

Repatriation as a Reflection of Stó:lô Cultural Values: *Tset Tháyeltxwem Te lálém S'olh etawtxw* (We are Building a House of Respect)

by

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Abstract

This thesis considers the repatriation of First Nations' cultural property and human remains from museums. It foregrounds the *process* of repatriation in order to report on how it can proceed in accordance with local values and goals. Based on PAR (Participatory Action Research) with members of the Stó:lô First Nation in British Columbia, which involved formal interviews and informal discussions, priorities and strategies for future repatriation initiatives were developed. Our use of PAR thus clarified this community's repatriation goals, while providing a way to enact a re-formed anthropology that addresses recent critiques of its epistemological and ethical practices.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all those who inspired these thoughts which I carry with me from this point forward:

**I give thanks to all the knowledge;
I give thanks to all the knowledge;
I give thanks to all the knowledge;
I give thanks to all the knowledge.
Here, There, and Everywhere.**

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This research has been a shared experience in learning, and there are an incredible number of people who have contributed to its growth.

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Introduction

This thesis has three related goals. The first is to provide an account of a collaborative research project that I undertook with the Stó:lô First Nation of British Columbia during the summer of 2003. The purpose of this project was to determine how Stó:lô cultural values define the benefits of the repatriation of cultural property for the community. The Stó:lô community, along with other First Nations, has experienced colonization, and as a result, the removal of their tangible and intangible cultural forms. The community is currently engaged in an effort to repatriate these forms, and they would like to do so in a way which reflects a range of local values and concerns on the part of their members. I was invited by the community to undertake research to determine the general nature of relevant perspectives and concerns and the ways in which Stó:lô values ought properly to be reflected in the process of repatriation.

Thus, the second goal of the thesis is to present Stó:lô views of repatriation. This will contribute to our understanding of how repatriation is being enacted today in Canada. It provides an illustration of how a particular First Nation community would like to participate in this process.

Currently, First Nations are working towards implementing controls over the research process, which is not unusual, given that over the past few decades First Nations have raised concerns about anthropologists and other Western social scientists whose research in their communities has not always benefited them. These concerns have come from both First Nations and anthropologists themselves. Issues pertaining to how the benefits of research are defined and ethical issues such as how ownership and

representation of cultural knowledge ought to be addressed characterize contemporary challenges to anthropology. One way to respond to these issues is to collaborate with First Nations people in research which facilitates their being the teachers and keepers of their knowledge for purposes which they define.

Thus, the third goal of this thesis is to assess the usefulness of collaborative research, specifically the participatory approach I followed which is generally referred to as Participatory Action Research (PAR). Given the contemporary attention in anthropology to participatory research methods, my primary goal as a researcher was to ensure that the research emphasized participation, and that the project would have benefits for the community. In order to incorporate these and other ethical considerations directly within the project, I chose to use PAR.

Research Methodology

PAR is a research methodology characterized by a “systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants in the inquiry” (Rappoport 1970: 499 cited in McKernan 1991: 4). The literature on PAR stresses that within various definitions of this methodological approach, there are four basic themes: “empowerment of participants; collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change” (Zuber-Skerrit 1992: 2).

PAR, then, is a methodology which constitutes a response to criticisms made by anthropologists and Indigenous people that, in the past, the goals of research have been defined as primarily those of the discipline. PAR emphasizes achieving the practical goals of research as defined by the participants themselves as the *means* of making a

contribution to social sciences. This process is illustrated in the following description of the goals of the methodology:

Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration in a mutually acceptable ethical framework (Rappaport 1970: 499 as cited in McKernan 1991:4)

PAR is also suitable for this project as it functions to respond practically to the contemporary social, political and cultural movement of First Nations' communities towards the ownership and control of research which affects their lives. Throughout this research, I reflected on a number of specific questions, including: Who owns the research? How will its results be disseminated? Who frames the questions that will be asked? Similarly, I reflected on the ramifications of being allowed, as a non-Stó:lô researcher, to do research with members of the community.

This is why the third goal of this thesis is to assess the usefulness of PAR to meet the practical goals of the Stó:lô community related to repatriation, as well as to illustrate whether PAR can constitute a response to the ethical and epistemological aspects of anthropology with First Nations. Moreover, I want to determine if PAR can contribute to the knowledge and goals of anthropology as well as the applied goals of the people with whom PAR is done.

Project Background

My involvement with the Stó:lô community began in 2002 at the suggestion of Pamela Brown, who is the curator of Ethnology at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in Vancouver. She recommended that given my interest in First Nations' attitudes toward repatriation, I contact the Stó:lô Nation. She told me that the Stó:lô Nation were

addressing numerous heritage issues within their community and that perhaps they might have an interest in exploring repatriation. Following her advice, I contacted the Nation by phone and was referred to the Stó:lô Nation's Aboriginal Rights and Title department (henceforth AR &T). At that time, I became aware of an application procedure which the Nation has in place for all external researchers hoping to work with Stó:lô people. This procedure is called the research registry.

The research registry process requires all researchers to provide an outline, potential questions and possible modes of dissemination for their project (for example, use in a Master's thesis). It also requires researchers to leave copies of all transcripts, interviews tapes and notes taken throughout the course of research with the Stó:lô Nation. I will further discuss the history and significance of the registry process as well as my own experiences with it in Chapter Three.

Once my registry application was formally approved by the Nation, I began discussions with employees at AR &T, primarily the archivist, the head archeologist and the Stó:lô cultural advisor, who work at the AR & T department. A function of the department is to manage research and heritage initiatives on behalf of Stó:lô Nation members. Based on these initial consultations, I learned of the potential benefits of my proposed research for the community. These benefits included: determining what level of understanding there was within the community about the possibilities of repatriation; determining what forms of cultural property people in the community might want to repatriate; and determining what and how cultural protocols might be utilized throughout the repatriation process.

After defining the intended goals and benefits of the project with both Carleton University (who have their own ethics procedure) and in consultation with individuals from the Stó:lô Nation, I spent three months living in Chilliwack B.C. and working with members of the Stó:lô community in order to engage in and facilitate a discussion of repatriation.

The Importance of Exploring First Nations Views of Repatriation

Repatriation is currently an important issue in Canada. It has an ongoing presence within treaty negotiations between First Nations people and Federal and Provincial governments. Repatriation is one component of contemporary discussions concerning First Nations' self-determination, self-governance and ownership by First Nations' of their culture.¹ Michael Ames, former director of the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, explains why repatriation has become a necessary and relevant issue to explore in Canada: "Since those who control history are the ones who benefit from it, people should have a right to the facts of their own lives" (Ames 1992: 140).

In Canada, as in other societies where Indigenous people have been colonized, the last two centuries have been characterized by an exceptional amount of collecting of Aboriginal cultural property. Such property includes what was defined in the latter part of the century as "intangible" forms. Prior to the 1970s, First Nations' cultural property was largely characterized as the material culture of a distinct "other," and Aboriginal objects

¹ The 1999 Nisga'a Treaty and Collective Agreement addressed the process of repatriation extensively and generated both discussion and awareness of the issue in Canada. See the following section of the agreement which addresses repatriation: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Chapter 17, section L—Cultural Artifacts and Heritage. Nisga'a Final Agreement Issue Papers, 1998.

were bought and sold, or displayed as relics in museums. The development of concepts of cultural property and repatriation began with the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Scholar James Nason notes: “The convention did more centrally establish for the first time international guidelines that cultural property of all kinds should be protected by all Nations and should be the subject of repatriation when illicitly removed” (Nason 1997: 239). The Convention also employed a new definition of cultural property. This definition encompassed as cultural property all possible objects of importance to archeology, anthropology, history, literature, art, or science, including fauna, flora, minerals, paleontology, monuments or parts of archeological sites, antiquities, all types of artworks, incunabula, documents, stamps of all sorts, furniture and musical instruments, and all archival materials. Similarly, as a component of the Convention, it was stated that “Intangible cultural property” is:

broadly based, and ranges from concerns about the maintenance of traditional languages, to concerns about traditional religious lore and practices, traditional and detailed knowledge of the natural world, and all types of oral history, oral literature and other knowledge that could generally be referred to as ‘lore’ (Nason 1997:242)

James Nason stresses that “Whatever form it takes, such specialized knowledge is characteristically regarded as property within tribal legal systems and therefore constitutes a key form of traditionally defined intellectual property” (Nason 1997:242).

The United States implemented Federal Legislation with the Native North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 to address repatriation. However, in Canada repatriation policy and practices have been developed and implemented by individual museums. This approach, which is sometimes referred to

as ad hoc, resulted largely from the 1992 Canadian Museums Association (CMA) Taskforce Report: Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships between Museums and First Peoples (CMA and Assembly of First Nations: 1992). The Taskforce was a collaborative effort involving representatives from various First Nations' communities, academics and museum personnel. The Taskforce members concluded that there was a need for increased participation by First Nations' people within Canada's cultural institutions. The Taskforce also concluded that in contrast to the United States, in Canada the development of individual museum policies is more viable for addressing calls by First Nations' for the repatriation of cultural property. The UNESCO Convention, CMA Taskforce, and NAGPRA efforts have collectively established the need to clarify why First Nations consider repatriation to be an important issue. Accordingly, how individual First Nations define the value and purpose of repatriation for their communities requires exploration. Research to understand individual community views of repatriation has become important in Canada, and can be used to develop mutually acceptable strategies for managing cultural property in both a community and museum setting.

Understanding repatriation from one community perspective also involves defining the practical issues involved in the return of cultural property. Examples of these issues include: Specifying types of cultural heritage, including the aforementioned "intangible" forms of cultural property; utilizing appropriate cultural protocols for handling sacred objects (especially to address the reburial of human remains); and clarifying contemporary definitions of ownership of cultural property. In order to address

these and other practical, spiritual and social issues involved in repatriation efforts, the participation and knowledge of Aboriginal people is essential.

Contributions of the Research

This thesis is designed to make the following three contributions. The first is to contribute to Canadian anthropology and the goals of First Nations people by addressing repatriation from a local community perspective. As a case study of one First Nation's views of the management and repatriation of their cultural property, the project reported here reflects the recommendations of the CMA Taskforce to do research with individual First Nations to explore this topic. To facilitate understanding and collaboration between communities and museums regarding repatriation is timely, and this research contributes to our understanding of Canada's approach to the process.

Second, this thesis provides an account of one use of PAR methodology. As I will discuss further in Chapter One, I used PAR because I support the attempts of a number of anthropologists and Indigenous scholars to decolonize the discipline of anthropology. A new methodological focus on collaboration and participation when establishing the goals of research with First Nations has become a component of contemporary anthropology. I will provide an assessment of PAR in terms of whether it is a way to meet some of the concerns raised regarding the epistemological and ethical aspects of anthropology.

The third contribution that this thesis hopes to make is to assist the Stó:lô community in achieving their goals related to repatriation. This collaborative effort contributes to the Stó:lô Nation's efforts to incorporate their cultural values, protocols and history into the repatriation process. The results reported here of our collaborative

project will be used for policy development related to repatriation in the community and assist with the management of Stó:lô heritage within a museum setting.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter One discusses particular challenges to anthropology which have emerged over the past few decades. These challenges include critiques of the epistemological foundations and ethical practices that have long characterized anthropology, especially in the case of research involving Indigenous cultures. For the purposes of this thesis, I will foreground human history museums because they have been key sites of these challenges and help to contextualize the topic of repatriation. Based on this discussion, I will argue that the use of PAR constitutes a response to the criticisms made of anthropology by contemporary anthropologists and Indigenous people.

Chapter Two provides a summary of the history and culture of the Stó:lô people. This chapter draws on ethnohistorical literature, community produced publications and my own fieldwork in the community. In particular, Stó:lô history, language, cultural practices and cosmogony, which all have significant implications for understanding Stó:lô views of repatriation, will be presented. This overview will highlight aspects of Stó:lô experience of colonization and how specific events have led to the appropriation of their cultural knowledge and property. Finally, this chapter will discuss the processes of cultural resistance and revival on the part of the Stó:lô community over time. This discussion provides a context to understand the current desire in the community to repatriate their cultural forms.

Chapter Three is my account of how I undertook PAR research with the Stó:lô community. In this chapter, I consider how the three themes of collaboration, participation and representation emerged as the research unfolded. I will discuss how I learned about the Stó:lô views of repatriation while working in the Stó:lô community.

Chapter Four reports the results of discussions with Stó:lô people regarding how repatriation can best reflect their cultural values. Consequently, I will include summaries of the following discussions with Stó:lô people of the following issues: What does Stó:lô cultural property consist of, and what should be sought for repatriation? What are considered to be the benefits of repatriation for the community? How do community members prioritize repatriation efforts? What are the forms repatriation efforts can take so as to reflect these benefits and priorities? What other issues related to repatriation were identified by community members? What are potential practical solutions to these issues? Lastly, the chapter provides an illustration of how repatriation is conceptualized in the *Halq'eméylem* language.

And, finally, in Chapter Five I offer my views, based on my experiences with the Stó:lô community, of the extent to which PAR research works to meet the goals of research for First Nations communities and anthropology. I will also consider this research based on whether PAR contributes to a reformed anthropology by assessing its benefits and limitations.

Chapter One

Contemporary Research with First Nations

As humans we have both an acquisitive and an inquisitive nature. It is perhaps these qualities of our nature that are most poignantly represented within anthropology. Over the past thirty years, these qualities of our nature have been challenged in relation to the value and purpose of doing anthropological research involving First Nations people.

A series of challenges commenced in the 1970s that reflected the confluence of emergent postmodern thinking within Western social sciences, and the social and political resistance of First Nations to colonial practices of all forms, including the anthropological research process. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, I will discuss four challenges which have influenced contemporary research with First Nations, and consequently the research project reported on in this thesis. I will then consider how, in Canada, the process of repatriation is influenced by these challenges. Finally, I will illustrate how I believe PAR, through its methodological and epistemological emphasis on participation, provides a way to undertake purposeful and ethical research.

Specific Challenges to Anthropology with First Nations

Traditional anthropology, which can be understood to refer to anthropology prior to the 1970s, embodied the influences of the modern era. Its foundations were based on a number of interrelated assumptions which resulted in particular methodological practices in research with First Nations.

The following assumptions and practices associated with early anthropology have been challenged by contemporary scholars: The epistemological assumption that the

goals and benefits of research are universal in nature; the removal of cultural in the context of the assumption that Native people were disappearing; the belief that objectivity is an ideal of anthropological research; and the belief that the representation and dissemination of cultural knowledge obtained through research ought to take the form of an authoritative text.

Contemporary research with First Nations, exemplified by the study reported in this thesis, reflects consideration of these challenges and suggests the following in practice: define the intended goals and emancipatory benefits of research locally through collaboration with First Nations peoples; emphasize efforts to decolonize or undo impacts of past research by assisting with the return of cultural knowledge to the community; acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples did not disappear by seeking to ensure that they are key participants within the research process; emphasize the subjective nature of human experience in the development of research methodologies; and finally, legitimize the creation of a reflexive text and the potential for varying modes of dissemination of research.

The Assumption that the Goals of Research are Universal

An epistemological and consequently methodological shift in defining the goals and benefits of research as local rather than universal has taken place over the last thirty years. One premise which characterized traditional anthropological research that influenced how the benefits of research were defined was the assumption of a metanarrative, or that there was one way of knowing. As a result, the benefits of research with First Nations were legitimized as universal instead of local in nature. Although

often limited to an audience of other academic researchers, anthropological research was assumed to make a contribution to “knowledge itself,” with the use and value of local cultural knowledge within the community often considered secondary, if acknowledged at all. This premise has been challenged by numerous scholars since the 1970s, and as a result, it is now considered crucial that the foundations and perceived benefits of research be defined by Aboriginal people themselves. Indigenous scholar Linda Smith challenges the origin and implication of the premise of universality in research in her recent text

Decolonizing Methodologies:

Many researchers, academics and project workers may see the benefits of their research projects as serving a greater good ‘for mankind,’ or serving a particular emancipatory goal for an oppressed community. But, belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of an ideology as it is academic training (Smith 2000: 2)

Consequently, as a result of this critique, collaboration to define the purposes with Indigenous people has become an important ethical and methodological component of research. One way this can be achieved is by emphasizing the use and production of knowledge in a community setting.

Methodological trends in anthropology which resulted from this shift are community based research (CBR) and PAR. These methodologies emphasize the full participation of the community and the researcher and propose a critical, reflexive² awareness on behalf of the researcher to facilitate emancipatory benefits at a community level. Critical questions which could be included in these research methodologies are posited in contemporary Indigenous studies literature, and include the following:

² Reflexivity is understood to refer to immediate and self-oriented awareness resulting from active participation in the present. Reflexivity differs from the more commonly used concept of reflectivity, which refers to a state of being which is a result of reflection on a topic and provides us with access to meaning of the past. These concepts are discussed in the Introduction to Turner and Brunner, eds (1986).

Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose intentions does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will the results be disseminated? (Smith 2000: 10)

It becomes evident that the participation of people in the rehabilitation of their own history and culture within the research process is essential, and has many benefits.³ As a result of their participation in defining the goals and benefits of research, First Nations peoples become valued in a new way; through a process of self-determination, they are the keepers of their cultural knowledge, while the anthropologist is the student, not the expert.

Methodologies such as CBR and PAR are valuable to anthropology because they include ethical, epistemological and methodological concerns associated with how the benefits of research are defined, and illustrate a transformation of the limitations of past research practices. Thus, the intended goals of research shift from being defined as “for the good of mankind” to local in nature. As a result, emancipatory benefits and outcomes of research are understood as they are lived in the community, and are defined by community members themselves.

The Assumption that Aboriginal Cultures Are Disappearing

³ The legitimization of community based research is clarified in terms of epistemological issues by a number of critical theorists, who all stress that local community epistemologies and subsequent protocol for the maintenance of culture are unique and must be appreciated as such within academic research. For examples, see: Foucault 1966, Nabakov 2002, who stress that social science research should emphasize local epistemologies, and that it is this process which enables knowledge to embody its social and cultural ideal, which is to be liberating. For examples of First Nations ethnography, see: Doxater 1990; Fiennep-Riordan 1998; Jacknis 1996; Beirwert 1999 and Miller: 2000 for examples of First Nations ethnography which reflects this trend.

A fundamental assumption of traditional anthropology was that Aboriginal cultures were disappearing.⁴ Along with other assumptions which characterized research in the modern era, such as belief in the universal nature and benefits of Western scientific knowledge, the assumption that Native people were disappearing provided an ethical justification for the indiscriminate removal of their cultural property through the research process. As a result, a goal of traditional research was to preserve as much of a culture as possible before it was gone. Throughout the last century, anthropologists working within what has been referred to as the salvage paradigm, moved towards First Nations and their cultural property with a sense of urgency.⁵ The notion of a moral and scientific mission permeated anthropology and ethnographic collecting in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and raises valuable ethical considerations for doing contemporary research with First Nations.

The scientific paradigm which permeated the modern era was a dominant influence on the early anthropological collection, preservation and display of First Nations cultural property within museums. Cultural studies scholar Tony Bennett notes of the relationship between science and the early museum: “The museum’s development from chaos to order was, simultaneously, that of science’s progress from error to truth.” (Bennett 1995: 2). The majority of anthropologists working in this era emphasized

⁴ For a discussion of the ideology of the “disappearing Indian,” and how this notion relates to museum acquisition see Ames 1990; see Cole 1985; for how it relates to collecting on the Northwest Coast of Canada. See Ziff and Rao 1996, for a series of essays written by Aboriginal scholars on the topic. See: Bennett and Blundell 1995, which articulates the contemporary argument that Aboriginal peoples are now participating in a process of “innovative traditionalism” through the integration of their traditional cultural forms in a contemporary setting.

⁵ This paradigm was characterized by the belief that Aboriginal cultures were disappearing, due to their socio/economic circumstance, which were believed to be inferior to those of the European. As a result of the impacts of assimilation and the inevitable disappearance of Aboriginal people off the bottom of the evolutionary ladder, objects and records of Aboriginal people needed to be acquired and preserved before there was nothing left.

evolutionary notions of progress and sought to represent other cultures as not as evolved as European and Western civilizations.

Because science was valued as a record of evolutionary progress from primitive to modern, this created an impetus for the collection of “primitive” cultural artifacts (Cole 1985: 287), and as a result, non-western cultures were often represented within museums as “frozen in time” in order to demonstrate the West’s progress from savagery to civilization.

These assumptions and practices were challenged in the 1970s by First Nations people and scholars alike and continue to be addressed in museum practice today. What resulted from initial challenges to this particular assumption of the modernist paradigm was a shift from trying to understand culture via the preservation of “traditional” aspects of culture (deemed to be most authentic at the time), to trying to understand the impacts of colonization. How First Nations cultural values have survived despite the impacts of colonialization became a new way of understanding culture and research.

In his 1986 text The Anthropology of Experience, anthropologist Edward Brunner describes culture as “Alive, context sensitive and emergent,” which directly challenged that notion Native people were disappearing. Given the existence of this continuum stressed by Brunner, there is little need to emphasize a distinction between “traditional” and “contemporary” culture in anthropological research. Rather the concept of “innovative traditionalism” (Bennett and Blundell 1995: 4), or the process by which cultural knowledge is maintained and given new meaning over time, is therefore emphasized. If it is understood that First Nations cultures are indeed “alive, context sensitive and emergent,” then understanding cultural perspectives and values requires the

anthropologist to engage, participate and learn from living people about their views and concerns by being with them. To be in the community as a fieldworker is no longer enough in terms of ethical research practice. The goals and desires of the Aboriginal Peoples we work with must similarly be our goals as researchers.

As a result, understanding culture in terms of participation in the contemporary world reflects a shift in research epistemology wherein history becomes ancillary to geography (place), not time (chronology). In research, the full participation of First Nations in the multiple processes of remembering, renewing and regenerating cultural knowledge as a method for addressing contemporary issues is therefore legitimized.

Participation by members of the community to define the purpose of research provides the ideal opportunity to do research that will have direct benefits for the community. This premise is reiterated by German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey who observes that: “Selves, social organizations and cultures are not given, but are problematic and always in production. Culture change, culture continuity, and cultural transmission all occur simultaneously in the experiences and expressions of social life” (Dilthey 1976: 203 cited in Brunner 1986: 12). Hence, the shift from emphasizing preservation to participation illustrates a radical change in how anthropological research with First Nations takes place.⁶

Furthermore, the appropriation of cultural knowledge through the research process is a contentious issue which has also come under the scrutiny of scholars and

⁶ While the primary goal of the removal of First Nations cultural property was preservation by traditional anthropologists, many forms of cultural knowledge are now considered important to preserve by communities themselves. The absence of cultural property from communities for one or more generations has necessitated that cultural protocols related to preservation be redefined in order to ensure the continuity of cultural values. The impetus to preserve various forms of cultural heritage is currently a choice which is self determined by First Nations peoples, and is reflected in initiative communities may undertake to develop their own museums intended to preserve cultural property for future use.

First Nations in recent years. Anthropologists have both knowingly and unknowingly removed huge amounts of First Nations cultural property through their research.

As noted above, this practice has been legitimized by colonial policies and practices which typified the mentality of the 18th and 19th centuries when the vast majority of ethnographic museum collections were initially created. The removal of both tangible and intangible cultural forms from First Nations communities resulted in the creation of the modern ethnographic museum.⁷ Such museums grew enormously from the period between 1890 and 1920, in what has been since referred to as the “museum era” (Kramner 1995: 27). This period was characterized by what has been referred to as a “collecting rampage” that occurred within Aboriginal communities around the world, including Canada. The appropriation of cultural forms, which were considered during this time to be “curios” or “artifacts,” resulted in practices aimed at preserving and displaying the cultural objects of “others” within museums. The value of ethnographic objects and subsequent forms of representation within the modern museum related to the affirmation of the colonization process of other non-Western cultures. The “truing” process of the colonization of cultural “others” was presented to the public by the classification and display of acquired cultural objects. To put the magnitude of the process of acquiring and collecting cultural property in perspective, James Nason notes, “Native Americans are among the most, if not the most, studied people in the history in the modern world”

⁷ Refer back to Introduction for the UNESCO Convention definition of intangible cultural property. One example of not mentioned in the UNESCO definition of intangible forms of cultural property are cultural symbols. A notable example of the discussion of the appropriation of First Nations cultural symbols is Deborah Doxaters “Fluff and Feathers: Symbols of Indianness” 1988, an exhibit which challenged how symbols and images of “authentic” First Nation’s cultural heritage have been appropriated and thus influenced the general public over time. Doxater’s exhibit reflected a trend during the late 1980s and early 1990’s of creation of reflexive museum exhibits curated by First Nations peoples which were intended to challenge the historical and anthropological representations of their cultures by museums over time.

(Nason in Ziff: 1996 243). Such collecting was particularly prevalent on the Northwest Coast of Canada at the turn of the century, when “ethnographers, museum curators and anthropologists suddenly discovered the art of the Northwest coast, and in this region, “the period from 1880-1900, collectors combed the region in what has been described as a ‘collecting rampage’ (Kramner 1995: 27).

The impacts for communities of the appropriation of all forms of cultural property have been enormous. The destruction and removal of features in the natural world that bear cultural significance similarly reflects the desire of non-Aboriginal people to accumulate in the modern era, and is currently a heated topic in treaty negotiations. The resistance of First Nations Peoples to the continued appropriation of all aspects of their lives has demanded a reflective awareness on behalf of scholars of the reality of this history and their involvement in it.

The current trend in research is to support First Nations’ efforts to undo some of the devastation of traditional research assumptions. This thesis is part of this process, with consideration inspired by awareness of the historical relationships between First Nations and anthropology. This awareness provides an opportunity to improve research and provide an means to engage in research that is considered meaningful to the community. Given this trend, projects like the one reported in this thesis aim to decolonize the impacts of appropriation of cultural knowledge by emphasizing individual and community participation to define how research can best take place. First Nations self-determination in all areas of life, including research which affects their lives, provides the opportunity for the renewal of their cultural knowledge removed through practices associated with the modern era.

Objectivity as the Goal and Ideal of Research

The fundamental assumption that there is an objective truth that is knowable and that this truth can be obtained through an examination of other cultures was crucial to the development of early anthropology. Challenges to the goal of objectivity in research have been made by scholars in various branches of the social sciences, who suggest the value of a more subjective approach in research to understanding culture.

The relationship between science and objectivity was clearly manifest in early anthropology in the assumptions and practices which brought about the appropriation and preservation of First Nations cultures. The relationship between the scientific paradigm and objectivity, specifically the notion of truth as empirical and tangible, was reflected in traditional anthropology, and subsequently, the building of ethnographic collections within the modern museum. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the role of objectivity in anthropological research was challenged directly by a number of scholars whose work exemplified a new way of thinking within the discipline. The argument that research epistemology and methodology must embody and reflect the participation of the researcher as well as the social and political context wherein the research takes place has been posited by a number of scholars. Several books advanced this critique, in particular Johannes Fabian's seminal text: Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes it's Objects, historian James Clifford's Predicament of Culture, and James Clifford and anthropologist George Marcus's Writing Culture: Essays on the Poetics and Politics of Culture.

The work of Johannes Fabian suggested a contextual approach to understanding culture. In Time and the Other, Fabian supports the value of the holistic approach to museum classification and display of cultural objects. He asserts that:

It is by diagnosing anthropology's temporal discourse that one discovers the obvious, namely that there is no knowledge of the other which is not also a temporal, historical, political text (Fabian 1983: 1)

In Clifford's text The Predicament of Culture, he posited the challenge that in anthropology, and more specifically ethnography, anthropologists must move away from portraying cultures as abstract, ahistorical others. (Clifford 1988: 23). He notes that while fieldwork was established as the norm in terms of anthropological methods from the period 1900-1960, the subjective nature of the process was only being directly confronted after the 1970s (Clifford 1988: 25). In his introduction to Writing Culture: Essays on the Poetics and Politics of Cultural Invention, Clifford made the radical claim that anthropologists cannot claim to know the whole truth, only partial truths, an argument which advanced the subjective nature of research (which is by nature a human experience) as not only inevitable but as the norm (Clifford 1986: 7).

Therefore, in order to acknowledge the limitations of the extreme premises of objectivity or subjectivity in research, both in our roles as researchers and human beings, we ought to seek to include as many qualities of knowledge and experience as possible prior to making our representations. Ideally, current anthropological research takes into account the objective quality of our subjective realities and remains sensitive to it in our representations. While we can research, we cannot know if in reality, we *know* the objective "truths" of another's experience or the past, for we can only interpret the manifestation of their memory in the present.

Conceptualizing participation as putting the anthropologist “back in” is one of the ways the participatory methods circumvent this theoretical problematic related to the role of objectivity in research. As anthropologists, we cannot claim to know the truth, to provide objective evidence, to use facts that exist outside of our human experience and the experience of those we work with, but rather we can be inclusive of these perspectives and experiences.

Representation as an Authoritative Text

How anthropologists make their representations of culture, primarily the creation of the ethnographic texts, has been subject to challenge since the late 1970s. During the 1980s in particular, two major critiques of how anthropologists make their cultural representations were advanced, and induced reflection by anthropologists on the following: the limitations of the traditional mode of dissemination of research, through an authoritative text, and the absence of the anthropologists experience in these representations.

A significant catalyst for these critiques was the previously mentioned Writing Culture book edited by Clifford and Marcus, which resulted in what has been referred to as the “writing culture” debate. Contributors to this book challenged anthropologists to rethink the poetics and politics of cultural invention (1986: 3) which illuminated a postmodern argument for the reinvention of both ethnographic writing and practice. Clifford advanced the belief that “anthropology no longer speaks with automatic authority for others defined as unable to speak for themselves (“primitive,” “preliterate,” “without history”) (1986: 10). Subsequently, Clifford argued that one of the ways to

confront these qualities of experience within ethnographic writing is to acknowledge that the concept of truth in the West is bound up with literate forms that have predominated over the inclusion of other senses (1986: 12). The resulting argument is that anthropologists must reintroduce their bodies and therefore all of their senses back into anthropology, which requires the anthropologist to fully participate.

The impact of the “writing culture” debate is addressed in the recent book After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Practice in Contemporary Anthropology. According to the editors of this book, “[t]he Writing Culture debate crystallized uncertainties about anthropologists’ subject matter (traditionally, the ‘other’), its method (traditionally, the monograph), and its intention, (traditionally, that of informing, not practice)” (James, Hockey and Dawson 1997: 2). Discussion inspired by the original debate is said to have “alerted anthropologists to the need to pay closer attention to the epistemological ground of their representations” (James, Hockey and Dawson: 1997: 3). The influence of Writing Culture on re-defining the concept of representation in ethnographic practice and writing is noted in After Writing Culture, wherein “representation” is reconceptualized as “interpretation, communication, visualization and advocacy” (Hockey, James, Dawson 1997: 3). This reformulation can be understood to redefine authentic “representation” as a holistic reflection of genuine contact and learning between the researcher and the people they work with.

Contemporary ethnographic works such as Crisca Beirwert’s 1999 Salish ethnography Brushed by Cedar: Coast Salish Figures of Power, provide examples of reflexive texts. Reflexivity can be conceptualized as a means of circumventing the practice within anthropology of seeing the anthropologist as a “detached observer” whose

goal is to maintain objectivity so as to accurately represent a set of cultural truths. The goal of reflexive texts and others types of cultural representations is not merely to represent the anthropologist's experience during research, but rather to be inclusive of his/her own learning process. This inclusiveness provides an opportunity to present a contextualized representation which illustrates how the researcher went about his/her learning, not just what he/she learned. In Beirwert's book, she states that the goal of her work is to "create a non-authoritative text that none the less speaks knowingly" (Beirwert 1999:3), which she does by illustrating not only what, but how she learned.

As a result of the critique by various scholars, contemporary ethnographic texts such as Brushed by Cedar speak through a reflexive awareness and sensitivity of the history of First Nations experiences with the West, and those of the researcher.

How the Challenges to Anthropology Have Influenced Repatriation in Canada

Since the 1980s, ethnographic museum policy and practice in Canada, including the process of repatriation, has been influenced by challenges similar to those being addressed by anthropology. The resistance of First Nations people to the appropriation and misrepresentation of their cultural forms has led to a series of changes in how museums handle and represent cultural objects. Some of these changes include: a subjectivist perspective of museum classification and display; truth as correspondent to value and experience; and the decolonization of the museum. The decolonization process, in contrast to the appropriation of cultural property that characterized the modern

museum, legitimized the emergence of repatriation efforts aimed at returning this property to the communities from which it was taken.

In museums, the process of decolonization reflects the re-claiming of cultural knowledge and objects by Aboriginal people in two ways: namely through repatriation efforts and through increased collaboration between museums and the communities they have historically represented.

Although museums continue to exist, their purpose and value have been protested in recent years by Aboriginal people as well as those in the museum community.

Museum studies scholar Susan Pearce summarizes how representations of cultural objects have been historically constructed:

[A]n illusion of a relation between things takes the place of a social relation. The collector discovers, acquires, and salvages objects. The objective world is given, not produced, and thus historical relations in the work of acquisition are occulted. The making of meaning in museum classification and display is mystified as adequate representation. The time and order of the collection erase the concrete labour of its making (Pearce 1994: 260)

Scholars working in the related fields of anthropology and museum studies assert that the means by which museums have historically defined and represented cultural objects have limited a full understanding of objects and peoples they sought to represent. Thus, there has been a shift to create museum exhibits which present the historical processes involved in the acquisition of cultural forms by museums. Presenting the historical relationships which enabled the removal of objects from communities is considered a new and valuable way to teach the public about culture and shared cultural histories.

In Canada, First Nations people engaged in political protests to demonstrate their desire to re-appropriate aspects of their cultures which had been taken from them. A

major catalyst for awareness of issues related to the representation and management of Aboriginal cultural property was the 1988 Calgary Olympics, and the resulting Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples exhibit put on at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. The Lubicon Cree, who protested the exhibit, claimed both political and ethical reasons for their actions. The members of the Lubicon community decided to boycott the exhibit because it was sponsored by Shell Oil, the company that was drilling in the area claimed by the Lubicons as their traditional land (Harrison 1988:12). Along with the political and economical reasons the community had for the protest, "it was assumed that The Spirit Sings only pertained to the Native Peoples of the past" (Harrison 1988 :13), and the community asserted that confining images of "Indianness" to an ethnographic past while ignoring the seriousness of contemporary issues (such as the presence of Shell Oil on their traditional land) was morally and ethically objectionable. The protests raised questions within academic and museum communities such as "who owns the past?" and "how do notions of 'authentic' Aboriginal culture manifest themselves within museums?" The issues raised regarding this exhibit engendered a nation-wide dialogue that focused on representations of Aboriginal people, the management of their cultural and intellectual property, and the repatriation of this knowledge.

Primarily as a result of protests of the Spirit Sings⁸ exhibit, and the ethical and epistemological issues which were raised by it, the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) Taskforce on First Peoples was organized by the CMA and the Assembly of First Nations in 1990. As outlined in its mission's statement, the Taskforce attempted to

⁸ The debate surrounding the Spirit Sings exhibit demonstrated the varying perspectives apparent within museum anthropology in the early 1990's. A brief sampling of the reactions of those involved include: Julia Harrison 1988; Ames 1988; and Trigger 1988.

“...develop an ethical framework and strategies for Aboriginal Nations to represent their history and culture in concert with cultural institutions” (CMA 1992:1). The Taskforce had an unprecedented number of scholars and Aboriginal people as participants. It sought to provide guidelines for relationships between museums and First peoples that would be less problematic, and this simultaneously brought the concepts of repatriation into a National dialogue for the first time in Canada.⁹ The Taskforce was a precedent setting effort in Canada, partly because the participants represented the major constituencies involved in museums, but also because it affirmed the position that Aboriginal peoples had the right to collaborate and participate with those developing museum policy.

Michael Ames stresses the timeliness of the shift towards increased participation of Aboriginal Peoples in museums:

What is significant about the 1980's is that after 100 years and more of boxing others, museums and their academic counterparts are only now beginning to hear what the objects of classification, especially those same indigenous groups, have been saying all along: They want out of the boxes, they want their materials back, and they want control over their own history and its interpretation. (Ames 1990: 140)

The process of repatriation itself can be understood to function simultaneously as the return, reintegration and renewal of cultural property for individuals and within a community. In the 1980s and 1990s, the repatriation process in Canada and the United States illuminated the issue of ownership, not only of objects, but of ideas and culture.

Aboriginal scholar Deborah Doxater articulates the complexity and importance of definitions of ownership for Aboriginal Peoples in contemporary Canada, when she observes that: “Aboriginal peoples in Canada, over the past decade, have experienced an

⁹ For further information regarding the implications of the Taskforce, see Nicks 1992.

increasing need to understand, and once again, to own our cultural past, present and future” (Doxater 1990: 56). She reiterates the importance of First Nations participation in a museum setting when she observes: “Instead of preserving the object produced by the activity of culture in a Euro-Canadian way, Aboriginal Peoples wish to access, communicate and preserve the process and living of a culture.” (Doxater 1990: 64).

How Does PAR Constitute a Response To These Challenges?

I will now turn to a description of PAR¹⁰, in order to illustrate how it can constitute a response to the aforementioned challenges regarding anthropological research with First Nations. Arguably, PAR can provide the opportunity to extend contemporary trends in research by linking participation in theory and praxis.

The origins and influences of PAR are multidisciplinary. As a methodological tool it has been used in the fields of psychology, education, aesthetics and anthropology. The origins of action research are unclear, some scholars state that the methodology originated with Kurt Lewin, an American psychologist, who in the 1940s argued that in order to “understand and change certain social practices, social scientists have to include practitioners from the real social world in all phases of inquiry” (McKernan 1991: 10).

Similarly, the philosopher John Dewey,¹¹ who “applied the inductive scientific method of problem solving as a logic for the solution of problems in such fields a aesthetics, philosophy, psychology and education” (McKernan 1991: 9) influenced the development of PAR. Dewey in turn was influenced by epistemological considerations

¹⁰ It should be noted that PAR is sometimes referred to as a form of Action research within the literature, with these terms being used interchangeably at times.

¹¹ John Dewey’s *Art As Experience* 1934, exemplifies his contribution to theory and praxis which focuses on the epistemological justification of the subjective processes of participation and experience.

related to the value of human experience by Wilhelm Dilthey,¹² whose conceptualization of experience as *Erlebnis*, a German word for “what is lived through,” supports doing participatory research.

Given the multidisciplinary influences and uses for PAR, I will now illustrate how PAR is a methodological tool which responds to the particular challenges presented earlier in this chapter.

The first, benefit of PAR is emancipation through participation for everyone involved.¹³ An anthropologist and a community using a PAR methodology get to focus on local instead of universal knowledge in order to achieve the emancipatory and pragmatic outcomes of research. The use of PAR, which Grundy writes:

[p]romotes emancipatory praxis in the participating practitioners; that is, it promotes a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in a political as well as practical action to promote change (Grundy 1987: 154)

Collaboration between researchers the community makes it possible to better define the benefits and goals of research in terms of locally defined emancipatory interests. Epistemologically, PAR allows First Nations, which have been defined historically as the cultural “other”, to be seen as both the subject (and expert) as a result of the emphasis on cultural specificity.

Second, defining goals for research locally and in accordance with local cultural beliefs, PAR rejects the pervasive assumption that Native people are disappearing. The

¹² Dilthey’s life work is probably best articulated in Dilthey 1976, a seminal text which explores his work. The influence of Dilthey on anthropological discourse is addressed in Turner and Brunner: 1986, where it is noted that “For Turner, the immediate inspiration for an anthropology of experience derived from the German thinker Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and his concept of *Erlebnis*, or what has been “lived through” (Turner and Brunner 1986: 3).

For an in-depth discussion of the concept of *Erlebnis*, see: Frank Schreiner: 1982.

¹³ The work of critical social theorist Jurgen Habermas is fundamental to an understanding of the notion of emancipatory knowledge in research. For a discussion of this concept see: Habermas 1972.

focus of research, therefore, shifts from seeking to preserve culture “before it is lost” to ensuring the successful continuity of cultural values. The participation of First Nations in research reflects a shift to the application of cultural knowledge as a primary way to address their contemporary concerns. In this way, PAR becomes a methodological tool to respond to or “decolonize” the impacts of these practices. When defined as a goal of research with the collaboration of those involved, PAR can be used to assist in the re-appropriation of cultural knowledge. In this way, PAR provides the opportunity to reflect, maintain and advance First Nations cultural values. The following definition of PAR asserted by Kemmis and McTaggart describes this process:

A form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social situation or educational practices, as well as understanding of these practices in the situations in which these practices are carried out (Kemmis and McTaggart: 1990: 5)

PAR responds to the impacts of the removal of cultural knowledge over time by facilitating the use of knowledge by and for those involved. This process of facilitation is designed to seek justice to a given problem or situation.

Third, when using PAR, the traditional goal of objectivity in research is negated in favour of understanding multiple subjectivities, with the result that “[t]he dynamic relationship between theory and practice in emancipatory action research entails the expansion of both the theory and practice during the project” (Grundy 1982: 358). PAR creates the opportunity for participants to engage in the learning processes which result from their lived experiences together. But for the growth of theory in practice to occur, says Grundy, the “facilitator must not attempt to direct the outcome of the deliberative process by attempting to thrust enlightenment on the participants, but must allow

symmetrical communication to occur from which enlightenment will flow” (Grundy 1982: 360). As a result, since both theory and praxis are apt to change and expand through the experience of doing collaborative research, to maintain or seek objectivity within the research process is therefore not a goal of PAR research.

Finally, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, one contemporary trend in research which resulted from the challenges to anthropology is the inclusion of reflexivity in all aspects of research. The focus on participation and subjectivity in a PAR methodology necessitates that these elements be included in the eventual dissemination of knowledge. As a result, the inclusion of a reflexive awareness of First Nations experiences and history as well as the researcher’s participation in the research process reflects the role subjectivity has in research. Reflexivity in praxis functions to better ensure that there are benefits for the First Nations people we work with due to our awareness of their experiences, and also permits a holistic representation of the research.

In conclusion, I chose the PAR methodology for this project because it provides a methodological tool which can be used to address these challenges to anthropology directly in practice.

Chapter Two

Aspects of Stó:lô History and Identity That Influence Stó:lô Views of Repatriation

In this chapter I turn to an overview of Stó:lô culture and associated concepts of Stó:lô identity. My discussion derives from my experience of speaking with members of the community and of my reading of ethnohistorical literature and community-produced publications. To begin, I will explore different aspects of Stó:lô history and identity, especially those which influence how the meaning, value and purpose of repatriation are currently understood by community members. Secondly, I will review particular significant historical events which have shaped the Stó:lô communities' experience of colonialism to illustrate how the appropriation of their cultural property has taken place. Finally, I will provide the example of recent efforts by the Stó:lô community which reflect it's contemporary cultural revival and resistance. This discussion of the communities' strategy of decolonization demonstrates why repatriation is a process that can be explored through participatory research.

People of the River

For the anthropologist Ian McIlwraith, Stó:lô is a term which literally translates in *Halq'eméylem* to "river". He continues that it is:

the name for Halq'eméylem speaking peoples living along the lower 170 kms of the Fraser River in Southwestern B.C. Stó:lô traditional life ways, past and present, have centered on the Fraser River and fishing, a pattern that has persisted for millennia. (McIlwraith 1996: 46)

The Fraser river and salmon are integral and meaningful aspects of Stó:lô life and identity. While working with community members for this project, I had the opportunity to learn about the significance of the Fraser River by fishing and preparing salmon for a feast. The River and salmon played a significant role in my experiences and how I learned about Stó:lô culture. See figure 1 for a view of the Fraser River from atop the sides of the Fraser canyon near Yale, B.C. This picture was taken during a roadtrip that some of the elders took me on to see the countryside and the Fraser canyon. There are family fishing spots in this area where salmon is windried, a traditional Stó:lô practice. Figure 2 shows elder Mel Bailey, one of my teachers and friends, with a salmon that we were going to prepare for my going away feast. I was given the honour of selecting which salmon would be prepared, and then similarly had the honour of preparing it for family and friends. Figure 3 shows the salmon after we prepared it for Mel's family and guests.

There are Island, Interior and Coastal Salish peoples. Since the 1970's, the Coast Salish people have preferred to be known as the "Stó:lô", although the terms Stó:lô and Salish are often used interchangeably in the ethnographic literature. The anthropologist Wilson Duff, who worked extensively with the Stó:lô people throughout the middle of the last century, introduced the term Stó:lô for the people of the Fraser Valley into the ethnographic literature. The name appears as Stó:lô in the orthography used in the Chilliwack area in the 1970's" (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 474).

The language spoken by Stó:lô people is *Halq'eméylem*, part of the larger Salishian language family within which the Interior and Island Salish people speak. Within the Halq'eméylem language, there are three further dialect groups; Upriver,

Downriver, and Island. Each *Halq'eméylem* dialect is further subdivided into what linguists call sub-or micro-dialects (Carlson 2001: 24). These dialects are generally differentiated by their spoken usage: “Upriver halkomeylem speakers would normally change all “n’s” to “l’s” (Wells 1987: 51). Moreover, there are distinct “upriver” and “downriver” cultural protocols which can be observed at Stó:lô cultural and gatherings, such as funerals.

The Origins of Stó:lô Culture

The Coast Salish Historical Atlas, edited by historian Keith Carlson, a long time Stó:lô Nation staff member, states that there are numerous theories of how and when Stó:lô people originally populated their traditional territory, or *S'olh Téméxw* (our world). Archeological evidence indicates that the migration of Stó:lô people to their territory occurred approximately 10,000 years ago (Carlson 2001: 20). There are several anthropological theories regarding the means by which Aboriginal people migrated to North America. However, “there remains no consensus among archeologists as to whether the first migrants to *S'olh Téméxw* arrived via land or sea” (Carlson 2001: 20). Pre-contact Stó:lô peoples were believed to be “a mobile people, organized as egalitarian family groups, whose livelihood depended on their success at fishing, foraging and hunting for a wide range of terrestrial, marine and riverine resources” (Carlson 2001: 20).

In apparent contrast to anthropological views of the initial populating of *S'olh Téméxw*, Stó:lô people, along with other First Nations, have their own cosmogony, or belief system based on creation stories which describe their origins. Stó:lô oral histories explain that “their occupation of *S'olh Téméxw* began with the arrival of skyborne beings

and through the transformation of ancestral animals such as mountain goat, beaver and sturgeon” (Carlson 2001: 20). While there are both anthropological and Stó:lô ways of knowing the past, both views agree that

[W]hether of transformation, skyborne or migratory origin, the uncontested roots of Aboriginal occupation in *S’olh Téméxw* clearly lies beyond the limits of memory (Carlson 2001: 20)

Archeologists do acknowledge that: “A great amount of time has elapsed since initial Aboriginal population of *S’olh Téméxw*—more than 350 generations. This time depth helps to reconcile the apparent differences between anthropological and Indigenous views of Stó:lô origins”(Carlson 2001: 20). The concept of “time immemorial,” defined as the state of being that “extends back beyond record, memory, or knowledge” (Carlson 1996:152) is currently used in many contexts, for example in legal usage when defining Aboriginal Right and Title. In the Stó:lô world, time immemorial is articulated as *sxwôxwiyám*, which reflects the time prior to the transformation of the world by *xéxáls* (the Transformers) (Stó:lô 2003: 2). The Stó:lô Nation Heritage Policy, a community publication which articulates Stó:lô cultural protocols for the management of cultural heritage, illuminates the powerful transformations evoked through a Stó:lô cosmogony:

We were put here by the Creator, *chichelh siyaim* but the world was chaotic. So *xéxáls* (the Transformers) and *Tel Sweyel*, (Sky Borne People) came to make the world right and transform it to its present form (Stó:lô 2003:2)

Categories of time articulated in Stó:lô cosmogony are extremely important in the constitution of identity. Thus, how the Stó:lô world came to be, the role of myth, and how these origins affect daily life for Stó:lô people today are important aspect of Stó:lô culture.

Prominent Stó:lô ethnographer Wayne Suttles further describes the importance of xéxáls for Stó:lô peoples:

In myths there was an age when the world was different, its people were like both humans and animals of the present age, and it was full of dangerous monsters. The myth age ended when Xáls¹⁴ the Transformer came through the world, transforming monsters and other myth-age beings into rocks and animals, and setting things in order for the people of the present age. The Transformer is very serious and concerned for human welfare (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 466)

Suttles elaborates on the contemporary relationship between Stó:lô people and mythical figures which forms the basis of ties between Stó:lô people and the natural resources in their territory:

Traditional local groups usually told how the group's founder dropped from the sky, where the transformer gave him technical or ritual knowledge, and where he established special relationships with local resources. Marriage with non-humans established an affinal relationship with obligations of reciprocity (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 466)

How Stó:lô people understand and integrate views of their origins into many aspects of their lives is expressed in Stó:lô views regarding repatriation. These views include the desire to repatriate transformation objects which reflect the work and stories associated with xéxáls. Transformation sites and associated objects are natural features located within *S'olh Téméxw*, some of which have been removed and are currently located in museums. Currently, the Stó:lô Nation is seeking the repatriation of the *T'ixwelátsa* statue, a transformation object associated with the work and stories of xéxáls.

Stó:lô Post Contact History- The Division of *S'olh Téméxw*

After the arrival of non-Stó:lô people (*Xwélitem*) in Stó:lô territory, a series of divisions of *S'olh Téméxw* took place. In particular, the US/Canada Boundary was

¹⁴ Xáls is the word for one of the transformers.

established in 1846, and in 1858 a reserve system was imposed in Stó:lô Territory by the Canadian Government. Dividing Stó:lô traditional territory into American and Canadian portions resulted from the Treaty of Washington in 1846 and significantly affected Stó:lô life. This event was a catalyst for both a tangible and intangible divisions amongst Stó:lô people, whose neighbors and relatives lived both in portions of what is now Canada and the United. The impact of this border on Stó:lô people is described in the following:

The treaty of Washington split Central Coast Salish Country into British and American portions, which thereafter experienced different political histories and administrative systems—a Canadian system, which made every large Indian village into a band with one or more tiny reserves, and an American system, which combined villages into tribes and gave some larger reservations but left others landless (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 471)

Conceptualizing the Stó:lô community in terms of distinct American and Canadian groups is considered problematic by some scholars and Stó:lô people alike¹⁵, as these are political rather than cultural distinctions. This situation was described to me in a discussion with an individual who works at AR & T:

The establishment of the U.S. boundary in 1859 really created this artificial line across what was once a highly interactive community and is still quite interactive, but that line artificially creates the perception that these are separate groups, one is an American tribe, and one is our Canadian group, and therefore they were separated groups in the past, which is not the case. They were a quite integrated community in the past, through oral histories, language, trade and exchange (02-02-A-p.11)

Following the creation of the border, the imposition of a reserve system in Canada functioned to further divide Stó:lô territory. This process is described in the following:

The first reserves in Stó:lô Territory were created in 1858 as a direct response to the Fraser Valley Goldrush and the resulting tension between *Xwélitem* miners and Stó:lô. In the establishment of the first reserves, priority was given to those areas where the threat of Aboriginal/Miner conflict was greatest (such as Hemhémethew {Hill's Bar} near Yale) (Carlson 2001: 94)

¹⁵ See Miller 1996/97, which examines the concept of cultural and tangible borders in the Salish community.

The irreversible impact of the creation of reserves on the collective Stó:lô community is expressed in contemporary land claims negotiations for Right and Title to Stó:lô territory.

The Negotiation of Right and Title to *S'olh Téméxw*

In Canada, the Stó:lô people currently live on a number of these reserves within their traditional territory along the Fraser River in Southwestern British Columbia (**Appendix A-Stó:lô Traditional Territory Map**). Contemporary political, legal and cultural definitions of what constitutes the collective Stó:lô community reflect the historical divisions of Stó:lô territory. As a result, an important way that the relationship between Stó:lô people and their territory is currently understood is in terms of Right and Title. This relationship is clearly expressed in the following statement: “We, as the Stó:lô, are a collective community who hold rights and title within all *S'olh Téméxw* (our world)” (Stó:lô 2003:2). Stó:lô Right and Title to *S'olh Téméxw* is currently being addressed in treaty negotiations with the Federal and B.C. Provincial Governments, at both a band and Nation level. The Stó:lô are currently in stage four of a six stage treaty negotiation process.¹⁶

A key characteristic of how these negotiations proceed involves distinctions between band and Nation. Stó:lô Nation is a First Nation governmental and service delivery organization which provides services to and represents twenty one of the thirty band level Stó:lô communities in treaty negotiations. Stó:lô band level communities are

¹⁶ See Michael Asch 1997, for a general discussion of aspects of contemporary treaty negotiations in Canada. For information about the status on Stó:lô negotiations, see www.ualberta.ca/~esimpson/claims/stolo.htm, which includes links to Provincial and Federal Governments websites with information about the current status of all current negotiations.

further identified in terms of whether or not they are “member” or “non-member” bands, which refers to their status in relation to their participation in treaty negotiations as part of Stó:lô Nation.¹⁷ These emergent definitions of community are discussed in literature regarding contemporary Stó:lô identity, where it is stressed that: The Stó:lô “rely on multiple expressions of their identity suitable to fit into the contemporary B.C. political and economic environment” (McIlWraith 1996: 42).

Therefore, while Canadian government allocations of band status include one or more numbered reserves scattered throughout *S’olh Téméxw*, (See **Appendix A**), before the imposition of the reserve system, movement of Stó:lô people between villages or communities was very common. Prior to the designation of reserves, it was villages, defined as “places associated with fishing sites and spirit-power sites or associated with a tribal town” (Carlson 2001: 24), which were the foundations of Stó:lô “communities.” It is notable that archeological evidence suggests that “the sub-dialects of *Halq’eméylem* almost perfectly correspond with the *Xwelméxw* (Human Beings who speak the same language) subwatershed ‘tribal groups.’ In the past, villages within these groups sometimes co-operated for common defense and economic reasons” (Carlson 2001: 24).¹⁸ Thus, one of the notions of community for Stó:lô people is one that is based on these “tribal” groupings which characterized the area prior to reserve creation. These three Stó:lô tribal groupings or areas are the Pilalt, the Chilliwack and the Tait. Some Stó:lô

¹⁷ For example, while the Stó:lô band Cheam is comprised of individuals of Stó:lô ancestry, Cheam is a “non-member” band which does not affiliate in treaty negotiations as part of Stó:lô Nation. Cheam, and the other non-member bands will proceed with treaty negotiations separate from the Stó:lô Nation governmental organization.

¹⁸ These cooperative relations are further illuminated through archeological evidence of rock wall fortifications, as is noted in Carlson: 2001.

individuals favor an emphasis on these tribal areas in defining their identity as a Stó:lô person.

The cultural significance of continual movement and interconnectedness between Stó:lô people despite changing legal and political definitions of community is reiterated by a current Stó:lô cultural advisor (an individual who is knowledgeable about cultural values and traditions):

Despite the imposed Indian Act idea of Stó:lô being inextricably anchored to a particular Indian Reserve...in reality, many people relocate a number of times in their lifetime. The complexity of overlapping lines reinforces the often repeated words of our respected community leaders such as Seabird Island councilor Clem Seymour: ‘We can’t just say that we are from a single Indian Act band. Look at where our grandparents lived and moved to. We are all connected. We are Stó:lô (Carlson 2001:32)

Thus, despite the social, political, legal and cultural divisions which have taken place since initial contact between Stó:lô people and Europeans, a shared sense of Stó:lô identity has endured.

Stó:lô Cultural Practices

Stó:lô people participate in a range of cultural practices and events including feasts, potlatches, funerals, social celebrations, sports, the Shaker Church,¹⁹ and in recent years pan-Indian ceremonial forms such as powwows.²⁰ Wayne Suttles notes in his seminal text Coast Salish Essays that the Salish language distinguishes between two main

¹⁹ For a discussion of the Shaker Church religion amongst Stó:lô peoples, see Barnett: 1957.

²⁰ What is notable about a discussion of Stó:lô ceremonialism is that “no Indian used the word, except to outsiders, to describe his or her gift giving event. The term “potlatch” was an invented omnibus word originally from the Nootka *patchatl*, which meant “gift” or “gift giving”, and entered general usage through the Chinook trade jargon in the 1860’s or perhaps even a little later” (Cole: 1990: 6). It is observed that “each community on the Northwest Coast had their own words for ceremonies and feasts. The Salish would have used *Klanak* or some other term depending on the occasion” (Cole 1990: 6). Carlson articulates that the term *st’le’aleq* is also used to mean potlatch in Stó:lo (Carlson 1999: 64).

types of ceremonial gatherings: the “feast” (*sxesen*)²¹ and the potlatch (*sxened*). Feasts are generally smaller in size than potlatches with guests being made up of immediate or adjacent community members. In the past, potlatches are thought to have functioned to redistribute an oversupply of food, mark a life crisis, or provide an opportunity for spirit dancing (Suttles 1987:204). Suttles describes the purpose of these events:

Spirit dancing functions as the expression of participation in a vision quest within which the dancer encountered an animal, either real or mythical that conferred on the vision seeker a particular skill. Potlatches among the Stó:lô were much larger, intercommunity gatherings that lasted several days, or even weeks, and were held in the late spring and early fall (Suttles 1987: 204)

Aside from the two major types of ceremonials, the feast and the potlatch, there are other ceremonies which have served different purposes within the Stó:lô community. The *sxwó:yxwey* ceremony, for example, is a very sacred and valued cleansing ceremony. The *sxwó:yxwey* has had multiple purposes for the Stó:lô:

Such cleansing ceremonies were used to wipe away a disgrace...and more commonly, to enhance occasions such as the bestowal of an inherited name, a girl’s puberty, the initiation of a new dancer, a wedding, or the display of a memento of the deceased (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 468)

In a discussion of potlatching amongst First Nations groups on the North West Coast, the historian Olive Dickason stresses the emphasis on immaterial wealth in Stó:lô potlatching: “property by which wealth was measured could be either in material goods (especially among the Northerners) or in immaterial rights, such as those to certain songs, dances or rituals (particularly amongst the Coast Salish) (Dickason 1997: 47).

23 The orthography used to describe these feasts is distinguishable from the orthography used throughout this thesis. While Suttles contextualizes the orthography in *Coast Salish Essays*: “This system (sometimes called Americanist, since it is used for American Indian languages), Builds on the Roman Alphabet as used for most European languages, adding a few Greek letters, a device from Czech and a few home made inventions” (Suttles 1987: 287), I have utilized a Halq’eméylem font program provided to me by the Stó:lô Nation, which is considered the most accurate way to reproduce the contemporary Stó:lô orthography.

The Concept of Private Knowledge

Understanding the value of immaterial property in Stó:lô culture brings us to a discussion of “private knowledge,” a significant aspect of Stó:lô culture, which directly influences how the benefits of repatriation are defined in accordance with Stó:lô values. Within ethnographic literature, “private knowledge” among Stó:lô community members is understood to be guarded knowledge that is usually translated as “advice.” “Advice” is said to consist of the following: “genealogies and family traditions revealing family greatness, gossip about other families demonstrating how inferior they are, instruction in practical matters such as how to quest for the right type of guardian spirit, secret signals for indicating that someone is of lower class decent, and a good deal of moral training (Suttles 1987: 8). This form of knowledge is interpreted as moral training that is required to exist in a specific place in the hierarchy of Stó:lô culture. In his essay “Private Knowledge, Morality and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish,” Wayne Suttles notes that: “In a society that stressed private property as the Coast Salish did, it must have been very effective to present moral training as private property, in the context of secret knowledge on the gaining of wealth and the maintenance of status” (Suttles 1987: 8). This view is confirmed by Dickason’s assertion of the value of immaterial property in Stó:lô culture. In this way, knowledge in Stó:lô is correspondent in value to tangible forms of wealth and property.

Stó:lô Experiences with Colonialism

I found it difficult at times to speak with Stó:lô people about their experiences of colonization and the consequent impact of these experiences on their lives. Given this,

there have been significant historical events which Stó:lô people have collectively experienced and which have had a tangible and profound impact on the Stó:lô community. Over the last 140 years, the opposition by the Canadian legal system to Stó:lô cultural practices, the influx of anthropologists into the lives of Stó:lô people, and the establishment of residential schools in Stó:lô Territory, have all been processes that have involved the appropriation and subversion of Stó:lô culture.

The Potlatch Ban 1884-1951

1884 was a significant year for Stó:lô and other Aboriginal peoples of Canada's Northwest Coast.²² This was the year that the potlatch ceremony was officially outlawed by the Canadian Government. While Canada's legal opposition to the potlatch commenced as a result of an amendment to the Indian Act in 1884, it was not strictly enforced until the 1920's when the RCMP assumed responsibility for enforcing the ban (Carlson 2001: 166). During this time, the indiscriminate appropriation of Stó:lô cultural property, both tangible and intangible, occurred.²³ In discussing the topic of repatriation for this project, one Stó:lô elder describes the impact of the ban on Stó:lô peoples as follows:

Ceremonies used to be held years ago by the Fraser River, and the RCMP used to watch people visit and then make a move on them, and people would scatter with their regalia. Regalia would have to be hidden in the mountains, and it is starting to re-appear now. Many objects ended up in museums this way, they were taken away or left because of fear. Because of this, the elders are just now starting to pass on their stories again, because they lived in their time with a fear of being arrested or something bad happening (11-03-A-p.1)

²³Specific forms of Stó:lô cultural property which were appropriated were addressed in our discussions as part of this project. Specific forms of cultural property members of the community would like to seek for repatriation will be presented in Chapter Four.

Between the years 1884 and 1951 when the potlatch was legally banned, while it may have appeared that the Stó:lô potlatch disappeared, there is evidence that indicates it simply changed place. Stó:lô ethnographer Michael Kew notes the continuity of Stó:lô ceremonialism during the potlatch ban:

Funerals had always been potlatch occasions, that is, times when ritual services were required of non-kin and reciprocated with gifts, and although these gradually incorporated elements of Christian services they preserved Indian belief about the dead and depended on ritualists to attend to the dead and their possessions (Kew 1970:210 ff in Sturtevant 1990: 476)

The integration and participation of Stó:lô people in a wage labor economy was another factor in the continuity of Stó:lô ceremonial life during this time. As a result of the movement of Stó:lô people to participate in seasonal work in canneries and hopyards, participation in ceremonies did not cease, but rather changed place. Historical records indicate that in the 1890's, hopyards had "sprung up throughout *S'olh Téméxw*, providing wage labour for many Stó:lô people. By 1894, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) reports that almost all Stó:lô people were employed at the canneries between June and September: "As soon as fishing season was over, all the Indians returned to their reserves and harvested their crops" (Carlson 1996: 168). While paid work transformed seasonal patterns, it did not eliminate the relationship between ceremonial life and the seasons for most Stó:lô people. During the era of potlatch prohibition, hop yards provided opportunities for large-scale social and political gatherings (Carlson 1996: 64). By participating in work opportunities, "Stó:lô were not seeking to replace or change past ways of life, but rather to participate more fully in their own economy, which had similar features to the European system but emphasized saving up goods to give away at *st'lealeq* (potlatches) (Carlson: 1996: 64). The successful integration of a wage economy

into the Stó:lô community is reflected in the diversity of economic patterns and opportunities Stó:lô people currently engage in. As a result of the introduction and success of wage labor economy within the community, potlatching and ceremony became less visible as a result of transformation, but nonetheless continued. Carlson summarizes: In 1892, the DIA report that they were “disappointed” when Musquem Indians hosted a potlatch and gave away hundreds of dollars worth of goods. In 1896, Bill Uslick, a Stó:lô man from Chilliwack was the first Aboriginal person to be arrested and convicted as a result of the anti-potlatching law. He served two months in prison as a result (Carlson 2001: 168).

It is notable that amongst Stó:lô people, varying perspectives on the potlatch existed, which are evident in petitions made to the Government regarding the ban on potlatching. The Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas describes how historical record indicates that: “In 1915, people from Sto:lo, Sechelt, Squamish and other tribes issue[d] a petition which support[ed] the banning of the potlatch, while in 1922, various B.C. tribes petition[ed] the superintendent general of Indian Affairs, protesting the banning of the potlatch”(Carlson 2001: 168). Therefore, despite colonial forces opposed to Stó:lô cultural practices, the participation of Stó:lô community members in ceremonies continued.

Stó:lô Relationships with Anthropologists

Another significant year in terms of Stó:lô experience with *Xwélitem* (Euro-Canadians) was 1890. In this year, Charles Hill-Tout, a teacher and “amateur” anthropologist, settled in Abbotsford B.C in Stó:lô territory and began conducting

interviews with Stó:lô elders (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 79). This was the beginning of an ongoing relationship between the Stó:lô community and anthropologists. Hill-Tout “worked with numerous Salish communities and followed Boas’s example of getting texts in Native languages as well as myths and ethnographic data in English (Suttles in Sturtevant 1990: 79). Hill-Tout’s work with members of the Stó:lô community is presented in the text The Salish People, which was originally published in 1890 and reprinted in 1978. Shortly after the arrival of Hill-Tout, Franz Boas began his research in the community commencing interviews with George Chehalis and collecting valuable information concerning Stó:lô transformer legends, tribal groupings and social structures (Carlson 1999: 166). One of the numerous texts Boas (in 1895) produced was Indian Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America. Many of the prominent texts that explore Stó:lô ceremonial life were published during the 1950s. This emphasis occurred in congruence with the amendment to the Indian Act which included the lifting of the Potlatch ban in 1951, at which point Stó:lô ceremonialism became more “visible” to anthropologists. Many of the texts during this time focused on the impacts and manifestations of culture change and the revival of tradition, while turn of the century texts had emphasized the “salvage paradigm,” which focused on attaining authentic representations of Stó:lô culture, as it was assumed it would disappear. Prominent ethnographic texts which examine the worldview and ceremonial practices of the Stó:lô community were produced by Homer Barnett, Wilson Duff, Diamond Jenness, and Wayne Suttles during the 1950s and 1960s.²⁴ Anthropological writing during this time emphasized ceremonialism with a number of texts about potlatching in neighboring

²⁴ Some notable examples of Stó:lô ethnography include: Duff 1952; Jenness 1955; Barnett 1955 and Suttles 1955.

communities to Stó:lô appearing as well.²⁵ While anthropological material about Stó:lô culture continued to be produced throughout the second half of the century, a trend which emphasizes Stó:lô identity characterizes the material from the 1990s to the present.²⁶ This coincides with an increase in Stó:lô heritage and cultural initiatives based upon collaborative relationships with anthropologist and other scholars. These efforts have resulted in numerous publications about Stó:lô culture, which will be presented later in this chapter.

The Stó:lô Residential School Experience: Coqueleetza and St. Mary's

The Stó:lô experience with residential schools began in 1863, when St. Mary's Roman Catholic Residential School opened its doors to members of the Stó:lô community. St. Mary's, located near Mission B.C., was "part of a larger colonial plan to assimilate, Christianize and 'civilize' Aboriginal peoples in B.C" (Carlson 2001: 68). In its first year, forty-two Aboriginal boys were admitted to St. Mary's (Carlson 2001: 68). Following the establishment of St. Mary's, a second school opened in Stó:lô Territory. In 1893, the Coqueleetza Industrial School, a Methodist residential school located in Sardis B.C., officially opened to Stó:lô children (Carlson: 2001: 74). As is noted in the Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas, the significance of the Coqueleetza grounds to Stó:lô people is clarified in oral histories , which describe how the Coqueleetza site is a place associated with significant stories and teachings for Stó:lô people. The story of Coqueleetza affirms the respectful, harmonious relations between men and women:

²⁵ See: Codere 1950 for an analysis of Kwakiutl Potlatching, and Drucker 1967 for a follow up to Codere's analysis of Southern Kwakiutl poltatching.

²⁶ For example, see: McIlWraith 1996, which examines the influx and impacts of pan-Indianism on Stó:lô identity.

Stó:lô *Sxwôxwiyám* tell us that this has been the case since before *Xwélitem* settlers and missionaries arrived in the region. As well as being an important mythological place, Coqueleetza has served many other functions over the years (Carlson 2001: 74)

Coqueleetza Industrial School eventually closed in 1940, with a hospital reopening in its place in 1941. After nearly thirty years, the hospital closed in 1969, at which point the Coqueleetza grounds were then further transformed in 1974 to be used as an armforces barracks (Carlson 2001: 75). The impact of Coqueleetza and St. Mary's on Stó:lô people has been significant. It “contributed to alcohol and drug addiction, led to loss of parenting skills, and in some cases, left the lingering, injurious legacies of abuse”(Carlson 2001: 68). Moreover, “[t]hough many Stó:lô shared these dark experiences, their memories of St. Mary's were not wholly negative: rather, they were complex, varied and individual” (Carlson 2001: 68).

Contemporary Stó:lô Cultural Resistance and Revival

Stó:lô cultural resistance is clearly illustrated by efforts by community members to re-claim the Coqueleetza grounds. Between 1968 and 1979, the Stó:lô people engaged in a series of ongoing negotiations with the Federal and B.C. Governments in order to secure control of Coqueleetza (Carlson 2001: 75), which culminated in May 1976, when numerous Stó:lô individuals occupied the site. As a result, twenty-six protesters were arrested for their participation in these demonstrations. In 1994, the old barracks were renovated and became the current Stó:lô Nation administration buildings (Carlson 2001: 75). The efforts to reclaim Coqueleetza commenced a continued period of cultural resistance, renewal and revival which is similarly reflected in the contemporary impetus to repatriate Stó:lô cultural property.

The successful transformation of Coqueleetza from a place associated with colonial practices and the subordination of Stó:lô culture to a place where the revival and continuity of Stó:lô culture flourishes is significant. It reflects the contemporary effort by Stó:lô people to engage in processes which renew and revive their culture. As Carlson writes of Coqueleetza:

Since the closure of the hospital and the repatriation of the Coqueleetza complex, the site has become the centre for Stó:lô Nation administration and governance, and the Stó:lô have re-appropriated the Coqueleetza meaning (Carlson 2001: 75)

The significance of the transformation of the grounds is articulated in the following: “This new ‘cleansing place’ is now a centre for cultural revival, where the pain of unfulfilled assimilationist policies is washed away” (Carlson 2001: 75). The re-appropriation by Stó:lô people of cultural knowledge in recent years reflects a contemporary desire to both protect and share Stó:lô culture. Part of the Nations’ mandate is to do this in ways which are both ethical and culturally appropriate.

Stó:lô Heritage Initiatives

The desires of members of the Stó:lô community to share their culture in accordance with cultural values and protocols is illustrated by various collaborative efforts between Stó:lô Nation and academics. Collaboration has resulted in two valuable publications about Stó:lô cultural heritage. *You Are Asked To Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History*, published in 1999, articulates the needs of community members to share their culture: “For many years it has been an objective of Stó:lô leaders to better inform *Xwélitem* society (Mainstream Canadians) about the history and culture of the Stó:lô people, as well as the history of Stó:lô-*Xwélitem* relations” (Carlson 1999: i).

The text also reflects the hopes of Stó:lô leaders to reduce prejudice towards Stó:lô Peoples, articulated in the introduction: “Stó:lô leaders recognize that by promoting cross-cultural awareness, prejudice and racism can be broken down and suspicion and resentment replaced with respect and understanding” (Carlson 1999: i). The Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas, which I have referred to frequently throughout this chapter, is another Stó:lô text published in 2001. It extended the hopes of its predecessor, You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History. The Atlas was hailed as a “landmark publication without precedent or comparison in Canada or the United States” which it accomplishes “through providing an in-depth and wide-ranging view of a single cultural region” (Carlson 2001: insert). The significant and collaborative research efforts between scholars and the community are highlighted in the text:

Much of the new analysis presented in this book is attributable to the unique and synergistic relationship of traditionally trained Stó:lô intellectuals working with non-Native colleagues educated in western universities. (Carlson 2001: insert)

The unique and meaningful relations between scholars and the Stó:lô community are also emphasized through the community’s participation with the University of British Columbia (UBC) in an Ethnographic Field School held annually at Stó:lô Nation. The UBC Ethnographic Field School, which commenced in 1996, brings undergraduate and graduate students to the Stó:lô community every summer in order to undertake collaborative research projects intended to be of use to the community. Many publications on Stó:lô culture have resulted from the Field School.²⁷

Stó:lô Nation has also succeeded in engendering accurate and respectful knowledge of Stó:lô culture as a result of such initiatives, subsequently implementing controls on the research process (such as the research registry) as well as the management

²⁷ One example is McIlwraith’s article (1996) used in this chapter.

of Stó:lô heritage within the community. The Stó:lô Nation Heritage Policy is a policy manual developed by the Nation with the goal to “preserve, protect and manage Stó:lô heritage in all its forms—in a manner consistent with Stó:lô values, beliefs and traditions” (Stó:lô 2003: 2). The forward to the Heritage Policy illustrates the goals of such policies and practices:

Stó:lô heritage is complex and dynamic. We carry on and express out traditions in relation to the ever changing world of which we are a part. This policy manual is a living document which reflects our views of heritage (Stó:lô 2003: 2)

The various decolonization efforts undertaken by Stó:lô people, including their efforts to regain control of Coqueleetza, the development of heritage publications based on collaborative efforts with scholars, and the implementation of controls over research, can all be understood in relation to a broader cultural revival movement. The revival of Stó:lô culture can similarly be viewed as a “decolonization” process, characterized by efforts to re-appropriate cultural objects and knowledge through a variety of means, including repatriation. The revival movement in Stó:lô is also characterized by the increasing number of people participating in cultural activities and initiatives (such as winter dancing, canoe racing, art, language programs), and by an emphasis on regenerating aspects of Stó:lô cultural life which were nearly lost through experiences with assimilationist policies such as the anti-Potlatch laws and residential schools. This revival of Stó:lô culture is self-articulated more precisely by a Stó:lô man in the context of our discussion of repatriation:

We have revitalized the other parts of our culture over the past 35 years or so, with of course the spirit dancing and art. Language, again is being solidified, again with a new generation of *Halq'eméylem* speakers and teachers. Our history is now being taught in our schools. These are all parts of a culture that I see, as being put back into place (05-03-B-p. 21)

This individual also indicated that repatriation can be understood within the context of a broader revival of Stó:lô culture and identity:

Things are starting to happen again, we were quiet for a while...but we are survivors, we're still here! And because we are survivors, we need to make our lives , I think, more complete, and bringing back the physical side of our history is one of the remaining parts of the jigsaw puzzle that we are putting together (05-03-B-20)

Thus, the success and continued emphasis of the Stó:lô people on the re-appropriation of their cultural forms strongly motivates their contemporary impetus to repatriate. Clearly, the efforts of the Stó:lô Nation justify and demand the use of participatory research methods which emphasize the values, history and experiences of the Stó:lô people.

Chapter Three

A Description of Using PAR in *S'olh Téméxw*

This chapter describes how I enacted PAR while working with the Stó:lô community. Given that one of the goals of this thesis is to assess the usefulness of PAR, this chapter will provide a description of how the themes of collaboration, participation and representation emerged while doing the research.

Collaboration

As I discussed in Chapter One, I take seriously the argument that research by anthropologists with First Nations must take into account cultural values in order to achieve emancipatory benefits from the research. Given this argument, the question arises, how have Stó:lô cultural ways and values influenced this particular research project? A first step in the process of collaborating with Stó:lô community members was for us to ascertain the emancipatory goals of research for Stó:lô individuals and the Stó:lô community. These goals developed within the context of the protocols for research established by the Stó:lô Nation through its research registry process. I contributed to this process of identifying the research goals by drawing on guidelines in anthropology related to doing ethical research with First Nations.

First Contact: The Stó:lô Nation Research Registry Process

As was noted in the Introduction, I was referred by the curator of ethnology at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) to the Stó:lô Nation, because members of the community were known to have an interest in heritage issues and repatriation. The

community had also done a significant amount of collaborative research with various scholars, exemplified by projects and heritage publications described in Chapter Two. As a result of this referral, in August 2002 I contacted the Stó:lô Nation Aboriginal Rights and Title Department (AR & T), the Stó:lô Nation governmental department which manages heritage and research initiatives on behalf of Stó:lô Nation members. At this point I was encouraged by the Stó:lô Nation archivist, who manages the registry process to submit a research proposal to the Stó:lô Nation research registry. He told me that the community considered repatriation a valuable topic to explore. (**See: Appendix B**)

As I briefly discussed in the Introduction, the registry process functions as a preliminary “gate keeping” system. It is designed to ensure that the following criteria are met for a given research project: ethical and cultural issues are considered, such as protocols for documenting and disseminating private or sacred knowledge; the research is useful to community members; there will be collaboration between the Stó:lô Nation and the researcher in order to define the benefits of the project; and the researcher provides Stó:lô Nation with copies of all information contributed by community members to a given project. This information is then stored in the Stó:lô Nation archives for future use.

The Stó:lô Nation initiated the registry review process in 1996 primarily as a result of inquiries made regarding archeological assessments in *S’olh Téméxw* (our world). The registry was broadened in scope during the following years to include any potential research involving Stó:lô community members. The expansion of the registry to all types of research resulted from concerns on the part of community members regarding the usefulness of research in which they participated, as well as redundancies in topics to which Stó:lô individuals were being asked to contribute. The registry, therefore,

functions as a preliminary way to ensure that knowledge is represented accurately and respectfully and that topics of inquiry have a pragmatic purpose so that the research will result in benefits for the community.

The registry application requires the potential researcher to submit an outline of the research topic, possible interview questions, research methods and possible modes of disseminating the information that is acquired through research. As a component of the process, registry applications are posted publicly within the community so as to elicit input from Stó:lô Nation government employees and other interested community members who are knowledgeable or have an interest in a particular research topic.

Defining the Goals and Benefits of the Research

Once my research registry application was approved (**See Appendix C**), I met with members of the Stó:lô Nation AR & T in order to further identify the intended goals and benefits of the research. At this point, it was agreed that the primary goal of the research would be to determine the level of understanding in the community regarding the repatriation of Stó:lô cultural property. This was seen as the first step that would permit us to identify community attitudes about the value of such a process. Based on this goal, our intention was to understand how practical considerations related to implementing repatriation could reflect cultural values and protocols.

The AR & T employees I spoke with already had many insights regarding the value of repatriation for the Stó:lô community. For example, they talked about how exploring the topic of repatriation would assist the community to achieve the following six practical objectives: supplement ongoing treaty negotiations by discussing

repatriation with members of the community; provide the basis for a chapter in the Stó:lô Nation Heritage Policy which would focus on the how repatriation can proceed in a way that reflects Stó:lô values; determine priorities for future repatriation efforts for the community; assist in supporting the current repatriation of *T'ixwelátsa* (A transformation object associated with the mythical work of *xéxáls*); develop an understanding of issues and potential resolution strategies related to repatriation; and finally, address repatriation within the context of contemporary definitions of cultural property. In initial discussions I had with AR & T, we agreed that discussions with community members should include consideration of the repatriation of intangible (or “intellectual”) cultural property such as songs, language, and knowledge of the natural world which may be kept in records at museums. This broadening of our interest reflects a shift in recent years to include “intangible” forms of cultural property within the repatriation process.

Determining Methodological Tools

Once the goals and intended benefits of the research were identified, the next step was to determine the most appropriate methods for the project. In-depth ethnographic interviews were suggested by some AR & T staff as the most relevant and useful research method. We agreed that this would provide an opportunity to record a variety of cultural views regarding repatriation. We also agreed that discussions should be tape-recorded, as the recordings could be used by members of the Stó:lô community in the future for purposes defined at that time. In accordance with the research registry, the recorded interviews would be stored in the Stó:lô Nation archives where they would be made

accessible to interested Stó:lô community members and scholars in the future. These decisions reflected the protocols the Nation has established for research and the specific goals of this project. We agreed that if people I spoke with objected to these procedures, then we could make certain arrangements to meet these concerns (for example, take notes in lieu of tape recording interviews). We agreed that the interview process should proceed with those who felt comfortable about having the recordings placed in the Stó:lô Nation archives.

Developing Research Questions

While I had provided initial questions in my research registry application, these questions were not fixed. In my view, they reflected my academic understanding of repatriation. My initial research registry application questions were modified many times before the interviews with Stó:lô individuals about repatriation began. Specifically, as I noted in Chapter One, in my original application to the research registry in 2002, Wilhelm Dilthey's life categories of meaning, value and purpose provided me with a broad matrix to develop an initial understanding of what repatriation might mean to Stó:lô community members, including how Stó:lô values might influence the process. Using the categories of meaning, value and purpose to frame questions reflected my own emphasis regarding how best I could understand repatriation through Stó:lô values. These categories provided me with an initial approach to work towards the goals established in my registry application, and they were deemed suitable by AR &T staff.

I had used Dilthey's categories in order to understand the experience of living and acting on the basis of cultural values and knowledge in Stó:lô culture, and how these

experiences related to repatriation. Some of my initial questions included: How is the value of objects and knowledge defined in Stó:lô? What purposes do various cultural forms have for community members once they are repatriated? Is a museum in Stó:lô considered a meaningful option? Would a museum serve a different purpose than that of a museum outside the Stó:lô community? How do Stó:lô cultural values influence the practical issues involved in repatriation such as the ownership, caretaking, display and handling of objects or intangible cultural forms? How do Stó:lô values determine ways of sharing the knowledge embodied in Stó:lô cultural property with both the community and the non-Stó:lô public once repatriated? I found that over time, the process of modifying and expanding these questions led to numerous new questions which were more specifically geared to understanding how Stó:lô values affected views of repatriation.

Participation

The initial goals and benefits of our research were defined over a period of nine months. During this period, I made a week long visit to Chilliwack in December 2002 so that I could visit the community and meet members of AR & T in person. From the December trip, our collaborative efforts to develop the research project culminated in my spending three months working with the Stó:lô Nation in the summer of 2003. Once I arrived for the summer, the following aspects of the research quickly developed: gaining an understanding of who to consult with; understanding how initial questions provided a means of informing more relevant discussion involving locally defined areas of interest; addressing the process of gaining consent in accordance with Stó:lô culture and being taught about the unintended benefits of the project.

With Whom Do I Speak?

Having arrived in Chilliwack, my first task was to orient myself and understand who I should speak with about repatriation. This process began when the Executive Director of the AR & T department provided me with a contact list of Stó:lô community members, whose input towards future policy development related to cultural property and repatriation was considered valuable. Prior to my first in-person meetings with Stó:lô individuals, I discussed with various co-workers at AR and T what experiences they had with Stó:lô heritage and repatriation. Gaining background information on individuals proved to be extremely useful for me, because I was unfamiliar with the community and my soon to be teachers. Given that repatriation is a complex and sensitive social, cultural, spiritual and political topic, it was understood that individuals would likely have different opinions, experiences and levels of understanding of the process. By having some prior understanding of the nature of community members' experience with repatriation, we were able to better explore aspects of the process most relevant to their own experiences in our discussions.

During the following three months, I spoke with males, females, elders, youth, individuals from member and non-member Stó:lô bands, those involved with institutional aspects of heritage management such as those working within heritage institutions,²⁸ as well as traditionally trained Stó:lô people, such as elders and spiritual people. While I met with twenty people for formal interviews which were recorded (most of whom I

²⁸ Two such heritage facilities in Stó:lô Territory are the *Shxwt'a: selhawtxw* cultural centre (house of long ago and today), located on the Coqueleetza grounds in Chilliwack B.C, and *Xá:ytem* Interpretive Centre in Mission, B.C.

spoke with two or three times), I discussed the topic informally with approximately forty people.

Those involved in the research provided diverse contributions to understanding the value of repatriation for individuals, families and the community at large. While some individuals had direct experience with of the process of repatriation (such as the contemporary namesake and caretaker of *T'ixwelatsa* currently being sought for return by the Stó:lô Nation), the elders in particular spoke of the meaning and value of Stó:lô heritage without having direct experiences of such a new process. The background information shared with me regarding individual ideas about repatriation was invaluable to the project, as it provided a starting point to engage in discussions.

While initial discussions were with community members identified by AR & T staff, as time passed in the community, word of mouth and awareness of the research project provided me new opportunities to speak with individuals who were not on my initial contact list. Those whose opinions and knowledge were highly regarded by other community members were recommended for the contribution their knowledge could make to the project. An article in the Stó:lô Nation newspaper about the research generated awareness of the project, and provided people with a means to contact me. This also caused the project to grow. By the mid-point of my time in *S'olh Téméxw* the project felt huge, because the more I spoke with people, the more people there seemed to be to speak with. I also wanted to make attempts to speak more than once with those involved. I began to experience an overwhelming sense of the magnitude both the importance of repatriation for community members, as well as how much there was to still do in terms of the project.

The importance of following up on our discussions was emphasized by some AR and T staff. The practice of following up proved to be meaningful for me and those I spoke with and allowed the following to take place: I would provide individuals with taped or written copies of our discussions if they so desired; create an opportunity for me to ask for clarification and make corrections with what they had shared with me thus far (such as with cultural practices or *Halq'eméylem* language); provide a chance to ask follow up questions; and encourage additions people might want to include after reflection of the topic or their initial contribution. Meeting a second or third time with people was not only a pleasure for me, but it also functioned as a way for me to express respect and appreciation for their willingness to share their knowledge with me. I did this as often as time limitations and schedules would allow, and managed to follow up with the majority of individuals I had initially spoken with. During the summer, I was taught by people I met about the cultural practice of preparing food for people, especially elders. Preparing food to give as a gift served as an expression of thanks and respect during our meetings. Usually when I met with people, I had the joy of cooking something to give to them as thanks for sharing their time and knowledge with me. Often we shared food during our time together.

How Asking Questions Informed More Questions

As my experience being in *S'olh Téméxw* continued, I became aware that in order to achieve the intended benefits of the research project, I must let go of my own preconceived notions of how and what the experience of doing the research would be. This realization can be illustrated by how the process of developing appropriate questions

to ask individuals regarding repatriation took place. As noted earlier, prior to my arrival for the summer, my idea of how I would initially approach the topic of repatriation was influenced by Dilthey's life categories of meaning, value and purpose.

The first part of the summer in the Stó:lô community focused on my attempts to understand what Stó:lô values were, and the relationship between the daily living of cultural values and repatriation. My learning curve as a researcher (and human being) was illuminated by how initial discussions with Stó:lô individuals functioned to inform future questions in the latter stages of the research. It became clear to me at these earlier stages in the research that defining the questions for research solely in terms of repatriation was too narrow. As a result of individuals explaining to me how they understood repatriation, my own views of repatriation expanded to include connections individuals made between repatriation and other aspects of their lives.

For example, while I had some prior understanding of the importance of ensuring cultural protocols were followed in the "handling" of First Nations sacred objects in museums as well as once they were repatriated, I learned how Stó:lô values influenced such protocols. In Stó:lô culture, protocols for handling cultural property are defined by caretaking responsibilities that are passed down by the community to a chosen individual. These responsibilities are carried out by the individual who bears the name, or title to these specific responsibilities. I will discuss specific connections Stó:lô individuals made between repatriation and their social, cultural, spiritual, historical and political experiences further in Chapter Four. I also gained an understanding of how Stó:lô cultural values influence views of repatriation by learning the meaning of phrases in the *Halq'eméylem* language. I had the honour of working with two elders whose knowledge

of the *Halq'eméylem* language is considered by community members to have almost single-handedly revived what was at one point considered an extinct language.

Together, they worked tirelessly on various language projects, and were generous with their time to discuss repatriation with me and work to create phrases in the *Halq'eméylem* language which would articulate the process. The elders used language to express how repatriation could reflect and proceed in accordance with Stó:lô cultural values. In Chapter Four, I will present the lexicon of *Halq'eméylem* words and phrases developed by these elders. Linking repatriation to various aspects of cultural life (including language) helped me and members of the Stó:lô community to understand the value of the process.

As the summer progressed, I began to understand how Stó:lô values define the process of repatriation. At times, I was overwhelmed by a feeling that I knew nothing. At the same time, I realized that my learning process could not be rushed, nor should it be unnecessarily influenced by my *prior* knowledge of either Stó:lô culture or repatriation. The ethnographic texts about Stó:lô people and their culture I had read, and the discourse related to repatriation that I was familiar with prior to my arrival, felt distant and one dimensional. In retrospect, I believe that the most significant part of being there was that I experienced *S'olh Téméxw* and learned from my teachers, young and old.

As a result of this state of mind, I was aware that I could not assume that Stó:lô people would articulate their views of repatriation in the same anthropological or discursive categories as my own. In some cases, individuals would discuss the process extensively, and not once use the term “repatriation.” The collective Stó:lô experience of having various cultural forms removed, whether legally or illegally, was referred to in all

of our discussions. Acts of appropriation have assumed many forms, and these were described in various ways by different individuals.

The removal of cultural objects, destruction of the natural habitats within *S'olh Téméxw*, and the suppression of cultural knowledge that resulted from the residential schools system and legal opposition to the potlatch influenced our discussion of repatriation. People spoke of their collective and individual experiences of having parts of their culture removed over time. As a result, our discussions of repatriation were emotional and clearly related to all aspects of Stó:lô culture, identity and history. The experience of discussing, and in some situations informing individuals that there are Stó:lô ancestral remains currently in museums was extremely difficult. It was emotional and sometimes shocking for people, especially elders. Any justification for the removal of ancestors seemed meaningless and shameful.

I became aware of the importance of the *Halq'eméylem* language as a way for people to express their values and views in our discussion. It became apparent that the inclusion of language was a way to ensure that the research was accessible to members of the community at a future point. Learning about the meaning of language and other aspects of Stó:lô culture resulted from being in the community to experience a way of living. By participating in the project, as well in a variety of ordinary and extraordinary events such ceremonial and social gatherings, I was able to gain a sense of Stó:lô values. This provided me with the ability to fully appreciate how invaluable the contributions of people were to our project and their community. I enjoyed this learning immensely on a personal and human level, as well as in the context of our research. I was taught about objects, traditions, language, names, cultural practices and protocols by being in the

community to participate in everyday experiences. I was taught about the value and interrelation between *S'olh Téméxw* and repatriation through the generosity of individuals who took the time to show me what it meant to be a Stó:lô person. I traveled with my teachers and friends through the backcountry, where we visited sacred sites, and I was taught stories about the land. I was taught *Halq'eméylem* place names for meaningful features of the land, and shown family fishing spots where the cultural practice of wind drying salmon is still done. Essentially, I was able to learn from doing, from participating with people in the physical place which is inseparable from their values. As the summer went on, often while sitting on the banks of the river near where I lived, the benefits of being “in the field” became clear; while my prior knowledge of repatriation acquired through academic training remained present, I was able to refer to more Stó:lô values in interviews and use less of my own discourse related to repatriation. I was then able to engage in a discussion of the topic as it is understood by Stó:lô people.

Addressing Consent with Cultural Values in Mind

Gaining consent for the research project was also addressed with Stó:lô cultural values in mind. Moreover, the importance of an oral tradition conveyed through the *Halq'eméylem* language, along with other aspects of Stó:lô culture, needed to be incorporated in the research process. A way in which oral communication was privileged in the project is exemplified by the process of gaining consent to do interviews. Stó:lô community members were generally familiar with the process of giving consent, as it is required by all researchers who make a successful registry application. But it became

apparent during the research that the process of gaining consent could be clarified by emphasizing oral communication.

The consent forms I used for the research which Carleton University required were perceived at times by individuals (including me) as too long. So, upon beginning our discussions, I made efforts to go through the document orally with individuals. The process of “talking through” the consent was recommended to me by coworkers at AR & T in order to clarify the process. I became aware how important oral communication is in Stó:lô. Not only is this way of communicating an important way learn about Stó:lô values, it is also a way to show respect to individuals that one meets.

I tried to consider the individual preferences of individuals during all aspects of the research. One example of how individual preferences were considered was the choice to be tape recorded during our discussions. While some individuals were comfortable with being tape recorded, others were not, so I took notes instead. This choice reflected the comfort level of the individual being interviewed, given that some individuals did not like being tape-recorded for various personal or cultural reasons.

Understanding the Unintended Benefits of the Research

As the summer continued, the intended and unintended benefits of the research crystallized for me. In many cases, our interviews expanded from the topic of repatriation to something closer to life histories. This seemed to result from people reflecting on the question: “What makes cultural objects and knowledge valuable to you, to all Stó:lô people?” In explaining the value of their cultural heritage, people provided me with a

history of their experiences and those of their ancestors, recalled through stories and oral histories.

Although I avoided reading academic texts at all costs throughout the summer, I was given Scott. M. Momaday's The Man Made of Words, St. Martens Press, New York (1997). His ability to describe the value of storytelling in First Nations culture struck me as poignant:

In the oral tradition stories are told not merely to entertain or instruct; they are told to be believed. Stories are not subject to the imposition of such questions as true or false, fact or fiction. Stories are realities lived and believed (1997: 3)

During our discussions, people would often relate repatriation to issues of identity, the continuity of Stó:lô culture for individuals and the collective, and to their shared history. Thus, it was very important for me to convey to individuals that there was no right or wrong answers for the project, and that to discuss the topic of repatriation as they understood it was a valuable contribution. I believed this was important to convey, as the goal of the research was not to speak with experts in the topic of repatriation; it was to speak with Stó:lô people to understand how their cultural values could influence the process. Although it was apparent to me that the Stó:lô people I spoke with were the experts, there were still times when individuals assumed that I was the expert, because I had academic training. It was important to clarify these roles while engaging with people. It is my belief that Stó:lô people are the experts on Stó:lô culture, and that there could be no contribution which was not valuable to the community or this project.

As mentioned earlier, I was often overcome with a feeling that I knew nothing while in *S'olh Téméxw*. I gave into the feeling and understanding that I did not fully comprehend what I was being taught. In many ways, my knowledge of both worlds I

lived in was suspended. The academic world I had left felt distant and institutionalized, and yet while in *S'olh Téméxw* learning, I felt as if it would take a lifetime to know enough to make a genuine contribution to the community. Thus, I committed myself to simply engaging and being with the people and being in their land while there, I recorded as much information as I could for the use of the community. I took in as much as I could, both in interviews and the extensive writing I did each day while perched on the side of the river. The way I decided to handle this feeling of being suspended between two worlds was to commit myself to making the connections later when I knew more. This state of mind resulted from my belief that Stó:lô people knew more than I ever would about their cultural values, and hence would be able to make links where I would not. They were my teachers, I was the student; the knowledge shared with me as part of the research was intended to be used by and for the community. Humility, while not a reflection of academic training, appeared to me to be one of the most valuable “tools” one could have as a researcher.

An example of how knowledge shared with me had a different value for me than for members of the community is exemplified by the unintended benefits which resulted from the research. Currently, information shared in our discussions regarding how traditional cultural values relate to natural resources and subsequent management strategies for the environment is being used by the Nation. My hope is that the knowledge shared in this project will be used in the future by Stó:lô Nation to achieve their practical goals.

Representation

As was noted in Chapter One, a significant consideration for contemporary anthropological research with First Nations is the question of how knowledge derived from research is to be disseminated. It is stressed that the way in which knowledge provided in research is eventually shared must be both ethical and accessible to those who have made contributions. As a result, the question of how information obtained during research this research would be disseminated was addressed in relation to how the goals of the research were defined. Arguably, making the results of the research accessible to those who shared their knowledge is essential and must not be avoided in favour of speaking only to academic peers.

Leaving Something Behind

Hence, as part of this research, the following were left in the Stó:lô Nation archives: typed transcripts of all twenty interviews; copies of tapes for all recorded interviews; and notes from all interviews which were not taped. Consent forms for all individuals who participated in discussions were also left in the Stó:lô Nation archives with accompanying notes and/or interview recordings. I offered copies of interview tapes and transcriptions to all individuals I had spoken with to keep for their own use or to be used by their individual band. I also provided the names and contact information of individuals who expressed interest in the research but were not interviewed due to time constraints. Finally, a map was created for the project by the Stó:lô Nation mapping technician. The map indicates which band level communities the Stó:lô individuals interviewed were from, and similarly illustrates the communities which did not have individuals who participated in interviews. This map, (**Appendix D**), provides a visual

aid to for Stó:lô Nation or future researchers to continue the repatriation research project if it is considered desirable at a future time. Along with the aforementioned materials left with the Stó:lô Nation, I provided the Nation with a summary report of findings which resulted from our discussion of the topic of repatriation. This report, titled *Tset Tháyeltxwem Te Lálém S'olh etawtxw* “We are Building a House of Respect” is a working paper upon which future policy can be built by the Stó:lô Nation. It is a summary report of approximately 4,000 words in length which articulates the findings of our project. The report was read by various co-workers who made suggestions regarding how the information could be presented so it would be accessible to community members. Language and format were emphasized as points to consider. Thus, the *Halq'eméylem* language was used where relevant and possible, and academic jargon was avoided. As well, verbs were used whenever possible to articulate ideas, because the *Halq'eméylem* language is an action based language which utilizes many verbs. The inclusion of *Halq'eméylem* in the title reflects the repatriation lexicon which was created as part of the project. “House of Respect” (*Te Lálém S'olh etawtxw*) articulates what certain elders felt would be a culturally appropriate place name for a museum in *S'olh Téméxw*, if that were to be considered a viable possibility by other community members. Using the phrase “We are Building” (*Tset Tháyeltxwem*) in the title of the report reflects how this research project encouraged everyone to come together and define what is meaningful in Stó:lô culture regarding repatriation. In the following chapter I will build on the structure of this report by using excerpts from interviews with Stó:lô individuals to illustrate how Stó:lô people feel that repatriation can reflect and maintain their cultural values.

Chapter Four

Repatriation as a Reflection of Stó:lô Cultural Values: *Tset Tháyeltxwem Te lálém S'olh etawtxw* (We are Building a House of Respect)

What did members of the Stó:lô community have to say about repatriation? In this chapter, I will present a summary of our discussions by drawing on the statements of the Stó:lô people with whom I spoke. Following the format of the summary report, *Tset Tháyeltxwem Te lálém S'olh etawtxw* (*We are Building a House of Respect*), which I wrote for the Stó:lô Nation, I will illustrate how the Stó:lô people I spoke with believe repatriation can proceed so as to reflect and renew their cultural values. While Stó:lô Nation is engaged in an ongoing effort to repatriate the *T'ixwelátsa* statue, currently no objects have been successfully repatriated to the community. Thus, input from community members about repatriation is considered valuable in order to define the role this process will have in the community's future.

Throughout the research project, the following emerged as central to understanding repatriation through Stó:lô values: establishing what Stó:lô cultural property consists of, and thus what people would like to see repatriated; identifying the perceived benefits of repatriation are; prioritizing what cultural forms could be returned; identifying different forms of repatriation efforts that can take place; addressing issues raised with Stó:lô values in mind and establishing potential resolution strategies for these issues; and finally, understanding how the repatriation process is articulated through the *Halq'eméylem* language.

What is Stó:lô Cultural Property?

In the early stages of the project, my discussions with individuals focused on what Stó:lô people consider cultural property to consist of and what sorts of things they would like to see returned. Engaging in a discussion of how Stó:lô cultural property is defined had two primary benefits. First, it gave me an understanding of the diversity of cultural forms that are meaningful to community members. It also created an opportunity for me to provide them with information about what forms may be held in museums and could therefore be potentially repatriated. How “cultural property” is currently defined by members of the community has social, political, spiritual, historical and legal dimensions which are essential to understand in order for the community to fully participate in the repatriation process. For example, while historically Stó:lô people may not have defined their ancestors’ remains as “cultural property,” currently, human remains constitute a key form of Stó:lô cultural property to be sought for repatriation. By discussing what Stó:lô cultural property consists of, specific forms were identified by individuals to potentially seek for repatriation.

The following forms were identified:

1. **Human ancestral remains and associated burial objects.** The return of Stó:lô ancestors remains which may be held in museums are considered of serious importance to return. One Stó:lô individual I spoke with referred to the importance of repatriating ancestral remains:

[We need to] put them in a proper place of rest, rather than having them sitting in a museum or something like that...Our people have an understanding of death and proper ceremonies that have to go along with that, to make sure that our people are looked after, cared for spiritually. (10-03-A-p.2, 3)

2. **Transformation sites and objects associated with the mythological work and stories of xexáls.**

These are objects and features of the natural world which bear cultural significance. The significance of these objects to the community is illustrated in the contemporary effort to repatriate the *T'ixwelátsa* statue. These objects have stories which are encoded with morals and teachings for all Stó:lô people. The particular story of *T'ixwelátsa*, involves a contest that occurred between xexáls (the Creator) and *T'ixwelátsa* who was a Stó:lô ancestor. Xexáls won the contest and turned *T'ixwelátsa* into stone, which is the form that he is now in at the Burke Museum in Seattle. As the individual who currently bears the name *T'ixwelátsa* explains, “One of the qualities that makes *T'ixwelátsa* valuable is that he bears a lesson in life for educating the rest of the community” (5-03-A-p.2). These sites and associated objects are considered sacred and are used for teaching Stó:lô myths or stories. The importance of these features and objects was articulated during an interview: “Just as all the transformation sites are, they function all the time to sort of hold that mythological world together, bring it into and interface with the contemporary public.” (02-03-A-p.9) *T'ixwelátsa*, is referenced in this context: “*T'ixwelátsa*, it’s an ongoing everyday experience of sacredness” (02-03-A-p.9).

3. **Sxwó:yxwey ceremonial masks and regalia and other ceremonial objects.**

Specific ceremonial objects identified for return were talking sticks, masks, cedar dresses, hats, and feast bowls. These objects are considered sacred to the community, and their continued use is integral to the well-being of the entire community. One elder described the significance of these objects: “Masks,

especially *Sxwó:yxwey* masks, are not museum pieces. They are traditional healers, and they help to heal people through the old ways” (11-03-A-p.2). Furthermore, the meaning and knowledge of the masks rests with community members who carry the mask or regalia: “Every mask has a story, and every mask belongs to a family who carries the mask. Masks must be recognized, along with other regalia as to who they belong to” (11-03-A-p.1).

4. **Utility objects** such as jewelry, beads, baskets, clothing, blankets; tools, bowls, weavings, looms and canoes; songs; *Slahal*²⁹ and other gambling game pieces and photos. To have these objects in the community is important because not only do they illustrate family lineages, they also provide an opportunity for Stó:lô people to carry on specific cultural traditions. One woman described the importance of the repatriation of these forms:

I never believed I would see it in my time. I never dreamed I would see actual stone beads—bead made out of stone. I never dreamed I would see what a cedar bark shoe; a pair of shoes looked like. Only in my minds eye could I create it based on how my grandmother created it; in words. I grew up with the stories about the baskets, about how it told the people who you were, who your parents were, who your mother was, who your grandmother was. That someone still has the knowledge to re-create the blanket; it’s made it even more important, the work that needs to be done to bring those items home (09-03-B-p.3)

5. **Environmental Features** such as sacred sites, fishing spots, petroglyphs and transformation sites are important for Stó:lô people to experience and care for. Cultural resources and meaningful features that exist in the natural environment need to be preserved. One man I spoke with described how cultural values govern the care of natural resources:

²⁹ Games and gambling are activities in Stó:lô culture which have persisted to this day. *Slahal* is a particular form of gambling which has associated pieces

We're supposed to look after it for future generations, and it's going to be gone. Going down to the creek and catching fish, or going out into the woods and being able to have a drink of water. Like my grandfather says: 'It's all important, right from the snow capped peaks right down to the ocean, it's all connected. It's all one, and we're supposed to be a part of that (03-03-A- p.15, 16)

The Benefits of Repatriation

Individuals I spoke with consistently asserted that repatriation was a process that has many benefits for the community, including cultural, social, historical, spiritual, and physical benefits which reflect Stó:lô values and history. For convenience, I am presenting these benefits in terms of a series of categories which are not mutually exclusive.

Education

Community members identified the education of their young people and outsiders as the primary benefit of repatriation. Education helps to maintain the continuity of Stó:lô teachings and affirm the cultural principle *Xolhmet et mekx' stam s'i:wes te selsila:lk chet*, (Take care of everything that our great grandparents showed us), *Itagles chexw xwelmi:ay staxwelh* (Remember the future generations)" (Stó:lô: 2003: 5). Integrating returned cultural forms in settings where educational practices occur would provide an opportunity to live and maintain this important cultural principle. Using repatriated cultural forms to educate was also seen as a way to develop pride in being a Stó:lô person. One individual described why repatriation is important to developing pride in being Stó:lô:

A lot more of our people are developing a sense of pride in who they are. They are finding out about the real teachings, and a lot of these things; different

artifacts, relics and things like that give ourselves and the public a sense of pride in who we are. I mentioned before, you have to know where you came from to get a sense of where you are going,” and I think repatriation plays a big part in that (03-03-A- p.2)

In discussing the impacts that the appropriation of Stó:lô cultural forms has had for the community at large, another individual observed how repatriation can benefit in this way: “It’s pride we need to bring back, pride in who we are” (08-03-A-p.6).

Education, as a benefit of repatriation, has another dimension considered valuable to community members. The return of cultural objects would provide a “completion” of cultural knowledge. Stories, teachings and values have continued despite the absence of the physical objects from the community, in some cases for an entire century. As a result of having cultural forms returned, Stó:lô teachers, especially elders and knowledgeable people, can utilize both the objects and stories to teach. Stó:lô elders would then have the opportunity to integrate their teaching and knowledge with physical objects so as to fully teach their cultural values and practices.

Breaking Down Negative Stereotypes

The use of cultural forms by Stó:lô people (old and young) to teach healthy and accurate images of their culture is another perceived benefit of repatriation. This benefit was described by a young man who works as an educator at a Stó:lô cultural facility:

My grandfather used to tell me stories...and now I have the ability to talk as he used to talk and share stories and knowledge and history. And it is very, very, important to do that. It is important for them to know how we were back in the day, how we are today, and how we have had to change, the kind of world we all live in now, and how we can all help each other (08-03-A-p.2)

Developing and expressing a healthy identity is considered valuable, because it helps to break down negative stereotypes within the community, as well as among the wider public. One Stó:lô woman spoke of how her ancestors struggled to continue with

their teachings in private despite the negative views of her people associated with assimilationist policies:

I grew up with the stories of our sacred items, I grew up in a time when it wasn't popular to be an Indian. I grew up hearing my Grandma speak the language and I could understand her for the most part, and probably answered her. But by going to school, there was no language. We learned about Dick and Jane, we learned how to square dance. We certainly didn't see our baskets and foods that our people ate...I am very aware of the impact not being a part of our language or cultures had. I am very aware of all the stories that I grew up with. So, what does repatriation do for someone? Certainly, for myself, it has validated all that I heard, all that I learned, and all that I understand (09-03-B-p.2)

Healing

Many thought that repatriation would benefit the community by helping it's members to heal the hurt suffered as a result of their colonization. The impact of having objects and knowledge removed from the community was addressed by one elder, who explained that "there's a lot of hurt; our language, culture, traditions have all been lost. Our burial grounds are very sacred and they are being destroyed. We have been hurt, hurt real deep" (12-03-B p.1).

Through their use, ceremonial objects such as *sxwó:yxwey* masks and regalia are used for spiritual and physical healing. Therefore, their return can assist in caring for the physical and spiritual well-being of community members when they are properly used in ceremonial settings. As *sxwó:yxwey* play an pivotal role in the lives of Stó:lô people, their absence from the community is perceived as damaging. One elder stressed the value of these objects, and how they should not be out of the community, "Sacred objects are not toys, they are very sacred, very strong" (12-03-B-p.1).

One woman noted the power of repatriation to heal individuals in the community: "I believe it wipes away some of the shame, I think it wipes away the words of racism

and discrimination, all those things that you grew up with” (09-03-B-p.9). Moreover, the process of healing is considered to be an important step towards developing healthy relations with individuals and institutions who participated in the removal of cultural knowledge from the community. The appropriation of Stó:lô cultural forms was discussed by one elder in the context of how repatriation can allow the community to share their culture with the wider society:

There’s all different reasons, I know, for taking these items, I know because I have heard them. The message, the biggest message, is the fact that they were taken away. Under what circumstance, we need to know, under what conditions, we need to know and hear it. All I know is that people need to hear this story; First Nations are not afraid to share, and First Nations have a lot to learn from other people as well, other Nations. And it is only on that level of sharing and respect that we’re going to be able to carry on as a people, and I know that’s the honest to god truth (09-03-B-p.9, 10)

Another elder and spiritual person spoke poignantly about how repatriation can function to heal the hurt that he believes Stó:lô ancestors feel as a result of the removal of sacred objects and knowledge from the community: “Our ancestors are puzzled as to why things are lost. We are not a whole people, Stó:lô, and that is why we have to try to do this in the best way” (11-03-A-p.4). He believes that the best way for repatriation to take place is for everyone in the community to participate.

Building Relationships

The healing process which repatriation can help facilitate also includes the opportunity to build a variety of healthy relationships. It can function to reconcile Stó:lô individuals who over time may have become estranged. This is because the repatriation of certain cultural forms would encourage participation in ceremonies which bring people together.

Repatriation can assist with the re-establishment of cultural and familial ties across wider areas, including ties between Stó:lô individuals, families, bands, and Nations. The current repatriation effort involving *T'ixwelátsa*, illustrates the benefit of building relations for the wider Stó:lô community. *T'ixwelátsa*'s contemporary namesake, who carries the hereditary name *T'ixwelatsa*, and bears the responsibility to care for the *T'ixwelátsa* statue, speaks of the importance of the repatriation effort:

The direction given was for it [*T'ixwelátsa*] to be used as a teaching tool as well as a spiritual object-it contains the living spirit of a human being; *T'ixwelátsa*, one of our ancestors. It probably means much, much more to my immediate family than to it does to the rest of Stó:lô Nation, but it does have social impacts throughout the whole of the Coast Salish speaking Nation. So, it is really important... I call it the renaissance of Stó:lô culture, and of course, that would also apply to all the First Nations' cultures around British Columbia which I know more of, but I am pretty sure that's happening all across North America (05-03-B-p.8)

Building relationships between Stó:lô people and non-Stó:lô people is similarly considered a benefits of repatriation. The impetus to develop these relationships was described in one discussion with a Stó:lô Chief:

It is a very touchy subject when you talk about things being taken away from our people; whether it be our language, artifacts, or people in general, our *own* people when they were already buried. But, a relationship needs to be developed between non-First Nations and also we need to talk to the other people of the First Nations' community (08-03-A-p.4)

Survival

The return of cultural objects of value is symbolic of surviving the experiences of residential schools, anti-potlatch laws, and the missionizing of Stó:lô culture. By teaching Stó:lô people (especially Stó:lô youth who did not directly experience these events) and the public about Stó:lô culture with returned cultural forms which have been preserved outside of the community, the message is that this doesn't have to happen anymore. The return of various cultural forms provides the opportunity to teach young people about Stó:lô history through telling the story of their removal and absence from the community. At the same time, the return of the objects functions to illustrate the survival of Stó:lô culture despite the absence of valuable objects and practices from people's lives. One individual described the importance of repatriation to the survival of the Stó:lô people:

Growing up, I heard the stories, had them passed on to teach, but the objects were not there. Nothing was there. Finally, we are getting to the point where the objects are going to be there (05-03-A-p.6)

Thus, after years of hiding culture, of learning about Stó:lô values and practices in privacy for fear of reprimand, repatriation can help to make a public statement about what Stó:lô culture is. Similarly, it can provide an opportunity to show how Stó:lô history has influenced what it currently means to be a Stó:lô person.

Continuity and Maintenance of Cultural Values

It is believed that repatriation would facilitate the continued survival of tradition as well as the expansion of cultural knowledge and practice in contemporary times. The repatriation of *T'ixwelátsa* exemplifies this process of renewal and restoration. It is believed that the return of *T'ixwelátsa* will simultaneously revive cultural practices and

traditions, while creating an opportunity for Stó:lô people to collectively participate in new and innovative cultural forms:

To celebrate, leaders from here, Nooksack³⁰ and neighboring tribes and chiefs will all come to celebrate and share. *Sxwó:yxwey* mask dances will be used to welcome him home, which is very sacred. People haven't seen this type of ceremony in a long time, even ever, so the welcome home celebration will be part of the revival!" (05-03-A- p.6)

For the restoration and continuity of cultural forms and activities to take place, it is considered essential that cultural objects be in the community.

Fulfill Individual and Collective Caretaking Responsibilities

Caretaking responsibilities are very clearly defined in Stó:lô culture and are integral to the well being of Stó:lô people. Caretaking of various cultural forms rests with chosen individuals. Understanding the significance of these responsibilities clarifies that the purpose of repatriation is not to "re-own" cultural objects, but rather to provide an opportunity for the appropriate individuals to fulfill these responsibilities. Given that certain cultural objects are cared for by individuals who bear specific responsibilities, fulfillment of caretaking responsibilities is extremely important and inseparable from all aspects of Stó:lô life. The importance of fulfilling caretaking responsibilities is stressed by an individual who was chosen to take on, or "carry" the responsibility to care for a song passed down through her family. In reference to the song, she explains:

We say all of this doesn't even belong, doesn't belong to individuals, it belongs to my children and my grandchildren. While I carry and utilize objects that are sacred, they don't belong to me. They belong to the spirit. I belong to the spirit. I don't own them, they come from the spirit. And if you don't care for it, you lose it, you see? If I am going to share a song, that's intangible. This song belongs to

³⁰ Nooksack is a Salish community on the U.S. side of the border, where *T'ixwelátsa*'s namesake is currently a registered member.

the Stó:lô people, and that's the way I introduce it: This song, we would say, belongs to our children and our grandchildren (09-03-B-p.12,13)

During our discussion, she sang me the song she was describing in order to show me the importance of caring for cultural knowledge in a contemporary setting. She also contrasted the differing views of ownership between Stó:lô and non-Stó:lô people in order to stress how their notions of caretaking and ownership differ:

My grandmother would say when she first heard that non-Native people owned land, she goes ' who are they, God? Who do you think you are, God? You own the land, you own this, own this? You don't own, whatever it is that you have, you share (09-03-B-p.13)

Follow Laws

As previously noted, there are specific cultural principles, often referred to as "laws" within Stó:lô culture, which are integral aspects of Stó:lô life. Repatriation would provide an opportunity for Stó:lô people to follow these principles. Some of these principles described by individuals include: living up to the name that you earned; fulfilling your caretaking responsibilities; and knowing "who you are, what you are and where you came from." The repatriation of *T'ixwelátsa* provides an example of how these cultural principles can be adhered to and maintained. The responsibilities of *T'ixwelátsa's* contemporary namesake to care for and share the knowledge associated with the object with the greater community is of extreme importance. The individual who currently bears the name *T'ixwelátsa* received the name from the elders of the community in his youth, when he became Chief of the Tzeachten band. In one of our interviews, he described why he received his name: "The elders decided that because I was now chief, I needed to have a First Nations' identity, so he covered me with the name *T'ixwelátsa*" (05-03-B- p.4). The meaning inherent in being given a name

(referred to as “being covered with a name”) was explained to him the evening of his naming ceremony, where 500 people attended. He describes the significance of being covered with the name:

What they said to me was that ‘from this night on, I was no longer [his anglo name], that I was *T’ixwelátsa*, and that it was my responsibility to find out all that I could about this name and the man who carried the name before me, and that that’s who I would be the rest of my life (05-03-B- p.4)

Through a series of life events which he believes were his destiny, he located the *T’ixwelátsa* statue in the Burke museum in Seattle, and commenced the effort to repatriate *T’ixwelátsa*, the transformation object. His efforts to repatriate the object reflected his desire to live up to the name he earned and fulfill his responsibilities. The path he was one was clarified by the words of his elders, who told him: “you carry the name, his responsibility. Bring him home” (05-03-A-p.2). He has been trying to get *T’ixwelátsa* home for eleven years now, since 1992.

Along with the aforementioned cultural laws, there are other powerful guiding principles with regards to the handling of ancestral human remains. To not adhere to these laws and related protocols is considered harmful spiritually and socially. Subsequently, the repatriation of human remains is a goal of the community, and provides an opportunity to correct damage done over time to Stó:lô people alive and deceased who have not been able to enact appropriate protocols in handling their ancestors.

Celebration

The last benefit of repatriation we discussed involves the celebration which will occur upon the return of cultural forms to the community. As one individual noted:

I think that when we start getting some of these things returned to us it is going to be a celebration, so we have to go on using our traditional ceremonies, and say thank you to the people who have been taking care of the objects for a number of years (10-03-A-p.2)

Celebrating the return of Stó:lô heritage reflects the physical and cultural survival of the Stó:lô people as well as the survival of objects which had been removed from the community over the last century. In this way, the celebration which will accompany repatriation efforts is deeply meaningful because as it is noted above, it signifies the survival of the stories, ceremonial practices, and values despite the absence of the objects. It also provides an opportunity to participate in the contemporary renewal and regeneration of cultural knowledge. During an interview, one woman referred to the repatriation of cultural property in terms of it providing an opportunity to be innovative with cultural practices, specifically the potlatch: “It would be wonderful if there would be a big celebration upon the return of repatriated objects. To celebrate the return of objects, we could have a potlatch, not a give away, but a give back” (06-03-p.2).

Priorities for Repatriation

Given the diversity of Stó:lô cultural forms and the numerous benefits identified for repatriation, a prioritization of what should be sought for return was necessary.

The reburial of ancestral human remains was identified as the first priority for repatriation. Stó:lô cultural principles require that proper protocols be followed in order to respectfully lay deceased relatives to rest. Those who have passed on should be buried at home with the proper ceremonies. One elder described the importance of the cultural laws that govern the proper treatment of the dead: “It is law in Stó:lô culture that a soul

will no rest until it is buried properly” (16-03-A-p.2). The significance of reburial efforts was also stressed by this elder:

All efforts are made to find human remains in every circumstance. If a person is lost, or in an accident and you don’t know where the remains are, you still keep going to look. The belief is that their spirit will wander if there is not a resting place given to them (16-03-A-p.2)

One elder describes his father’s stories of how these protocols were not followed in the First World War. While his father survived the War, other Stó:lô people did not: “When fighting in the wars, you always have to bury the dead. In 1918, my grandpa fought in the war, and they couldn’t bring Stó:lô bones back. This was very, very bad” (16-03-A-p.1). Thus, in the case of Stó:lô ancestral remains in museum collections, every effort must be made to locate and bury them respectfully, for as one elder described, “the laws that teach how to handle ancestors are very important” (16-03-B-p.1).

The second priority for return are sacred and ceremonial objects, specifically *Sxwó:yxwey* masks and regalia. Described as “healers,” these objects are extremely sacred. Their handling and storage by museums is considered to be in breach of the cultural protocols which govern their care. These objects are considered “private” in nature because only certain individuals may use them at specific times, and upon their return they will be re-integrated by appropriate individuals into Stó:lô ceremonial life. They will be used to teach a new generation of Stó:lô people ceremonial practices and traditions, and as conduits to heal and teach. *Sxwó:yxwey* play an pivotal role in the spiritual and physical well-being of Stó:lô people and they need to be returned to the community.

The third priority for return are objects for public and community teaching, such as baskets, weavings, jewelry, bowls, tools, carvings. All are objects which carry individual, familial and community importance. They will be used as teaching tools within the community and in settings that include members of the greater public. Upon their return, they may be displayed publicly to teach about the practices and traditions of Stó:lô people. An example of the diversity of uses for these objects may be a cedar basket. While this type of object could be displayed publicly, it may also have stylistic or familial markings that are of value to certain Stó:lô individuals or families. When returned, contemporary Stó:lô artisans could therefore reproduce these insignias in their own works.

Lastly, transformation objects associated with the work and stories of the mythological creator's *xéxáls* may also be used for public display and teaching. These objects, such as the *T'ixwelátsa* statue, are the contemporary depictions of Stó:lô individuals who met with *xéxáls*. The moral stories which they embody are considered valuable educational tools.

Forms of Repatriation Efforts: How Repatriation Can Proceed

Discussion with Stó:lô people elicited four different ways in which repatriation can take place, and these ways reflect the different types of cultural forms as well as different uses that are anticipated for repatriated materials. Some materials will be for public use and display, others for use in ceremonial settings. In the case of ancestral remains, some will be identifiable, while others will be unidentifiable in terms of familial connection or place of origin.

Prior to discussing these four forms that repatriation efforts can take, it is important to note that distinctions made between “private” and “public” objects are not fixed, but rather represent some cases which were described in interviews. Defining the value of an object is a complex social and cultural process which reflects the influence of many factors. It was stressed in our interviews that within Stó:lô culture the value of an object is in many ways a reflection of the intention of its maker. These intentions, in many cases, may only be assessed by certain knowledgeable and spiritual people in the community. For example, a bowl may be appropriate for public display and use if it is known by knowledgeable people to be a utility object. If it is a ceremonial bowl, the community and public may be harmed if proper corrective ceremonies are not used to ensure the objects, which may be very powerful or damaged due to their inappropriate handling in a museum setting, are safe for community members to handle again. Similarly, *T'ixwelátsa*, one of many transformation objects and sites which depict the work and teachings of *xéxáls*, is to be used publicly as an educational tool. Other transformation objects may have different histories and purposes and therefore are not to be used for public display either within the community or by related non-Stó:lô cultural institutions.

The first form of repatriation involves the return of objects and intangibles (such as songs) intended for public use and display. The objects are to be stored, handled and displayed within the public realm, which could occur at the *Shxwt'a: selhawtxw* cultural centre (house of long ago and today), or at the *Xá:ytem* interpretive centre. Once back in the community, they would be used in a public space to teach community members and the general public about Stó:lô values and history. As mentioned earlier, telling the story

of the appropriation of objects and their return and reintegration into the Stó:lô community represents a significant purpose to repatriate. Returned Stó:lô objects may be incorporated into educational practices at Stó:lô cultural facilities. Once it has been established by Stó:lô spiritual people that the objects are safe to handle and display, upon their return they would be used to educate and could include the following: tools, baskets, canoes, bowls, weavings and looms, jewelry, clothing, songs and certain transformation objects.

The second form of repatriation effort involves objects used for ceremonial purposes. Sacred and ceremonial objects are to be used by Stó:lô community members at ceremonies and cultural gatherings. As regalia and masks are cared for by a specific individual or family, and are considered private in nature, these objects would not be used for display in public or museum setting. The purpose of their return is the continuity of a variety of cultural practices and traditions, including the fulfillment of individual and familial caretaking responsibilities. This type of object would be handled and used in a specific ceremonial context by appropriate members of the community, and could include the following: *Sxwó:yxwey* masks and regalia, other ceremonial objects such as rattles, talking sticks, and some types of clothing.

The third form of repatriation involves human remains with identifiable familial connection or area of origin. This type of repatriation effort is relatively clear in terms of practice, as Stó:lô cultural principles that define treatment of ancestors are very strict. These cultural protocols emphasize the involvement of the close family of the individual and then extend outwards from related families to the entire community. Protocols for

reburial are based on Stó:lô practices, values and principles designed to adhere to cultural laws in this area.

The fourth form of repatriation involves human remains with unidentifiable familial connection or area of origin. This is possibly the most complex of all the forms that repatriation can take for the Stó:lô community. Remains may be unidentifiable as Stó:lô if a non-Stó:lô cultural institution does not have specific provenance information about the appropriation or removal of ancestral remains. This information is extremely important to reburial efforts, as it determines immediate family ties and subsequent caretaking responsibilities.

Issues and Resolution Strategies Related to Repatriation

A number of sensitive issues associated with repatriation arose during our discussions, and in many cases individuals made attempts to resolve them by making suggestions

The first major issue some individuals expressed was concern about the spiritual condition of repatriated objects. They said that the spirits of these objects may have been disturbed in museum settings. This concern pertained in particular to ceremonial objects, given their sacred, private nature. One man spoke about the seriousness of this issue:

Handling our artifacts is very important, because a lot of things are sacred. Some things weren't even meant to be seen. Some items carry the power of the person that used it. If they were for ceremonial use they would probably be put away because in order for them to be used by a ceremonial person or spiritual person, they would have to be handed down within that family line. And if you don't know the family line they would have to be put away, 'cause they might cause the person harm if they used it (04-03-A-p. 2)

He also stressed how certain objects cannot be handled casually, or by untrained people: “We would have to take some of the spiritual people out to feel, feel the energy in some of these items...like they may not like the way that they’ve been handling them” (04-03-A-p.2).

Spiritual people need to be able to conduct ceremonies for objects prior to their handling in non-Stó:lô cultural institutions. Thus, when objects are located in museums and can be verified as Stó:lô, the elders and spiritual people need to participate prior to any repatriation effort commencing. The participation of spiritual people and elders in determining the spiritual condition of objects is considered essential. As one man explained, “We need them (spiritual people) right from the onset of knowing where items were, and what they were, so we’d know how to deal with them” (04-03-Ap.10).

Another issue that arose in our discussions of repatriation has to do with the question of where objects would go once they are returned. Some community members expressed a desire to develop their own band-level cultural facilities for the storage and display of family and community objects which could be repatriated. Concerns were also expressed about the security of facilities which would house repatriated objects. Environmental damage from fire or flooding as well as theft were seen as issues that would require attention prior to the repatriation of objects. Ways to address issues of storage and display also became evident through our discussions.

Several people stressed that objects should be returned to families whenever possible, as this reflects cultural caretaking principles which are inherent in the treatment of cultural objects. Once returned, they continued, these objects could be lent or stored at the *Shxwt’a:selhawtxw* cultural centre or at *Xá:ytem* interpretive centre. Furthermore,

they thought that proper security measures for storage and curation must be met prior to the return of objects. This would particularly be the case if new facilities were developed.

The last major issue which arose out of discussions of repatriation was the sensitive issue of defining protocol for handling human remains where familial connection to community members cannot be determined. This could be the case if remains were identified as Stó:lô in a museum, but it was unclear which family they belonged to. This was a major concern for numerous people, as one community member described: “It touches everyone’s heart and there are obligations to take care of our ancestors” (01-03-A-p.8). Nonetheless, the repatriation of unidentified human remains is considered essential, as stressed by one individual:

I believe they need to come home, because even though the remains have been moved elsewhere in the world, the spirit is still here, and you know, to take the spirit from the person, there are spirits, probably the spirits are stirred up because they’re remains aren’t there (04-03-A-p.3)

In interviews, one potential solution we discussed was that Stó:lô Nation would adopt caretaking of reburial efforts at a Nation level. In order for this to be successful, it was stressed that the input of as many community members as possible is essential. Stó:lô Nation has had prior experiences with reburial efforts involving remains found in *S’olh Téméxw*. These remains were found and it was determined they were unidentifiable in terms of what specific family or band they were associated with. In these cases, protocols dictated that efforts be made to rebury the remains in the closest bands to where they geographically were found. Thus, in the case of remains which can be identified as Stó:lô in a museum setting, their repatriation should involve collaboration with as many Stó:lô people as possible to decide where they would be reburied. Using the already established protocols outlined in the Stó:lô Nation Heritage Policy for reburial of remains

found in the natural environment therefore provides a starting point to handle these efforts. As was the case of in a reburial that took place in the non-member Stó:lô band named Tsawwassen, cultural protocols were utilized flexibly to handle the effort, and many people from neighboring Stó:lô communities were involved. One individual involved in the effort describes how the innovative use of cultural protocols is a positive process for the community: “It provides a platform to revive some of our old values, a reason for trying to find these old values” (01-03-A-p.7), and through this process, “there’s a revival as well!” (01-03-A-p.10). Therefore, reburial efforts will follow the strict laws which require that burial takes place, but be innovative and context sensitive as to how the event occurs so as to reflect contemporary life. The fundamental message regarding this issue was that where the ancestral remains are buried is secondary to the value of having them returned. One man’s sentiments powerfully described this scenario:

I guess it probably doesn’t really matter where it’s buried; it’s that we bring them back. It doesn’t matter where it goes, it’s that we do it right. We need to have the spirit back, it doesn’t matter where the remains are here (17-03-A-p.6)

Understanding Repatriation in the *Halq’eméylem* Language

A vital aspect of understanding repatriation through Stó:lô values and history is grounding and knowing the process in language. As part of this research, I had the honour of working with two elders who have dedicated their lives to the revival of the *Halq’eméylem* language. Their work at recording the language so it can be passed down to future generations is believed to have almost single-handedly revived what was in the not so recent past considered an extinct language. Both of these women were remarkable, and their generosity of spirit to both their community and me is deeply valued. The

following is a lexicon of new words and concepts created by these women for this project as well as existing terms in *Halq'eméylem* which they believed related to repatriation.

Existing Terms Related to Repatriation

1. **S'olh stexw ohlet**, which translates in English as “To be respectful to something, everything”. This concept reflects the act of respecting all aspects of life. To respect Stó:lô cultural knowledge is considered essential.
2. **Xolhmet**, which translates in English as “to take care of”. This concept refers to the act of caring for things of meaning. Taking care of Stó:lô cultural knowledge is similarly of significant importance to the well-being of the community.

New Terms and Phrases Related to Repatriation

3. **S'olh etawtxw**, which translates in English to “Building or house of respect.” During our discussions, I asked if there was an already existing term for museum in *Halq'eméylem*. There was no such word. After we discussed what the function of a museum was, one of the women asked “Is it where you put things you respect”? As this would be the primary function of having a museum to share Stó:lô heritage with the community and the public, the women decided that this would be an appropriate phrase for ‘museum.’
4. **Qaylemt ye Si:ya:yalh tset**, which translates in English as “To put away our late friends.” This term articulates the process of reburial in *Halq'eméylem*.
5. **Maqèlstem te ilh la sqal**, which translates in English as “What has been stolen has been brought back.” This sentence articulates the process of

repatriating objects which were stolen or removed without consent from members of the Stó:lô community

6. **Qèlstexw**, which translates in English as “To return, or bring back something.” This sentence describes the act of returning something, and could be used to describe the repatriation of objects and knowledge that left the community, but may have been traded, sold, or given away.
7. **Qà:qèl stexw**, which translates in English as “To return or bring back many things.” This is the plural translation of Qèlstexw.
8. **Tset Tháyeltxwem te lálém S’olhetawtx**, which translates in English as “We are building a house of respect.” I asked the elders how I would articulate the research we all participated in to understand repatriation. This phrase they which taught me reflects the process of Stó:lô people coming together to define and participate in the repatriation process in a way which reflects their values and history. Subsequently, this became the title of this thesis.

In conclusion, Stó:lô community members believe that repatriation will provide them with an opportunity to renew, revive and celebrate their cultural heritage.

Repatriation, along with other heritage initiatives such as language revival, reflect the desire of community members to manage and participate in their cultural heritage in accordance with their values. Ideally, this research project has provided a preliminary step for the community to continue to meet their goals related to repatriation.

Conclusion

From Here to There to Back Here Again: Assessing the Usefulness of PAR

I turn in this chapter to the final goal of my thesis, which is to assess the usefulness of PAR to assist anthropologists and at the same time meet both the goals of anthropology and those of First Nations people.

Benefits for the Stó:lô Community

As noted in the Introduction, one of the intended contributions of this research was to assist members of the Stó:lô community to achieve their practical goals related to repatriation. While it remains to be unseen whether future repatriation efforts will successfully take place, this project was successful in engaging members of the community in a discussion about the process. People came together to discuss and define how repatriation can proceed in a way that reflects their values. PAR can be seen to have assisted the achievement of these goals. The conscientious and collaborative efforts of community members have resulted in a set of recommendations which can be used by the Stó:lô Nation to proceed with repatriation efforts in accordance with their values. The following recommendations relate to how and why the people I spoke with believe repatriation should proceed.

First, it was considered essential that all aspects of a given repatriation effort must occur with the full involvement of the community's elders. The process must include the elders' participation from inception to the point where objects are actually returned. In order to successfully participate in repatriation efforts, decision making in this area

should follow the traditional forms of governance and problem solving. This process begins with the elders who advise and make recommendations, at which point the issue is brought before the Chiefs who provide input, at which point a decision is made that is a reflection of all views.

Second, it was recommended that repatriation be viewed in relation to broader issues of self-governance, self-determination and resource management that are directly linked to ongoing treaty negotiations. This reflects the inextricable political, legal and social aspects of the process, in particular that non-member bands and Stó:lô Nation may seek objects for return separately.

This being said, the third recommendation is that repatriation be considered primarily a cultural issue which is inclusive of all Stó:lô people, regardless of familial or band or political level affiliations. The political dimensions related to whether a returned object would be stored at a band or Nation level do not impact the desire that returned cultural forms will be used and shared by all Stó:lô people. While repatriation is a complex cultural, social and political issue, political and social issues of ownership and representation both within and external to the community can be addressed and handled in each individual effort. This will take place through a mutual process of consultation and the use of clearly defined cultural knowledge and practice.

Fourth, it was recommended that repatriation be viewed as one component of a broader “cultural revival movement” the community is currently experiencing. Along with participation in language revival, ceremonial practices and curriculum development, repatriation is viewed as an integral way for Stó:lô people to teach and utilize their cultural values. Repatriation provides an opportunity along with a variety of other

cultural initiatives currently taking place within the community to develop and maintain a healthy cultural identity.

Fifth, it was recommended that repatriation must reflect cultural caretaking responsibilities and values through the return of objects to individuals who then have the option of lending them to a Stó:lô cultural facility if appropriate. Repatriation provides an opportunity to fulfill these responsibilities, which necessitate that returned objects are placed in the care of individuals and families first if this type of provenance information is available.

Lastly, it was strongly recommended that repatriation be achieved in order to meet educational goals. Repatriated cultural forms are considered valuable educational tools which have innumerable benefits for the Stó:lô community and the general public. As noted earlier, this is considered to be the primary benefit or purpose to repatriate.

Preliminary Steps For Repatriation

Deriving from the recommendations of the Stó:lô people I spoke with, we identified a number of short and long term steps that the community can take to repatriate their cultural forms. The following are the preliminary steps which were established as necessary to take to set up the process prior to a repatriation effort commencing.

The first preliminary step is to continue interviews with members of communities not represented in this initial research, as well as with other individuals who may be interested in participating. Youth who were consulted for this project both formally for an interview as well as informally were interested in the repatriation process and in contributing their voices and ideas. The elders input into this issue cannot be stressed

enough, and their teachings, values and participation in all stages of the process, including initial interviews is invaluable. Ongoing consultation with members of the Stó:lô community regarding their opinions, concerns and stories related to repatriation is considered desirable, as the topic was of great interest to a cross-section of community members.

The second step is to continue with life history research. This unexpected result of the research emerged when asking community members about the value of cultural objects and knowledge and their potential return. It became evident that this process is related to all areas of personal and cultural life. Interviews often expanded to something closer to life histories, which included numerous stories and knowledge that clearly define the value of cultural objects. Practical considerations that are necessary to make the repatriation process beneficial to the community also resulted from these discussions. Life history research, especially with the elders, is a valuable step towards providing “evidence” of values, connection to geographic place, and as a means of developing contemporary heritage policy. It is directly linked to contemporary assertions of self-governance, self-determination and therefore can supplement a platform for treaty discussions.

The third preliminary step is to continue to develop collaborative and ongoing relationships with various museums and cultural institutions that have Stó:lô cultural objects in their collections. These relations are integral to ensuring that accurate and thoughtful representations of Stó:lô culture are made in public museums and that proper cultural protocol is utilized in the handling and storage of Stó:lô objects. These relations also build the foundations for future repatriation efforts when they occur.

The fourth step is to inventory the stories and knowledge shared in interviews related to the appropriation (removal) of objects from Stó:lô communities. Given the level of awareness on behalf of community members of objects being removed in a variety of contexts from communities, it is invaluable to utilize these stories to locate objects as well as continue to prioritize what is valuable to members of the community.

Therefore, the fifth step is to locate inventories of museums that are known to have Stó:lô cultural property in their collections. Once collections in these cultural institutions are inventoried, contact with museum institutions in Canada, the United States and Europe to locate Stó:lô heritage can take place. Examples from interviews of museums with Stó:lô objects in their collections include:

- Museum of Anthropology (Vancouver, BC)
- Royal British Columbia Museum (Victoria, BC)
- Burke Museum (Seattle, WA)
- Canadian Museum of Civilization (Ottawa, ON)
- Kilby Museum (Kilby, BC)

Upon the completion of these preliminary steps, the following are specific long term steps that are required to start the actual repatriation process

The first step is to continue developing policy (such as add to the Heritage Policy) which will outline how repatriation will be handled as a reflection of Stó:lô values.

Policy to address repatriation will serve to clarify the issue.

The second step involves visiting Stó:lô objects and ancestral remains in museums. Visiting the museums will verify their cultural affiliation with the Stó:lô community and to ensure they are spiritually safe to return. Elders and spiritual people

may do corrective ceremonies to ensure that an object has not been disturbed while away from the community and it is safe to handle and display.

The third step involves developing a cultural facility, which was an extremely favorable idea amongst all community members interviewed, whether it be at a Nation level or a band level. Moving away from the Western concept of a “museum,” the facility could exist as an extension of the facility already at Stó:lô Nation. Interest in developing space for the storage and display of objects at a band level was also expressed as a goal of specific communities. Increased storage space, display areas and the continuation of interactive and participatory teachings developed by members of the community to educate Stó:lô people and the public are further goals.

With these short and long terms steps having been taken, the community will ideally be in a position where they can seek the return of objects and ancestors and bring them home.

PAR as a Contribution to a Reformed Anthropology

As discussed in Chapter One, this thesis reflects the recommendations of the CMA Taskforce that local First Nations cultural values and protocols be incorporated into repatriation initiatives. In the case of the Stó:lô First Nation, this thesis illustrates how repatriation is a process that has interrelated cultural, social, political, spiritual and legal dimensions that must be taken into consideration. Similarly, in terms of how some Stó:lô community members view the process, repatriation is intimately linked to First Nations efforts to sustain their distinct culture, achieve self-determination, and successfully complete treaty negotiations. Ideally, this research has contributed to Canadian anthropology by providing an illustration of one community’s views of repatriation, and

in doing so, legitimized the need for research with other First Nations community's to understand their goals related to the process. In this way, PAR has assisted in making the second contribution of this thesis, to develop understanding of how the process of repatriation can be enacted so as to reflect, cultural knowledge and values.

Did PAR assist in making the third contribution of this thesis, which was to contribute to a re-formed anthropology that addresses the epistemological and ethical challenges that have confronted the discipline over the past few decades?

In my view, the employment of PAR with members of the Stó:lô community has benefited them. Furthermore, the use of PAR has been a way for me to be with people and obtain knowledge from them which is of interest to anthropology.

And, yet, as I see it, PAR must be extended in two ways if we are to continue to have a discipline called anthropology. First, we must link our own lived experience as researchers to our representations of our research. We must have the experience of 'being there' in order to access local forms of knowledge. But in our representations we must articulate our experiences and understandings of local knowledge within broader contexts, including our interpretations of the broader political and historical practices and processes that have affected the people with whom we work. This is one of the things that distinguish us as anthropologists from travelers and other casual observers of other cultures while allowing us to maintain our humanity.

The second extension is more difficult, as it requires a shift between merely hearing and recording what people say to listening to them in a way that allows us to understand *their* understandings of *their* histories. In the case of First Nations peoples such as the Stó:lô, these are local histories of colonization, appropriation, theft and the

subversion of their Aboriginal cultural knowledge, objects and spirit. In appreciating the shift for an anthropologist from hearing to a more engaged form of “listening,” it becomes clear that an interview, a word, a gesture is not something we go in and “get” in the field. Rather, it is something that is given to us as a gift, and it is a reflection of trust. As such, it carries with it a great responsibility.

It is through extending our “being there” to “participating with” and more fully “listening to” community members in the design and conduct of research that we can produce interpretative texts that are of interest to anthropologists and at the same time reflect people’s own understandings of their own local histories. Finally moving from the “here” of anthropology to the “there” of another culture and then “back again” to anthropology has given me a sense of my shared humanity with the Stó:lô people I met. For me, my ‘fieldwork’ with this community has been like a mirror: It has led me to challenge the distinction between “me’ and “them.” In the end, I have found, we are all people participating in the creation and re-creation of ourselves and our humanness. Our differences, as distinct and as important as they are, provide a bridge rather than a barrier between us when we truly engage.

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