the Sto:lo. He prefers the term "Native fishing." When I conducted my first interview with Lester on July 9, 2002, he noted that as of that date there had been no opportunities for fishing under his commercial license—no openings.

9 Regulations enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries rendered illegal any time of fishing other than set-net fishing in the Fraser River above Mission Bridge. As noted earlier, this is the area in which the majority of Sto:lo reserves lie.

Summary and Analysis

In spite of the law, Sto:lo fishers have sold their catch. Local newspapers periodically reported "Tons of Seizures" and sting operations launched to uncover the black market trade in salmon. It was reported that in one season Chilliwack Fisheries officers seized approximately eight tons of salmon valued at about \$60,000, plus close to 400 illegal nets and several outboard motors, boats, cars and trucks (*Chilliwack Progress* 1988a). Reports reveal that in some years as many as 160 charges were laid against more than 60 individuals. Fines for those charged were sometimes as high as \$5000 plus the forfeiture of a vehicle. On top of having to pay fines and forfeit vehicles, fishermen also faced the loss of their food fishing license. Sales agreements provide for protection of those items essential to the economic activity of fishing, while also offering an opportunity to participate fully in the capitalist mode of production and receive all its benefits.

It was during the sale years from 1992-1997 that large sums of money were made by some Sto:lo fishers. Notes Ken Malloway, this accumulation of wealth was not new to the Sto:lo. Commenting on Suttles (1974, 1987) comparison of class designation in Sto:lo society as resembling an inverted pear, Malloway described the system as a bit more complex than that mirroring somewhat the present day, larger Canadian society. There was an upper class, middle class, lower class/slave class. Ken noted that mobility from middle/lower class was possible through the accumulation of wealth. As he explained, extraordinary fishing ability afforded one method of ascension to a higher class. However, this could be a bit problematic in that lower class individuals were designated as such because "they did not know their past or family" and hence had no connection to the rights afforded by family connections to resources. Nevertheless, the point Ken was striving to make was that wealth, specifically the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, was indeed a part of Sto:lo social order. He gave an example his uncle Frank Malloway's Halq'eméylem name, which means "one who gives big potlatches." According to Ken this name, going back 500 years, demonstrates the fact that "obviously some Chilliwack people were rich." Bierwert, writing

on the accumulation of wealth by some Sto:lo fishers, notes that roughly 10 percent of the fishers took about 40 percent of the catch (1999:252).

This notion of the accumulation of wealth as anathema to Sto:lo social order is a theme present in discussions of accumulation of wealth by some within the Sto:lo community as well as by some outside the Sto:lo community. It is possible that these discussions hinge on the definition of “communal right” as it was set out in the language incorporated in the individual sales agreements negotiated each year. Central to this argument is that the issuance of “communal licenses” was to each **Band**. Based on that argument, the issuance of a “communal license” dictated that the catch or subsequent profits generated from the catch belonged to the **Band** as a whole rather than the individual and that fishers had an obligation to ensure that all **Band** members shared in that profit. According to Ken, while some contended that the communal right meant everyone was to have an equal share, that notion was not consistent with the Sto:lo past. Ken Malloway went on to comment that “everyone has equal opportunity, but some fish harder than others and some have better fishing spots. We are not communists.”

For the Sto:lo, the fishing industry as well as participation in the larger capitalist economy have long been a part of Sto:lo life. Historical records reflect the Sto:lo fishers as entrepreneurs, initiating trade relations with the Hudson’s Bay post at Fort Langley long before commercial canning reached the Fraser. That history is not lost on Ken Malloway and Lester Ned. Both refer to this early business relationship with HBC when they talk of the importance of a Sto:lo commercial salmon fishery. Sto:lo fishers such as Ken Malloway and the other canyon highliners as well as Lester Ned have always sold their catch even in the pre-Pilot Sales Program years. Long standing supplier/customer relations had existed for several generations, quite often being ‘passed down’ through the family. There existed a black market in Aboriginal-caught salmon that existed as well as the informal economy surrounding the sale of Aboriginal-caught salmon. Also existing were the long standing agreements between buyers and seller, arrangements that were often handed down within

the family. Aboriginal fishers had their regular customers (Bierwert 1999:244). At times these customer arrangements were disrupted by participation in Pilot Sales Program fisheries.

As the debate rages within the larger Canadian commercial fishing economy as to the place of an in-river, Aboriginal commercial fishery, Ken Malloway and Lester Ned continue to seek to make a living as fishermen, as participants in the larger society in which they find themselves by relying on the traditions of the smaller Sto:lo society to which they belong. With an expanded access to the fishery for Ken Malloway through his large kin network and corresponding access to fishing sites and for Lester Ned via his Aboriginal commercial license and access to the industrial fishery, a perception is created of wealth accumulation through a “legal sale” fishery that some claim is not a traditional Sto:lo practice. Emerging are two distinct dialogues: one within the smaller Sto:lo society juxtaposing tradition and participation in a legally sanctioned fishery, the other between Sto:lo fishers and the larger society offering protected economic opportunities.

Just as with the connections to the larger economy through the black market fishery, the connection to the larger economy as part of legally sanctioned fisheries cannot be overlooked. As Ken Malloway explained, it is the desire to participate in the larger economy without the fear of arrest and the loss of vehicles and equipment that they seek. Participation in legally sanctioned fisheries places Sto:lo fishers such as Ken Malloway and Lester Ned squarely within the larger economy and the security of its structure and polity, while allowing them to also contribute to the smaller Sto:lo economy and its structure and polity: tradition. Participation in legally sanctioned fisheries locates Sto:lo fishers in a space between tradition and regulation; affirming the Aboriginal right to fish through their participation in two economies. For Ken Malloway, Lester Ned and other Sto:lo fishers the action of fishing is not singly defined by the particular license or conditions under which fishing is practiced. The practice of fishing conducted within the confines of the law does not deny the relevance of the practice as it contributes to the act of resistance any more than participation in the practice of out-

law fishing defines the conditions of resistance or as described by G. Smith (1989, 1999) the reproduction of culture. In short, resistance and livelihood become two sides of the same coin, inseparable and joined by tradition. What is observed is the shifting of the conditions under which resistance, rebellion and agency are manifest and how they are realized in connection with Sto:lo tradition and social identity when viewed as part of an emerging history that is connected with a specific history/prehistory and economy within a context of a global history and economy (G. Smith 1989, 1991, 1999).

By examining legal fishing as it relates to an opportunity to make a living within a context of resistance and accommodation, the existing relationship between tradition and capital accumulation is indeed valid within Sto:lo social order. Fishers such as Ken Malloway and Lester Ned who not only participate in the sales agreements, but push each year for their signature, challenge the notion that the agreements represent an infringement on the Aboriginal right to fish. While these agreements may set limits on the practice of fishing, the Aboriginal right to fish exists whether agreements are in place or not. These fishers also challenge the notion that participation in sales agreements should be viewed as less than traditional. Fishing as a traditional practice is not singly defined by the conditions under which the fishery is conducted but rather also by how the individual fisherman identifies himself, especially through his place in the community and the fishery. Lester Ned is indeed a Sto:lo fisher whether fishing from his “lazy white man’s” boat under his A-1 Aboriginal commercial license or in his band’s spot at Devil’s Run.

Perceptions and misperceptions of wealth and access to the fishery have placed some Sto:lo fishers within the space between tradition and regulation. Traditionally fishing had indeed been bound by regulation, albeit it from within Sto:lo society rather than from without. Respected individuals, *siya:m*, as well as family connections to fishing grounds worked to determine who fished where and how. As canning progressed on the Fraser, state regulation replaced traditional rules for fishing. Fisheries regulations created a site of power and corporate enterprise at odds with the Canadian state as well as with other Sto:lo

fishers as commercial fishing continued among the Sto:lo both illegally and legally (Bierwert 1999). Outlaw fishing as a practice came to be for some, a form of resistance to the repressive politics of the state (Bierwert 1999:245). Can it not be said that participation in the legal sale of salmon represents its own form of resistance when viewed as a mechanism of cultural reproduction or more specifically the protection of a livelihood that is interconnected with a social identity?

A glimpse into the Sto:lo way of life as described by ethnographers such as Wilson Duff is of families travelling to the canyon to fish. It is a picture of entire families congregating in camps to cut and hang sockeye from family racks as the canyon winds flow through the bright red strips. This picture can be juxtaposed with that of full totes of salmon ready to be deposited at DFO-mandated landing sites, where shiny silver unprocessed sockeye are turned into hard cash. The red colour so visible from the many racks along the river’s edge remains hidden. Both are pictures of the Sto:lo way of life. Both are pictures of tradition. Both are pictures of a life.... lived. Fishing is the essence of Sto:lo identity and life. Sto:lo people have fought to keep intact the social and economic aspects of their fishery. Fishing represents not only a livelihood or a way of making a living but a life lived.

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“They Had a Deep Respect for the Earth:” Teaching Ethnoecology in the Settler-Canadian Classroom

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Abstract: In courses on Indigenous peoples and the environment, the classroom becomes a potent site of Native-settler encounter, where the settler-Canadian student deploys and reinterprets existing narratives about Indigenous peoples and the land. A central character in these stories is a phantom-like Indian figure who is just on the brink of disappearing, and who has “deep understandings” ready to be transferred to the morally prepared student. In this view, being Indigenous is simply one of many mental alternatives in which the Indigenous “feeling for nature” promises to restore sustainability and simplicity to once-Indigenous westerners. These narratives silence ongoing disputes over Indigenous lands and resources and constrain teaching about the history and politics of Native-settler relations.

Key words: ethnoecology, teaching, Native-settler relations, Indigenous studies, environmentalism.

As a teacher of undergraduate courses on Indigenous peoples and the environment, I am frequently asked questions about *them*. Who *are* they? What are the Natives’ *spiritual beliefs*? What is their *culture*? Could I bring in an Elder so that we can absorb her *ancient wisdom*? Why do they have so many *problems*? How come they use guns if they *love nature*? Aren’t the traditional ways of life *disappearing*? Could we please have workshops on basket weaving, pit-cooking, and how to colour wool with plant dyes? Why didn’t the Natives realize that the fur trade would lead to *the demise of their culture*? How can *urbanized* Natives claim to be *traditional*? Why are they so *messed up*?

Such questions mark the classroom as a potent site of Native-settler encounter, where students deploy existing narratives about Indigenous peo-

ples, nature, and the land, and re-interpret them in ways that do real political work. The questions students pose and the stories they tell in class suggest that they are also encountering, explaining, and sometimes evading their own, settler-Canadian participation in “nature” and “disappearing ways of life.” The central character in these stories is the mythical Indian, who is not the passive romanticized figure of a pre-contact past, but is instead endowed with a remarkable agency: he (and sometimes she) comes to life, mobilizes so-called “deep understandings,” transmits timeless “mindsets” to young people, recovers “our common heritage as humans,” and participates in all sorts of ways in the settler-student’s environment. The student therefore enters university already knowing a great deal about this prototypical figure, who conveniently appears, disappears, and reappears

as part of nature itself. This occurs in the classroom and at other locations where the land is narrated and stories about the past are told. The effect of these encounters is to silence the politics and histories of ongoing disputes over land.

The following is an account of what I—myself a settler-Canadian—have learned about the role the imaginary Indian plays in cementing settler authority over Indigenous peoples and territories. Students' comments, questions, and analyses spoken and written across two universities and five separate courses give shape to a sort of "ideal type"—an individual student who, though not necessarily "average" or "typical," serves as a conceptual device through which I describe students' understandings of Indigenous peoples. The imagined Indian, who exists in the timeless, place-less, unattainable domain of "nature," is the ever-present interlocutor in the student's explorations of his own relationship to the land.

Vine Deloria, Jr. encountered, in his dealings with anthropologists, bureaucrats, scientists, and members of the public, many of the same stories about Indians that I heard inside the classroom. Deloria's essays on Native-settler relations are dominated by one character in particular: the anthropological fieldworker, who was free to define, theorize, and represent, and whose imaginative forays into Indian Country had gone mainstream. For me, this fieldworker appeared as an undergraduate student seeking the key to Indian culture and an explanation for Indian "problems." Through Deloria's writings, I learned to understand this student as the voice of settler privilege, and the student's Indian as disappearing yet accessible; gentle yet dangerous; primitive yet wise; authentic yet tainted. This is the impossible Indian of the settler imagination.

Throughout his career, Deloria argued that Euro-North Americans have only a shallow understanding of the land on which they live, and that their constructions of Indigenous peoples serve as a source of authenticity and as a way of legitimating a colonial order. That order is under constant threat and must be continually re-told, with the Indian as a central character. In settler stories about nature, Indians are shadows of the past. Their evolutionary trajectory ended with white contact, and their maladaptive-

ness to "progress" foretold their sad but inevitable decline.¹

Disembodied and defeated, traditional knowledge floats, available for consumption by the morally prepared student who hopes to channel the "mind-set" of the people he adopts as his ancestors. As a result the student's Indians are divided between modern Indians, or those who "are messed up" and "use modern techniques," and the mythical, phantom-like super-Indian. This division is one that Vine Deloria has also closely observed: "the Indian image split and finally divided," he wrote, "into modern Indians and the Indians of America—those ghostly figures that America loved and cherished." (Deloria 2003:28)

An Indian Presence With No Indians Present

The ghostly figure identified by Deloria moves in and out of my classroom too. He is a phantom, a relic from another time, embodying Indigenous peoples in the form of a single individual, serving only, as Deloria suggests, "to personalize the fortunes of the tribe. A mythical Hiawatha, a scowling Sitting Bull, a sullen Geronimo; all symbolize not living people but the historic fate of a nation overwhelmed by the inevitability of history" (Deloria 2003:25). He lives on, as in the timeless space of an Edward Curtis photograph, his weathered face looking far off into the distance. At the turn of the 19th century, Curtis was one of many fieldworkers attempting to salvage Indigenous peoples through texts, artifacts, and on film. His photographs today oscillate between the ethnographic and the popular (Wakeham 2008:88). The mass cultural appeal of Curtis's photographs—they can be

1 The preference by undergraduate students for grand theories and master narratives has been noted by Tad McIlwraith in his teaching blog (2009). McIlwraith calls this the "Jared Diamond Effect." In *Guns, Germs and Steel*, Jared Diamond ecologizes the familiar plot of Indigenous decline by suggesting that agricultural advancements "conquered" Native hunting societies throughout the world. The Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith identifies history as an important site of decolonization for Indigenous peoples. Western history, Smith argues, is a modernist project—a totalizing discourse into which all known knowledge can be incorporated, and in which there is forward movement through progressive stages of development. See Smith 2006:29-35.

found on posters, internet sites, and postcards—brings individuals to life in freeze-frames, but, as Wakeham suggests, the immediacy of the images hinges upon the demise of the persons depicted (94). In the classroom, the spirit of the Indian is resurrected through the death, or near-death, of his environmentally-sensitive practices. It doesn't matter what tribe he belonged to, or what happened to him: he survives only as the embodiment of environmentalism itself. "Indigenous knowledge has so much to offer in the realm of sustainable living," my student tells me. "Traditional knowledge seems to encompass so many values that western society is beginning to incorporate into culture. They had a deep respect for the earth and saw everything as interconnected."²

This is not the student's modern Indian, who he describes as "drunk," "urbanized," or as "having lots of problems." Indians of today have "lost touch with their Native roots" and have "a muddled sense of priorities and values." They fish "illegally," hunt "out of season," and are "just as bad as a white person," though this was not always the case, and wise Elders, my student assures me, counsel against such bad behaviour. These Elders are themselves an endangered species: "dying off," and living in a mythical space—"caught between two worlds"—but still able to impart timeless ecological wisdom. In preparation for his assignments, the student travels far and wide on the internet, accessing tribal secrets and becoming the confidant of wise old Indians. Indian words are strewn throughout his essays as a series of wise quotations, warning against the evils of waste and greed. "Take only what you need, use all that you take," I read, over and over again. The cruelty and folly of the white man are captured neatly in little sayings that are entrusted to the student: the intellectual disciple and inheritor of rare and valuable Indian wisdom. Like his shadowy internet ancestors, today's Elder

2 Once the land was securely in the hands of non-Natives, settlers could feel comfortable in sympathizing with the Indian, and calling on his noble qualities to critique western civilization. See Limerick 1987. The trope of the ecological Indian developed in the 1970s, during a time of growing environmental awareness and a strong American Indian rights movement. It is perhaps best illustrated by the Crying Indian—a Hollywood actor used in advertising campaigns against pollution and litter.

threatens to expire at the moment the student comes on the scene—"one of the last knowledge holders," my student says ominously. He is a kind of living dead whose death is postponed only long enough to transfer knowledge and ward off ecological ruin.

Defeated and dejected, this phantom needs life-support, and my student is eager to provide it. In the process, Indian "traditional wisdom" is transferred to the settler who, through a meeting of minds, becomes more authentically Native than "today's Aboriginal youth." These youth, I am told, are hardly children of nature. "Today's Native kids are cut off from their Native culture. But we can all learn from and adapt these important cultural values, which sadly are on the verge of disappearing." Important stories and traditional knowledge however, can be shared with the student, who insists that his introduction to Indigenous peoples comes just at the moment of their imminent disappearance, making him the caretaker of knowledge that tribal people themselves are not morally prepared to understand.³ He is set to preserve what he calls "vast ecological wisdom," which "could potentially be extremely helpful" to averting global ecological disaster. But he is not interested in actual Indigenous peoples, who Deloria says "begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian. Many anthros spare no expense to reinforce this sense of inadequacy in order to further support their influence over Indian people" (Deloria 1969:86). The student, on the other hand, does not feel like a shadow, but like the rightful, direct descendant of this Indian, and the owner and protector of disappearing traditional knowledge. I get the distinct impression that this knowledge is fading, not as the consequence of ongoing dispossession, but like the print on a page left in the sunlight, or like a rock worn down by the action of wind and weather. It is a disembodied knowledge, and has no need for the land: it is simply forgotten, washed from memory by the tides of time and progress.

With the question of land safely out of the pic-

3 Deloria (2004) describes a similar phenomenon, in which Indian buffs and writers claim to have become the confidantes and best friends of wise old Indians, who prefer to share highly sensitive knowledge with the writer, rather than with their own communities.

ture, the Indian “feeling for nature” and “deep cultural understanding” can be safely contained and transferred without conflict. The phantom Indians involved in the transfer of knowledge are nameless, timeless, and tribe-less, thereby transcending the events that made them invisible in the first place. Unaffected by the removal of forests and their exclusion from the land, they continue on, undisturbed, with their ancient practices. One such ghostly Indian figure appears as a woman, pictured on a storyboard in a wetland-turned-nature preserve, sitting cross-legged in front of a pile of reeds. Photographed in black and white, she is described simply as “Native American woman weaving baskets.” “Wetlands provided early cultures with many daily essentials,” we learn. She is unnamed—a stand-in for all Indigenous peoples—and exists in an indeterminate, prehistoric time. We are urged to discover her by looking for plant species that have outlived her extinct kin: “Native Americans wove cattail leaves into mats and used hardhack and rush stems in weaving baskets. Berries such as salmonberry, cranberry and blueberry provided important food sources. ... See if you can spot any of these native plants as you walk the trail.”⁴

Back in the classroom, I find this woman there too, a template for the student’s own “deep understandings,” “stories,” and “feeling connected to nature.” She is the “wise Elder” who has “ancient wisdom” that the student feels should be taught in school, and that he wishes he had acquired at a younger age: “I have always felt that being taught Native information when we are young can help foster our connection to the land. If popular support for radical change in societal values cannot be found within the population today, then why not begin to educate the next generation as to the benefits of Indigenous ways of knowing and living?”

Deloria suggests that we take extra care to inform students that they will not be learning about “culture,” “religion,” “spirituality,” and “environment;” that the proper place for this type of instruction is in Indigenous communities; and that university courses in American Indian studies focus on the history of Indian relations with the United States, as well as

modern expressions of Indian identity (Deloria 1998:30). This has always been my explicit approach too. Then why is this phantom so difficult to extirpate from the classroom? What can the meaning of “culture” for settler-Canadian students tell us about ongoing Native-settler relations? And can the classroom provide, as Deloria suggests, “a framework in which the demands for lands make sense” (Deloria 2003:xvi)?

Culture, Technology and Emotionality in the Berry Patch

My student is very excited about Indian culture. It is the opposite of “our technological society,” he tells me, and it is why he is taking this course on Indigenous peoples: to learn lessons in sustainable practices, and a different way of living that is in harmony with the earth. In this quest he is inspired and supported by fellow environmentalists, who see the wild state of nature as the location of Aboriginal culture. Briony Penn, a nature writer living in British Columbia, laments that “most vestiges of true aboriginal way of life in this region” are gone, “but we still have some berry patches left.” “For an uncertain future, this is a reassuring thought,” she muses. The tangled brambles of these berry patches, the rotting logs inside them, the birds and insects flitting in and out, create a situation of “chaos:” “equilibrium is reached by virtue of thousands of years of confusion. When the commercial hybrids have foundered from over-specialization, the scientists will come back to this thicket.” Her final comfort

comes from a Chilcotin legend about the repercussions of over-fulfilling one’s desires—a tale to be told in the patch. Raven once stole the only Salmonberries on earth from a sacred patch guarded by the people. He laughed so loud, thinking himself clever to steal them, that the berries all fell from his mouth and scattered over the land, springing up as new bushes wherever they fell. Standing amongst the Salmonberries, I felt it was fitting that as a tribute to our cleverness at manipulating the world, we might be left with the odd patch of berries. As those motorists zoom disdainfully by me, I’ll have the last laugh. [Penn 1999: 101-102]

4 Mercer Slough Nature Park, Bellevue, Washington.

Here, wild, chaotic nature offers a morally superior alternative at an ecologically uncertain time. This alternative is simultaneously a step back in time (the “thousands of years of confusion”) and away from technology (“manipulating the world,” “cars”), as well as a source of Native stories—“to be told in the patch.” It is pure and raw nature, unfiltered by technology, economy, or reason. This nature exists on a large scale only in remote times and places. It is where survival skills are all that stand between the hunter and starvation; nomadic bands make haphazard encounters with animals; and superstition and fear are ways of coping with unpredictable natural elements. Today, my student tells me, there are only remnants of this nature left, perhaps in the “far north” where Indigenous hunters are still “living according to their traditional ways,” and where people are living away from the “culture clash,” and with few “modern technologies.”

Much like this nature writer, my student looks to Indigenous stories to get a sense of the primordial feeling of being “connected to the earth.” But it is not only for himself that he wants to know how this must feel: it is also to find out whether or not Indigenous practices disrupt nature, and how far Indians themselves have been corrupted by “modern techniques.” Could I tell him the story of what the whale means to Makah culture? The Makah are going after whales again, this time with guns, and my student wonders whether they still really need whales. What about the Sto:lo? Do I have a story that can explain their relationship to the salmon? How is selling fish traditional? Wouldn’t money make them overfish? Perhaps we could just have “an Aboriginal person or Elder come in to tell oral stories so that students really get a feel for their importance.”

What matters in the end, my student tells me, is “mindset.” It is “mindset” that is embodied in stories and facilitated by primitive technology. As a hunter—“but not a sports-hunter!” the student insists—he too uses “traditional Native techniques,” which allow him to bridge the gap to Indigenous “emotion:” “I feel it is important to draw a distinction between ‘hunters who use traditional native techniques,’ a group of people which need not, and should not be exclusive to Indigenous peoples, and ‘hunters who use modern

techniques,’ a group which does not and should not exclude altogether Indigenous people. I feel hunting is a timeless aspect of human existence, and has a special place in my own heart. Hunting is something I take very seriously and practice with much emotion.”

Participating in ancient “mentalities” or “emotions” allows for a heightened awareness of nature, but when it comes to wildlife biology—actually knowing about animal populations and allocating hunting rights—these mentalities seem to lack any real empirical reference, and cannot be taken seriously as fact. Yet wisdom and certain factoids may be gleaned from them: “though we may disagree with the mentalities associated with these societies and the means in which they regard the natural systems, taking advantage of the vast ecological wisdom acquired over so many generations could potentially be extremely helpful,” the student writes. This “wisdom” contains “emotion,” and also valuable nuggets of ecological information, such as the clever tricks Indians used to find and process plants and animals in a “sustainable” manner, and to shield themselves from weather and disease. “Sadly,” my student laments, “in our attempts to assimilate them, we have also thrown away immense information and knowledge in regards to the land.” This continual fluctuation, between what Deloria calls “a recognition of Indians’ practical knowledge about the world” and “outright admiration for their sense of the religious” is not only “unsettling and unproductive,” but it also “does not attribute to Indians any consistency, nor does it suggest that their views of the natural world and religious reality had any more correspondence and compatibility than do Western religion and science” (Deloria 2001:1-2).

The religiosity of imagined Indigenous knowledge is glossed in class as “deep understanding,” and is considered the opposite of science, where technology and reason (“problem solving”) and a reliance on calculation and facts dominate. “Traditional knowledge” is considered the realm of faith and belief, rather than knowledge itself. It is neither empirical nor theoretical, and it is practical only because simple technologies did not require sophisticated or consistent human analysis. My student, who believed the

course would teach him about sustainable living and green lifestyles, yearns for a lost time when modern technologies did not interfere with this type of human relationship with nature.

Life in the past was simple and straightforward, “without the need to problem-solve,” and without the need for complex technology: “when a resource such as balsamroot is harvested, protected and nurtured in appropriate ways, there is no need for technology to advance beyond variations of a digging stick.” These societies were “simple and in-depth,” rather than “convoluted and inaccessible,” and had “a broad view” rather than a “narrow and technical” one: “they were not technologically, academically or politically advanced, but they were emotionally advanced.” It is morality and emotionality (residue from the past), rather than science and technology (unique to the present), that marks stories and practices as Indigenous.

This construction of culture requires Indians to be located at a particular point in time, and that time is not now. The Indigenous youth of today, the student laments, “would rather have the latest cell phone than the oldest ecological knowledge.” Since technology is considered absent or relatively primitive in true Indigenous ways of life, the achievement of Indian culture seems to be their stagnation in time, or the very *absence* of technological progress. In an essay praising the Indian for treading lightly on the earth, the student writes, “though it would be difficult to argue that North American Indigenous peoples would have developed a material technology advanced enough to physically reach them to the moon had they been left alone, one could easily argue that the world would be nowhere near its irreparably damaged and unbalanced state.”

As a stagnant cultural form, Indigenous knowledge is understood as a kind of proto-science, that has preserved what the student refers to as the “whole system,” through “thousands of years of trial and error,” and on fishing grounds with “simple stone traps.” This is a nature experienced directly, without the intervention of interpretation, theory, or even empirical investigation. Through direct experience of primordial nature, the student understands a time when the world stood still: “while European culture

is characterized by increasingly complex and convoluted human systems, Native culture is premised on understanding the original complex system.” His is an accessible, personally experienced nature. It is the nature, and the childhood, the student feels he never had.

This approach to categorizing Indigenous knowledge sees Indigenous practices as a stage in a progression of beliefs, best grasped in childhood—a recapitulation of cultural development in human ontogeny. Childhood, like the phantom Indian’s golden age, is a time when wonder, awe, and playful discovery sets the stage for a “holistic science.” Indigenous knowledges are the recovered tools that were lost somewhere along the way, and that presage their uses in the modern world: “techniques for sustainable extraction were developed,” I am told, “over generations of Aboriginal people interacting with and respecting the environment.” And these techniques “were passed down to children by knowledgeable Elders,” a process that mirrors the student’s own position as a learner. Childhood features prominently in the student’s view of what education could become: not the “extremely dry” material of his science classes, but filled with stories about animals that anyone can relate to, “if only they are willing to listen.” Getting rid of artificial “mental divisions,” and “opening up your heart” is a kind of reverse educational process in which “getting back to basics” allows one to backtrack from the status quo and “regain a connection to the land.” This linear metaphor twists into one strand individual human growth (child development) and social evolution (progress), where the past is an unravelling of the present, and at the same time a way of solidifying the present through smarter progress. “When we incorporate Indigenous knowledge into school programs, we can learn the deep respect the Indigenous population had for sustainability.”

Much like the visitor to the berry thicket, my student has discovered in Indigenous nature a setting that serves as an authentic, original reference point. Nothing happened there—at least nothing fact-based, documented, objective, or testable—but it is where the Indian *feels* nature, and where abstractions of Indigenous life—the settler’s stories—find their form long enough to be transported into the pres-

ent. It is where moral content forms the background rather than the substance of ecological relationships, and where nature is a concept hidden beyond the horizons of time and space. The settler student, like “the white man” of Deloria’s analyses, “has the marvellous ability to conceptualize. He also has the marvellous inability to distinguish between sacred and profane. He therefore arbitrarily conceptualizes all things and understands none of them” (Deloria 1969:188-189).

Reconciling the Culture Clash: Indians-are-us

Such conceptualizations and abstractions turn Indigenous knowledge into “values,” which act as convenient containers in which culture can be carried around, under the assumption, as Vine Deloria would put it, “that being Indian is a state of mind” (Deloria 1998:30). As a state of mind, values are universal and do not need Indigenous people, nor any people, for that matter, to exist. They simply swirl around in a timeless manner, bringing the inner kernel of humanity back to us westernized moderns. They are part of “our common heritage as humans,” my student writes triumphantly.

If these values can be freely taken on, felt, and just as freely discarded, then decolonization is just one of many mental alternatives, requiring nothing more than empathy and what my student has branded “cultural recognition.” Without reference to place, this Indians-are-us attitude does away with any conflict over the land. After all, such conflicts exist only in the mind, and can be resolved without reference to historically-based grievances: “Contrary to the assumption that settlers are inherently non-relational, those more relational practices have been buried by centuries of an increasingly dogmatic and controlling concept of social and ecological relations,” my student writes. He goes on to say: “what if we were once all native to somewhere, but our thought processes were all ‘colonized’ at some point?” Indians, my student tells me, like the ideal society of the past and future, had “simple understandings,” and “had no need for complex social structures;” instead “they lived by a few key beliefs that are simple, elegant, natural and which replace the myriad of institutions

western culture has created.”⁵

How is the student to resolve, within this scenario, Indigenous realities, such as lack of control over lands, forests, fisheries, education, language, child welfare, and governance, I wonder? What happens when unexpected “emotions,” or “angry Indians,” such as the ones blocking highways or logging roads, invade this peaceful image? What would happen if the student were thrust, not into a clash of “cultures,” but a clash of people—not “reconciliation” and “sharing,” but contention over land? For Deloria, such contention is the substance of what the settler North American calls cultural sharing: “There was never a time when the white man said he was trying to help the Indian get into the mainstream of American life that he did not also demand that the Indian give up land, water, minerals, timber and other resources which could enrich the white men” (Deloria 1969:174).

When fishing and hunting rights, or Aboriginal title enter the classroom, the culture clash gets serious: the student discovers he has been idealizing the Indian all along. Like Shepard Krech in *The Ecological Indian* (1999), the student sets out to debunk what he knows is a “romanticized” image: the Indian as a gentle child of nature mystically connected to non-humans. “So go argue with your mother,” Deloria would say, directing the student to consider how such images are not of Indigenous origin, but are rather “the lies of the previous generation of whites, who wanted to believe these things about Indians” (Deloria 1992:402). By expelling him from the

5 The assumption that Indigenous beliefs are simple, straightforward, and easily summarized persisted in the classroom, despite readings to the contrary. In one of the required texts for the course, *Two Families: Treaties and Government*, Harold Johnson writes that “under the law of the Creator, a student can spend a lifetime trying to understand three words: ‘All My Relations.’ ... But who are my relations? How should I relate to them? Why should I remember them when I gather from nature? Why should I remember them when I finish speaking? There are simple answers to these questions, but no complete ones. I could spend a lifetime trying to understand, and never know it all” (18-19). On the arrogance of outsiders, he writes: “When something is seen from a distance, it appears small, and some people are fooled into believing that they have an understanding of it” (20).

“dark green” end of the environmentalist spectrum, the student frees the Indian from the lie of ecological nobility.⁶ According to Krech, and my student, the Indian needs to be stripped of his qualifications as an environmentalist; after all, he engaged in all manner of destructive practices, such as overhunting and setting out-of-control fires. Like Krech, the student links ecological damage not to evidence of human-caused extinction or widespread devastation, but rather to claims that Indians adhered to irrational cosmological constructs, and were poorly equipped to know the power of their own subsistence practices. The spectre of this Indian rises from the ashes of his historical decline when claims to nature have material consequences: “I feel like in this class we romanticize Native people. How can they live sustainably when their populations are growing faster than the non-Native population?” I am asked. Indians, after all, my student tells me, are disconnected from their “traditional ways,” and developed a desire for land only recently, when it increased in value.

I try to fill the room with new characters. I show a photo of Harriet Nahanee, a Nuu-chah-nulth and Squamish elder and activist, facing arrest but thrusting a copy of the Royal Proclamation, which recognizes Indian title to unceded lands, in the face of a police officer. Nahanee was protesting against the expansion of a highway near Vancouver, and later died in jail. I show another picture, this time of Tahltan Elders blocking Royal Dutch Shell from accessing the sacred headwaters, and reading a statement that they will always be there. These Elders want to protect the headwaters of the Skeena, Nass, and Stikine rivers, including their sensitive salmon and wildlife habitats, from being contaminated by coal-bed methane extraction. I assign articles by Sonny McHalsie on the history of Sto:lo fishing places, and by Arthur Manuel on the assertion of Aboriginal rights by Secwepemc land users.

6 Paul Nadasdy in “Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian” argues that debates about whether Indigenous peoples are environmentalists are actually arguments about where they belong on the spectrum of environmentalism; such a spectrum assumes that environmentalism is a variable that can be plotted on a single axis.

For their final essay assignment, I ask the students to write a review of any book in the field of ethnology, and I provide a long list of possible titles. The most innocuous-sounding titles appear to be the most popular—“The Earth’s Blanket,” “Ecologies of the Heart,” and “Women and Plants.” Despite the course’s focus on the history of Native-settler relations, no one chooses “Fish, Law and Colonialism,” “As Their Natural Resources Fail,” “Kiumajut (Talking Back)” or “Hunters at the Margin.” My student is upset: he has picked a book on reef net fisheries—“lots of great information on cultural practices” he tells me mid-way through—only to find the last chapter entitled Genocide.⁷ In fact, speaking of injustice in the present, as many Indigenous authors do, is not only “biased” but downright dangerous: “faced with the realities of the colonial past, it is clear that blame is due. However, the way this blame is expressed could incite among First Nations readers feelings of hate and alienation that may, in the long run, be counter-productive to the quest for a better future.” Words like “dispossession” and “forced assimilation” are too “alienating,” he concludes.

Vine Deloria knew such censorship well: books “chronicling contemporary outrages” had difficulty getting published in the 1960s and 70s, for fear that they would “stir up bad feelings between Indians and whites” (Deloria 2003:26). I seem to have stirred up a lot of bad feelings, and I am warned to be careful: my student suggests that “openness,” rather than a “rigid agenda” can help transform “negative attitudes about Indians,” and “cultural misunderstanding.” “I have found that it is not helpful to create excessive controversy around social and environmental issues,” my student writes. “I believe that through the open telling of the truth without a rigid agenda is the best way to inspire ‘Aha!’ moments in your audience.” We have come to the end of the term. He is tired of my “bias.” I am “too political,” and he wishes I would just “stick to the subject matter.”

We just need to learn, he tells me, who the Indians *really* are. What is their relationship with nature? I get some advice too: “Many schools have begun to increase the level of outdoor, practical learn-

7 See Claxton and Elliot 1994.

ing. There are no doubt many within local Indigenous communities who would be more than happy to share their knowledge with students. Furthermore, this would work to empower the all too marginalized Indigenous communities across the country. I hope I get to have this experience in the rest of my courses here.” And so, the task of learning about Indian culture is postponed to next semester.

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