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Common Wealth?
Cultural and Economic Conflicts
Over Nature in Nuu-chah-nulth Country

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of Master of Philosophy

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER
GREGORY MARTYN AIM
ABSTRACT

Relations of power, cosmology and economics come to the fore in conflict over natural resource management in the contemporary nation-state. The ethnographic focus here is on the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples of western Canada, who have been engaged in the politics of treaty negotiation and the ecological management of their traditional territories for many years. This has given rise to conflict between Nuu-chah-nulth, as well as between Nuu-chah-nulth and various groups of non-Aboriginal others. Competing ideologies and economies impact on Nuu-chah-nulth communities and restrict their ability to access natural resources. Combined with high unemployment, a history of colonial oppression, and social marginalisation, this is leading to social dysfunction and debilitated communities. I examine the affects of colonial and more recent government policies, arguing that these have maintained a systematic repression of Nuu-chah-nulth cultures and livelihood, with a consequently high negative impact on the well being of Nuu-chah-nulth communities.
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To the Nuu-chah-nulth people who offered me their friendship – thank you for showing me your country and the way of life you fight to sustain – very special thanks to Ray and Regina Martin.

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Grade 2 Newsletter

My favourite thing to do in Ahousat is:

Georgia... to play on the trampoline.
Isaiah... to go swimming.
Jorie... to play outside on the trampoline.
Georgia.
Gabe... to play on the monkey bars.
Thomas... to go fishing.
Swan... to go swimming.
Haida... to go and play in the park.
Marina... to go and play in the park.
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1

THE NUU-CHAH-NULTH AND THE NATION-STATE

Plate 63. Clayoquot Sound – a storm is brewing
Victor Hugo wrote that, “anywhere one can dream is good, provided the place is obscure, and the horizon is vast”. The west coast of Vancouver Island, the furthest western point of Canada is such a place. To do justice to this mythic landscape is near impossible, but few writers and artists who visited would be able to resist an attempt. Clayoquot Sound is the rugged jewel in Vancouver Island’s crown, home to the Nuu-chah-nulth people, a political alliance of fourteen First Nations related through blood, culture and language. The coastal forests of this archipelago serve as the backdrop for the history of their contact with Europeans. James Cook met the Nuu-chah-nulth in the late 1700s and a trade in sea otter pelts began, so lucrative for both parties that the animal was hunted to near extinction. The next two centuries saw the steady development of fishing and logging industries, the main livelihood for local Nuu-chah-nulth and European settlers until recent decades. In recent decades the over-harvesting of resources, fluctuations of a global economy, and the political successes of conservationists have impacted the livelihoods of local working-class people. An unemployment rate of 80 per cent means Clayoquot Sound is no longer a “working forest”.

Environmentalism has not been good for logging but it has been great for tourism. Clayoquot Sound’s scattered islands are a hiker and kayakers’ paradise and the set-off point of Tofino is a town with a village feel. The backpackers and B&B’s are full year round. High end resorts offer a millionaire’s hunting lodge ambience popular with corporate urbanites. The resorts are surrounded by dense rainforest, with wild salmon on the menu and carved Nuu-chah-nulth masks adorning the walls.

While tourists are aware of the local Nuu-chah-nulth people who serve them in restaurants and teach them about their art in local galleries, few are aware of the nearby communities or ‘reserves’. One local Nuu-chah-nulth run company, Tla-ook Cultural Adventures, has set out to change that. While paddling an elegant and sturdy ‘dug-out’ canoe through her people’s territory, owner Gisele Martin and her guides share their knowledge of the ecological habitat, history, and way of life of their people, often through story and song. The tours remind visitors that they are holidaying in Nuu-chah-nulth country.

We paddled up alongside Eagle Island, a rocky mound clustered with trees. A favourite spot of both locals and visitors, two long wed bald Eagles have been nesting here for many years. The male spread out his prodigious wingspan and arched his neck like an athlete. Gliding over the water and up into the azure sky he rode the currents in perfect arcs until he spotted the flash of a salmon. Diving fast he lowered his talons,
speared a salmon, and flapped with some effort back to the tree, clasping his silvery prize.

Gisele stood up, leaning on the handle of her paddle with relaxed command.

"I don’t know how many of you know about the burial sites here but we’ve asked that people not land on there."

The majestic American looked quizzically at the island and then up at Gisele: “It sure is beautiful country! You just never get tired of it!” he offered good-naturedly.

Gisele nodded politely and continued paddling. Gliding past Eagle Island, we marvel at the dinner plate sized starfish glued to the rocks and their magnificent fruit-loop colours.

Gisele is quiet for some moments, paddling slowly.

“When they [archaeologists] dug down they found a lot of really old artefacts...harpoon heads, bones and tools, and some massive graves from the epidemics our people had. Our tribe, Tla-o-qui-aht...we used to be about 5,000-7,000 people living in this little area here, and this was just our winter village. In the summer and the spring we would move to other sites, but after the smallpox epidemics there were about 100 of us left and now we are back up to about 700 or 800. Most of our population is under thirty years of age.”

“When did this smallpox epidemic happen?” The American looked up at her respectfully.

“The 1820s I think is when it really...when Victoria (capital of British Columbia) really boomed and people went down there to trade and then carried it back up here...”

Gisele leans forward on her paddle and settles in.

“My great-great grandmother. I’m not sure how many great-grandmothers!”

She grins and looks down shyly. Gisele is charming and we are all under her spell.

“She is responsible for saving our family from the smallpox around that time cause’ she knew something was happening and she took the whole family and they moved way back into the mountains and hid there for quite a few years and when they came back there were barely any people left, but the people that were left called her Tla-o-ok after the Tla-o-qui-aht people...that’s how she saved us then”.

The English boys are too young to understand the gravity of what Gisele is describing but they stare at her wide-eyed. Us adults are probably sharing mixed feelings...empathy, sadness, and perhaps an abstract guilt. Gisele rests her elbows on her paddle and continues.
“Tla-o-qui-aht actually means different people. If you look at the different names of the tribes along the west coast of Vancouver Island most of them end with an aht like Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Aht means people. So there’s deer people, people with their backs to the wind, here its ‘different people’ and the reason we’re called ‘different people’ is because of a war that happened about 600 years or so ago. We used to be a bunch of small tribes and there were other tribes living here so we didn’t have access to the ocean resources year round. And sometimes we got warred on and made slaves of and we got tired of it so we came together and formed one big tribe – Tla-o-qui-aht – different people, and we ended up becoming one of the fiercest tribes on the west coast.”

Gisele spins the paddle in her hand and smiles.

“My great-great grandfather, and again I don’t know how many greats! But way back then during that time of the war he conquered the area of Long Beach so my last name, my native name means Yaksuis. It means Long Beach, and the peninsula that Tofino is on today is called Esowista and that means to be clubbed to death …”

I ponder whether this thought might sour the taste of oysters and chilled white wine for some this evening back in the tourist comfort of Tofino. Gisele gazed out to her peoples’ village of Opitsat, lost to us for a moment.

“There’s a lot of history out here.”

Our canoe glides past the village dock. Kids run in zigzags on the beach giggling as dogs give chase. A fishing boat lies half submerged on the bank, its paint gone but for a few faded strips of colour.
My thesis is an exploration of the premise that Adelson (2001: 76) has raised in regard to First Nation communities: that 'real social or health improvements will only take place in conjunction with the attainment of economic and political autonomy on an Indigenously controlled land base'. My research is an analysis of the continuing effects of colonialism on Nuu-chah-nulth people and their communities, exacerbated by neoliberal political and economic changes as forces affecting Nuu-chah-nulth ways of life and livelihood. I view the colonial project as a particular historical process, not random but rather, as Jean and John Comaroff (1991: 14) assert, 'an integral part of the social and cultural revolution which accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism'. This is a process continuing to influence contemporary economic policy (see Chapter 8.).

By neoliberalism I refer to a political-economic system and philosophy based on free enterprise and trade. The term is often used interchangeably with globalisation. Proponents of neoliberalism hold that government action should not inhibit the freedom of global commerce.

Map 1. Canada. Vancouver Island with the provincial capital of Victoria at its southernmost point is circled in red. Clayoquot Sound is on the central west coast. See following map on page 6.
Neoliberalism is commonly viewed by its critics as opposing social democracy and socialism, protectionism and environmentalism in foreign markets, and purporting by way of a ‘messianic’ capitalism, as Jean and John Comaroff assert, to offer the power to progress and transform ‘the universe of the marginalised and disempowered’ (2001: 2).

In terms of social impacts neoliberal policies, introduced in the 1970s as the economic policies of Thatcherism and Reaganomics, have further marginalised poor communities in both ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries. This has led to a significant rise in unemployment and, in many First World nations, the steady dismantling of social services due to a shift to market rather than government control. To improve corporate efficiency, neoliberalism strives to reject or mitigate labour policies such as the minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and protectionism.

Mario Blaser, Harvey Feit, and Glenn McRae, editors of In the Way of Development (2004), present Indigenous peoples such as the Nuu-chah-nulth as agents of resistance politically engaged with the demanding processes of neoliberal economics and development. Local meanings and economies clash with imposed development projects. The ‘life projects’ of Indigenous groups stand in contrast to the projects of industry and the state, and are expressions of agency in pursuit of autonomy. Harvey Feit’s (1995; 2004) work with James Bay Cree hunters indicates the dynamics of power relations that arise in development conflicts in North America, and draws attention to the differing perceptions of nature held by Indigenous and Euro-Canadians.

Neoliberal economic practices have impacted at the local level in Clayoquot Sound through the relationship between local and global economics. Local and global economies can never be separate and are always in a state of interrelationship (see Appadurai, 1996). There are both social and environmental consequences when communities enter into market relations (see Nietschmann, 1973). Billions of dollars in natural resources, particularly trees and salmon, have been taken out of the area with little economic benefit to local communities beside sporadic and non-permanent employment. Local people did gain access to employment in extractive industries, but the labour market was unstable and communities suffered negative social and environmental effects. My research offers insight into the capacity for agency of Indigenous groups in the nation state, the challenges they face, and the nature of the structural violence that marginalises peoples like the Nuu-chah-nulth in their own productive lands.
The Nuu-chah-nulth live in relatively isolated communities, spread over a total area of 12,000 acres (E. Y. Arima & Dewhirst, 1990: 409). This is half the size of the main reservation held by the Makah, their relatives over the USA border to the south Washington State. Such small-scattered land holdings greatly hinder any effective economic development. The population of Nuu-chah-nulth today is 6,400 in fourteen First Nations, and it is a young population fast increasing. While only half of the Nuu-chah-nulth population reside in their home communities, the rest having moved to urban centres, my focus is on those people who continue to live in their First Nation territories.

My case study focuses on two central coast Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht. The majority of my fieldwork was located in three sites - two Tla-o-qui-aht villages and one Ahousaht village. I examine how colonial and contemporary government policies have affected local economies, subsistence livelihood, and the social and cultural fabric of communities. I argue that the ongoing political and economic strategies of the Canadian state, as well as those of some Nuu-
chah-nulth political elites, directly threaten Nuu-chah-nulth livelihoods, aspirations, and self-determination. The communities with which I worked are geographically isolated from major urban centres, seats of government, and commerce, yet are directly affected by state and industry decision-making, policies, and ideology. While my analysis is predicated on the observation that the Nuu-chah-nulth, like other Indigenous peoples, are forced to engage politically within a hegemonic discourse this does not, as Ingold (2000:133) points out, ‘question the worth or integrity of their political project. They may indeed have no alternative’. One focus of this work is the dynamic between hegemonic processes and local agency.

My analysis of the Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht communities of Clayoquot Sound builds on Parajuli’s privileging of the community as a potential site of governance, not seeking to confront state institutions of power head-on but rather aiming to ‘weaken the system in question by creating contending structures of power’ (2004). The word community, Julian Steward (1955) asserts, can be a general, even meaningless, abstraction. The concept of ‘community’, in the context of the politics of place with which I am concerned, is ‘determined by deep convictions about that participation in place, and the culture which is nourished by it’ (Chamberlin, 1997: 14). A primary objective of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations is to exercise a firm command over resources at the ecosystem level and retain, as much as is possible in a modern context, customary institutions of governance. Parajuli (2004) analyses similar concerns held by the Alliance for Tribal Self-Rule in India, a confederation of tribal peoples also determined to gain political autonomy through the economic control of resources in traditional lands.

Indigenous peoples throughout the world continue to struggle for recognition and acknowledgement of their human rights within the constitutional law of the nation states that subsume their territories, as well as in the context and protectorate of international law. They strive to hold on to their way of life and define their cultural identity on their own terms. Indigenous communities are marginalised whether situated in the developed or developing worlds. In Canada, First Nation peoples are the poorest, most disenfranchised citizens in the nation. The social effects of colonial projects which Indigenous peoples have in common throughout the world are startlingly similar: higher rates of incarceration, suicide, community violence and substance abuse than the rest of the population, land (reserve) allocations commonly inadequate for economic autonomy and population growth, substandard housing and general material poverty.
Comeau and Santín (1990) assert that Indigenous living conditions resemble underdeveloped populations in the Third World.

Consideration of the practices of power leads me to define my position on the colonial project, and the political positioning of postcolonial as an adage to represent a supposed time after colonialism: a ‘neo-colonial’ present. While there have been changes in relations between Indigenous Canadians and the government, I argue that the colonial project is still playing itself out politically.

Canada is no longer a colony and its independence has long been recognised as free of British authority. Yet, as Michael Asch (2000:148) asserts, to understand the Canadian state’s relations with First Nation peoples, it is reasonable to view contemporary Canada as a colonial state, as it remains based ‘on political institutions and values that derive solely from the history and culture of the former colonisers and defines its origins as a radical departure from an Indigenous past in which the appearance and then the formal independence of the original colonists represent the formative historical events’.

There has been no decolonisation of First Nation peoples in Canada, referred to by Adelson as the ‘internally colonised’ (2001:77), a term introduced into Canadian political context by Paine (1977), and in Australia by Beckett (1977; 1988). Writing of Australia, Ian Hughes (1995) labelled ‘independent autonomy’ the final stage in the process of internal colonialism after subjection and exploitation, protection and segregation, assimilation and integration, and self-determination and reconciliation. The Nuu-chah-nulth have not yet entered this stage.

Canada, like nations with similar histories, is often referred to as a settler nation. Between 1800 and 1914 the world’s land surface controlled by Europeans increased from 35 to 84 per cent (Headrick, 1981). As Maybury-Lewis (2002) observes, by the beginning of the twentieth century about 30-50 million Indigenous people, about 80 per cent of their total population, were killed by warfare and disease through contact with Europeans. This dramatic historical change has affected all hunter-gather groups, albeit in different ways.

James Frideres (1983: 295-6) distinguishes the key features of colonisation as geographical invasion, socio-cultural dislocation, the establishment of external political control and economic dispossession, the provision of low-level social services, and a racial ideology which positions the colonisers at a higher level of civilisation than those colonised.
Since European settlement, Canada’s approach to First Nation peoples, like other European colonial projects throughout the world, has been one of paternalist and institutionalised racism. The perception of Aboriginal people has been that they were part of a vanishing past, more akin to the forests in which they lived and the animals they hunted than equal competitors for the control of North America (Trigger, 1985). This perception has shaped 150 years of settler/First Nation relations in which the structural oppression of cultural practices and language has threatened their survival, identity and very understanding of personhood and belonging. Canadian government policy and the prioritisation of the profits of extractive industries have made it increasingly problematic for First Nation peoples to live in the way they wish.

In the complex history of interaction between First Nations and Canadian governments there have been two central and ongoing issues of contention: treaty negotiation and the denial of sovereignty. Sovereignty, Asch (1997) proposes, is a term that shifts between the relative and the absolute. It has strong currency in Aboriginal communities, yet with very different meanings in non-Aboriginal peoples’ understanding.

First, Asch argues, state sovereignty may be taken as underwriting political and constitutional power, particularly in the context of the territorial reach of the state, yet in the context of Aboriginal rights sovereignty is an ‘inviolable expression of a people’s collective identity, transcending the particulars of time and space and the irrelevant polemics of treaties. It does not need anyone’s validation, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal; and is inextinguishable, like an individual’s conscience’ (1997: 12).

Aboriginal sovereignty in British Columbia has been denied historically. Settlers have viewed First Nation peoples as an obstacle to the project of settlement and economic expansion. Entrepreneurial capitalism in British Columbia continues to be hindered by unsettled land claims and by Aboriginal calls for the acknowledgement of rights and title to traditional territories.

Asch (2000) points out four distinctions by which Canada justified the appropriation of previously occupied territories. These are military conquest, cession (formal transfer of territory by treaty), annexation (assertion of sovereignty over another polity without military conquest or treaty), and settlement of territory not previously occupied or belonging to another political entity. Canada, asserts Asch, predicates its sovereignty on the settlement model, the thesis of which rests on the legal concept of terra nullius: territory which is uninhabited or is not governed by a political entity. Asch points out that such a presumption could only reasonably be made of Antarctica (2000: 149).
The Canadian state has followed a policy of assimilation since settlement while at the same time segregating First Nation peoples from the rest of society through an imposed reserve system of land allocation. These policies of containment, constraint, and repression have impinged on every aspect of people's lives. The restriction of peoples' movement was instigated through the reserve 'pass laws' enforced by resident 'Indian Agents' under whose authority community members required permission to leave the confines of the reserve domain, and in which every aspect of their lives was micromanaged by Indian Affairs bureaucracy (see Chapter 2).

In British Columbia cultural practices and ceremonies such as potlatches were outlawed from 1884 to 1951 when the ban was lifted due to the lobbying of First Nation leaders. A ban on political organising among First Nation communities was also lifted at this time. Potlatches are elaborate celebrations marking rites of passage such as the handing down of a chieftainship, a memorial, marriage, or adoption, and are central to Nuu-chah-nulth social, economic, political, and spiritual life. Government 'Indian Agents' prosecuted and jailed those who disobeyed this ban, and potlatch regalia was confiscated and sold to museums (see Chapter 8).

Legislative restrictions encouraged people to renounce their 'Indian' status in order to claim equal rights with other Canadian citizens, and families were obligated by law to send their children to church-run residential schools which forbade the use of native languages and beliefs in an effort to Christianise and 'civilise' children. The sexual and physical abuse of students in such schools was common and many children died 'in care' (for Nuu-chah-nulth testimony see NTC, 1996). Colonial and contemporary government policies continue to negatively affect the social, cultural, and economic fabric of communities.

I contend that this enforced containment of Nuu-chah-nulth people within restricted reserve domains and the separating of children from their families to be confined in residential schools is represented by Foucault's (1975) use of Bentham's panopticon in which an inspection house (see reserve or residential school) is controlled by a central figure (see Indian Agent or priest/warden) who watches and contains those captured. While Indian Agents and residential schools have entered the realms of history their impacts are passed from generation to generation, and Foucault's panoptic mechanisms of social control are actualised in continuing policies of political marginalisation exacerbated by the economic rationalisation of an allied government and industry.

A common sentiment expressed by the Nuu-chah-nulth is that they feel every aspect of their lives is predicated and controlled by government. Those Nuu-chah-nulth who
have attempted to politicise their communities towards a meaningful self-determination have experienced the subjection of surveillance and espionage on the part of government agencies seeking to destabilise political agency. For the Nuu-chah-nulth, and allied First Nations on the coast, the West Coast Warriors Society has represented a grass roots political motivation, particularly among young men. Advocating non-violence, the group was dedicated to the physical defence of Indigenous communities, from racist policies and repressive law enforcement agencies. Members of this group and their families continue to be threatened, and in the current political climate the label of terrorist has been applied. The group, comprised of members from First Nations throughout the west coast, displayed a unity among marginalised peoples of concern to intelligence agencies of the state. They have eventually disbanded due to harassment of their families, but have vowed to continue their political and social struggle as committed individuals. Nuu-chah-nulth resistance is repressed by similar state strategies directed at Native Americans. There continues to be significant Indigenous political alliance between Canada and the United States. The state repression of the American Indian Movement has been well documented, if not by anthropologists (see Churchill, 1999; Churchill & Wall, 2002; Matthiessen, 1992). I will return to an analysis of state repression, and subsequent Nuu-chah-nulth resistance in the following chapter.

My ethnography is based on a year’s fieldwork during 2003/04 on the central west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. This research period builds on three months fieldwork as an MA anthropology student at the University of Manchester during 1999/2000. It was during this initial visit that I became interested in the ideological differences I perceived between the Nuu-chah-nulth and environmental activists. At times political allies, these two interwoven but distinct political communities have experienced definitive victories in their efforts to curb large scale clear-cut logging, and yet their political motivations have differed radically.

Of all cutting methods clearcutting causes the most damage to habitat, and of all forests to cut, old growth is the most damaging to ecosystems. In temperate rainforests such as Clayoquot Sound the absence of fire allows trees to reach ages of more than 1500 years. This forest is often referred to as old growth and is now a rare type of ecosystem. It is highly prized by the logging industry, conservationists, and First Nations on the Pacific Northwest coast of North America. Each of these have utilised the old growth forests over long periods, but they do not share the same values.
In Clayoquot Sound clear-cutting of large areas of old growth trees has affected both land and marine ecosystems and impacted the subsistence economy and largely seafood diet of Nuu-chah-nulth people. I returned to the Sound in 2003 as a doctoral student to spend more time with local Nuu-chah-nulth. I sought a greater insight into their lifeways and political and economic aspirations, and wanted to analyse the rhetoric used to communicate their aspirations to outsiders.

My initial inquiries into the relationship between the Nuu-chah-nulth and the environmental movement developed into a focus on Nuu-chah-nulth efforts to sustain a livelihood from their environment in the face of government and conservationist policies. Environmental NGOs have considerable influence over environmental policy and resource management within their territories. This influence has gained acceptance among local and provincial government as tourism in the area has taken economic precedence over extractive industries.

While my association as a researcher in Clayoquot Sound was with both Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Aboriginal communities, my focus has been analysis of political and economic control over Nuu-chah-nulth territories, and Nuu-chah-nulth strategies to counter outside interference. I argue that external controls represent a continuation of colonial structures and practices oriented explicitly and implicitly towards the further dismantling of Nuu-chah-nulth modes of governance and socioeconomic organisation.

Canada’s Constitution Act of 1982 declares that ‘existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognised and affirmed.’ Nevertheless, Aboriginal self-government may only be exercised ‘within the framework of the Canadian constitution’ and must be negotiated with the federal and provincial governments (Bolisci, 1993: 243). While recognition of Aboriginal rights and title was acknowledged in the Constitution, colonial thinking still informs legal interpretation with a bias that places First Nation peoples at a disadvantage (Asch, 1997).

Successive governments in British Columbia have refused to acknowledge Aboriginal sovereignty as a basis for claiming land and resources, and thereby retain political and economic power. In the last decade however, the government of British Columbia denying the existence of Aboriginal title and declining to negotiate, has undertaken treaty negotiations with many First Nations throughout the province.

From the first recorded treaties between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown in the seventeenth century to recent agreements with the Nisga’a of British Columbia in 1999 and the Nunavut Inuit of the eastern Arctic in 1993 (which took twenty years to negotiate), there have been over five hundred treaties and agreements (Tulley, 2000).
Two thirds of First Nations in British Columbia are engaged in trilateral negotiations with British Columbia and Canada, yet the Nisga’a Treaty is the only one to be signed in recent years and this was settled outside the current treaty process. A claim to Aboriginal title and self government made by the Hereditary Chiefs of the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en Nations of British Columbia led to the 1997 decision of the Supreme Court (Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia) that Aboriginal title still exists in Canada.

First Nation political and legal struggles in regard to resource rights were improved by the now famous Regina vs. Sparrow (1990) case, in which a fishermen was arrested for using a net for his home use salmon catch deemed oversized by fishing regulations. Sparrow argued it was his constitutional right to take what he needed for his subsistence use. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that governments do not have the power to interfere unilaterally with existing Aboriginal rights - including activities such as hunting and fishing. While the Sparrow case established a framework for addressing what could be justifiable infringement of Aboriginal rights, it remains that without settled treaty rights, First Nations people must defend that their Aboriginal rights were not extinguished at contact on an individual case-by-case basis in the courts.

Nuu-chah-nulth resource use remains, like their communities, significantly constrained spatially, politically, and economically. While Nuu-chah-nulth people watch outsiders take wealth out of their territories their own resource use is significantly constrained. While I was living in Clayoquot Sound two young men I knew were arrested for their resource use. One, an Ahousaht man who has married into the Ahousaht took clams from an area that was closed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Clams are a resource taken year round by Nuu-chah-nulth, nevertheless he was fully aware what he was doing would be deemed illegal. He was caught by a Pacific Rim National Park officer, and subsequently taken to the police to be charged. As well as a possible jail sentence, he was to have his boat and pickup truck impounded. He had two choices: get a lawyer or pay a 10,000-dollar fine. He decided to go to court but on advice from his lawyer as to the financial costs of doing so he backed down. His lawyer advised him that it would be a prohibitively difficult and expensive case to prove his Aboriginal right to gather shellfish when he needed it. DFO dropped the fine but banned him from harvesting seafood for two years. Some Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation councils are discussing paying legal support for their people in cases that involve the repression of Aboriginal resource rights.

Another case, which gained some publicity, was that of Thomas Paul, a young Ahousaht man I met in Maaxtsisiis. I would often ask him how this case was going
when I saw him in the village. In 1993 Paul cut three cedar trees and took a windfall
tree in Maaqtusis. He had permission from the Ahousaht council, and took the trees to
make an addition to his house. The Ministry of Forests seized the trees and charged
Paul with unauthorized harvesting of timber. He contended that he was applying his
Aboriginal right to take wood for working on his house, as the Nuu-chah-nulth had
always done. His legal supporters were the Haida Nation, who have concerns about the
precedents set for Aboriginal resource use, and Sierra Legal, the legal arm of the
environmental organization the Sierra Club. They argue that the tenets of resource use
in the province are stated to be conservation, followed by Aboriginal use, and that these
claims were not met. The Supreme Court ruled that the province does not have
jurisdiction to deal with Aboriginal issues. This was a major victory for First Nations.
Nuu-chah-nulth people who have worked in extractive industry have seen the
environmental impacts first hand. Some loggers I met had walked away from the job at
a time when they were receiving high wages, disgusted by the waste and greed of
industry practices. Fishermen also, who watched large fishing teams throw back the
majority of their catch because it wasn’t worth the returns to process them, have been
staggered by the waste. Nuu-chah-nulth have of course been complicit in the practices
of these industries and often benefited from them financially as well as other non-
Aboriginals, yet most people I talked with knew when what they were doing was
unethical and out of keeping with Nuu-chah-nulth teachings. Chief Simon Lucas of the
Hesquiat on the Hesquiat Peninsula of Clayoquot Sound recalls being reprimanded
for their herring fishing practices by one of their old chiefs.

When the herring industry started, our tribe had twelve people fishing
in the harbour before spawning...this old Chief said, “What are you
people doing? What are you involved in? You are fishing these fish
when they are near spawning!” He told us it was the ultimate crime.
He was right. Our people put out hemlock branches to collect herring
roe for food, it used to be really thick. Today when we lift the
branches we are lucky to have half an inch of herring roe (2003: 14).

In contrast to many Indigenous Canadian peoples, the Nuu-chah-nulth never signed
treaties or agreements with the Crown or federal and provincial governments. At
present the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations are negotiating the largest treaty settlement in
British Columbia since the Nisga’a Final Agreement was settled. They categorically
deny any extinguishment of rights and title to their territories. They did not lose their lands and waters through war or sign territories away through treaties or agreements. The Canadian governments counter that the Crown owns their land by right of settlement. By virtue of its right of sovereignty or imperium, the Crown had the power to create and extinguish former rights and interests in land. Yet, Ahousaht hereditary Chief Earl George asserts,

We simply do not recognise any other Nation in our territory, much the same as the government seems to feel. Only one of us was here first, and no war occurred to change the ownership of our land or transfer it to the newcomers. We hold this position that we do not agree with the system that was introduced, making certain areas Crown land, fee simple lands, private lands, parks, and offshore zones without consulting First Nations’ (1994: 81).

Aboriginal people continue to say that their traditional title cannot be extinguished by the acts of others. Many non-Aboriginal British Columbians are opposed to the treaty process due to fears of inequality. Many First Nation people with significant hope invested in the outcome of the process view negotiations as achieving little more than jobs for the Aboriginal political. Over a decade of treaty negotiations between the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (the political representative body of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations) and the provincial and federal governments has resulted in little progress. The living standards of the Nuu-chah-nulth have not improved and in some communities worsened since the treaty process began.

Clayoquot Sound is one of the world’s most diverse ecosystems providing the Nuu-chah-nulth with a rich and varied material culture and diet for thousands of years. When living amongst the serene beauty of Clayoquot Sound, it is easy to imagine that isolated Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations continue to hold authority over the lands and waters in their traditional territories. Yet a power struggle is being carried out in Clayoquot Sound involving many different players. First Nations, government, industry and environmentalists all bring their political and economic desires into this landscape.

Described as ‘the most complicated political ecosystem in the world,’ by Valerie Langer, forest campaigner for Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Clayoquot Sound has been the scene of heated clashes between Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, environmentalists, and forestry companies. Conflicts over protection of ecosystems, visual aesthetics,
tourism, commercial and sports fishing, aquaculture, and large-scale industrial forestry have been central issues in recent decades. In 2000, areas of Clayoquot Sound were designated a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) biosphere reserve, part of an international network in which exchanges of information, experience and personnel promote the conservation of ecosystems. This project claims to hold local peoples’ livelihood in equal importance, a claim I review in Chapter 4.

While I was living in Clayoquot Sound, local Nuu-chah-nulth told me they felt 'boxed in' and desperate. They see themselves as living in isolated reserve communities characterised by inadequate land holdings and chronic housing shortages. Nuu-chah-nulth territories, and their authority over them, are constrained by government agencies such as Parks Canada. Areas of lands and waters currently in treaty negotiation have been alienated from Nuu-chah-nulth due to the establishment of conservation reserves and parks, both land and marine, such as the Pacific Rim National Park, the borders of which subsume a large percentage of Tla-o-qui-aht coastal territory. This area is waterfront land of prime value, from which government and developers receive substantial annual tourist revenue. Territorial control is contested on the basis of economic, cultural and spiritual claims.

In Clayoquot Sound Nuu-chah-nulth people hunt, fish, gather plants and berries, and engage in spiritual practices throughout the region, from ocean and offshore islands to remote mountain places only known to individuals and families. The economic, cultural and spiritual practices of the Nuu-chah-nulth have been threatened by the activities of non-Aboriginal people, who live in, and visit, Clayoquot Sound. Yet, the environment is also important for the social and spiritual well being of the majority of largely Euro (Anglo) Canadian people who live in Clayoquot Sound. For many others, particularly intermittent workers in the region, Clayoquot Sound is primarily a source of economic livelihood.

Nuu-chah-nulth cultural renewal and empowerment as a means of resistance to counter hegemonic power is central to my research. In particular Nuu-chah-nulth strategies to resist, as Herzfeld asserts, ‘the demands of an often heavily western-directed environmentalism’ (2001:171). I position the ‘environment’ and ‘landscape’ as sites through which political will is strengthened and articulated, keeping in mind Peet and Watts (1996) assertion that ‘environments’/‘landscapes’ are active articulations in everyday human life. I also draw on Gledhill’s (1997) consideration of the effects of western liberalism on Indigenous rights and social justice, particularly in relation to
politicised ethnicities. I argue that cultural identity is a constantly shifting ideological resource, utilised for political and economic purposes.

Government agencies such as Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Coast Guard all enforce authority over human resource use in Clayoquot Sound. Nuu-chah-nulth fishery guardians also regulate the resource use of Nuu-chah-nulth people. I examine the methods by which the Nuu-chah-nulth deal with this territorial encroachment in the context of their claims based on the legitimacy of traditional ownership, long standing habitation and environmental stewardship. The unemployment level in Nuu-chah-nulth communities on the central coast is approximately 80 per cent. This welfare colonialism (Paine, 1977) produces considerable social and economic strain and dysfunction when coupled with the ongoing effects of colonial and contemporary government policies. While this thesis is concerned with the social impacts of colonial, state, and neoliberal economic policies and actions, I aim to avoid a model which merely sets up Nuu-chah-nulth people as agents of an oppositional culture suffering the causal effects of externally imposed forces. Significant complicity in modes of social oppression exists on the part of Nuu-chah-nulth elites that I take up in Chapter 6.

This oppression is actualised in Nuu-chah-nulth abuse to self such as alcohol and drug dependency, cases of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome in children; mental illness, particularly chronic depression; and in the form of abuse of others such as domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse. People shared their loss with me: family members taken by drug overdoses, alcoholism and suicide, daughters and sisters raped, sons hospitalised by severe beatings. Many perpetrators of violent and sexual abuse were students at church-run residential boarding schools where abuse by priests and administrators was common, and cultural shaming was an official policy of the administration (see Chapter 6). Within some families the shaming of victims of rape/sexual abuse has been a way to shield family members responsible for crimes. The shame of the family is contained through the projection of blame and responsibility onto the victim rather than the abuser. The young victim will often leave the community by choice or family coercion.

Many offenders do not remember committing crimes due to their severe impairment under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. In the isolated rural Nuu-chah-nulth communities of the central coast many offenders are not prosecuted because of negligence or corruption on the part of local police, or denial and fear of retribution on the part of family and community members. People are often afraid to go to the police,
as the offender may be a member of a powerful family with a high degree of control over community affairs.

Political elites control the implementation of social services, and in this way their power over community members can be formidable (see Boldt 1993 on forms of tyranny within First Nation’s political elites). Community members, generally mistrustful of the police, are increasingly involving them as the levels of violence and sexual crimes worsen. Many Nuu-chah-nulth use the word ‘crisis’ when talking of social conditions in their communities.

Violence and sexual abuse are particularly debilitating in small kin-based communities in which people are very familiar with one another. As people often said to me, ‘we are all family!’ An emphasis on the forgiveness of offenders and organised meeting of abuser and victim in the approaches of many Aboriginal healing groups has arguably led to further suffering for victims (see LaRocque, 1997). Nuu-chah-nulth political councils have often dealt with crimes, such as theft, drug dealing and bootlegging of alcohol, in a traditional manner: individuals are forced to leave the community indefinitely. In many cases offenders return and family members take them back into their homes and lives. The same crimes are often recommitted. Healing services are increasingly utilised within communities, drawing on Nuu-chah-nulth spiritual practices, as well as other cosmological systems, both Western and those of other Aboriginal peoples.

Nuu-chah-nulth social suffering and loss of community structure and cohesion can be traced to many different causal factors. Significant effects include their experience of colonisation by Europeans and the subsequent political and religious systems that deconstructed and dismantled traditional systems of governance and economy. This encouraged disempowerment as the newcomers progressively gained control of land and resources. Colonial efforts to destabilise Nuu-chah-nulth political and economic systems have, to some extent succeeded. I explore the lasting contemporary social impacts in Chapter 6. The undermining of cultural and economic systems continues today under the guise of economic and political ‘development’.

For Indigenous communities in the First World the relationship with the government and settler majority is often represented in official policy and public relations rhetoric as one of cooperation and benevolence on the part of the state. Canada is studied by other nations as a model of cohesive and peaceful multiculturalism. Canadians’ view of their country as a world model of environmental, cultural, and political enlightenment is pervasive. Unfortunately contemporary socioeconomic inequalities do not reflect this
ideal. First Nation people harbour resentment due to a history of broken colonial and
government promises. British Columbia as a province is seen as unstable by many
investors because its ethnic and land-based conflicts continue without resolution. Many
Canadian and foreign investors view the province’s unsettled First Nation claims to
lands and title as a risk to economic development. Feit’s (2004: 98) observations of the
Cree of Quebec, a people who have experienced long and tense relationships with
developers in their territory, are equally applicable to the socioeconomic realities of the
Nuu-chah-nulth. Both peoples draw attention to the destruction of rights, the political
betrayals of governments, negative environmental impacts, and call for respectful
sharing between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian communities.

Like Indigenous peoples in other settler nations such as Australia and New Zealand,
where cultural lifeways, languages and autonomy have been systematically weakened,
Nuu-chah-nulth societies have long been in decline, both culturally and economically.
As self-defined nations, but politically unacknowledged within the nation-state, the
Nuu-chah-nulth seek self-government supported by increased access to the natural
resources of their traditional territories. They demand that these territories be accepted
as legitimate and sovereign by the Canadian state.

I offer an insight into the everyday lives of Nuu-chah-nulth, their communities, and
the environment in which they live. I draw attention to the economic diversity of Nuu-
chah-nulth sources of livelihood, showing that land and sea-based resources comprise a
significant component of the local economy, not merely an anachronism in a market
world.

I analysis conflicts, both between Nuu-chah-nulth groups and with non-Aboriginals,
and chart the history of trade and competition over resource use. It spans from the fur
trade, which inaugurated Nuu-chah-nulth relations with Europeans, to economic
decline in recent decades, largely due to environmental protest over unsustainable
commercial logging and fishing practices. Relationships have been shaped by the clash
of differing perceptions of environmental management and development. My charting
of this history of Clayoquot Sound demonstrates the intertwining of social, cultural,
economic, and environmental factors.

Nuu-chah-nulth rhetoric represents their societies as engaged in balanced and
reciprocal human-environment relationships, as inherent stewards of nature. Euro-
Canadian conservationists as well as Nuu-chah-nulth hold government and industry
responsible for environmental overexploitation in Clayoquot Sound. Yet, Nuu-chah-
nulth leaders often view economic development such as forestry and aquaculture in
their territories as the only path available to improve life for their people. While potential economic development by Nuu-chah-nulth is presented as more sustainable than the practices of non-Aboriginal managed industry, the primary objective of the Nuu-chah-nulth leadership is employment and revenue rather than conservation. In Chapter 4, I explore how Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations attempt to balance traditional values of environmental stewardship with the economic needs of poor communities with high unemployment.

I analyse whether the Nuu-chah-nulth can be heard within the hegemonic political discourse of British Columbia and Canada, as well as that of Nuu-chah-nulth elites. Through Nuu-chah-nulth commentary and ethnographic narrative I present some common concerns and grievances of Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht people. The perception held by many Nuu-chah-nulth is that life has gotten worse. People point to community violence and sexual abuse, as part of a general decline in traditional values and morality. I argue that much of this suffering and violence is due to structural changes in social and economic systems brought about by colonial, and now government policies. The sexual abuse of Nuu-chah-nulth children at church-run, government-funded residential schools has had ongoing negative social effects. Inadequate local governance of pressing social issues is heightened by the Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary and elected political elites that continue to vie for power. These challenges are combined with a romanticised nostalgia for a pre-contact past viewed as economically and morally superior.

I explore the contemporary relevance of systems of ownership and resource use, examining whether they are still practiced in Nuu-chah-nulth communities, or are merely past privileges now largely confined to the nostalgia of cultural rhetoric (see Chapters 6 and 7). Hereditary chiefs say they cannot fulfill their responsibilities to their people. Inherited rights and privileges were based on geographic control of resource sites enabling Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation to function. Without this control today the role, importance, and relevance of hereditary chiefs is uncertain. Many chiefs demand the continuing rights and privileges of their traditional rank yet are unable to fulfill their traditional responsibility for the welfare of the people. Without Nuu-chah-nulth control of land and resources, the role and importance of hereditary chiefs are uncertain and in doubt. Many chiefs demand the rights and privileges of their traditional rank and resent their loss. It is common for Nuu-chah-nulth who do not directly benefit from the hereditary chiefs to view them as having little to offer today.
In Chapter 6 I analyse the treaty process in the context of Nuu-chah-nulth political elites, conflicts between hereditary chiefs and elected councils, and disillusionment regarding the positive outcomes of a treaty in the minds of many Nuu-chah-nulth people. Internal Nuu-chah-nulth conflicts between competing ‘traditional’ hereditary governance and introduced electoral systems of political organisation often disable decision-making processes leading pressing issues to be subsumed by political infighting. Borrowing from Leach’s (1970) analysis of the difficulties experienced by the Kachin of Burma in navigating dual political systems, I consider Nuu-chah-nulth tensions and loyalties between elected and hereditary forms of governance, and how this destabilises efforts towards self-reliance and autonomy.

Nuu-chah-nulth elders are the traditional bearers of knowledge, both received teachings and the wisdom of lived experience in their environment and society. In Nuu-chah-nulth society sharing this knowledge with their people is their responsibility. Treaty negotiation calls for specialist knowledge of territorial boundaries, resource sites, history, and cosmology. When Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations councils prepare for a meeting with government representatives they utilise this knowledge. Hereditary chiefs and their speakers, as well as various elders whose memories span periods of transformation for their people, are called upon for expert knowledge.

Treaty monies exist to pay people fees for their time and knowledge. The opportunity is highly coveted by chiefs and elders, living as they do in poor communities and often on income support. Monetary reward for expert knowledge has now come to be expected, and many will not share cultural information without a fee. This position conflicts with the traditional responsibilities of the roles of chief and elder in Nuu-chah-nulth society. Many Nuu-chah-nulth attribute this change, as well as poverty and unemployment to the change in social values. Treaty negotiations have created a political elite of those holding ‘expert’ knowledge, with kinship loyalties dictating who will be employed and who will not, often regardless of peoples’ proven expertise. In a climate of poverty in isolated communities it is also a source of badly needed income, and thereby a source of jealousy among elders.

The right to pursue commercial development within Nuu-chah-nulth traditional territories is a strong motive in their treaty negotiations with government. Billions of dollars in extracted natural resources have been taken out of Clayoquot Sound. Tourists spend millions of dollars every year. There are opportunities for Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations to benefit economically but without legal and sovereign control of their lands they are unable to do so (see Chapter 7). Colin Scott deconstructs the claim of Flanagan
(2000), author of *First Nations? Second Thoughts*, that the notion of First Nations sovereignty is a fiction. Flanagan asks Canadians to put aside the moral dilemma of European expansion, discovery, and invasion and acknowledge that ‘in a free country like Canada aboriginal leaders can talk all they want about their own inherent sovereignty but the expression is only a rhetorical turn of phrase’ (2000: 61).

The Tin Wis Congress, hosted in the late eighties by Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations at the Tla-o-qui-aht owned Tin Wis Best Western Hotel in Clayoquot Sound, was an effort to define the structural nature of economic development that threatened the social and environmental well being of local communities.

Most of the land use conflicts that Native peoples and environmentalists have been involved in are a reflection of a certain kind of political-economic system which encourages uncontrolled, widespread and short-term exploitation of natural resources – a process carried out in British Columbia by large corporations and facilitated by government policy and administration. In economic terms, it represents wholesale liquidation of natural resources capital, and the diversion of the profits into the hands of a few (Tin Wis Congress in M’Gonigle, 1988: 122).

I argue that significant Nuu-chah-nulth resistance to development projects in the region is due to their lack of power, at present, to control the nature of development or to benefit from it economically, as well as due to environmental impacts that have threatened their local food resources. Projects often inhibit Nuu-chah-nulth livelihood and access to resources. Government grant licenses to industry for developments within territories that are presently being negotiated for treaty. I offer examples in Clayoquot Sound that illustrate the denial of Aboriginal rights and title, and show Nuu-chah-nulth agency aimed at achieving economic prosperity. I offer ethnographic examples of conflict situations over rights for Clayoquot Sound Nuu-chah-nulth, one being the Tla-o-qui-aht struggle to secure a clean fresh water supply to Esowista, their community at Long Beach (see Chapter 3).

I discuss these transformations in Nuu-chah-nulth life through the example of the contemporary potlatch. Potlatches are giveaways, feasts and community ceremonials where watersheds in life are honoured such as a coming of age, the handing down of a chieftainship, or a memorial, and ensure relations with other Nuu-chah-nulth, and other, First Nations are sustained and strengthened (see Chapter 8).
Anthropologists have taken great interest in the Northwest Coast potlatch for its sophisticated display of wealth and privilege, and its emphasis on rank in social organisation. I ask what social role the potlatch plays in contemporary times, and whether the potlatch still reinforces traditional hierarchies. Throughout this study I indicated the tensions between two political systems: the electoral and hereditary. I analyse the potlatch as a representation of this tension.

The Nuu-chah-nulth view the potlatch as an occasion when everyone comes together as a community, and the many urban members come 'home' to their families. I ask whether the social distance between 'elites' and 'the people' has lessened or increased in modern times. The potlatch is viewed as an opportunity to reinforce identity and to be Ahousaht or Tla-o-qui-aht together. An important aspect of this reinforcement is the sharing of traditional subsistence foods hunted and gathered by locals, and gifted by visitors from other First Nations.

The potlatch is one of the few occasions in which Nuu-chah-nulth get the opportunity to eat nutritious 'wild' foods such as herring eggs, seal, duck, salmon, halibut, and sea urchins. Parents and grandparents sometimes lament that young Nuu-chah-nulth preferring 'modern' highly processed foods to a traditional diet. The Nuu-chah-nulth are certain about the direct correlation between dietary change and poor Nuu-chah-nulth health, particularly high levels of heart disease and diabetes. People draw parallels between the nutrition of traditional foods and the 'old ways' and values of their culture and society. Processed foods low in nutrition are perceived to be 'white man' foods and one of many elements of European culture negatively impacting Nuu-chah-nulth people. This view is strong among the elders of communities.

In my concluding chapter I reinforce how this study, offering anthropological and historical analysis of Nuu-chah-nulth adaptations and responses to economic and political transformations that have reached their shores, is an effort to show the political sophistication with which Nuu-chah-nulth people have both resisted and embraced this change.

I discuss how wealth and development are conceptualised by the Nuu-chah-nulth in their aspirations for the future? I reiterate the impacts of the structural violence of residential school education, the government policies of the Indian Act, and in recent decades neoliberal economic policies, as well as Nuu-chah-nulth efforts to heal and reinvigorate their communities. I contend that Nuu-chah-nulth families have orchestrated remarkable strategies in order to benefit from the material wealth of the industrial economy without sacrificing their way of life. And yet the Nuu-chah-nulth
have experienced profound difficulties in adapting to the socioeconomic changes of modernity and in recent decades, characterised by economic rationalisation and continuing government efforts at assimilation, these pressures have begun to impinge unbearably on community wellbeing. Competing 'traditional' aristocratic and 'modern' democratic political systems continue to create uncertainty. The control of Nuu-chah-nulth territories by non-Aboriginal authorities such as Parks Canada, and unwelcome economic development, negatively affects Nuu-chah-nulth resource access and livelihood, limiting their capacity to resist and exercise any affective autonomy in their own lands. They not only struggle in their engagement with modernity, their contemporary experience is modernity's product.
2

CLAYOQUOT SOUND – PEOPLE AND PLACE

Plate 64. Logs lost and discarded by the reckless practices of forestry companies clog the beach line near the traditional boundary of the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ucluelet territories, now also within the boundary of the Pacific Rim National Park.
Clayoquot Sound contains the largest area of ancient temperate rainforest remaining on Vancouver Island. Over half the world’s remaining temperate rainforests are in Alaska and British Columbia. Apart from significant areas clear-cut by industrial logging, Clayoquot Sound contains the greatest area of unlogged forest on Vancouver Island. Temperate rainforest 900 metres above sea level has a forest cover consisting predominantly of a canopy of western red cedar along with other less common species such as amabilis fir and western yellow cedar and mountain hemlock. The climate of Clayoquot Sound is temperate and wet with an annual rainfall of 324 cms (127 inches). Shellfish and finfish are found in the waters and estuarine flats of the area, which host marine coastal ecosystems including eelgrass and bull kelp.

Clayoquot Sound’s rainforest, lakes, rivers, and alpine peaks provide habitat for a vast array of species, a significant number of which are endangered or rare. A variety of land and marine mammals such as killer, humpback and grey whales, black bears, wolves and cougars are also found in relative abundance.

Clayoquot Sound is 95 km from north to south and 50 km from east to west. It reaches from the Hesquiat Peninsula [see map 1 below] in the north to Quisitis Point in the south. It is an extremely diverse area geographically. The outer coast consists of a low-lying riparian plain up to 11 km wide, which includes the Hesquiat Peninsula, Vargas Island, and most of Long Beach. Inland the terrain becomes increasingly mountainous reaching elevations of approximately 1700 m punctuated by fast flowing rivers. Several long inlets up to 11 km long penetrate this landmass. The upper reaches of the inlets drain the landmass of Vancouver Island. The following account by Arima indicates the rich ecological diversity of the past:

The West Coast country has been rich in fish, shellfish, and mammals and birds of land and sea. Much plant food also existed with berries, shoots, and roots in season. By hunting, fishing and gathering, the people lived well with no need for agriculture. Although land resources were important, the bountiful sea provided the mainstay of life. Salmon, herring, cod and halibut were the main fish caught. From the tidal shore, clams, cockles, mussels, oysters, barnacles, chitins and sea urchins were harvested. Whales, porpoises, sea lions and hair (or harbour) seals were the big game of the sea. With these there was also the sea otter, with its precious pelt. Ducks, geese, swans, and cormorants were among the bird life utilised, while in the forest the grouse were easy to approach. On land the main game animals
were deer, elk, and black bear. Smaller mammals hunted included mink, marten, otter, and raccoon. While wolves and cougars could be found...commonly eaten plant food included the berries of salmonberry and thimbleberry plus the tender spring shoots of the plants. Salalberries, blackberries, cranberries, gooseberries and huckleberries were also eaten, as were the roots of clover, skunk cabbage and the rhizomes and fiddleheads of ferns, the bulbs of camas and the inner bark of hemlock, all mainly in spring and summer (1983:1)

The natural abundance of the environment allowed Nuu-chah-nulth communities to invest considerable time in the pursuit of art and technology (E. Arima, 1983; Drucker, 1951; E. Sapir, 1961). The Nuu-chah-nulth are viewed as settled groups of hunter-gatherers in early ethnography (Boas, 1891; Drucker, 1951). Western science proposes that the first peoples of the region may have crossed over the Bering Land Bridge by foot 11,000 years ago during the last ice age.

The Nuu-chah-nulth have no traditional belief in migration to the west coast of Vancouver Island, and their cosmology holds that they are the original inhabitants of their homelands since creation. Each chiefly family holds their own creation story about how their first ancestors came to be. Intensive archaeological surveys on western Vancouver Island show an environment with populations greatly exceeding those of the post-contact period. Some early estimates come from the explorer Meares who estimated that Chief Wickaninnish (this Tla-o-qui-aht title is inherited patrilineally and continues today) in the 1770s had 13,000 subjects, and the Ahousaht chiefs, Hanna and Detootche, had 3,000 subjects between them. The estimate of the Nuu-chah-nulth population in total was 31,000 (McMillan, 2000: ).

Epidemics introduced through European contact such as smallpox, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, and intensified intertribal warfare led to a decrease of 80-90 percent in Nuu-chah-nulth populations. By the nineteenth century disease had killed thousands of Nuu-chah-nulth. When the first census data became available for Canadian First Nations in 1885, the combined population of Nuu-chah-nulth and neighbouring Ditidaht was 3,500. Many families and communities were completely wiped out. By 1939 this combined population figure was 1,605 (McMillan, 2000: 249). The present population of registered Nuu-chah-nulth throughout Vancouver Island and elsewhere is 7,931 (NTC figures). The Nuu-chah-nulth villages in Clayoquot Sound have a combined population of 1,200 (from Clayoquot Biosphere Trust figures).
Europeans first named the Nuu-chah-nulth the Nootka. Nootka was a Spanish misunderstanding of the directions of the Mowachaht of Nootka Sound to ‘come around’ the rocks. Nootka subsequently became established in historical and anthropological literature. The Nuu-chah-nulth have since rejected this term. In 1958, they formed the West Coast Allied Tribes, and on August 14, 1973 incorporated as a non-profit society called the West Coast District Society of Indian Chiefs. They referred to themselves collectively, linguistically, and culturally as the ‘West Coast’ people from the 1960s until 1979 when they changed the name to Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC), a contemporary alliance of fourteen First Nations. Correct usage is Nuu-chah-nulth-aht. Nuu-chah-nulth translates loosely as ‘all along the mountains’ and refers to the west side of Vancouver Island’s mountain ranges, which are common to all groups and viewed as the ‘spine’ of the island. Aht means ‘people of’ and ‘dwelling at’, but use of this suffix proves too complicated in multiple context and usage, and most Nuu-chah-nulth refer to themselves as such so I will adopt this usage here.

The Nuu-chah-nulth ha’thoughthee (chiefly territories) stretches along 300 kilometres of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island, from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. It includes inland regions such as the territories of the Tseshahht and Hupacasath near the town of Port Alberni. The Hupacasath split from the NTC to pursue a separate treaty. Five other Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations dissatisfied with the progress of the NTC separated to become the Maa-nulth First Nations who are also pursuing a separate treaty with the provincial and federal government. The NTC is in the fourth stage of a six-stage treaty process, negotiating an agreement on behalf of seven of its First Nations: the Ahousaht, Ehattesaht First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nation, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and Tseshahht. Negotiations are progressing slowly. The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations of Clayoquot Sound are the Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht. Along with the Toquaht and Ucluelet they form the Central Region alliance of the NTC.

Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations are made up of several chiefly families or ‘houses’, once separate local groups amalgamated through expansionist warfare. Throughout the historic period numerous politically independent groups were subsumed into larger politics through warfare (McMillan, 2000: 13). These political changes were the beginnings of the group structures that constitute the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations today. Unlike First Nations to the north such as the Tsimshian, Tlingit and Haida, who have matrilineal descent, the Nuu-chah-nulth are patrilineal (Service, 1958:205). Nuu-
chah-nulth structure is complex rather than elementary (Rosman & Rubel, 1971), and while Drucker (1951:278) observed that a man was considered to belong to his father’s house there was no fixed rule.

Central coast Nuu-chah-nulth followed an annual cycle of seasonal moves between a number of permanent villages and resource sites, the latter based on the utilisation of resources such as fishing, deer hunting, and shellfish and berry gathering (see references below). Winter villages were those sheltered from the wild storms of the coast. Small ‘houses’ or tribal groups lived throughout each territory forming confederacies. Ethnographers have named this subsistence economy the ‘annual round’ (E. Arima, 1983:11), the ‘yearly round’ (E. Sapir, and M. Swadesh, 1955:27), the ‘economic cycle’ (Drucker, 1951:36), and the ‘annual economic cycle’ (McMillan, 2000:16). The term subsistence has acquired great depth of meaning for First Nation people. While usually it refers to the minimum necessary for survival, Asch (1997: 13) observes that it is commonly used by Aboriginal peoples in Canada to, ‘refer to all that is essential to their well-being, including their attachment (spiritual as well as material) to their homeland’.

Since the 1700s Tla-o-qui-aht territory has included the two main communities which they live in today, Opitsat (pop. 151) on Meares Island and Esowista (pop. 125) at the north end of Long Beach. Total membership as of October 2004 is 852 (NTC figures). The Tla-o-qui-aht hold 10 reserves located on 220 hectares, which were allotted by British Columbia in 1889. The Tla-o-qui-aht originated from the Kennedy Lake and Kennedy River area, and their name means, ‘people of other tribes’, from which the anglicised Clayoquot of present day Clayoquot Sound is derived. The following three pages feature aerial photographs of Opitsat and Esowista (Tla-o-qui-aht) and Maaqtsis (Ahousaht).
Plate 65. Opitsat, Tla-o-qui-aht village (c/o Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations).
Plate 66. Esowista, Tla-o-qui-aht village (c/o Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations).
Plate 67. Maaqtusiis, Ahousah village (c/o Tle-o-qui-aht First Nations).
Plate 68. Clayoquot Sound from above (c/o Google Earth).

Through expansionist warfare they amalgamated smaller groups and came to control Tofino Inlet, Esowista Peninsula (Esowista village) and the offshore islands, as well as Meares Island (Opitsat village). The Tla-o-qui-aht became an amalgamation of as many as ten formerly independent local groups. Banfield, an early Indian Agent and trader noted that the Tla-o-qui-aht were said to be ‘the most warlike Indians on the west coast of Vancouver Island’ as well as such skilled canoe makers that they earned the reputation as the great canoe-mart of the coast’ (1858:50). Tla-o-qui-aht canoe making prowess greatly aided their military expansionism.

Drucker (1951) observes that the chronology of Tla-o-qui-aht amalgamations and expansions through warfare was produced by bloody vendettas, suspicions of malevolent witchcraft, matters of honour, and expansionist drives. The Tla-o-qui-aht were unique in the complete success of their wars. It is common when talking with Ahousaht to be told that much of Tla-o-qui-aht territory belonged, and still belongs, to Ahousaht. Territorial disputes are now negotiated at the Treaty table and in council meetings rather than through warfare on the waters and islands of Clayoquot Sound (see further, Chapter 7).

Ahousaht is the largest First Nation on the central coast with 1,734 members (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council figures, 2004). The Ahousaht are comprised of three former groups: the Ahousaht, Manhousaht and Keltsomaht. In 1951 the Ahousaht and Keltsomaht bands officially merged to form the present Ahousaht First Nation. The
neighbouring Keltsomaht were so closely allied with the Ahousaht that the ranking order of chiefs included both Ahousaht and Keltsomaht chiefs. Drucker (1951) was confused by assertions of distinctiveness contradicted by their claims to common origin and kinship. Warfare, particularly the Ahousaht invasion of the Otsoat war (similar to the successful amalgamation of the Tla-o-qui-aht) brought many smaller groups together within Ahousaht territory. Ahousaht refers to the people of (aht) Ahous, a small bay on the west side of Vargas Island. The name ‘Ahous’ means ‘facing away from the ocean’. Ahousaht territory borders on that of the Tla-o-qui-aht. Like the Tla-o-qui-aht, the Ahousaht gained much of their territory through warfare. Prior to expansionism, particularly the warring of the late 1800s, their territory was small. The main drive for expansion may have been their lack of salmon resources, which would have caused hardship through the winter (Bouchard & Kennedy, 1990).

Historically, territorial conflicts have characterised relations between Nuu-chah-nulth groups whose core impetus to wage war was territorial expansion leading to an increased access to natural resources. Alliances were secured through marriage and trade. In this context territories were occupied exclusively by patricians who protected their claims to ownership through systems of defence, warfare and communication.

While some researchers have questioned the existence of boundaries between hunter-gather groups (see Andrews, 1994: 66) there is no question that the Nuu-chah-nulth, long settled in their territories, practiced intricate systems of hereditary ownership and resource use. Whether and how these traditional Nuu-chah-nulth systems of governance and ownership still have power and relevance for Nuu-chah-nulth people today is one of the inquiries of this work. The political and economic interests of the Euro-Canadian majority have subsumed rights of resource use traditionally offered or withheld to others by controlling hereditary chiefs. A number of major family groups make up the Ahousaht, and these kin group ‘houses’ have their own cultural ownership of songs, dances and mythological stories. Internal power struggles over the primacy of different groups have persisted since amalgamation.

The main Ahousaht community is located on Flores Island and has been widely known as Ahousat. Yet the locals know the village by its traditional name of Maaqtusiis. Maaqtusiis is the only one of 25 Ahousaht reserves (comprising 592 hectares of discontinuous reserves allotted in 1889) occupied year-round and has a community of over 900. Ahousaht Chief Earl Maquinna George (1994: 4) explains the meaning of Maaqtusiis as ‘moving from one village to another’, ‘going from and going to’, or ‘to stay for some length of time’. The name recalls the seasonal cycle of hunting
and gathering. It is also known in local slang as ‘the Rock’, in part because the community is isolated and only accessible by floatplane, or the more commonly used boat/water taxi. When the logging and fishing industries were at their height a couple of decades ago many people, almost solely men, were making good money and they would charter planes home. No one does this today, as the community is significantly poorer.

The other three First Nations in the central region are the Hesquiaht, Ucluelet and Toquaht. I visited and talked with Hesquiaht, Ucluelet, and Toquaht people but spent very little time in these communities, focusing rather on the Ahousaht village of Maanquisiis, and Esowista and Opitsat of the Tla-o-qui-aht.

Hot Springs Cove, with a population of approximately 200, is the main Hesquiaht community. A few people remain at the old village site at Hesquiat. The Hesquiaht take their name from their village site in Hesquiaht Harbour. There are 655 Hesquiaht members (NTC figures, 2004). Their five reserves of 320 hectares were allotted in 1886. The name Hesquiaht is taken from the sound made when people eat herring spawn that has been deposited on surf-grass or sea-grass. In Clayoquot Sound Indian Land Use (Bouchard & Kennedy, 1990) elders Alice Paul, Joe Tom and Ben Andrews stated Split Cape as the north-western territorial boundary used by the ten local groups amalgamated as the Hesquiaht. This marks the spot where the Hesquiaht and Manhousaht once argued over a drifting whale on their territorial boundary. The Hesquiaht shared this account with Drucker (1951) indicating the strictly enforced rules of Nuu-chah-nulth ownership.

The Manhousaht, who today are amalgamated within the Ahousaht polity, were towing a whale. Had the whale drifted ashore it would have been theirs, but it was in Hesquiaht waters making it their ‘salvage’ property. By salvage the Nuu-chah-nulth meant that anything that drifted into the waters of a chief’s territory was rightfully his. This included the ships of European explorers and traders as well as drifting whales. The Hesquiaht attached lines to the whale and towed both the whale and the Manhousaht canoe with it to shore. Seeing they had lost, one Manhousaht got the last word in with the sarcastic comment, “Well, Hesquiaht, for once you will have something to eat instead of little hermit crabs”.

The Ucluelet reserve at Ittatoo in Barkley Sound is home to 191 people. Total membership is 603 (NTC figures, 2004). Their name comes from the Nuu-chah-nulth Yo-Cluti-Ahts, meaning ‘the people of the sheltered bay’, referring to their well-protected landing place for canoes. Their first contact with Europeans was in 1787
when Captain Barkley sailed the Imperial Eagle into Ucluelet territory looking to trade for otter skins. The nine reserves of 199 hectares were allotted in 1882. There were five major Nuu-chah-nulth groups, which dominated the Barkley Sound area: the Ucluelet, Huu-ay-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, and Uchucklesaht.

The Toquaht are located on the north side of Barkley Sound on the southwestern coast of Vancouver Island and have 114 members. Their seven reserves of 196 hectares were allotted in 1882. Toquaht means ‘people of the narrow channel’. At contact, Barkley Sound was home to the highest population of First Nation people on the island. Toquaht was one of the five groups, which dominated the Barkley Sound area along with Huu-ay-aht, Tseshah, Uchucklesaht, and Ucluelet.

The Nuu-chah-nulth speak three closely related languages which comprise the Southern Wakashan division of the Wakashan language family: Nootka or Nuu-chah-nulth proper spoken between Cape Cook and Pachena Point including Clayoquot Sound; Nitinat, spoken from east Barkley Sound to Point No Point; and over the Canadian/American border to Cape Flattery, Makah. There are varying dialects of Nuu-chah-nulth proper (Jacobsen, 1979; Lincoln, 1980; Rose, 1981) yet there are few fluent speakers today. The Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht each have fewer than twenty fluent speakers. A Nuu-chah-nulth speaker under forty years of age is extremely rare. Of the sixty native languages throughout Canada that were spoken at first contact, seven have disappeared, and another fifty are not expected to survive (York, 1992).

Across the Canadian/American border on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State live the Makah, who are relatives of the Nuu-chah-nulth and remain linked politically and culturally through regularly reciprocated potlatches, political activism, and kinship. The Makah political relationship with the state differs from that of the Nuu-chah-nulth in that they have a constitutional treaty with the US government. In an 1855 Treaty, Makah signed away much of their traditional lands in exchange for their reservation at Neah Bay, educational and health benefits, and the guarantee of protection for their fishing rights. These treaty rights allocate them half the total amount of fish harvested in their territorial waters (McMillan, 2000).

In contrast economic factors have led to changes in Nuu-chah-nulth lifestyle and modes of employment characterised by an increased reliance on the cash economy and store bought foods. In recent decades 80 per cent unemployment and reliance on welfare has led to a more settled lifestyle in communities. The seasonal subsistence moves of the community to other villages to hunt and gather food resources no longer take place on the central west coast. Many natural resource exploitation practices are
still utilised such as fishing, shellfish gathering, firewood cutting, and items such as canoe and mask carving. While the ‘annual round’ talked of by Arima (1983) no longer occurs many Nuu-chah-nulth talk of the desire to return to a more healthy and ‘traditional’ lifestyle and livelihood. The desire is expressed through romantic nostalgia on the part of older people, and a view that the return to a way of life governed by traditional principles and values is a way to bring positive change to their communities.

There have been many environmental changes since European contact and settlement. Reintroduced by conservationist programmes, the sea otter is now recovering its numbers after a hundred years of heavy commercial trapping by both Nuu-chah-nulth and Europeans: the beauty of the furs gained them prestige which brought traders high prices in Europe and China (Drucker, 1951; Martin, 1978; McMillan, 2000). Today the otter now threatens the food resource sites of coastal Nuu-chah-nulth, who rely heavily on shellfish and other marine invertebrates as a source of food. Salmon stocks are greatly depleted due to destructive logging practices and overfishing by commercial interests. Herring, halibut, and cod stocks are critically depleted. Traditional Nuu-chah-nulth foods such as whale, seal and sea lion remain abundant according to local people but the seal is the only sea mammal eaten today, and only by a very small number of Nuu-chah-nulth.

Clayoquot Sound is a contested space, between Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, and between Nuu-chah-nulth and government, extractive industry, and environmentalists. Key issues include the conservation of ecosystems (see Chapter 5), visual aesthetics, tourism (including sports fishing and hunting), forest companies, and the condition of First Nations communities. Today, the Nuu-chah-nulth comprise approximately half the population of Clayoquot Sound yet live on less than one percent of their traditional land-base and have unemployment rates seven times higher than that of nearby non-native communities. While present village sites in Clayoquot Sound are still designated as Indian Reserves (land with IR status) they represent a fraction of Nuu-chah-nulth traditional territorial holdings with archaeological evidence of habitation for at least four thousand years (see McMillan, 2000).

The First Nations land base of government-designated ‘Indian Reserves’ totals only 0.4 per cent of the land base in British Columbia, while First Nations people make up 3 per cent of the population (BC Statistics). In Clayoquot Sound the Nuu-chah-nulth make up 50 per cent of the population with 1,055 hectares, comprised of small scattered ‘Indian Reserve’ lands held in trust by the Canadian government under the Indian Act, 1876 (see p.45). ‘Indian Reserves’ are sections of land set aside by the
Crown, and now the federal Canadian government, for the use of an ‘Indian band’. The term reserve is one I found to be viewed with disfavour by most Nuu-chah-nulth. As Cliff Atleo Sr. (Ahousaht) states: ‘we don’t have “reserves”. Those are colonial terms and we are not Indians, never have been. We are quu’as [original peoples]’ (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003).

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognised the existence of Aboriginal groups as individual nations, with the Royal House of England as the Sovereign of each individual First Nation. Traders and early colonists accepted First Nations as independent self-governing peoples. This changed in British Columbia when the provincial government argued that extinguishment of Aboriginal rights and title had occurred at European contact. In 1871, as British Columbia joined the confederation provincial and federal government focused on the question of land and its efficient settlement by Europeans. It was at this point in history that the displacement and dispossession of Aboriginal peoples lands began officiated by the establishment of bureaucratic paternalism that continues in a lesser form today. The allocation of reserves remains bitterly resented by Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Historian Cole Harris (2002: 265) observes of this confinement that the ‘allocation of reserves in British Columbia defined two primal spaces, one for Native people and the other for virtually everyone else’. Harris asserts that the allocation of 1,500 small reserves scattered across the province, unlike the often-large land allocations of Native Americans, expressed the provincial government hope that small reserves would force First Nation peoples into the workplace. They would thereby become civilised, and provide cheap seasonal labour for growing industries, especially fish canning and domestic labour positions.

Ethnographer Philip Drucker’s (1951) only mention of reserves in his major work The Northern and Central Nootkan Tribes, was to comment that the Canadian government’s establishment of reserves ‘scarcely affected native life’, asserting that ‘all the important sites – the winter and summer villages, the salmon-fishing stations – were set aside as Indian reserves, so that there was no dislocation of the groups’ (1951). Drucker’s observation of reserves is one of a number of brief commentaries presuming the demise of Nuu-chah-nulth cultures.

The Nuu-chah-nulth, unlike their American cousins the Makah, did not cede any of their territory or sign agreements with the provincial or federal governments. Coastal First Nations in British Columbia have been confined to particularly small parcels of land. Government justification for this in the late 1800s was the strong reliance on
marine diets of the Nuu-chah-nulth and other Pacific Northwest coast groups the Kwakwaka'wakw, Tsimshian, and Haida. A picture of the effects of reserve life on the social and economic fabric of coastal Nuu-chah-nulth communities will emerge through this study.

Government administration of reserves also meant the suppression of Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonial and political life. Public gift giving through the potlatch feasts, or parties, as they are also known, masked dances, and other ceremonies and rituals were banned under the Indian Act (1850) in Canada (see below). The potlatch remained illegal from 1884 until 1951. Traditions were continued in secret, and often involved the misleading of zealous Indian Agents (government workers responsible for control and administration of individual reserves) and missionaries as to the whereabouts of a potlatch. Regardless of cultural repression, of the Nuu-chah-nulth as well as other First Nations on the Northwest Coast, local accounts and individual memories indicate a resilience which continued these traditions in spite of legislation intent on eliminating them (see Hoover, 2000).

Kelm (1998) notes that during the second half of the nineteenth century increasing discontent was expressed by First Nations with regard to the size and nature of allocated reserves. The total land base of 1,606 reserves occupies approximately 350,556 hectares. Much of this discontent stems from the fact that reserves were insufficient to sustain food production through either agriculture or ranching, and alienation from the rest of their traditional lands meant that hunting and trapping opportunities were significantly reduced. While a lack of sufficient arable land for agriculture has not affected Nuu-chah-nulth reliant on coastal access to seafood, hunting and trapping is no longer viable because of settlement and industry, compounded today by tourism and recreational use. While the Nuu-chah-nulth do hold the right to hunt, fish, and gather resources for non-commercial, or what has come to be known as ‘home use’, their access to their territories to practice that right is significantly contained by development, non-Aboriginal settlement, tourism and recreational use, environmental degradation, and the authority of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Parks Canada.

In 1857 the British House of Commons passed a law on behalf of the Canadian Colonies entitled An Act for Gradual Civilization. The law was the first of many designed to encourage First Nations to relinquish their land, language and culture in exchange for full British citizenship. In 1869 the newly formed federal government of Canada continued this effort by passing the Gradual Enfranchisement Act. The Act
offered the proposed benefits of municipal government (Miller, 1991). This introduced an electoral system of one elected head chief and councillors, the hereditary chiefs, and a presiding Indian Agent. The hereditary chiefs were not to be replaced when they died. All men over the age of twenty-one could vote for the election of their tribal chiefs and councillors. But this was the limit of meaningful participation, as the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs determined the manner and nature of the election, and these elected officials could be removed from office at any time by the government. A democratic system was thereby imposed on First Nations and, in the case of the Nuu-chah-nulth, continues in tension with their ‘unofficial’ but still relevant hereditary system of governance (see Chapter 7). The government refused to acknowledge or negotiate with unelected hereditary Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs, only recognising a single chief elected under the democratic system. This is still policy today.

Through this new form of control the government could enforce all manner of by-laws upon communities and individuals, covering everything from the maintenance of roads to the observance of order and decorum at assemblies. The Consolidation Act of 1876 repeated this political model with the intention that First Nation peoples would, ‘lose control of every aspect of their corporate existence’ (Miller, 1991: 151). This Act enabled the government to bring about the economic development they urgently desired. Under the Act the government could create, ‘individualised land holdings, determine the use of resources, and create particular educational systems. It now had the political and financial control to make enfranchisement a reality’ (Miller, 1991: 151).

The government found that the great majority of Aboriginal people had no desire to be ‘released from the land’, as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration W. E. Harris, put it during the establishment of previous Acts (Neu & Thiessen, 2003: 14). This was land that had sustained their families and communities for hundreds often thousands of years. Nevertheless, provincial and federal governments continued their policies of enfranchisement and acculturation, seeking to separate Aboriginal peoples from their land so as to access it for economic development.

The Indian Act was developed from this history of colonial government and newly federated by the Canadian government in 1876. The Act has governed First Nations peoples’ lives since, and has been widely despised by Aboriginal people. The Act set out rules for governing reserves, and defines how bands can be created, and spells out the powers of ‘Band Councils’. As specified under the Act, a band is a community for whom lands have been set apart. Historically the Ahousaht have been known as a band
but now identify as the Ahousaht *First Nation*. The designation First Nation makes a claim to sovereignty and continued Aboriginal presence. In the political climate of treaty negotiation many Nuu-chah-nulth ‘bands’ have changed to this term.

Restrictions in the *Indian Act* have ranged from rules dictating how communities should elect leaders to the enforced removal of children to the church run Residential School system, as well as how an individual’s estates would be settled after their death: a literal cradle to grave social policy. In Nuu-chah-nulth territory, there have long been attempts to break down the hereditary system and replace it with a democratically elected council. Both these political systems exist in tension today.

The *Indian Act* was the vehicle used to vest title to reserve land to the Crown. The establishment of reserves in the 1880s made it difficult for First Nations to access their traditional foods. The *Indian Act* made it illegal for them to sell or produce goods without the written permission of the local Indian Agent. The Indian Agent became the de-facto ruler of Indians on reserves. Indian Agents had to give written permission for Indians to leave the reserve for any reason, an aspect of the *Indian Act* attracted the interest of the South African government in the 1950s when they were seeking ways to impose apartheid (see DuCharme, 1986). One Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary chief remarked, ‘Dependency under the *Indian Act* has not served us well. Generations of our people have died poor on our rich lands’ (Inglis, 2000: 8).

The Act granted that if men (not women) learned to read and signed a pledge to live as a white person they would then be allowed to vote, own property, serve on juries, and enjoy various other rights of civilised society. Aboriginal people who made this choice were termed ‘enfranchised’ and stripped of their ‘Indian status’. Those who enfranchised did so for many reasons, including the desire to vote, to drink, to own property, to live in another country, or to become a ‘professional’, a lawyer, teacher, or clergyman. A man who enfranchised was granted, *fee simple* in English common law, any portion of Indian Reserve land that had been allotted to him. This caused conflict within First Nations communities when it happened but it was rare. The wives and children of men who enfranchised also lost their status. Any woman that married a Euro-Canadian man lost her ‘status’ and any rights that came with it. The colonial project changed the dynamic of relationships between men and women, and Judeo-Christian principles of male gender primacy meant that Indian Agents and missionaries worked to undermine the power of women in many First Nation societies, particularly those matrimonial societies to the north of the Nuu-chah-nulth such as the Tlingit. Among patrilineal coastal First Nations such as the Nuu-chah-nulth complementary
sexual divisions of labour existed, and this equality in economic roles carried through into social life. The Indian Act of 1867, and subsequent government efforts at assimilation, continued to undermine this through imposed ethnocentric distinctions of gender.

These many negative attributes led few Nuu-chah-nulth people to choose enfranchisement, most viewing it as an attempt to strip them of their remaining land base. Yet, some did in order to live with what they saw as greater self-determination in an inevitably transforming world. Tom Mexsis Happynook [Huu-ay-aht] tells of his grandfather’s reasons for choosing enfranchisement:

There was several generations that were forced through government legislation to try to be assimilated and to give up their cultural ways but the fact of the matter is out here, because we have only had 150 years of contact, all of those things that were outlawed like the potlatch, our government business - that’s how we conducted business, was outlawed, where we would have a potlatch...During those generations that we were severely impacted by Canadian legislation policies and regulations, we never ever lost those things. They were just...you could describe it as ‘put in the closet’ for a while. Potlatches were still going on in secret. There were laws in Canada that if three or more native men were talking on the street corner they could be thrown in jail because they may be talking about their Aboriginal title rights and interests. We were not allowed up above the car decks on the BC ferries, we had to stay down below, we weren’t allowed to go into liquor stores, we couldn’t buy houses and in fact my family was severely impacted by those particular policies. My grandfather in the mid fifties voluntarily enfranchised, and what that means is he voluntarily gave up his aboriginal rights, his rights as an Indian, because he didn’t want me to go to residential school. He wanted to be able to buy a house in Victoria, he wanted to be able to go above the car decks on the ferries, he wanted to be able to go into the liquor store, he wanted to be able to vote. We didn’t get the vote until the sixties, he wanted to do all those things, and in order to do that he had to give up his rights as an Indian (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).
In 1969 the *White Paper* was legislated by Jean Chrétien (then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) to abolish the *Indian Act* and to recognize First Nations as the same as any other minority in Canada rather than as a distinct group. This was received by significant opposition from First Nations and cancelled in 1971. The White Paper, another attempt at assimilation, proposed the termination of all special rights for Aboriginal peoples, arguing that equality and the end of the discrimination of Aboriginal people would be brought about by the extinguishment of their rights. In this way it was a blueprint for assimilation. This involved the transference of responsibility for Aboriginal affairs from the federal government to the provinces, a sobering thought for First Nations in British Columbia due to the province’s long history of refusing to negotiate or consult with First Nations over matters that concerned them. The White Paper was a call for individual rather than collective rights, and led First Nation people to organise politically like never before (see Cardinal, 1999). Today in British Columbia the provincial government is again calling for the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights in return for land settlements negotiated through treaty agreements.

In 1985 the Canadian government passed *Bill C-31*, an Act to amend the *Indian Act*, 1876. The Bill amended the Act in a number of important ways. It ended many of the discriminatory provisions of the *Indian Act*, especially those that discriminated against women, and changed the meaning of ‘status’ and ‘non-status’. For the first time the Bill allows for limited reinstatement of Indians who were denied or lost status in the past and allows First Nations to define their own rules of membership. Tom Happynook explains how these amendments affected him:

I became an Indian in 1985 through Bill C31. Bill C31 was a bill that was developed by the lobbying of the women because when a native woman married a non-native man she lost her rights. But when a non-native woman married a native man she became an Indian. Now, what kind of sense does that make? It is absolute nonsense. It is so stupid. There was an effort by the native women to lobby the government of Canada. Bill C31 came in 1985. I was born non-status. I still went through life with brown skin (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

The assimilation efforts of the federal/provincial governments and churches were not ultimately successful, as can be seen today in the continued reproduction of First
Nation traditions and life ways. The prospect of assimilation seemed inevitable to Drucker (1951: 14). His prophesied final steps in the transition to 'modern acculturation' or assimilation, included the establishment of residential schools in which generations of Nuu-chah-nulth children were separated from their families in order to civilise and Christianise them; increased white contact due to work in canneries at Clayoquot and Nootka; contact with the white community at Tofino; and regular steamship service on the coast bringing more contact with Europeans. To non-Aboriginal observers, the establishment of reserves and the Indian Act were just moves towards a necessary transformation of Nuu-chah-nulth society towards a Eurocentric concept of civilisation. While the changes Drucker pointed to impacted on Nuu-chah-nulth life, his fatalistic premonition did not come to pass. Today, many of the responsibilities and much of the governance of the Indian Act has now been passed on to Aboriginal organisations such as the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC). Social service obligations of government such as health and education have to some degree come under the control of the NTC although the federal government finances the organisation.

After World War II government and industry became aware of the worth of what were deemed 'economically unused' reserve lands and set about establishing further controls over use of resources, while working to quell First Nations aspirations to make their lands economically productive. At this time Aboriginal rights began to be further marginalised by provincial fish and game laws aiming to control and limit use of resources. As Neu and Thierren assert in Accounting for Genocide – Canada's Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People, 'it is hard to imagine a more pervasive bureaucratic occupation of a people's community' (2003: 120). Approximately half the members of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations live 'Off-reserve', particularly drawn to urban centres in order to access employment and education opportunities. On the central coast of Vancouver Island where there is much concern in Nuu-chah-nulth communities about young people feeling forced to leave in order to gain education and employment, there is also talk of people coming home to their coastal villages. While Indian and Northern Affairs Canada statistics do not substantiate this belief, some communities such as Maaqtusis are growing fast and there are serious housing shortages. The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations population overall indicates an increasingly young population. In Canada's Aboriginal communities 50 per cent of the population is under the age of 25 – a percentile rising every year (Indian and Northern Affairs).
The population of Clayoquot Sound is 50/50 Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Aboriginal, predominantly Euro-Canadian. Tofino is the economic hub for tourism in the central region and the main non-Aboriginal settlement, with a population of approximately 1400, made up of mainly Euro (Anglo)-Canadians. Spanish explorers named the town in 1792 but never settled it as a colony. In the early 1900s, there were only a few European settlers living in the area, then considered one of the most remote parts of Canada. From 1910 on, the legendary Tofino Lifeboat crews saved the lives of many mariners and made the town famous throughout British Columbia. In 1913, a church was built, then a post office, logging camps and a general store. Over the past century, several mines have operated in the region yet none remain operational today. Prospectors came seeking gold, copper, and silver but none of the operations yielded significant results. There is renewed interest in copper mining in the area today. Access was by ship until the threat of invasion in World War II saw the building of a military airport (now commercial). Tofino comprises 11.05 square miles of land on the Esowista Peninsula.

In 1959, a road was built to Long Beach from Port Alberni in central Vancouver Island. The road was established to facilitate the logging industry yet also provided access for many young urban Canadians, whose counter culture lifestyle attracted them to enjoy the ‘wilderness’ in the 1960’s (see further Chapter 5). Tourists began to visit the central West Coast. The main draw was the beaches and forests of Long Beach between Tofino and the logging town of Ucluelet. As tourism increased, so did awareness of the natural beauty and ecological diversity of the area. Twenty years later when clear-cut logging threatened to eradicate old growth forests of Sitka spruce, giant red cedar and Douglas fir the road built for logging trucks provided access to protesting environmentalists.
ENVIROMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CONFLICTS IN CLAYOQUOT SOUND

Plate 69. Tofino beachfront. Tourist Kayakers prepare to leave for a tour of the surrounding area. Kayaking is a lucrative business in Clayoquot Sound. In the foreground ready for the next groups of visitors sit the Tla-o-qui-aht dugout canoes of Tla-o-qui-aht Cultural Adventures, a Tla-o-qui-aht run cultural tours company.
Clayoquot Sound and the Pacific Northwest coast region has been a region of intense trade for thousands of years as Nuu-chah-nulth groups traded for natural resources and foods they lacked. Trading and the establishment of marriage alliances between groups gained a political and economic security against attacks by other groups who had entered into similar confederacies. An historical overview of Clayoquot Sound as a place of commerce as well as conflict illuminates the transformations and dynamics in relations between Nuu-chah-nulth and settler Europeans, and with present day Euro-Canadians and other non-Aboriginals. The conflicts, both historical and contemporary, stem from negotiations over the ownership and management of the environment and its resources, which came to sustain various economies, local, national, and global. Commercial trade in Clayoquot Sound brought the region and its inhabitants into the global and political economy by the late 1700s. The battle for control of the sea otter fur trade brought England and Spain to the brink of war (Drucker, 1951: 11). It also saved the city of Boston from financial ruin.

Drucker asserted that the machinations and political struggles of global economics were not relevant to his anthropological inquiry. In my case they are. Nuu-chah-nulth people, then as today, are directly implicated in the global economy. First contact between Nuu-chah-nulth and Europeans was based on the mutually beneficial action of trade. In this chapter, beginning with first contact in Nootka Sound to the north, and then moving south to Clayoquot Sound, I document a history of Nuu-chah-nulth-European economic relations through a series of natural resources exploitation: from the fur trade for sea otter pelts to fisheries, logging and today, fish farming and tourism.

In the 1770s, when sustained contact between Europeans and First Nation peoples in the Pacific Northwest began, European explorers, traders, entrepreneurs, churches and national governments were playing a complex game of political chess. Europeans came to the coast intending to claim territory, make a profit, win intellectual glory, and convert souls. It was during this brief but pivotal period that First Nations and Europeans met and developed a trading relationship that laid the groundwork for future social, political, and economic interactions. Ships from Spain, England, America, France, Russia and Portugal visited the Northwest Coast and came into contact with Nuu-chah-nulth, Makah, Salish, Kwakwaka’wakw, and Haida peoples.

The political and economic game that the European nations played at this time had certain rules, the most fundamental of which was the right of possession following first discovery. Under Nuu-chah-nulth laws of possession anything that drifted into their waters, whether it was a whale, a trader’s schooner or an explorer’s galleon, was the
property of the chiefs who controlled those waters. It was obvious to Captain Cook on his first visit that the Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs regarded the newcomers as an economic resource (McMillan, 2000:181).

The first recorded encounter between First Nations and Europeans in what was to become British Columbia, was on the 20 July, 1774, when Juan Jose Perez Hernandez, explorer and captain of the Santiago, met a group of Haida off the northwest point of Langara Island in the Queen Charlotte’s Island group. On the 8 August off Estevan Point in Nootka Sound (named after Don Estevan, a crewmember of the Santiago) the first meeting of Europeans and Nuu-chah-nulth occurred. European articles such as iron were traded for the furs of sea otters and other animals such as mink and martens, woven hats and cedar clothes and capes. The meeting is recorded in the Journal of Father Tomas de la Peña (Cutter & Butler, 1969: 121-3, 157-61). While initially fearful, some Mowachaht paddled their canoes out to examine what they perceived to be a huge floating house with people walking on top. Mowachaht named the ‘floating house’ mal'mathnii, and Europeans have been known by this term on the coast ever since. Elders told me that the term means more than simply ‘floating house’ or ‘people of a floating house’. More philosophically it means a people without roots, a people adrift or ‘at sea’. The meaning is sometimes recounted with sad irony in Nuu-chah-nulth conversation about Nuu-chah-nulth and European relations since contact.

In 1775, a Spanish expedition led by Bruno de Hezeta of the Santiago, and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra of the Sonora, passed by the North Pacific coast but did not lay anchor. The next encounter in which, as Drucker asserts, ‘the evil star of European civilization dawned for the Nootkans and their neighbours on the Northwest Coast’ was four years later when Captain James Cook entered Nootka Sound on March 31, 1778, and anchored in Resolution Cove, Nootka Sound, home of the powerful Chief Maquinna (1951: 11). Cook and his crew were the first Europeans to have sustained contact with Nuu-chah-nulth, in that case the Mowachaht (now Mowachaht/Muchalaht) of Yuquot, who today are one of the nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. At Yuquot, Cook and his crew met with Chief Maquinna. As Cook approached Yuquot, a group of Mowachaht apparently called out to his ship: itchne nutka, itchne nutka. McMillan (2000: 6) notes that the term Nootka stems from a word meaning “to come around” or “to circle about” reflecting attempts by local Mowachaht to direct Cook and his ship into the sheltered harbour at the front of their village at Yuquot. Cook believed the Mowachaht were telling him their name was Nootka. Cook claimed the territory for Britain, but did not establish a settlement there. The name Nootka persisted, and the
term was used to encompass all the peoples and tribes (now Nuu-chah-nulth) that live along the west coast of Vancouver Island. The name Nuu-chah-nulth was adopted by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council in 1978, exactly 200 years after James Cook named the people Nootka (McMillan, 2000: 6).

Cook became famous in throughout Europe, not for his geographical 'discoveries,' but rather for the otter skins some of his crew traded for European wares. When it was learned that the furs were worth more than their weight in gold when sold to the Chinese in Canton, Drucker reflects, 'the fate of the native cultures was sealed' (1951). The publication of Cook's journals in 1785 sparked the fur trade, drawing Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nation peoples on the Pacific Coast into long relationships with profit-hungry European and American traders. In the early years metal, copper and iron, were in high demand by Nuu-chah-nulth traders but once that need was assuaged, muskets, powder, shot, blankets, molasses, cloth and liquor dominated the trade. The Nuu-chah-nulth were now engaged with the political economy of Europeans and there would be no turning back.

Coastal Nuu-chah-nulth chose to forego traditional subsistence pursuits in order to focus on the highly lucrative trade in sea otter furs. This was a radical transformation in Nuu-chah-nulth management of this particular resource. Only people of high rank had been permitted to hunt and wear sea otter furs guaranteeing a measure of conservation. As the hereditary chiefs needed as many hunters as they could to take full economic advantage of the lucrative trade in otter furs, this rule of status was forgotten. This changed with the rush for profit during the fur trade period, and it was in this period that some Nuu-chah-nulth men, not of hereditary ancestry, began to gain high status among their people through trading.

Fisher (1977: xv) notes in his work on Early relations between First Nations and Europeans in British Columbia that, 'during the fur trade there was the kind of reciprocity between the two races that is implied by the word "relationship," but with settlement the word "impact" more appropriately describes the effect of one culture on another'. I emphasise this early reciprocity because early historical scholarship (Howay, 1928; Ryerson, 1960) on the fur trade sets the economic scene as one in which First Nations were nothing more than gullible victims of avaricious European traders. John Meares made his first voyage to Nootka Sound in 1785 (of Meares Island in Clayoquot Sound, traditional territory of the Tla-o-qui-aht today), followed by Hanna. Trading vessels from the East India Company - the Sea Otter under Hanna, 1785, and the Experiment under James Strange, 1786, were the first European vessels to visit Yuquot
solely to trade for furs. By 1788 Meares was bringing in European and Chinese workmen. At Yuquot they erected a dwelling and a shipyard on land that Meares claimed he had acquired from Chief Maquinna. Here the schooner *Northwest America* was built and launched. By 1792 the maritime fur trade had reached its peak with 31 vessels trading along the coast of what is now Alaska and British Columbia.

The trade in sea otter pelts was like a gold rush. European and American traders sold pelts in Europe and China for thousands of dollars. The success American and British traders so threatened the Spanish and their Pacific Empire that the Spanish established an outpost in Nootka Sound in 1789. By 1794 Spanish explorer Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra (of Quadra Island in Ahousaht territory) formally surrendered to Captain Vancouver. But the Europeans were not in total control. Chief Maquinna steadily consolidated his political and economic power by way of a trade monopoly with European and Americans in Nootka Sound. He alone defined who could and could not trade, acting as the sole power broker in Nootka Sound while also controlling the northern Nuu-chah-nulth. Only when resources such as sea otters were nearly exhausted would Maquinna permit other tribes to trade, and even then he would broker the trade deals at great gain. Chief Maquinna’s wide influence and prowess in war maintained his success.

But Maquinna and his people also felt the impact of mistreatment and arrogance from European traders. There were many reasons for the violent attacks by Nuu-chah-nulth. Relations with traders worsened in the decades after Cook had arrived (E. Arima, 1983: 127-30; McMillan, 2000). In 1803 when the *US Boston* anchored close to shore in Nootka Sound, she was to meet a sorry end, due to harsh treatment from previous crews, compounded by Captain Salter’s insult to Maquinna. The Mowachaht killed all the crew of the *Boston* except Thompson, a sail maker, and Jewitt, a blacksmith. Jewitt later authored an account of his time as Maquinna’s slave (Jewitt, 1967). Maquinna had recently diminished in status and so the bounty of the *Boston* allowed him new riches for trading and potlatching. He held a potlatch in which he distributed many of the goods taken from the vessel to other tribes. In return for the guest’s offerings of whale blubber, herring roe, and dried fish and clams, they received cloth, gunpowder, muskets, looking glasses, and so on. This potlatch restored Maquinna’s prestige and respect amongst Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs. While taking the *Boston* enhanced Maquinna’s wealth, it put an end to Nootka Sound’s reputation as a safe haven, affecting the region economically. The majority of ships bypassed the area in the next few decades leaving the Nuu-chah-nulth in near isolation until the mid nineteenth century (McMillan 2000:
188). An exception was the voyage of Lieutenant Camille de Roquefeuil of France who twice explored the coast of British Columbia during 1816-1819, visiting and trading with Chief Maquinna. His journey was an effort to increase French prospects for commerce in the aftermath of Napoleon’s overthrow.

The first fur trader to reach Clayoquot Sound was Charles Barkeley (who named Barkeley Sound to the south) in 1787. The Tla-o-qui-aht Chief Wickaninish controlled Clayoquot Sound and had greatly expanded his territory through a series of wars, emerging as a major economic force in the maritime fur trade period in much the same way as Maquinna had in Nootka Sound. Chief Hanna of the Ahousaht to the north of him was an important leader in the region also, yet such was the power of Wickaninish, McMillan notes (2000: 181) that he was forced to surrender his furs to Wickaninish before they could be sold to Europeans. The third power broker was Chief Tatoosh of the Cape Flattery villages to the south, a people are now known as the Makah. Wickaninish, Maquinna and Tatoosh held strong social ties through trade and intertribal marriage.

As in Nootka Sound, Nuu-chah-nulth conflicts with traders in Clayoquot Sound were at times brutal. In 1811 the Tonquin sailed into the Sound to trade for furs. Tla-o-qui-aht oral history tells of the ship’s captain bargaining for otter pelts with Tla-o-qui-aht, but trying to trick them in trade. When confronted, Captain John Thorn struck the Tla-o-qui-aht Chief Wickaninish with a pelt. The Tla-o-qui-aht, enraged by the mistreatment of their chief, stormed the ship and killed Thorn and his crew. After the fight, one European survivor, a clerk, set fire to an estimated 4.5 tons of gunpowder in the hold, killing hundreds of Tla-o-qui-aht.

The Tonquin’s anchor was recently found in Clayoquot Sound at the forewaters of the Tla-o-qui-aht village of Opitsat. Local Tla-o-qui-aht, Joe Martin, is the great great grandson of the chief insulted by Thorn, and has recently set up the Tonquin Society to ensure that the Tonquin’s anchor stays in Clayoquot Sound and can be used as a site of ethnohistory for his people. This will enable the Tla-o-qui-aht to tell their side of the story and bring tourism revenue into their territory.

When American explorer Captain Robert Gray left Clayoquot Sound in the spring of 1792 he burned the village of Opitsat to the ground as a warning to the people. He believed the Tla-o-qui-aht were planning to capture the US vessels, the Columbia and the Adventure. He aimed to send the message that he held the real power. Tla-o-qui-aht history does not represent the burning of the village of Opitsat although it is documented in European accounts (Drucker, 1951: 15). As competition for furs rose,
Nuu-chah-nulth asked more for their otter pelts, but began to be treated disrespectfully by many American and British traders.

As the sea otter fell into serious decline on the Northwest coast, Nuu-chah-nulth otter hunters were kidnapped by European and American traders and taken to California where they were forced to hunt otters. During this period American and British traders often entered Tla-o-qui-aht territory, cannons and swivel guns at the ready. The sea otter was a catalyst for conflict in the area. In 1911 it came under the protection of the International Fur Seal Treaty signed by the United States, Russia, Japan and Great Britain (for Canada). The Canadian Federal Fisheries Act, 1985 and the British Columbia Wildlife Act, 1996 protect this species today.

Europeans brought diseases such as smallpox, measles and tuberculosis, against which the Nuu-chah-nulth had no defence. The most deadly disease was smallpox, which began its destruction on the Northwest coast soon after first contact between Nuu-chah-nulth and explorers. As late as 1875 Father Brabant, a local missionary stationed near the Hesquiat of Clayoquot Sound, described an outbreak of smallpox, which badly affected both the Mowachaht and the Hesquiat, and McMillan (2000) assumes, affected other Nuu-chah-nulth groups as well. The plummeting population levels, up to 80% among some groups and villages, accounted for major changes in Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation and culture. Estimates of population at contact differ. Arima et al. (1991: 1-2) holds that an estimate of 30,000 people made by Meares was probably accurate. The first accurate census in 1885 of a combined Nuu-chah-nulth and neighbouring Ditidaht population was 3,500 (Duff, 1964: 39). By 1939, the total was 1,609 (McMillan, 2000). Many chiefs died without heirs in their direct line, and potlatches began to be given by collateral relatives who had never potlatched before (see further on the potlatch, Chapter 9.) Commoner families came to prominence as other prestigious hereditary family ‘houses’ (patriclans) were wiped out. The histories and privileges sometimes passed into those of a new house through a small number of remaining members who were married into, or simply joined, new houses as their family groups had died.

Ahousaht elder, Momook John of Maaqtusiis, told me that many people in his village were killed by smallpox brought by the Spanish (the Ahousaht village of Maaqtusiis is on Flores Island and named after the early Spanish explorer). Momook’s mother contracted smallpox but it was not a severe case. Momook’s grandfather Skookhum Jack fled with others, staying away for many months until it seemed safe to return. On their returned people lay dead all over the old reserve site. In one day alone, Momook
recalled, eighteen people died. Momook also pointed out to me the trade beads all over
the village. Many Ahousaht buried the trade beads that had been given to them by the
Spanish as they thought they might be the carriers of the death that took their people.
Momook had collected many from under his sister Rosie’s house, a few of which he
gave me (see Rosie Swan’s testimony in Chapter 6, p.189). His father had also collected
them. They are understood to be two hundred years old and were received from the
Spanish.

As recently as 1887 Catholic missionary Father Brabant was lamenting the loss of
many Mowachaht and Hesquiaht children to measles, many of the survivors of which
then succumbed to ‘consumption’ (tuberculosis) (2000: 192). Venereal disease brought
by European sailors was also rampant and McMillan notes that the local people at
Nootka were also beginning to suffer and die from syphilis, from 1792. Venereal
disease not only killed many Nuu-chah-nulth, it left others infertile, further exacerbating
the decline in population. It was during this early period of contact that Nuu-chah-nulth
tribal populations in the tens of thousands dropped to that of hundreds.

As well as loss of life to disease and encounters with Europeans, conflicts between
Nuh-chah-nulth groups were occurring. During this time many Nuu-chah-nulth groups
were wiped out or amalgamated into larger groups. The resulting depopulation
accounted for major changes in Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation and culture. The
number of independent Nuu-chah-nulth polities was greatly reduced during these
periods of conflict.

Trade rivalries and access to firearms resulted in widespread casualties amongst the
Nuu-chah-nulth. The Tla-o-qui-aht were able to expand into their neighbours territories
due to the introduction of firearms. In the late eighteenth century the Ucluelet expanded
their territory, while the Ahousaht nearly exterminated the nearby Otsoaht and took
their territory in the early nineteenth century. These wars were recorded by Drucker
Conflicts between Europeans and Nuu-chah-nulth, and inter-tribal warfare between
Nuu-chah-nulth, were complex during this early period of commerce.

While I have been referring to tribes in this early period of first contact as Nuu-chah-
nulth, there was no such tribal alliance as exists today in the form of the Nuu-chah-nulth
Tribal Council, but rather a number of confederacies which allied in war and trade.
Expansionism through warfare was predicated on the pragmatic desire to amass territory
and increase access to larger and more varied resource sites. Desired access to salmon
tributaries was a common trigger for war.
The year 1812 marked the beginning of a new phase of development, when overland fur traders took centre stage. The fur trade on the coast was largely exhausted, with the near extinction of the sea otter. The fur trade had brought conflict and disease to the Nuu-chah-nulth as well as wealth. The end of this maritime period saw the beginning of European settlement, with a much more significant impact on the Nuu-chah-nulth way of life than the fur trade. Nuu-chah-nulth people began to be subjected to the imperialist policies of the British Crown. Fisher argues that 'the word “impact” more appropriately describes the effect of one culture on another' during invasion and settlement than the reciprocity which characterized the early days of the fur trade (1977: xv). In 1860 a young English businessman, Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, hired fifty men and sailed up the Alberni Canal from the west coast of Vancouver Island intending to establish a logging camp and sawmill on land that Sproat had been sold by the Crown (see C. Harris, 2002). On arrival Sproat found the land belonged to someone else, the Tseshahlt. He proceeded to buy it again with goods worth twenty pounds on the condition that the Tseshahlt would move the next day. The next day the Tseshahlt remained and seemed to be preparing to fight, taking up muskets and pikes, and painting their faces black. Sproat levelled his boat's cannons at them and, seeing that resistance was futile, the Tseshahlt moved to another site nearby. Sproat's (1868: 3-4) account in his, Scenes and Studies from Savage Life tells that he visited the Chief with an interpreter at his big house, no doubt the Tyee head-chief) and asked him:

"Chief of the Seshahls [Tseshahlt]," said I on entering, "are you well; are your women in health; are your children hearty; do your children get plenty of fish and fruits?"

"Yes," answered an old man, 'our families are well, our people have plenty of food; but how long this will last we know not. We see your ships, and hear things that make our hearts grow faint. They say that more King-George-Men will soon be here, and they will take our land, our firewood, our fishing grounds; that we shall be placed on a little spot, and shall have to do everything according to the fancies of the King-George-men.'

Sproat told the chief that this was indeed true. The chief responded that they did not want to sell their land and that the King-George men should stay in their own country. Sproat replied that regardless of this the white men would come and all these things he talked of would come to pass: the white men would give them work, teach their children
to read and write, would buy their fish and oil, and moreover were their superiors. The chief protested that ‘we do not want the white man. He steals what we have. We wish to live as we are’. Harris (2002) omits the line ‘He steals what we have’ from this citation in his use of Sproat’s account. Why he omits this line is uncertain but his portrayal of Sproat the colonist is heroic, and the present day settler society of British Columbia is offered up as a ‘remarkable creation’. Never challenged by Harris is the notion of development, progress, and modernity.

Sproat and his men, mostly Americans apart from Sproat, discussed the ethics of forcing the Nuu-chah-nulth to sell their land under threat of loaded cannon. They considered whether they held the right to do so, and concluded that they did as the land was not being utilised to its capacity and the people did not occupy it in any civilised sense. The reserve system was soon established, and government policy, European settlement, and the beginnings of industrial logging and fishing, brought a new and intense wave of impacts through which, in Harris’s words, ‘one human geography was being superseded by another, both on the ground and in the imagination’ (C. Harris, 2002: xvii). By the time Sproat arrived in Alberni Canal to confront the Tseshahat chief, Europeans had been in contact with the peoples of Vancouver Island for eighty years.

Little commerce prospered in the decades after the Tla-o-qui-aht and the Mowachaht took the Tonquin and Boston in Nootka and Clayoquot Sounds respectively, until the dogfish industry brought about a resumption in trade in the 1850s (McMillan, 2000: 188). The importance of the trade for Nuu-chah-nulth was significant. The Huu-ay-aht requested and were granted five reserve sites associated with their dogfish oil and sealing stations (Newell, 1993: 59). The oil was required for lubrication by developing lumber mills in the Northwest. It lasted as a viable Nuu-chah-nulth economic activity until the end of the nineteenth century. Drucker (1951: 45) notes that many men devoted a large part of the late spring and summer fishing for dogfish. The oil had long been a trade item amongst Nuu-chah-nulth who used the rough dried skins as a type of sandpaper for woodwork (Momook Johns, [Ahousaht]: pers. comm. 2003).

In the 1880s fur seal hunting became lucrative employment for Nuu-chah-nulth men. White schooner men contracted the men who provided their own canoe, harpoons, and guns. They were given their meals aboard the ship at a low charge and were paid from 1 to 2 dollars for skins (Drucker, 1951). Men who signed onto the sealing schooners traditionally hunted seal for food as well as furs. Chief Earl Maquinna George (1994: 33-5) of Ahousaht pointed out the importance of seals to Nuu-chah-nulth in his M.A.
Before the fur seal became a focus for the European fur trade industry, it was an important source of food for the coastal people. Our people mainly used the meat and the fine fur robes that were very warm and comfortable to wear. Like salmon, whale meat and whale blubber, the seal meat was smoked for long-term storage. The story of the fur seal has much importance; it clearly shows an example of the changes to our people’s behaviour after the arrival of Europeans. Before the arrival of the fur buyer/trader, our people used the aboriginal style of spear with a barb on the end, to go through the skin and into the body and when you pulled it back the barb locked a line into place made out of gut, wound up into a rope... When we started hunting on the schooners, following the herd, we used the canoes to hunt during the day with the same method until there was enough money to buy guns. The guns would kill the seal more quickly (1994: 33-5).

Initially, in the 1800s, the hunters went on short trips but it wasn’t long before hunters were journeying to the Bering Sea (see Drucker, 1951: 13). Many of my informants in their sixties and seventies recall older men of their family heading off for months at a time, and returning with grand stories and often wealth. In this way many Nuu-chah-nulth men, saw the world beyond the Northwest coast. They visited San Francisco and the ports of Japan and China. Many sealing captains hired Nuu-chah-nulth on a long-term basis, recruiting the same crews from the same tribes year after year. Although the $1 to $2 the sealing captains paid the men per hide was low, and they were obliged to pay for their meals while on the schooner, they could return home having made several hundred dollars, even over a thousand dollars in a good season. This was a great deal of money in the 1880s. Chief George tells of the changes brought home by Nuu-chah-nulth sealers:

This is the route that our forefathers took when they started signing on as hunters, seamen, and as cooks for 9 months of the year, stopping into some of the ports that were close to the seal herd. In California, they went into San Francisco and went ashore and shopped in the big city for clothing,
rum, whiskey, cutlery, teapots, kettles, cooking pots and anything that was of value, because the hunters were very well off. Some of the hunters made big money selling their seals to the captain of the ship, who was the agent for the company to pay off the hunter all through the hunting trip. Part of the changes to our relationship with the seals came from the change in the hunt. That hunt resulted in the depletion of seals on our coast. It also depleted our traditional hunters, due to their participation in the commercial hunt. Eventually, the smaller seal populations led to conservation measures in the form of an international treaty. The treaty was between the Americans, Russians, Japanese and British on behalf of Canada, made without any reference to the needs of roles of Nuu-chah-nulth people (1994: 33-5).

Nuu-chah-nulth participation in commercial hunting and the international economy meant the absence of hunters, in this case Ahousaht, from home. Hunters’ engagement in the cash economy for long periods depleted the cache of subsistence skills available to village communities as a whole, thus affecting the local economy. Many of the better hunters did provide for their families while away, through the cash rather than subsistence economy. Sealing captains would establish credit at the local trading posts for the hunters’ families while they were at sea (by the 1880s there was a store at Clayoquot) (Drucker, 1951: 13). On their return hunters brought stories of a wider world and the trappings of new material wealth, including many practical items - kettles, cooking pots, teapots - which could not be found in Nuu-chah-nulth material culture at the time. Like the guns and ammunition brought back by hunters, they transformed everyday technology and livelihood. These items, like the Nuu-chah-nulth accumulations of iron kettles, guns, and knives during the fur period, greatly aided in the taking of animals for food and in their preservation.

As with the sea otter trade, depletion of stocks saw the industry move further north. An Imperial Russian navigator discovered migrating seals making their way though the passes of the Aleutian Islands and this led to the exploitation of the northern breeding grounds. In the Aleutians, albeit to a lesser extent than on the Pacific coast and Japan, Nuu-chah-nulth hunters continued to play their part in the global economy. Ahousaht elder, Momook, shared with me stories of his father’s journey as a hunter on a sealing schooner bound for the Aleutian Islands. The Russian government used forced Aleut labour to provide them with a steady supply of seal pelts for commercial sale. His father met with Aleut people who were clothed in furs, living in huts underground, and
surviving very simply in the desolate climactic conditions of far northern Alaska. Momook told me his father was fascinated to meet a people that seemed to be living largely “as they were before the white man came”. His father sang Ahousaht family songs to the people he met, and they sang for him in return while exchanging gifts. Even without language, he felt very close to the Aleut people he met. They were like family. The Aleutian Islands became the main source of sealskin for the world, before near extinction led to a world ban on sealing in 1911. Presently, only a few hunters go out for seal, and then usually just for the observation of tradition at a potlatch, in order to provide a ‘chiefly’ food for hereditary chiefs, both local and visiting. Offering seal meat reaffirms tradition and shows visiting First Nations that one is as observant of protocol as one can be in modern times. Few people eat it or have an interest in doing so.

The whale is at the core of Nuu-chah-nulth political and cosmological thought. They could, as Harkin observes, ‘stave off starvation of entire villages, but could also bring death...whales were feared for their death bringing powers nearly as much as they were appreciated for their life-giving substance. The position of the chief is precisely analogous. This is the basis for their identification’ (1998: 4). Whale meat, blubber, and oil helped the Nuu-chah-nulth through the harsh winters of the coast.

It was the chief and his wife, who performed the rituals and prayed at the shrines dedicated to the whale. The chief was thereby wholly responsible for the outcome of the hunt, and for the protection of the entire territory and his people who relied upon him for their survival. The exclusive ownership of the whaling medicine rituals was the most important power held by a chief. The rituals represent physical and moral purity, ensuring a successful whale hunt, and are a sign of chiefly legitimacy (E. Arima, 1983: 40-1; Drucker, 1951: 169-70). Tom Mexsis Happynook (Huu-ay-aht, southern region Nuu-chah-nulth), a member of a hereditary whaling family, and a whaling chief:

It called for very, very rigorous spiritual rituals and celibacy. You started on the top of the mountain and worked you’re way down to a cave and this was our family’s history - a cave on the ocean. Nine months in conjunction with the moon - very rigorous spiritual and physical training, fasting, bathing, and praying. And that was to make connection with the whale to show the spirit of the whale that you were being honourable in asking him to provide for the community and that you knew where you were going to meet up. Depending on where you met that day or how far off shore it was if you were way off shore you didn’t dispatch the animal, you wounded it, cut off
its back flukes, tied the canoes up beside it using the sealskin flukes and we would make it swim for the village and we would give it direction by poking it in the eye with our sharp yew wood paddles. We invented that so that it couldn’t dive, and sound, and hurt us and potentially kill us. And for days we would have this animal alive if we were thirty or forty miles off shore, swimming us back to the bay. I don’t know if you’ve seen it but I did a paper about our family’s traditional whaling equipment that we used. It tells as much as I can tell because our secrets are for our family. That’s what made us important in our government structure. That’s as much as I can share. And I had a huge debate, internal debate, about what I should share because I was taught that all of this stuff was extremely sacred and it was for you only. I can hear my grandfather telling me these things. But I thought I needed to express in general terms what this means to us and why it’s so important to us. For example, the wife of the hereditary whaling chief played a huge role. She was connected to the spirit of the whale. She had to lie on a cedar mat and face the mountain and she couldn’t move, and the canoes could be out for days, and she had to lie there without moving because she was the one who kept the whale calm. She was the one who kept the whale from going off shore. She was holding it against the mountain looking that way. Incredible stuff. Incredible stuff and I bring this forward in contemporary whaling forums and everyone looks at me like what a bunch of hogwash. To me it’s real. To me it is important. To me it is the truth (Happynook: pers.comm 2003).

The whale is the most important political symbol of the environmental movement, used by organisations such as Greenpeace whose agenda, and to large extent support, is dependent on decisive actions against whaling throughout the world. Tseshah woman Charlotte Cote (2002) has outlined efforts to resume whaling traditions by the Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah and their importance, actual and ceremonial, for cultural identity. Erikson (1999) argues that Makah efforts to resume whaling are leading some environmentalists to question the cultural legitimacy of the Makah, as well as that of other Indigenous societies. For example, limited quotas exist in the Arctic north of Canada for the subsistence hunting of whales. The Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations are still in treaty negotiation so do not have a constitutional right to whale under Canadian law, although there has long been strong interest in re-establishing whaling practices. The
Nuu-chah-nulth have been influenced in this regard by their Makah relatives in Washington who resumed whaling in recent years. Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah were the only Northwest coast peoples to practice whaling. Until recently the Makah had a long-standing constitutional right (1855) to whale. But whaling has become increasingly politicised with First Nations and supporters drawing attention to the 'ecoimperialism' of animal rights activism. In December 2002, the Makah annual quota of five whales was overruled. The US courts determined that, while whaling was within their treaty rights, this right clashed with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), violating not only the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) but also the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The Makah have lost their annual quota of five whales. The overruling of their constitutionally protected treaty rights has been seen as an ominous legal precedent for. The decision has been seen as a setback for Canadian First Nations a set back for the Makah and has widened the rift between environmentalists and the pro-whaling members of Nuu-chah-nulth nations. There is however much division amongst Nuu-chah-nulth themselves over whaling but this is not a source of conflict between Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Tom Mexsis Happynook, whaling chief of the Huuay-aht, explains the conflicts in Euro-Canadian and Nuu-chah-nulth cosmology with regard to the ethics of modern day whaling.

The fact of the matter is that Japan and Norway are sixth and seventh out of the nations for taking whales. The first is the Faro Islands, the second is Greenland, and the third is Canada. We take the third most whales per year in the world. Japan are way down there. The politics behind it, as the founding chairman [Happynook is] of the World Council of Whalers, is that the politics behind it is the Second World War. The racism towards the Japanese is still front and centre. And in fact when we held our 2000 conference and general assembly in Nelson, New Zealand. Some TV interviews took place and a New Zealand interviewer said to the Japanese “If you would stop whaling we wouldn’t hold WWII against you”. He said that on national television! That is the underlying issue because the Japanese waged war in the forties. They are still being punished for that in terms of their ability to access their traditional food. If you go to Japan, and I am heading to Japan at the end of October, their whaling history is absolutely phenomenal. It goes back thousands of years. They used to use nets to catch the whales. During the depression times in England what the kids in the
schools ate was whale meat, because there was no other food around. So it’s all a political debate and the anti-whaling people bring in the emotional level and that’s fine.

The environmental movement has been here for forty years. It started in the late sixties and everything was going along good because we were focused on the goal and then the almighty dollar came into play in the late seventies, when all of a sudden these people who were spearheading this movement realised that they could solicit a whole lot of money by using these particular issues as a springboard to further their cause. So now almighty dollar came in here. The Humane Society of America, Greenpeace, all of these organisations - a protest industry - generates hundreds of millions of dollars each year from people who mostly live in the urban areas and have a disconnect from their food, from nature, from their understanding of what their role is in this world. You see huge ads from International Fund for Animal Welfare in the New York Times. A full - page ad saying, ‘We need to stop whaling’ because it is a bad thing. When in fact if you go to Chikotka in Russia it is their sea mammal hunters, which are making sure their children, and their community, aren’t dying, because with the collapse of Russia there is no electricity. There is no fuel, there is nothing out there, and they have to go back to their traditional way of life to survive, where they dig huge iceboxes into the tundra. They go down seventy feet and that’s where they store all their food in these huge caverns that they dig out right that they use to keep food for them. It is their whale hunters, their walrus hunters, their beluga hunters, the grey whale hunters, and the seal hunters that are helping them to survive. They have nothing out there. So here we have huge ads in the New York Times saying that we need to stop whaling. Well if you stop whaling you are going to kill a people. You are going to kill the Chikotka nation - the Chikotka people. They won’t be able to survive.

I have no intention of harvesting whales to extinction. If I did that my heritage is gone. I won’t allow that. My heritage as a whaling family is extremely important to me. It has been our role and responsibility for thousands and thousands of years. And the names that we have in our family
that we talk about tie us to that. Our people [pause] our hereditary people made a conscious decision in the twenties not to whale any more because they knew there was problems. But in terms of the argument [that] Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah and other Indigenous peoples who are close to urban centres don’t need to access their traditional foods is a pile of hogwash, and the reason for this is we are all dying. We are all dying from rheumatism, heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis. The list goes on and on and on. The food that we have had introduced to us is killing us (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

Debates over issues of ecological balance and management are complex. Some environmentalists feel a limited whale and seal cull could aid cultural regeneration and should be allowable, yet the majority feel killing whales is wrong on any grounds (Orton, 1995; 2000). Attitudes to environment management change fast. Media manipulation and swaying public sympathies can greatly affect Indigenous peoples’ traditions and their rights. Many pro-whaling Nuu-chah-nulth see conservationist lobbying against their rights to utilise traditional resources as a continuing repression of their ways of life (T. Happynook, 1999; 2001; S. Lucas, 1998). While Nuu-chah-nulth whaling and sealing traditions have had little if any ecological effect in comparison to industrial whaling, the trade in these resources historically had great economic importance (on trade see McMillan, 2000: 155). Nuu-chah-nulth desires to resume whaling are based on cultural rather than economic aspirations and needs, although environmentalists fear they would attempt to whale commercially. Rhetoric regarding whaling traditions has become a symbol of defiance for many Nuu-chah-nulth leaders, most of whom are hereditary as well as elected chiefs. As hereditary chiefs are those with the inherited privilege to be whaling chiefs it is often an issue of personal importance culturally. While pro-whaling Nuu-chah-nulth talk of the need for reintroducing sea mammals into their diet, few people left alive have tasted whale meat and there is little interest in it as a food in the communities.

The salmon is the central resource of the Nuu-chah-nulth people, and they think of themselves in both an economic and spiritual sense as a salmon or ‘fresh-water’ people. Ceremonies in honour of game were enacted in order to conciliate the being for having been taken, and were only performed for salmon, herring, whales, and bears. Drucker (1951: 175) found no other creatures honoured in this way by Nuu-chah-nulth. I saw Tla-o-qui-aht honouring salmon while on the coast: taking the bones and guts to the
water to ensure that the salmon are reincarnated fully formed in their home beneath the sea.

Salmon were the basis of Nuu-chah-nulth diet, economy, and trade. Used as a measurement of worth, salmon represented a monetary system amongst the Nuu-chah-nulth. Newell (1993: 28) asserts that in the past variation in supply and distribution created a system which, linked families through modes of production, sharing of resource sites, and exchange of goods. On the central coast of Vancouver Island as throughout the Northwest coast preserved salmon was, and still is to a large degree, the principal food and main source of protein. Of all varieties, dog salmon is historically the most important. Its large runs took in every sizeable stream and river, and the time of the runs in early autumn were perfect for the preparation of winter supplies (Drucker, 1951: 36). The Coho salmon, which runs at the same time, has more fat so is not as easy to cure. Sockeye salmon has always been, as now, prized for its flavour by coastal First Nations as well as by the commercial canneries, which have taken vast quantities. The spring salmon and humpback runs are too small to be of economic importance.

Historically, the local fishing industry was dominated by activity related to the harvesting and processing of wild salmon. The industrial salmon fishery dramatically changed the economic cycle of the Nuu-chah-nulth, in British Columbia dating back to the Fur Trade era of the early nineteenth century, when the Hudson Bay Company began buying salmon from First Nations people to feed its employees and for export. Salmon canning began in the early 1870s. Gillnetting was the primary salmon fishing method, which until the 1920s accounted for two-thirds of the dollar value of the entire industry. Fishing and fish processing were the lifeblood of the Clayoquot Sound economy for the first half of the twentieth century. The first cannery opened in 1895 at Kennedy River and processing facilities followed shortly in both Ucluelet and Tofino, along with buying stations in most Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

Entire families migrated to work in the canneries. Nuu-chah-nulth participation in the fishing industry, and in trade with Europeans meant that they began to travel more freely in coastal waters. In the days of the expansionist wars of the Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht in Clayoquot Sound, Drucker observed that only a large party would be able to travel in any safety. By the 1880s seasonal travel to salmon cannery plants in Victoria and on the Fraser River was a normal part of Nuu-chah-nulth economic life. Seasonality suited the social and cultural structure of the Nuu-chah-nulth who were used to an economic cycle and adapted well to the new economy. The canneries were particularly popular as they allowed for an entire family to move, work, and live together. By 1895
the British Columbia salmon fishery had become the biggest economic force in Canadian fisheries. The processing (canning) industry grew alongside it, and by the same date 22.25 million kg of salmon had been canned (Newell, 1993: 4). Nuu-chah-nulth incorporated industrial fishing and canning work into their existing system of family and seasonal activities. At this time, and well into the twentieth century, Nuu-chah-nulth labour was invaluable to the industrial fishing and processing industry, and at one time BC salmon-cannery camps relied heavily on the Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nation peoples for their skills in fishing, fish-processing, boat-building, and net-making, and for their local knowledge of navigation, fishing grounds, and fish behaviour (Newell, 1993: 206). As Kelm (1998) observes, in the thirty years between 1871 and 1901 sixty-seven canneries were established in BC at the mouths of the Fraser, Nass, and Skeena rivers on the mainland of British Columbia, as well as on the central coast of Vancouver Island. Two of these Vancouver Island canneries were in Clayoquot Sound.

Most Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nations fishermen would not buy the required licenses and regularly sold salmon to fishers on licensed vessels, which was illegal. Then as now First Nations considered the harvesting of salmon their traditional right. As so many Nuu-chah-nulth people, fishers and otherwise, said to me while on the coast, ‘the white men came here and we showed him where to fish and how to catch them, and then once we had taught them they set about pushing us out of the way’. The history of fisheries regulation policy in British Columbia testifies to this complaint.

Every year the industrial fishing industry took more fish, and both the industry and communities began to suffer shortages. From the late 1800s Nuu-chah-nulth food fisheries had depended on the minister of fisheries, yet by 1917 the chief inspector of fisheries was given the power to set the location, quota and methods of catch of First Nation people (C. Harris, 2002). These first decades of the twentieth century saw the government begin destroying Nuu-chah-nulth fishing weirs, specifying net size and catch, and ban fishing in certain areas altogether. Salmon shortages seriously affected First Nation people’s health, as well as leading to a loss of work in the industrial fishery that generated cash for other foodstuffs: shortages led to famines. When shortages began, First Nations food fisheries were targeted as the culprit. Government and industry attempts to restrict and regulate them began. In 1913 slides on the Fraser River caused by railway construction wiped out the First Nations fishery, leading to widespread famine, while the industrial fishery in the Fraser estuary remained open. By the mid-twentieth century the majority of canneries had closed down all along the coast.
Although efforts to stop First Nations food-fishing were unsuccessful, access to their primary dietary staple was severely constrained in the first half of the twentieth century. During this period regulations got tighter, and much of the non-Aboriginal public continued to attribute the shortages to the fisheries of the First Nations.

Newell (1993) shows that, as the industry developed and mechanised in the twentieth century, changes in labour supply, markets, technology, and government regulation led to First Nation peoples being largely cut out of the industry, both fishing and canning. Nevertheless, Nuu-chah-nulth communities continued to survive economically through a combined subsistence and cash/wage economy. Salmon fishing and fish processing for both home and commercial use sustained Nuu-chah-nulth families. As the fishing and canning industry transformed it began to draw less and less on the traditional methods familiar to First Nation peoples, but Nuu-chah-nulth families mastered the new technologies of fishing and processing, continuing to work within the new systems of industrial production.

At the same time Nuu-chah-nulth found their options for employment in canneries declining. On the British Columbia mainland in the early 20th century First Nation workers, once the core labour force of the processing industry, were replaced by non-Aboriginal labourers, particularly Japanese. Yet, on Vancouver Island, First Nation labour continued to be the norm, and many Tla-o-qui-aht, Ahousaht, and others on the central coast continued to rely on the canneries for employment in the cash economy. Despite fluctuations in employment due to industry changes, cash from waged work was becoming increasingly important to First Nation communities involved.

During the years of World War II First Nations women and men gained steady employment due to the expulsion of the Japanese, yet by the early fifties as the industry became further automated only one third of the labour force were First Nation people. Yet, as the processing industry looked for a wider variety of species beyond the ideal sockeye, the skill and knowledge of First Nation fishers was again valued. Subsequently as markets were found for other species of salmon such as chum, a fish which is a Nuu-chah-nulth staple for canning, fewer and fewer fish were available for preservation. First Nation people also had less time to devote to catching and preserving fish for their own winter supply. Salmon is no longer at the centre of Nuu-chah-nulth economy, transformed as it has been by participation in the cash economy. Yet the salmon remains a central food source for Nuu-chah-nulth and is shared and distributed within individual First nations and communities through a family quota of fish.
After the salmon the most important marine resource for the Nuu-chah-nulth on the central coast was the herring. A major industrial halibut fishery began in the 1880s, and historically white fishers, predominantly Norwegian-Canadians, have controlled the halibut fishery. Initially, they relied heavily on Nuu-chah-nulth assistance, yet as the profit margins grew, Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen were marginalised in a familiar pattern. Today, numbers are extremely low due to the environmental impacts of overfishing, clear-cut logging, boat traffic, and pollution. Drucker (1951: 43) observed during his fieldwork in the 1930s that the only two fish catches in which the entire population engaged were the fall salmon and herring. The herring is treated ceremonially by the Nuu-chah-nulth and, much like the salmon, is thanked for giving itself to the people and blessed and entreated to come again.

Herring schools were the first important resource to appear in spring and were taken with dip nets and herring rakes (long poles with sharp bone points on which the fish were impaled). Spring salmon fed on the herring so they soon followed behind. When herring spawn they deposit their roe on kelp or other plant material, which is still harvested on the coast by Nuu-chah-nulth, and viewed as a great delicacy. The roe is also collected on hemlock boughs pushed down under the water for that purpose. While this is still practiced on the coast, Nuu-chah-nulth talk of a significant decline in herring stocks, and pollution, the negative environmental effects of logging, over fishing and water traffic as the causes.

Most coastal Nuu-chah-nulth took halibut, especially when salmon was scarce, and constituted a favourite back-up food. The waters off the west coast of Vancouver Island and Haida Gaia (Queen Charlottes) were the best halibut grounds. Today, environmental impacts and conservation restrictions have decreased the importance of halibut. Historically in the summer, west coast Nuu-chah-nulth would move in large numbers to camps near the open sea. McMillan (2000) notes that in early spring, as stores of dried salmon and other winter provisions ran out, the Nuu-chah-nulth began their move from the ‘inside’ to the ‘outside’ territories: terms still used to differentiate between the areas within the archipelagos of Clayoquot Sound and inner waters, and the open sea. There they would take halibut as well as hunt for sea mammals such as sea otters, seals, and whales. This was an important part of what Drucker (1951) and Arima (1983) called the ‘annual round’: the economic cycle of the Nuu-chah-nulth which was until the beginning of the twentieth century the basis for their social and economic life.

While the cycle of resource hunting, fishing, and gathering was fractured by periods spent in wage labour, many of the seasonal food gathering activities continued well into
the 1960s when logging and fishing as a commercial concern drew many Nuu-chah-nulth men away from their home communities. Cliff Atleo Sr. of the Ahousaht is in his sixties and was a commercial fisherman before the Nuu-chah-nulth fleet was marginalised, along with non-Aboriginal fishermen, by massive rises in licence prices and quota sizes specified by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. These factors meant that it was no longer possible to make a living as small operators on the coast. Atleo Sr. came from a large family typical of the time, and when as a young man he remembered there were always enough natural unprocessed subsistence foods.

I was fortunate to have seen and learnt to be a fisherman. To have been part of how it used to be in that I saw the day when we were actually rich. We weren’t wealthy but we were rich. By that I mean we had fisheries all year round. We fished cod in the wintertime. We fished red snapper. We fished dogfish for their livers and we fished herring in the springtime. Before the spring was over we fished halibut and each was a bridging fishery. We trapped in the wintertime and then the salmon came along and the fall fishing came along and then the cycle repeated itself. We trapped in the wintertime and we jigged for cod, we jigged for snapper. We sustained ourselves. It wasn’t designed to catch as much as you can when the season was open but it was designed to sustain our families. I was part of a family where Mum had fifteen kids and I’m number three (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2004).

As anthropologist Rolf Knight (1996) points out, resource industries in British Columbia are characterised by seasonal or fluctuating operations. Industries such as salmon fishing and canning operate for about four to five months of the year, operating on contract labour, which like the logging industry (see further later in chapter) shifted the risk to the workers. These are patterns of employment reappearing in contemporary industrial relations in Clayoquot Sound.

Seasonality suited the social and cultural structure of the Nuu-chah-nulth who were used to an economic cycle and adapted well to the new economy. The canneries were particularly popular as they allowed for an entire family to move, work, and live together in contrast to logging which meant that the father/husband of the family was sometimes gone for months at a time, living and working at a logging camp. While women also entered the wage economy their importance in subsistence food production
increased as more men spent greater amounts of time in wage labour. Men would return periodically with supplies and money for their families, often for a potlatch or family event. Loggers’ wages, particularly during the seventies and eighties before the decline of the industry, were high, and during this time reliance on subsistence practices lessened further. These economic factors have meant it has been common for Nuu-chah-nulth children to be raised by their grandparents.

Economic diversity has been a characteristic of Nuu-chah-nulth livelihoods before contact with Europeans introduced them to a cash economy. Diversity continued after as Nuu-chah-nulth integrated new sources of wealth, including cash, into their local economies. As Wendy Russell (2004: 132) observes, ‘struggles for self-determination and self-sufficiency are significantly linked’. I would argue that they are inseparable, and that cultural systems cannot be sustained without a viable economy. The Nuu-chah-nulth have combined locally based subsistence with market-oriented production, with a degree of success since their colonisation, notwithstanding its upheavals. The present situation, however, suggests the long struggle to maintain some control of their local economy may be lost.

Licence regulations developed in the late 1970’s. The government promised to assist First Nations in the herring catch in order to compensate them for being cut out of the halibut fishery. Yet, the licences were prohibitively high, a lucrative government effort at conservation which enabled the large corporate fishing fleets to continue and the small fishing boat team to be cut out of the market. It became virtually impossible for anyone to enter the fishing industry, especially young First Nation men who had been brought up by their fathers and grandfathers to become fishermen. The Nuu-chah-nulth whose traditional economies and cultures are based on ocean resources were particularly affected. Increasingly stringent legislation targeting First Nation usage led George Manuel, president of the Union of British Columbia Chiefs in 1978, to declare the Department of Fisheries (now Fisheries and Oceans or DFO) ‘Enemy No.1’ of British Columbia’s First Nations (Newell, 1993). Few commercial fishing vessels (estimated to be less than 50) remain operating in the region and fish for only part of each season. Only a small percentage of these are Nuu-chah-nulth owned and operated. Without access to the few lucrative fisheries that remain for halibut, black cod, and herring, the small boat fleet the Nuu-chah-nulth and other Northwest Coast First Nation people have been squeezed out of the industry.

Newell (1993: 182) writes that in the accounts of the economic cycle by Charles Moser, a Roman Catholic missionary stationed at Opitsat with the Tla-o-qui-aht in April
1902, Moser wrote that all the Tla-o-qui-aht who had not gone out seal hunting went fishing for halibut and cod in their canoes, catching 847. On 16 May Moser saw six canoes head out whale hunting but with no luck. In the summer most left to work at the salmon canneries, and then in late September or early October they went off to Kennedy Lake to put up their supply of smoked salmon. The women would preserve halibut through smoking or drying the firm white flesh.

As anthropologist Rolf Knight (1996) points out, resource industries in British Columbia are characterised by seasonal or fluctuating operations. Industries such as salmon fishing and canning operate for about four to five months of the year, operating on contract labour, which like the logging industry (see further later in chapter) shifted the risk to the workers. These are patterns of employment reappearing in contemporary industrial relations in Clayoquot Sound. Licence regulations marginalising First Nation fishermen developed in the late 1970's. As Newell (1993: 180) explains, in the 1970s halibut came under licence-limitations and no First Nations met the requirements for a license. The government promised to assist First Nations in the herring catch in order to compensate them for being cut out of the halibut fishery. Yet, the licences were prohibitively high, a lucrative government effort at conservation which enabled the large corporate fishing fleets to continue and the small fishing boat team to be cut out of the market. It became virtually impossible for anyone to enter the fishing industry, especially young First Nation men who had been brought up by their fathers and grandfathers to become fishermen. The Nuu-chah-nulth whose traditional economies and cultures are based on ocean resources were particularly affected.

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While First Nations retain their connection to a transformed yet still relevant traditional salmon based economy, they are part of the global economy and affected by its fluctuations. The closing in 1983 of BC Packer’s large Tofino fish-processing plant cut out an important and nearby source of cash wages for First Nations in Clayoquot
Sound. The second to last salmon processing plant, North Sea Products closed down in 2005. North Sea was proud to process wild rather than farmed salmon but overheads, a decline in fish stocks, and the brief catch openings allocated by government restrictions made it impossible to operate. The one remaining processing plant in Tofino processes high volumes of farmed salmon. Like logging, the fishing industry has become an exploiter of local resources without any local benefits and negative social and environmental impacts.

By the late 1990s over 80 different species of fish, shellfish and aquatic plants were being harvested commercially in BC. The decline of fish stocks continues to affect coastal communities negatively. Regardless of the fluctuations of the commercial fishing industry, food fishing remains a core element of First Nations communities’ survival and health. Most people have a large freezer to store their allotted number of salmon (per individual and family) granted by the community food fish. In recent decades since the number of local fishermen with boats has dropped to only a few, and people can not afford to do their own fishing, each First Nation organises a catch every year to ensure each family has a supply of salmon. Many people still have smoke houses for smoking the salmon they receive, as well as canning and jarring their fish for the winter. The few who do have access to a boat and fishing equipment will also supplement this amount allocated by the First Nation, by providing fish now and then for their relatives.

Sharing networks struggle to ensure that all members of First Nations get their share of fish, even if they are away from ‘home’ living in urban areas. There are conflicts within First Nations over fair distribution and accusations of nepotism levelled at families with political and economic power. Yet, regardless of internal conflicts and the marginalisation of Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen and their communities, Nuu-chah-nulth leader’s claims are consistent. As Newell notes ‘the historic record is clear: Indians want to maintain their precontact position as the people with the first right to use the marine resources in their territories. They have been willing usually to share their fish and other resources in their aboriginal territories but not to surrender all control over management and use of them. They recognise that their own fate is tied to the fate of those resources’ (1993: 210).

In the case of the Nuu-chah-nulth their communities are as reliant on fishing as the James Bay Cree (see Feit 2004 and Russell 2004) are on hunting, and this economic pursuit, like Cree hunting, rides the ups and downs of the wider economy, sometimes integrated and sometimes marginalised by the practical and moral fluctuations of the
market. Whereas the Nuu-chah-nulth had a large percentage of successful fishermen through Cree, Nuu-chah-nulth, and most contemporary Indigenous peoples are today engaged in a ‘mixed’ and ‘diverse’ economy. Dr Don Hall, Fisheries Biologist for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council outlines some of the changes that have left Nuu-chah-nulth cut out of commercial fisheries.

I do hear from Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen a lot, “Look, we’re getting older, our kids aren’t interested because they see the difficulties and how hard it is in increasing profits to make a living”. So basically Nuu-chah-nulth are dying out as commercial fishermen because nobody young sees it as a viable career path or opportunity. Now that’s a generalisation, there are a few, but not many. I would make that observation over the eleven years I’ve been here. I’ve seen it decline in Nuu-chah-nulth commercial activity. Now, that spills over into Nuu-chah-nulth food harvesting because I guess, way before my time, but people describe it as “not that long ago”, in the fifties and sixties, all families had a canoe, there on the beach, in Ahousaht, everybody would go out fishing, the kids would go out in the summer. The fathers would go out and there would be a lot of commercial fishing activity taking place. There’s always been a lesser distinction in Nuu-chah-nulth mind between what’s commercial fishing and what’s home use fishing. You know, “yeah we’re going to catch and sell fish but my families hungry, a potlatch is coming up, a wedding, we’re going to take fish for our home use. Our auntie doesn’t have many fish, or their house burnt down”. There are all these family-social interactions that take place too. In the last eight years or less, since the Nuu-chah-nulth fleet has taken another whole hit in terms of viable commercial fishermen. You’ve got less, way less, activity on the water, first off there aren’t canoes, families don’t have canoes on the beach anymore, and then the transition was: Everybody had access maybe forty years ago, and those that didn’t have access were provided for by community. Then the ‘everybody had access’ part dropped off but you still had a pretty strong commercial fleet and they provided the void of people providing food for their families. And now you are really at the point where your have twenty/thirty/forty active commercial fishermen within the whole Nuu-chah-nulth area, and then you’ve got a few guys that go out and put around and can still afford to run a boat, gas and maintenance, but you have
lost, to me, the core level of access that they needed to have a commercial fleet that could also do the home use food fishing as well. There are rules against that to [mixing of commercial and domestic activity when the fish boats went out] because the DFO doesn’t like to see them mixing their commercial activity with their food fishing (Hall, pers.comm: 2003).

Herring roe is still collected from hemlock boughs tied under water done in some communities such as the Ahousaht village of Maagtusiis, but the amounts gained are considerably smaller these days, as over-fishing has largely decimated the herring. The introduction of the industrial herring-roe fishery in the 1970’s, as well as a resurgence in the small but lucrative herring roe-on-kelp fishery has allowed a few individuals a livelihood. The herring roe market is Japan. Due to the lucrative nature of the resource, Newell observes, the provincial government restricted the First Nation food-fishing limit to one pail per household of spawn. Today, First Nation people who own roe-on-kelp licenses are also prohibited from using any of the products of their spawning ponds at home (1993: 192). I was fed roe on kelp on many occasions, especially at potlatches and feasts, yet it was often frozen rather than fresh as it is no longer a reliable resource. Many of the elders would complain about this saying that ‘it is not like the old days’, as they would about the manner of preparation of many food items they were fed at potlatches. Regardless of the change, people still see it as a treat to be savoured, and very nutritious, but it is increasingly difficult to get children and young adults to eat such traditional foods.

Crab traps can be seen throughout the waters of Clayoquot Sound and much of the west coast of Vancouver Island. These traps are only legally for home use however, and in 1991 by Newell’s (1993) account not one crab licence was issued to a First Nation or First Nations individual out of 222 issued. Presently it is common in Clayoquot Sound for Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadian fishers to sabotage each other’s crab traps. The Nuu-chah-nulth traps are for home use, the Euro-Canadians who hold licences are generally for industrial use. Licences for the local Dungeness crabs are worth up to 500 thousand dollars Canadian.

Geoduck and horseclam licences also had no First Nations holders out of 55 held in 1991, although while I was on the coast over a decade later there were a few geoduck licenses held by local First Nations, which provided employment for a handful of people. Pronounced “gooey-duck”, the name comes from the Nisqually Indian “gwe-dulk” meaning "dig-deep". You need dive licences to get geoduck and nearly zero First
Nations individuals have a dive licence, so the divers tend to be European and work for the First Nations. Divers use a directed water jet called a "stinger" which loosens the substrate around the clams and allows them to be lifted out harvest them individually. Gooseneck barnacles are harvested live for export to Spain. It is a fishery traditionally used by First Nations for income and food. The fishery was closed in 2000 by DFO for conservation concerns. This fishery is currently in discussion as to possible commercial use by First Nations. First Nations hold 237 of 333 green and purple sea urchin commercial licenses and have designated beaches for harvest that are off limits to commercial fishing activities. It is believed that the stocks need to be rested.

There have been limited openings for commercial clam digging in the last couple of years. I went out clam digging with a large part of the community at Maaqthusiis. For two nights families raked and dug into the tidal sands for manila clams. People filled sacks and an agent set up shop near the village harbour where locals could bring their clams to be weighed and receive cash. Due to the lack of employment and without the large amounts of money needed to buy fisheries licences for commercial sale people were happy to be able to access some resources and to make a little cash. Daryl Campbell is an Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian, a small group of Ahousaht men employed by the Ahousaht council to ensure sustainable resource use in their territory, as well as to liaise and negotiate with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and local aquaculture and fish farm industry over resource use (see next page). The Ahousaht Fisheries are responsible for the annual salmon food fish for the community and the allocation of a quota of fish for each family. Clam digging is one of the few commercial marine resources the Ahousaht and other Clayoquot Sound Nuu-chah-nulth are able to utilise, although it is only 'open' for a few days of the year, whereas traditional food use is year round. Campbell is pleased that his people gain a little livelihood from the clams but he is concerned about the ecological impacts on the commercial use of a resource that is an important part of the Ahousaht diet.

A classic example is this clam opening. Yes, I’m happy inside but again I also have to be concerned about the greed that might set in because they are going to wipe out all our home-use beaches we have staked aside for thirteen years. You know you might have heard it last night [when I was out digging with the Ahousaht] that there is so much clams over there that it is crowded and they’re dying. My God, I went out the first night of the opening. I observed, no, none no such thing. Number one they weren’t being honest. I
think we need to be really cautious and not believe everything we hear and talk to the people directly involved because far too often the dollar supersedes common sense. That has been the basis of the fish farm issue, and now the clamming issue (Campbell, pers.comm: 2004).

Harvesting clams and oysters is a staple of the Nuu-chah-nulth economy and diet. Clam digging has recently been the only lucrative, and accessible (low cost) harvest on the coast for Nuu-chah-nulth communities, yet both Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Guardians and the DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) are concerned about over-harvesting. Lack of stable livelihood and 80 percent unemployment in communities such as Maaqtusis means the limited clam digging season has been extremely popular with large numbers of community members taking part. This is largely due to the clam harvest having been the only real resource revenue available to local people in the last few years.

There is a fast growing aquaculture industry in Clayoquot Sound, the most controversial aspect of which is salmon fish farming. Concerned locals and environmental groups condemn fish farms for causing negative ecological affects. A common bumper sticker reads, ‘Friends don’t feed friends farmed salmon’. Atlantic salmon is farmed in waters home to Pacific breeds of salmon and fish escapes have purportedly threatened native fish stocks. Farmed fish are treated with antibiotic drugs to quell disease caused by poor hygiene due to fish being penned in close proximity.

Environmentalists and Nuu-chah-nulth share concerns regarding viral outbreaks such as Infectious Haematopoietic Necrosis (IHNN), which has infected Clayoquot Sound, passing from one fish farm to another. Pacific National Aquaculture, the major salmon farming company in the region has since closed down its processing plant in Tofino and laid off workers, many of them Nuu-chah-nulth, uncertain of whether it will reopen. The future of this industry is unstable but licences for new fish farm operations continue to be liberally granted by the provincial government. There are 23 salmon farming sites (tenures) in Clayoquot Sound. The farms are large open net cage structures immersed directly in the ocean. A typical farm may contain anywhere from 250,000 - 1,000,000 farmed salmon. Some of the environmental factors voiced as concerns by the local environmental group Friends of Clayoquot Sound are for example: the massive volume of raw sewage created by salmon farms, the lack of independent environmental impact assessment of the farms located in Clayoquot Sound, and the significant fish escapes from Pacific National Aquaculture pens due to improper operating procedures and
massive over-stocking at several farms. Escaped farmed salmon are of the Atlantic rather than Pacific species, and are thought to endanger the wild Pacific salmon stocks. According to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, escaped Atlantic salmon have been found in over 81 BC rivers and streams. A small portion of British Columbia’s rivers has been surveyed so far - meaning non-native Atlantic salmon could inhabit many more. Atlantic salmon compete with wild salmon for habitat and have been known to eat wild salmon fry and eggs. The company was fined only $115 for stocking a farm with almost one million Atlantic salmon, even though the approved stocking level was only 250,000 (Friends of Clayoquot Sound figures, www.focs.ca).

Fish farms in Clayoquot Sound are situated close to the coastline within Nuu-chah-nulth territories that are under negotiation in the treaty process. The majority of fish farm sites are near or among crucial Nuu-chah-nulth food resource sites and impact them negatively. While the industry is a widely acknowledged environmental threat it provides badly needed employment for Nuu-chah-nulth. While fish farming does not create many steady local jobs, the farms provide one of the few sources of employment in Clayoquot Sound. Daryl Campbell, Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian comments on the fish farms that have been established in Ahousaht territory.

We went through this process on fish farming. Their bluff site [site planned for fish farm by company]: we said no, our local government [Ahousaht First Nation] said no, what did the government [British Columbia] do in their brilliance? They went in there and did it anyway. Lo and behold what happened? The biggest catastrophe of fish mortalities [disease mentioned in paragraphs above, and caused by outbreaks of farmed Atlantic salmon mixing with local Pacific salmon stocks], we have pictures of that and the stench [of hundreds of thousands of rotting fish]- to demonstrate what First Nations were saying no to. You know it’s the brilliance of science, it’s got me concerned because one of our river systems the Median, the Chinook [salmon] numbers are so low now and they’ve been on a decline since the time fish farms were put up in that inlet, and they [fish farm company and British Columbia government which sold them the licence to establish themselves in Ahousaht territory] can’t tell us [Ahousaht] differently that migrating stocks do not stop in there. They do. Our people this year witnessed wild salmon that got stuck in there. I’m not saying they were [Ahousaht leadership] bought out but there have been dollars made
available, oh yeah, jobs have been made available and we negotiated a protocol agreement where we now receive royalties. Before we received nothing, and it was only when Ahousaht got radical and said no to fish farms, all of a sudden there were jobs made available and we [Ahousaht Fisheries Guardians] were directed by our chiefs to negotiate a protocol agreement and that's what we did, and its an ongoing process (Campbell, pers comm: 2003).

Both Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht engaged in protest and civil disobedience against fish farms operating in their territories before finally signing agreements on the promise of employment for their people on the fish farms. Tla-o-qui-aht (as of August 2004) has eight members employed on the farms. The chief and council of Tla-o-qui-aht have been working with a company, Creative Salmon to develop a protocol agreement, similar to the agreement between Ahousaht and Mainstream Canada Daryl Campbell talks of previously. Elected councillors made these decisions without the blessing of many in their communities. There was no community vote or referendum. These agreements with industry have angered many environmentalists in the region who see Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht as having been co-opted by industry and accepted gifts and money at the expense of the ecosystem of the Sound. One Tla-o-qui-aht council member has been employed by Creative Salmon since the agreement was signed and has been working in the industry for over a decade. Other council members expressed their concerns to me about his involvement and that of the then elected chief who has now finished his term.

While Nuu-chah-nulth have been concerned about environmental impacts they have also been working to establish their own aquaculture ventures in Clayoquot Sound. Aquaculture was seen as a possible economic alternative to the industrial salmon fishery that the Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nations were marginalised from by government and industry licensing policies. The Department of Indian Affairs created an aquaculture task force to establish pilot projects and management training, and six First Nations became involved (three salmon farms, three oyster/shellfish farms). By 1991 two of the three fish farms owned by First Nations had closed due to financial difficulties. While First Nation fish farms have not yet been successful financial ventures, other aquaculture enterprises such as oyster farming are showing good potential. Under the direction of the recently formed Nuu-chah-nulth Shellfish Development Corporation, 2003 saw the establishment of pilot shellfish sites (harvest for commercial sale). The
Tla-o-qui-aht have set up an oyster farm in Lemmens Inlet to the east of the village of Opitsat, with the help of an environmental organisation with a very social focus, Ecotrust Canada, which has better relations with First Nations than many other environmental based groups as they work to create sustainable resource livelihoods for people in marginalised regions. It is too early to ascertain the employment and revenue potential for the Tla-o-qui-aht and other First Nations, but there is high world demand for shellfish.

Shellfish farming of Pacific oysters, Blue lipped mussels, Manila clams, and Japanese scallops have now surpassed the economic revenue of the wild harvest in Clayoquot Sound. Exotic crustaceans the gooseneck barnacle and the geoduck clams are harvested for the Spanish market. Crab traps are a common sight throughout the archipelagos of Clayoquot Sound. Commercial operators who hold a licence to harvest and sell crabs own most of the traps. The Nuu-chah-nulth have traps set for their home use, particularly in the waters in front of their communities where they can check them easily, but they are not allowed to catch crab for commercial sale, and the licences are prohibitively expensive. This inequity leads people to raid and destroy each other’s traps; Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Aboriginals with or without a licence all want this resource.

The core concern of Nuu-chah-nulth in Clayoquot Sound is a lack of reliable employment coupled with critically limited commercial access to resources within their territories. Nuu-chah-nulth leaders claim this is the major cause of poverty in their communities. Cliff Atleo, Sr. of Ahousaht asserts that it has been particularly the negative impacts of marine resource licensing that has marginalised the Nuu-chah-nulth economically.

You know with first contact with our people that showed them how to catch the furs that were so valuable whether it was otters or seals, we taught them how. When the first commercial fishing started happening we taught them where to fish for them. We taught them how to catch them. Our people are the ones that taught people how to catch herring, and what did we get for it? A policy that pushed us out. No doubt about it. People would be hard pressed to convince me that what went on was not a racist act and results, because it’s really sad now that we have so little involvement. We have crab fisheries in front of Ahousaht. We take crab for ceremonies and feasts and stuff like that but not one [commercial] license belongs to our people and all
the other resources that are now exploited for value. We have so little involvement (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003).

Chief Simon Lucas of the Hesquiaht of Clayoquot Sound, north of Ahousaht, is the Coastal Co-chair for the BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, an organisation working to unite BC First Nations in a common goal of increased Aboriginal access to commercial fisheries. Lucas, like Atleo Sr, the impacts of licensing. Writing in 2003 Lucas indicates that these regulations are more strongly enforced every year.

Over the past three years our people have been badly affected by regulations, but some of us are still out there. We have one person left who has a halibut license, we have one person who is still involved in the black cod fishery, and one person left in the crab fishery. The list goes on. (C. S. Lucas, 2003: 14).

Logging has had major and far-reaching social impacts on the Nuu-chah-nulth that continue to affect them today. While the canneries provided housing, albeit of appalling condition (see Kelm, 1998) this allowed Nuu-chah-nulth families to stay together, and in fact near entire village communities often migrated together for the canning season. In contrast to the canneries, logging companies would only provide camps for the workingmen; often meaning meant the father/husband of the family was sometimes gone for months at a time. While women also entered the wage economy their importance in subsistence food production increased as more men spent greater amounts of time in wage labour. Men would return periodically with supplies and money for their families, often for a potlatch or family event. Loggers’ wages were high, particularly during the 70s and 80s before the decline of the industry, and during this time reliance on subsistence practices lessened further. These economic factors have meant it has been common for Nuu-chah-nulth children to be raised by their grandparents.

Small-scale logging was an important part of the early 1900s economy on Vancouver Island. In 1955 the British Columbia provincial government granted MacMillan Bloedel Limited (MB) a renewable Tree Farm License with exclusive rights to log in more than half of Clayoquot Sound. In 1956, logging rights in almost all the rest of Clayoquot were granted to another company, British Columbia Forest Products (now known as International Forest Products/INTERFOR). The logging industry operations vary by season, although operations in Clayoquot Sound are presently minimal. As important as
seasonal variation was fluctuation created by economic factors. As leases, contracts and
the markets shifted individual logging companies and sawmills opened and shut down,
took on workers and just as quickly laid them off. It was not unusual for sawmills to
operate at full capacity for a number of months meeting orders on hand, and then cut
back or shut down until further orders came in. Those employed in the mills took up
work long shoring the lumber, then shifted to other mills, took up a different line of
work, or remained unemployed until things started up again. Many of the primary
resource industries used contract labour. This employment pattern shifted the risk to the
workers, and is still in practice today in many extractive industries (Knight, 1996: 80).

A road built in 1959 connected the coast with the major timber-milling town of Port
Alberni. Constructed to increase the efficiency of the logging industry it also allowed
more visitors to visit the region. Ironically, considering the purpose of the road, many of
these visitors who stayed permanently became protesters against the logging industry in
Clayoquot Sound in later decades, and with considerable success. The creation of
Pacific Rim National Park in 1971 further stimulated tourism growth. By the 1960s and
70s in response to market demand and technological development logging became an
industrial activity, displacing small-scale logging businesses. The Friends of Clayoquot
Sound (FOCS), the most active local environmental organisation, was formed in the late
1970’s to oppose clear-cut logging in Clayoquot Sound.

By the 1980s strong local Nuu-chah-nulth protest began to be heard. In 1982,
Ahousaht concerns about impacts to local shellfish beds at Schooner Cove on Flores
Island (Maaqtusiis, the Ahousaht community of approximately 900 people situated on
the coast of Flores Island) led them to take forestry company MacMillan Bloedel to
court to stop them log booming (sorting of logs before delivery to timber mills) in the
area. Ahousaht contended that bark and debris hurt their herring roe fishery and
shellfish beds. The judge admitted that the Ahousaht were correct but ruled in favour of
logging company MacMillan Bloedel. From the 1980s on Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations
began to blockade to stop construction and resource exploitation by private corporations
working with the blessing of the provincial government.

As the Nuu-chah-nulth began to engage in serious political action in the 1980s
clashes between environmentalists and an allied government and industry reached a
height labelled the ‘war in the woods’ by the media. The political agendas of
environmentalists and Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations became increasingly entwined in
Clayoquot Sound. In 1984 forestry company MacMillan Bloedel engineered a plan to
log Meares Island, the source of fresh water supply for the municipality of Tofino and a
sacred area within disputed Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht territory (they receive no revenue for water taken from their territories). When loggers turned up to begin cutting they were met by Nuu-chah-nulth and non-native protesters. From this point on it was fought in the courts. While the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust website purports that logging was 'threatening the water-supply and viewscape for the District of Tofino' it was also a direct incursion upon Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht territory and rights.

Many Nuu-chah-nulth, Tofino municipal leaders, local business people, and environmental organisations voiced their protest. The Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht asserted their title to the island and declared Meares a Tribal Park in 1984. Other peoples such as the Haida have also utilised this tactic to declare their unchanging rights to territory in the face of unwelcome outside authority (Notzke, 1994: 250). The local environmental organisation Friends of Clayoquot Sound supported the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht in their efforts to halt clear-cut logging on Meares Island. Both Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht claim rights to the island. They declared the island a Tribal Park and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, beginning treaty negotiations with Canada, sought a court injunction. The Park has welcomed non-Aboriginal visitors while the Nuu-chah-nulth have continued with traditional subsistence practices, although this use is significantly constrained by outside authorities such as Parks Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

By January 1985 the British Columbia Supreme Court had, as in the case of Schooner Cove, upheld the rights of logging company MacMillan Bloedel and ordered protesters to stop interfering with logging operations. Justice Gibbs also granted the province the right to extinguish native land claims through the Terms of Confederation. In March 1985, the British Columbia Court of Appeal overturned his decision and granted Nuu-chah-nulth an injunction. This prevented MacMillan Bloedel logging Meares Island until the issue of Aboriginal title and the outcome of treaty negotiations were settled. They remain in negotiation.

In 1988 Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Aboriginal locals blockaded logging road construction in Sulphur Passage, the ecologically pristine entrance to the Megin Valley, and the largest unlogged coastal watershed left on Vancouver Island. The courts granted the injunction to the logging company. Thirty-five people were arrested, including Ahousaht Chief (Tyee – head hereditary chief) Earl Maquinna George who stated that he would not allow logging in the area. In 1989 more than 200 Ahousaht and people from Tofino gathered on a logging road in the Atleo (the Atleos are a prominent hereditary family of Ahousaht) River watershed in Ahousaht territory in an attempt to
stop the clear-cut logging of this salmon-rich stream. They were unsuccessful. In 1989
the BC Premier announced the formation of a task force to decide which areas would be
logged and which protected. This had little effect as clear-cut logging continued in areas
of Clayoquot Sound indicated as ‘pristine’ by environmentalists and Nuu-chah-nulth.
The BC government then announced a Clayoquot Sound land use decision.

Over 70 per cent of the Sound’s old growth forests were to be clear-cut. The
government then created a Scientific Panel to recommend how the region should be
logged. The BC Ombudsman declared that the Nuu-chah-nulth was not adequately
consulted regarding the land use decision. The government and central region Nuu-
chah-nulth began negotiating an Interim Measures Agreement at the treaty table. It was
with the provincial government that Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation’s placed the blame for
the infringements in their territories. As Tennant notes the province was the majority
focus of First Nation people’s resentment and the federal government received only
minor criticism (1990: 208).

The Nuu-chah-nulth court case begun in 1991 focused on the issue of competing
rights to the trees on Meares Island. In 1992 court proceedings were replaced with
negotiations towards co-management of all resources on Meares Island, rather than
simply the issue of ownership of the trees (see Notzke, 1994: 98-99). Meares Island
remains representative of power relation issues for Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations that go
far beyond environmental concerns. The plan to log Meares Island was in violation of
land claims being negotiated on the treaty table, of which Meares Island was a part.
Boundaries and issues of management continue to be disputed between Nuu-chah-nulth
First Nations and with provincial/federal governments. The Nuu-chah-nulth of
Clayoquot Sound has received significantly greater attention in the media and within
global political discourse than Nuu-chah-nulth in other areas.

Environmentalists present this as one of their great successes, overlooking the fact
that it was the injunction of the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht that brought a stop to the
logging. The protection of Meares Island gave activists a sense that the unlogged valleys
of Clayoquot could be saved. The Meares Island blockades released a rising tide of
public concern about industrial logging in Clayoquot Sound, and elsewhere in British
Columbia. Meares Island, like other high profile alliances between First Nations and
environmentalists, is characterised by a combination of comradeship and mistrust. Nuu-
chah-nulth, like many other First Nations peoples have had serious concerns about the
motivations and alliances of environmentalists. Once Meares Island had been
temporarily saved from logging by the Ahousaht First Nation’s successful injunction
against MacMillan Bloedel, environmentalists turned their attention to the next area to be saved. The Nuu-chah-nulth continued to fight for a permanent injunction and the protection of their aboriginal rights, an issue not of primary concern to environmentalists. Nuu-chah-nulth subsistence practices of hunting and fishing are often explicitly blocked by environmentalists whose primary motivation is the designation of lands as Parks.

In 1993 a season of mass protests and arrests brought Clayoquot Sound to global attention. The year saw a 3-month blockade: the largest peaceful civil disobedience action in Canadian history in which 353 people were arrested blocking a logging road. The environmental organisation Ecotrust noted in 1997 that the conflict over land use had become the focal point of life in the region for over a decade. During these times of protest ideological differences between Nuu-chah-nulth and with non-Aboriginal protestors led to a broken alliance. The Nuu-chah-nulth was fighting for control of their territory while the environmentalist agenda was driven by scientifically informed conservationist policy. While they believed the land should be utilised for subsistence, environmentalists believed it should be protected from all human resource use.

As the protests erupted Nuu-chah-nulth people found themselves sidelined in a political dispute that the civil defence of Meares Island had triggered. While many local Nuu-chah-nulth people could see that a stand had to be taken they also had considerable stake in the industrial economy. The main source of livelihood for many Nuu-chah-nulth men and their families was logging. While Meares Island became a platform by which Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations stood their ground for fair treaty negotiation and consultation, the successful result meant the loss of many jobs. Consequently, increased technology and advanced logging methods in the industry also cut workers. Local Ahousaht elder Frank August viewed the protests as representing an environmentalist agenda allied with a 'misguided' minority of Nuu-chah-nulth.

I know a lot of people will hate my guts for saying this but I’ve always thought if it wasn’t for transients coming all the way from Quebec and Montreal and them places, hitchhiking all over the place. They’d come into Tofino, B.C. and they’d decided logging was no good. So they started protesting. Shortly after they got a few of our young people involved. That’s what happened. Some guys got radical on it, some guys just said, why can’t you let the people work if they want to earn a living? Some of our people were saying that. They worked, some of the guys got to work to make a
living. But a lot of these guys that weren't working or anything just fell in with the transients, fucking caught what a Minister said to us at one time: "It's the blind leading the blind". Just went in and started joining the protesting. Well, what can we do? They cut out that logging. Logging never - for sure it did - they cleaned up quite a bit [efforts to improve environmental effects of logging practices] before I left in the last ten years I worked there I guess. When they first started protesting Mac and Blow started cleaning up their act a lot. They could of done a lot more I guess but they pulled out. Sold out to Weyerhaeuser, but it got to a point where Greenpeace and all those guys joined in. I don't think our people really had any control over it after that. They're the guys who talked to some of our people here and that's where it ends up. I can't mention any names...it's just a group that wanders around and disturbs everything. I think if the way things were going before when I was still working if the chiefs got together they probably could have arranged something to work with those guys [logging companies] who gave us those jobs as loggers. Like I say we even got one of the Kennedy family from the United States leading these guys to protest. Now we end up with nothing to do, no jobs. Our young men can't work anymore - that was a good job. Of course it's changed quite a bit because of mechanised machinery, big machinery they brought in. It was a lot different in 1963 when I first got into it. By the time I quit there was a lot of changes in the machinery, a lot faster. I guess they had to slow down a bit sometimes, but as it is today there is no jobs at all. Very, very few jobs I guess if any. A friend of mine I talked to a couple of days ago, he lives in Nanaimo, I used to work with him at Kennedy Lake [near Clayoquot Sound in Tla-o-qui-aht territory], now he has to go all the way up the mainland, straight across Port Hardy, way up there somewhere to work in logging, because there is nothing here on the island. (August, pers.comm: 2003).

Nuu-chah-nulth leaders were not against logging as much as against logging practices, and specifically at not being consulted—they receive no revenue from trees taken out of their territories. They have attempted to create a sustainable forestry industry in Clayoquot Sound, eschewing old forestry methods, while creating revenue and employment for their people. The Nuu-chah-nulth are 51 percent owners of lisaak Forest Resources Ltd, a company funded and started by the Nuu-chah-nulth Economic
Development Corporation; a Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council venture. The multinational logging company Weyerhaeuser owns the remaining 49 percent. Isaak to date has not been able to compete with the timber supplies and prices of large forestry companies elsewhere in BC who have little or no interest in sustainable logging. Isaak contends its forestry methods are sustainable and retain the biodiversity, water resources, Nuu-chah-nulth values, and the scenic beauty so valued by many locals as well as visitors and the tourism industry. Yet, these considerations make it difficult to compete economically, and mismanagement has also been a factor.

Logging activity has dropped markedly in recent years since the introduction of the recommendations of the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel, and the significant growth of tourism revenue in the region. Yet, these guidelines are often infringed upon by logging companies that continue to be granted forestry licences by government. Operators are expected to adhere to the ethical guidelines of the Scientific Panel in regard to sustainable forestry practices in which local Nuu-chah-nulth had considerable input. Yet, logging companies continue to ignore protection provisions and consistently lobby to move their operations into protected areas. While remaining an environmental threat the industry provides little employment for locals. Both Euro-Canadian and Nuu-chah-nulth loggers and their families have suffered from unemployment since the days of protest pushed large-scale logging out of Clayoquot Sound.

The environmental group, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, recently celebrated the ten-year anniversary of their part in halting clear-cut logging in the Sound, most famously represented by the declaration of Meares Island as a tribal park. Blockades and protests continue to periodically occur as forestry companies continue their attempt to clear-cut old growth forests in Clayoquot Sound. Ideological differences between environmentalists and Nuu-chah-nulth over human relations with the environment also continue. Tom Mexsis Happynook, Huu-ay-aht, posits differing conceptions of biodiversity as the core issue of conflict between Nuu-chah-nulth and many environmentalists and scientists. An aspect of the authority Atleo, Sr. claims for Nuu-chah-nulth is the extensive environmental knowledge gained from thousands of years (see McMillan, 2000) living in Clayoquot Sound.

Political conflict continues to define relations between the logging industry, local environmental organisations and First Nations (see Satterfield, 2003). As a result of the protests of local First Nations and Friends of Clayoquot Sound (FOCS), many national and international environmental organisations have become interested in Clayoquot Sound: Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Sea Shepherd, Sierra Club, Ecotrust,
Conservation International, Nature Conservancy, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and others. The organisations have utilised different political methods. Some have advocated direct action, while others have relied on legal and media campaigns in an effort to protect ecological habitat. Most have been willing to work towards establishing sustainable economic development initiatives in the area, recognising the loss of employment to local people who work in extractive industries.

In the political milieu of Tofino and Clayoquot Sound there are significant cultural and class conflicts among Euro-Canadians as well between Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadians. In the 1970s the majority of newcomers that flowed into Tofino were largely a university educated urban middle-class, which distinguished them from residents who lived in the area in order to work in the logging and fishing industries. Many of these now established residents have come to rely on ecotourism for their livelihood and form the core of Clayoquot Sound’s environmentalist community that spearheaded the mass protests of 1993.

The international attention brought about by the “war in the woods” distinctly altered the economic status quo of the region. Logging companies have struggled to retain their economic access to the region against the political successes of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations and environmental groups by funding volunteer organisations. These groups are essentially a Canadian adaptation of the American ‘Wise Use’ movement’s strategies and politics. An ideology of human use as an ethical priority and economic necessity rather than that of environmental conservation is the key drive of the movement’s philosophy.

A North America conception, its ideology is that of ‘the defence of free enterprise’ and a ‘working environment’. This paradigm is based on the idea that unlimited economic growth is possible and beneficial, and that environmental problems can be solved by technology and tempered by the market economy. In contrast the environmental movement contends that growth must be limited, science and technology must be constrained, and that natural resources are finite. To those whose livelihood depends on a ‘working forest’ in Clayoquot Sound the environmentalists seem to be winning. Sustainable ecological management practices for forest and marine resources are now established in Clayoquot Sound through an uneasy Nuu-chah-nulth and environmentalist alliance, and the establishment of the Pacific Rim National Park and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The Wise Use movement, as it has come to be known, portrays itself as a grassroots rather than industry motivated movement. Yet, its financing and leadership comes from
the mining and logging industries. Due to this corporate funding environmentalists dismiss the groups as an exercise in spin doctoring. The movement's political ties to the American Freedom Coalition, the political arm of the Unification Church that has supported right-wing regimes in Central and South America, makes its claims to be a grass roots organisation appear dubious.

In the case of Clayoquot Sound its members are forestry workers most likely unaware or ambivalent to the political connections of the movement, who are concerned about the they're loss of livelihood, and the welfare of rural communities long reliant on extractive industry for survival. Many feel certain that the successes of environmentalists in protecting old-growth forests and reforming forest management directly targeted their jobs.

The primarily working class logging town of Ucluelet and the significantly middle-class college educated conservationist residents of Tofino became increasingly polarised as protest strengthened and logging jobs disappeared. During the early nineties and the 'war in the woods' and the mass arrest of 93 forestry funded groups such as the BC Forest Alliance and Share BC, following the 'Wise Use' model outlined previously, used publicity to lead workers into antagonistic scenarios with protestors, telling them that they were the cause of their threatened jobs. In Clayoquot Sound and other areas of British Columbia, there were cases of management flying to logging camps by helicopter and delivering large slabs of beer while giving a rousing speech about the protestors who were cut to make their families starve. The results were often violent. A number of protestors camps and blockades were terrorised at night and there were allegations of rape and assault in a couple of cases.

The environmental movement, led by Greenpeace who financially supported and orchestrated a protest of over ten thousand people in large part through their own publicity, was also to blame for the situation by targeting workers rather than the corporate sector of the forestry industry, the managerial class that largely escaped scrutiny.

The situation was far more complex than threats from the environmental movement, and protestors, like First Nations, were a convenient scapgoat for changes in the industry brought about by managerial decisions. Workers were devastated by job losses, while production was increasing. Figures showed that it was primarily profit margin targets and increased technological efficiency that was putting loggers and mill workers out of jobs. These changes began to take place at the beginning of the 80s as production
increased and workers in logging and mills were laid off, this over a decade before the mass arrests and media frenzy of 1993 (Harter, 2004).

Yet changes to a truly sustainable forest management that addresses the human component: the economic and social needs of struggling rural communities who have lost their livelihood, may diminish the appeal of anti-environmentalist and anti-First Nations groups. There is a growing realisation among environmentalists that people and their economic livelihood must be considered and respected alongside their desire for environmental conservation. Wise Use groups struggle against the vision of city politicians and environmentalists for ‘wilderness’ areas set aside for urban visitors to engage in recreational activities such as hiking and kayaking. A view also held by First Nations and yet, due to majority Euro-Canadian belief in the extinguishment of Aboriginal rights and title, this alliance is on political ground as unsettled as that of the First Nation/environmentalist alliance.

First Nations in Canada and Native Americans are often the political target of Wise Use groups due to land claims being seen as threatening the livelihood of non-Aboriginals, politically those working the rural sectors of the resource industry. Yet, as Furniss (1999: 104) asserts, drawing on her fieldwork among the logging community of Williams Lake in interior BC, Euro-Canadian attitudes to Aboriginal Canadians are not homogenous: some are openly racist; some oppose treaties and rights and call for assimilation; some who are ambivalent about European and Aboriginal Canadian relations; and there are those who are supportive of land claims and respect and revere First Nations cultures and traditions. This diversity of opinion can certainly be found in Clayoquot Sound and there is no shortage of Euro-Canadians ready to expound on their conception of the supposed cultural and genetic inferiorities and predispositions of Nuu-chah-nulth people. Regardless of ethnic conflict many Nuu-chah-nulth who lost their jobs agree with those living in Clayoquot Sound who call for greater consideration of the welfare of local working people rather than with the conservation focus of the environmental movement and Parks Canada.

Yet, Nuu-chah-nulth loggers, as well as cannery and timber-mill workers, have had little connection with a wider workers movement and unionism. Indeed, the relationship between First Nation people and unionism has been problematic. First Nation people's relationships with wage labour has been unstable, as they have dealt with a market economy in which the welfare of workers was commonly the last consideration. The fact that the majority of First Nations workers have been employed in the resource industries has exacerbated this instability. As resources could be quickly depleted,
companies often moved on. First Nations people, unlike many non-Aboriginals did not. A deep sense of place led them to find themselves in conflict with an ‘economic geography they could not control’ (2002: 287). Even if a contract for employment lasted years rather than months First Nation people would nearly always go back to their home territories. This did not suit the settled job security required and desired by trade unions, although as Rolf Knight observes this does not imply that First Nation people did not engage in class action. Unemployed Nuu-chah-nulth loggers in their fifties and sixties told me that the unions were a “pain in the ass, didn’t care about Indians, and we got better pay by not being a member of a union anyway. If they fired us we just went down to the next logging camp, there was that much work in those days [1970/80s]”.

The last twenty years has brought an unprecedented growth in world trade, yet concurrent socio-economic inequality has increased in most of the industrial countries of Western Europe and North America (Storper, 2001: 89). As Paul Farmer (2003: 243) asserts, the spread of a global economy is connected to, ‘an evolving human rights irony: states become less able to help their citizens attain social and economic rights, even though they often retain their ability to violate human rights’. What Farmer (2003) calls the ‘pathologies of power’ perpetuate a neoliberal ideology, which erases history and denies any causal relationship between economic policy and human inequality.

The Pacific Rim National Park authority now surrounds the Tla-o-qui-aht community of Esowista. The first federal-provincial agreement for the Pacific Rim National Park was signed in 1970 and re-negotiated in 1987. It was established subject to the comprehensive treaty claim of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. A variety of legislative, regulatory and management mechanisms are in place to ensure the protection and conservation of landscapes, ecosystems and biodiversity within the borders of the park. This includes federal legislation and various Acts that impose authority over resource use.

The Pacific Rim Park runs along the southwestern coast of Vancouver Island. Islands, beaches and open ocean divide into three geographically distinct park units: Long Beach (in Tla-o-qui-aht territory), Broken Group Islands (a group of about 100 islands in Barkley Sound which is in Tseshaht territory, the area is their land of creation), and the challenging 72-kilometre West Coast Trail, a tourism hiking venture (which starts in Huu-ay-aht territory where they run a campground for hikers and offer Huu-ay-aht guides). The park comprises a total area of 500 square kilometres stretching 125 kilometres from Tofino in the north to Port Renfrew in the south. To the east of the park is the Vancouver Island Range, to the west, the Pacific Ocean.
The Long Beach unit boundary of the park surrounds the seven-hectare Tla-o-qui-aht reserve Esowista. At the time of the creation of the park Esowista was going through a period of transformation from a seasonal fishing camp to a permanent residential community. At that time the Government of Canada recognised that a larger site would eventually be required to meet the needs of Tla-o-qui-aht living in the village. Over the years population growth strained the capacity of Esowista and problems with water quality and sewage disposal emerged. Some Esowista residents blockaded the main road into Tofino that passes their community in order to highlight the poor water quality which was causing sickness and various health ailments amongst the community, particularly that of children and elders. The elected and hereditary Tla-o-qui-aht chiefs did not support the blockade. The leaders lived in Tofino or at Opitsat on Meares Island, both areas with an excellent water supply. Expensive tourist resorts on either side of Esowista also get their water piped directly from the springs of Meares Island. Tla-o-qui-aht involved in the protests managed to get the attention of local authorities and the water supply now comes from the nearby Tofino Airport.

The Tla-o-qui-aht community of Esowista at Long Beach has recently begun extensions to its reserve in order to provide much needed housing for a heavily overcrowded and fast growing community, as well as for those Tla-o-qui-aht who wish to return home from urban centres but have been unable to do so due to the housing and land shortage. Tla-o-qui-aht leadership have for many years attempted to reclaim land taken by the Pacific Rim National Park.

As a result of negotiations between Tla-o-qui-aht, Parks Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Canada National Parks Act will be amended to remove, or return from the Tla-o-qui-aht perspective, 86.4 hectares of land from Pacific Rim National Park Reserve to expand the Esowista Indian Reserve. The return of this land will to some degree address chronic overcrowding in Esowista, and hopefully aid infrastructure improvements that will remedy sewage disposal and water quality concerns, as well as create communal spaces for young Tla-o-qui-aht, sorely needed in a community in which young people are significantly disaffected (see Ch.6). Parks hope to support the development of a model community that will exist in harmony with the National Park Reserve.

This was a major achievement in First Nations relations with Parks Canada. The official priority of Parks Canada is what they term the 'integrity of habitat'. This makes successful claim of Tla-o-qui-aht it a rare amendment to the Canada National Parks Act, helping to address the urgent need of Tla-o-qui-aht to rebuild and recreate a healthy
community. The additional land is pivotal to the success of the comprehensive community development plan which hopes to achieve a modern village centre, a large sports and recreation area and playgrounds, a community centre that will be built along the lines of a traditional longhouse, and a new council office and administration buildings.

In the consultation phase of the project Esowista residents told their leadership they desired coastal foreshore. Parks and government negotiators did not accept this land request. Many residents asserted that Tla-o-qui-aht leadership did not fight hard enough for their interests at the negotiating table. Coastal foreshore is more desirable for a people for whom seafood makes up the majority of their diet, as well as economically superior for commercial development.

In an interview with Turtle Island Native Network (March 28, 2004: www.turtleisland.org) the elected Tla-o-qui-aht Chief of the time, Moses Martin, explained some aspects of future land use – ‘One of the negotiated elements is an agreement to keep a 300 metre buffer of forest land, between the new village and the ocean, to allow access to the public to continue to use the Schooner Cove hiking trail and it will include beach access’. The land they have gained represents less than one per cent of the Pacific Rim National Park’s total land base.

Many Tla-o-qui-aht viewed the decision as one in which their subsistence needs came second to the recreational use of non-Aboriginals. A view strong in British Columbia today is the supposed wastefulness of First Nations hunters and fishermen. Conflicts with Euro-Canadian and other non-Aboriginal sports fishermen and hunters are common. The Tla-o-qui-aht argued that they have always lived at the edge of the ocean, utilising salmon, sea mammal and other marine resources of the area in a sustainable fashion. The primary objective of Parks in the agreement is ‘ecological integrity’ rather than the socioeconomic needs of Tla-o-qui-aht residents.

As Russell (2004: 132) observes, ‘struggles for self-determination and self-sufficiency are significantly linked’. I would argue that they are inseparable, and that cultural systems cannot be sustained without a viable economy. The Nuu-chah-nulth have combined locally based subsistence with market-oriented production, with a degree of success since their colonisation, not withstanding its upheavals. Some Nuu-chah-nulth people do not tend to view the present economic system as problematic, only the matter of who benefits from it. Other Nuu-chah-nulth people, some linked with the radical environmental movement, contend that there needs to be a radical restructuring of social power for First Nations to improve their standard of living and gain economic
and political autonomy. The present situation, however, suggests the long struggle to maintain some control of their local economy may be lost.
WAYS OF SEEING – CONFLICTING PERCEPTIONS OF NATURE AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

Plate 70. Tlaooark (Gisele Martin) takes visitors hiking on Meares Island in Tla-o-quii-aht territory and teaches them some Tla-o-quii-aht ecology.
I don’t know if you’ve ever spent time on the coast, through a number of seasons, let alone countless generations. But things are very liquid: you can just get lost in it. You get lost in the forest, you get lost in the ocean, you get lost in a rainstorm, a snowstorm, you get lost in a season – you get lost. It’s very liquid and moving and deeply layered spiritually. You’re captured easily. You can lose yourself in all of that power, in all of that majesty of the environment (Joe David interviewed by Duffek, 2000: 359).

Clayoquot Sound is not only an economic area of rich natural resources but also one of leisure and recreation for British Columbians, Canadians and the wider world. Clayoquot is one of those beautiful areas on the edge of the world often described as wild or wilderness by visitors, overlooking the fact that the area is one of worked livelihood in which the ecosystem is managed and transformed by human action. Both First Nations and Euro-Canadians utilise the region for its natural resources, and yet increasingly make their livelihood from offering visitors close communion with nature. While Clayoquot Sound remains a site of considerable resource extraction by way of logging (though considerably lessened than in past decades), fisheries, and aquaculture, a nature – dependent tourism or ecotourism has significantly transformed the economic and social landscape of the region. Developers’ and government visions for Clayoquot Sound often differ from the ‘life projects’ (M. Blaser, 2004) of local residents, both Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Aboriginal.

Clayoquot is on the Pacific migratory route for whales as they pass through on their way to southern waters. While whale hunting was once a crucial element of Nuu-chah-nulth economic and ceremonial life, today whale watching brings millions of tourist dollars into the region. The whale watching business was the first to discover the significant tourism potential of in the area. Seal, sea lion and bear watching boats run through much of the year. The tourist season is now lengthening into the winter months and the town of Tofino is a busy set off point of accommodation, restaurants, holistic cafes, health practitioners, surf and kayak shops, and First Nation galleries. Kayaking and hiking are extremely popular activities for those seeking the aesthetic experiential pleasures of nature.

Clayoquot Sound has become a playground for wealthy urban elites. The region is less a working environment for extractive industry. As I pointed out earlier in Chapter 3, in the majority perception of the logging community of the neighbouring town of Ucluelet, Tofino destroyed their economy. To the majority of Tofino residents, the
halting of industrial logging has meant the saving of a beautiful ecosystem and the creation of a vibrant tourism economy. Conflict and mistrust between the two communities has persisted since the widespread protests of the eighties and nineties.

Ucluelet, once one of the wealthiest communities in British Columbia due to the forestry industry, is now one of the poorest, while Tofino has seen significant economic growth. Land in Tofino and the surrounding area is very valuable and continues to increase. The cost of living in Tofino also continues to rise, a difficult side effect of tourism for local people, both Nuu-chah-nulth and others, many of whom now drive a couple of hours north to the urban centre of Port Alberni to buy their groceries and supplies. Many loggers, both Euro-Canadian and Nuu-chah-nulth who were making up to 80,000 dollars a year in the early nineties are now unemployed. Family break-ups have been common.

While my focus is the central coast Nuu-chah-nulth people and their communities, the neoliberal economic model impacts all ‘periphery’ (in regard to both geographic and economic) regions and people that have been reliant on extractive industries for livelihood. In Clayoquot Sound pronounced divisions exist due to issues over unresolved Nuu-chah-nulth land claims, modes of employment, and cultural perceptions of human-environment relations. The region has been described as one of the most complicated political ecosystems in the world by local environmental campaigners.

Land is representative of cultural identity and a professed spiritual connection to land is a potentially powerful political tool, whether those seeking legitimacy are Euro-Canadian or Nuu-chah-nulth. As Timura observes (2001:107) ‘increasingly, landscapes and the natural resources they contain are understood as powerful, historical products of multiple and often overlapping cultural categories and contending social and economic forces’.

Analysis of cultural perceptions dependent on local environmental knowledge is central to understanding differing human adaptations to ecological habitat. Indigenous knowledge systems are often highly complex, developed over considerable periods of time, and demonstrate a profound understanding of local ecology and human-environment relations. This knowledge is not only made up of practical information, but cosmological also, threads of meaning which constitute what Nuttall (1998) labels ‘know-how’ and Ingold (2000) ‘ways of dwelling’.

In anthropological and development discourse theorists such as Sherry and Myers (2002) have favoured TEK (traditional environmental or ecological knowledge) and TEKMS (traditional ecological knowledge and management systems); others have
found the use of the word traditional to be an incorrect suggestion that knowledge is static (Berkes, 1992). Cliff Atleo Sr. (Ahousaht) denounces the use of ‘traditional’ to describe what he views as existing cultural practices:

Our government is described as “cultural”. We are described as “traditional” and I reject all of those because it is like they died and they didn’t die and their still here and we still practice them and therefore they are. They are not traditional. I think that there is actually a prevalence of arrogance that exists in the non-Aboriginal community: they created everything and that they are going to give us things and only give us what they’re willing. There is this arrogance that thinks that they can actually do better than nature (Atleo Sr. pers.comm: 2003).

The cultural root of this political and economically expressed tension is based not only on issues of power but in spiritual and philosophical connections to identity encapsulated in the land contested. Nuu-chah-nulth and Canadian discourse is tied, like all politics, to an ethnopoetics of history, mythology, and identity. Anthropologically informed issues such as cultural identity, the cosmology of ecological practice and the politics of cultural renewal may be perceived as elements of an ideological battle over land. Questions asked are who best understands the land, is most connected to it and best able to manage it. I argue that spirituality and religious belief are cultural modes by which ownership may be implied, as well as extensive knowledge of the local ecological habitat. Issues of identity and belonging are expressed through the ways in which people talk about their environment.

Settlers in colonial nations such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand have utilised a collective land based identity in order to consolidate and legitimise their claim to lands they have settled. Furniss (1999: 53-4) points out Hobbsnaw and Rangers’ (1983) assertion that selective historical traditions were constructed by colonial governments in the promotion of nationalism, this in order to legitimise the subjugation and colonisation of Indigenous peoples. The real power of a selective tradition can be seen when a set of unquestioned historical “truths” become accepted by the majority of members of a society, thereby shaping their treatment of the people they have colonised. One aspect of these assumptions are Euro-Canadian perceptions of the human-environment relations and ecological philosophies held by Indigenous others such as the Nuu-chah-
nulth, with whom they have been competing for the control of natural resources since settlement in Clayoquot Sound.

Cosmological factors in large part determine people’s cultural perceptions of the immediate environment/ecological system they live within. Religious life and ecology are inherently linked. Cosmological thought and belief defines much of human practice in regard to ecological philosophy and ‘management’. Anthropologists (M. Harris, 1974; Rappaport, 1979) have long emphasised the material relations between humans and their environment. More recently anthropologists (Ingold, 2000; Myers, 1987) have called for the need to give credence to the human as culture-user, and to the cosmological foundations of human-land relations. Traditional rights to resource use claimed by Nuu-chah-nulth leaders make up part of a system of reciprocal relations, not only with other humans but also with animals and plants. In Nuu-chah-nulth cosmology human beings have definite obligations that represent actual relationships. While these responsibilities, like those of hereditary chiefs towards their people, are not met as they were in the past, they are expressed in cultural rhetoric.

As Descola (1994:1) observes, there appears to be two conceptions of the natural world, ‘usually presented as mutually exclusive: the one sees nature as an animate twin of society, the other conceives it as the set of phenomena occurring outside the realm of human action. It is the signal privilege of ethnologists to tread this line’. The idea of empty or ‘uncivilised’ wilderness can be viewed as deeply enshrined in European, particularly in colonial settler societies. As Cosgrove notes, ‘the wilderness landscape is furthest removed from the city and civil life. It lies at both the beginning and the end of the cycle of nature...it is pre-social’ (1988:297). The concept of wilderness invites definition, even judgement. The strong currency of this idea leads Ingold to assert that ‘we tend to think that the only environments that still exist in a genuinely natural condition are those that remain beyond the bounds of human civilisation’ (2000: 198).

How important is cultural perspective when judging land and the subjective ‘value’ applied to it? I ask in what ways are claims made by opponents when land is contested: economically, ethnically and religiously (Gledhill, 1994). I argue that a cultural group’s cosmology affects political beliefs towards assumed rights to land. Kapferer (1997) addresses the relation between cosmology and environment: ‘Cosmological notions concerning the creative and degenerative forces affecting human existence in the universe are critical for comprehending the way human beings orient themselves within their environments. People form and attach significance to features connected with their social existence and physical environment’ (1997: 86). The Nuu-chah-nulth utilise their
environment for both economic and spiritual needs. Throughout their territories are sacred places and resource sites known only to the families who use them.

Ingold (2000) proposes some appropriate base understandings of the concept of environment. Firstly, it should not be confused with the concept of nature. The difference is in perspective: ‘between seeing ourselves as beings within a world and as beings without it’, proposing that ‘the world can exist as nature only for a being that does not belong there, and that can look upon it, in the matter of the detached scientist, from such a safe distance that it is easy to connive in the illusion that it is unaffected by his presence’ (2000: 20). Chief Tom Mexusis Happynook [Huu-ay-aht] (1999; 2001) believes that many environmentalists and scientists view Nuu-chah-nulth cultural philosophies of environmental management within an inappropriate and unrealistic framework.

In the Nuu-chah-nulth language "Hishuk Tsawalk“, everything is one; everything is connected. This longstanding human relationship with our natural world is now under attack by those who wish to see us "evolve", to live in a state of urban separateness from our natural world. Those who would separate us from nature are the so-called "environmentalists" or "protest industry" (T Happynook, 2001: 2).

The conservation-based ethic placing humans outside nature is ecocentric. Resentment towards environmentalist philosophies is common among Nuu-chah-nulth people. Happynook’s contention is a reaction to a conservationist agenda that does not consider human livelihood. Milton asserts, “spokespeople for the environmentalist movement have transformed Indian respect for the land...into a cult-like vision of new age ‘spirituality’”, and notes that Aboriginal emphasis on the good of the group over the individual is transformed into a completely different set of meanings, or as Milton proposes, the ‘modern poverty of the First Nations has little to do with white suburban antagonism to industrialisation’ (1996: 49).

Environmental groups have utilised the authenticity of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations claims to rights and title of territories in order to further political agendas, often misrepresenting Nuu-chah-nulth philosophies and concerns. Indigenous people in Canada come into conflict with environmental NGOs who co-opt Indigenous concerns in order to further agendas of conservation and wildlife management. Utilising a
spiritual New Ageism and anti-industrialism they render First Nation people iconic symbols of oneness with nature.

The environmental movement has capitalised on the romantic perception of Nuu-chah-nulth as morally impeccable ‘nature’s stewards’, as have Nuu-chah-nulth in order to further their political agendas. In contrast to the view of poor/rural/Indigenous people as despilers of the land, environmental concerns within industrialised Western societies lead some political proponents to look to First Nations as holders of ecological balance and conservation. While Nuu-chah-nulth share and sometimes idealise this traditional view of their culture as one of environmental and social harmony, economic and social realities make it difficult to uphold in everyday life, and this is accepted, at least by young Nuu-chah-nulth if not their elders (see Ch. 6), as an aspect of modern life. The ideology of western liberalism may then demand that claimed cultural identities are legitimised according to dominant measures and values. At issue are differing philosophies towards human relationships with the environment, as well as economic competition over natural resources. Government agencies such as Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Police, and the Coast Guard enforce authority over human resource use in Clayoquot Sound.

Nuu-chah-nulth people often express frustration concerning environmentalist views of ‘Aboriginal ecology’. In the late 1960s the First Nation peoples of Canada and the United States came to be seen as ‘natural’ conservationists. As Calvin Martin (1978: 157) observes, in the fervour and growth of the environmental movement of the time, and steeped in an intellectual tradition of the Transcendentalists (such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and John Muir), the vanishing, savage, or drunken ‘Indian’ began to be seen in fresh constructs in the North American European mind. There were two common perceptions often held: 1) First Nation peoples are holistic, inherent, and harmonious environmentalists who hold nature in reverence and 2) when they appear to be as fallible as non-natives they are deemed to be a people who have lost their way and become corrupted by industrial values.

Ideological assumptions regarding Nuu-chah-nulth political ecology have been adopted to condemn First Nation councils for attempting to establish economic self-sufficiency through the utilisation of natural resource extraction. Environmentalists have sought to further political agendas by identifying themselves ideologically with the authenticity of Nuu-chah-nulth land claims and long connection to land, yet without supporting local peoples’ needs and concerns regarding access to resources.
Indigenous peoples like the Nuu-chah-nulth who remain significantly dependent on their surrounding ecosystem for survival are blamed for environmental crisis in their regions. The argument offered is that ‘poverty is the largest pollutant’, and that marginalised (a term often used to indicate rural/Indigenous peoples) groups are desperate enough to forsake their environmental future in order to survive in the present. This epistemology is based on a ‘tragedy of the commons’ paradigm, but is in actuality Parajuli (2004) claims, the ‘tragedy of the commoner’s’, whose livelihood is denied and discarded by the market. Some environmentalists use this paradigm to dissuade those who would support economic development undertaken by Indigenous peoples. Nuu-chah-nulth who have entered into partnership with forestry companies to log sections of their territories have faced environmentalist opposition, although in Clayoquot Sound there has been some environmental support of small sustainable operations.

Environmental management decisions and processes can have significantly detrimental affects on communities. Any decision for action related to existing or potential environmental consequences of human activity has an impact, and is intended to, but the nature and severity of that impact is uneven and dependent on local social, economic, and cultural conditions. Hence, it is important to understand the social, cultural, and economic context within which environmental decisions are made, and ways in which local community-based factors interact with the execution of decisions often made elsewhere. Local awareness becomes more critical as we examine the consequences of environmental decision-making on a global scale.

In 2000, 350,000 hectares of Clayoquot Sound lands and waters were designated a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Biosphere Reserve, part of an international network in which exchanges of information, experience and personnel promote the conservation of ecosystems. The biosphere is the earth’s zone of air, soil, and water that is capable of supporting life, reaching from about 10 km into the atmosphere to the ocean floor. Put most simply, the biosphere is the area of Earth where all life occurs. Ideally, biosphere reserves hold a protected core of relatively undisturbed land serving as a reference by which scientists may monitor the effects of human use (Notzke, 1994). UNESCO claims it’s reserves value local human people’s livelihood in equal measure with conservation.

Cayoquot Sound Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations did not acknowledge the reserve as legitimate, due to the refusal of UNESCO to support the Tla-o-qui-aht claim to lands utilised as the Tofino Airport. Tla-o-qui-aht had loaned the land to the federal government during World War II on the condition that it was returned. Rather than
return the land to the Tla-o-qui-aht, Transport Canada chose to sign the lands over to the regional district of Tofino/Ucluelet, despite ongoing treaty negotiations with the Tla-o-qui-aht people.

On May 5, 2000, more than 100 Tla-o-qui-aht members and their supporters gathered at the entrance of their Esowista community to march protesting the transfer of the Tofino Airport lands to the control of the municipal district. Tla-o-qui-aht leaders chose May 5 for the protest; the day the then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien arrived in Tofino to join the UNESCO designation celebrations. The airport has proven economically crucial for a growing tourist region. The Biosphere Reserve designation now acknowledges Aboriginal rights and title. This was a specific requirement of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations of Clayoquot Sound in order for them to support designation of the reserve.

For Nuu-chah-nulth UNESCO is viewed as yet another illegitimate authority imposing restrictions upon their resource use. Nuu-chah-nulth also feel that biodiversity, a major component in environmental and scientific thought and planning, ruptures the relationship between ecosystems and human beings. Within such a framework people are separated from nature and not acknowledged as the managers of biodiversity. Biodiversity is a philosophical as well as scientific concept. American philosopher Ken Wilber observes that biodiversity is based on a structure of hierarchies.

Eco-philosophers, who abhor hierarchies that place humans on the top of the evolutionary scale, have their own very strong hierarchy, which is: subatomic elements are parts of atoms, which are parts of molecules, which are parts of cells, which are parts of organisms, which are parts of ecosystems, which are parts of the biosphere. They thus value the biosphere above particular organisms, such as man, and they deplore man’s using the biosphere for his own selfish or ruinous purposes. All of that comes from their particular value hierarchy (2000: 38).

Wade Davis (2002) counters that while biodiversity and protection of the biosphere are crucial issues, what he terms the *ethnosphere* is overlooked with tragic consequences for many of the planets indigenous cultures and peoples. The ethnosphere, Davis asserts, is ‘a notion best defined as the sum total of all thoughts, beliefs, myths, and intuitions made manifest today by the myriad cultures of the world. The ethnosphere is humanity’s greatest legacy’ (2001: 8). Eugene S. Hunn (1999) shares Davis’s (2001) concern and proposes that what many scholars now call
traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) has far reaching worth beyond that of historical record. As Eugene Hunn (1999: 26) asserts, ‘TEK systems embody the cultural diversity of the human species. As such their role in the evolutionary future of our species may be compared to the role of biodiversity in the future of life on earth,’ and may be seen to, ‘resemble the genome of a species, in that, ‘each genome is a bit of information essential to the manifestation of the species in the life of each individual’.

The separation of culture and nature in classical science has been challenged by anthropologists (see Bateson, 1973). The disconnection of nature from culture is at the heart of disputes between Nuu-chah-nulth and environmentalists who rely on the scientific concept of biodiversity to dictate resource management policy and guidelines. Chief Tom Happynook of the Huu-ay-aht argues that this philosophy of biodiversity affects Nuu-chah-nulth livelihood adversely as it separates culture from biodiversity:

When we talk about aboriginal practices we are in fact talking about responsibilities that have evolved into unwritten tribal laws over millennia. These responsibilities and laws are directly tied to the environment, and are a product of the slow integration of cultures within their environment...the environment is not a place of divisions, but rather a place of relations. A place where culture and biodiversity are not separate, but in fact need each other to maintain the balance required for survival. One of the protest industry’s most successful strategies to date has been the crusade towards bio-diversity. Regrettably, they have convinced the general public to overvalue certain parts of the environment: whales, seals, as an example, and removed the cultural aspect, human relationships, from biodiversity. The result is an unbalanced environment and ecosystem (T. Happynook, 1999).

The designation of parks, reserves and biospheres is deeply resented by Indigenous peoples affected, subsuming their roles as stewards of lands and waters within their territories. Nuu-chah-nulth land claims through the treaty table are compromised when these same lands and waters are designated to be the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve or the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Many Nuu-chah-nulth talk of the grave error of leaving humans out of the circle of biodiversity, and consistently talk of the crucial human role in managing ecosystems through sustainable resource use. As
Don Hall, a Euro-Canadian Fisheries Biologist for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, observes:

The Nuu-chah-nulth are saying “hey, we’re part of this ecosystem” and they would say that it is out of balance now. The sea otters have come in, the sea otters are afforded more protection that the Nuu-chah-nulth. They are eating up all of our favourite foods in these areas...that is part of the Nuu-chah-nulth argument. It is out of balance and there is no consideration of the human component as part of the ecosystem (Hall, pers.comm: 2003).

Hall uses the example of the reintroduction of the sea otter on the Pacific west coast in the early 1970s. Once driven to near extinction by the fur trade, the sea otter has become a representation of the ideological conflict between differing ‘subsistence’ and ‘conservationist’ perceptions of nature. Hall acknowledges that the reintroduction of sea otters is negatively affecting the abundance of shellfish resources utilised by Nuu-chah-nulth. Yet he counters biologists have shown that sea otters are important elements of west coast biodiversity and are beneficial to the ecosystem.

I think that’s quite clear for a number of reasons. The otter I think, well, you have messed up the ecosystem big time in the last two hundred years and now you have reintroduced sea otters and now you have forty years of sea otters being in the Kyuquot and Chunksalsh area [Nuu-chah-nulth of the northern region of the west coast of Vancouver Island]. You know, of the studies that have been done it says that you have a much healthier ecosystem with sea otters around than without them, but it is a long-term recovery to where humans start to see the benefit from that. So Jane Watson [marine biologist] can go up there and do dive surveys and say ‘yeah with sea otters we have this amazing kelp understory and all these invertebrates, and everything else happening down here under water that you can’t see’. Kyuquot people would probably see more kelp beds than they used to. They can see that on the surface but they don’t see all the stuff that’s going on underneath, but it is a long time before that kelp understory expansion translates into something that translates into a positive impact for a Kyuquot person living up there.
You have forty years of sea otters being around [since reintroduction of otters]. You’re starting to see the initial benefit of that but it’s a long time before you see something that humans will measure as “oh, this is good for us”. All you’ve got in the meantime is fifty years of no crab, no urchins, no abalone, none of these things that the Nuu-chah-nulth have gotten used to eating over the last couple of hundred years. People don’t think in terms of Nuu-chah-nulth and other humans as being part of that ecosystem and needing to maintain a role in it (Hall, pers.comm: 2003).

The reintroduction of sea otters in Kyuquot Sound, north of Clayoquot, has greatly impacted the ecology of the area. Northern Nuu-chah-nulth people have watched sea otters eat out their shellfish resources. Human subsistence use is superseded by that of conservationists’ desire to see the sea otter reinstated into the ecosystem of the Northwest Coast. Sea otters are purportedly now moving south, and while they have not yet reached Clayoquot Sound in large numbers there is great concern amongst nations such as the Hesquiaht, Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht that food harvesting in their territories will be adversely affected. There seems to be some debate as to whether Nuu-chah-nulth actually harvested shellfish throughout their history. As Don Hall notes some Nuu-chah-nulth are angry over sea otters in the northern region of Kyuquot eating valuable shellfish resources that are claimed as crucial and traditional foods of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Daryl Campbell, an Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian, comments on the environmental and social effects sea otters have had on his northern Nuu-chah-nulth relatives in Kyuquot, and his fears for central region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations as the otters migrate south.

When you see a community like that basically raped from all of its resources by these sea otters, and at the same time you’ve got the brilliance of science saying, ‘oh kelp beds are good for you’. But what you can’t eat isn’t good for you. Nourishment is one of the most important things. You know it just throws up a whole lot of red flags when I listen to my cousins from Kyuquot. I have family up there ah, that are married up there ah. You know, to hear individuals say they’ll have two generations that have lost a way culturally and traditionally in food-gathering: clams, butters, abalone, urchins, purples, greens, you name it, you know? And that’s all for the betterment of tourists, tourism you know? They feel its better taking a
picture of a sea otter but how long can a sea otter be there having its picture
taken when it doesn’t have a food supply? That’s why they’re moving this
way. You know, there are a lot of examples that First Nations could come
up with in regard to science vs. traditional (Campbell, pers.comm: 2003).

Chief Simon Lucas of Hesquiaht is the Coast co-chair for the BC Aboriginal Fisheries
Commission which since its founding in 1984 has acted as a united voice for First
Nations in regard to improving their access to fisheries. His feels that non-Aboriginals
seem to value the survival of the sea otter more than the survival of Indigenous people.

DFO said that the sea otters were extinct from the west coast of Vancouver
Island, so they brought some from California. There are more sea otters now
in Kyuquot and they are eating all the sea urchin. The people of Kyuquot are
almost extinct; compared to the sea otters, we are now the endangered
species. We as humans are not as important as sea otters and the sea otters
aren’t even indigenous. They came from somewhere else (C. S. Lucas,
2003: 14).

Don Hall makes the assertion in defence of science that sea otters are beneficial to the
environment that:

The ecosystem is probably so out of whack without sea otters on the west
coast but it’s been that way for so long that you’ve now got Nuu-chah-nulth
who like to eat sea urchins. Well, I think we’d [biologists] argue that in the
1700s Nuu-chah-nulth didn’t eat sea urchins because they weren’t around
because any urchin that popped up got munching by an otter, so you’ve got a
sort of new interest and desire for a food that probably pre-sea otter
extraction wasn’t available. Actually there is evidence to back that up to
which shows really clearly that around the time otters were hunted to
extinction the diet switched. All of a sudden you saw clams, mussels, and I
guess urchin shells that showed up in the middens but they weren’t there
before (Hall, pers.comm: 2003).

Advocates of biodiversity argue that species regulate themselves without the need of
human management and harvesting. Nuu-chah-nulth people disagree, vowing that their
stewardship is imperative to insure a healthy ecosystem. While conflicts remain between First Nation and Euro-Canadian people over the human role in the biosphere, McGregor (2004) points out that an uncritical belief in Western science and technology as the only system of thought by which environmental problems may be solved has declined.

Western society increasingly recognises the value of other knowledge systems. This is a significant step. The establishment of the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel, a body of experts made up of scientists and Nuu-chah-nulth was created in order to support the argument for humans as a crucial element of the ecological biosphere. This alliance is an example of change in attitude among scientists.

Scientific conservation, Ingold (2000: 68) points out, is actualised in practice by ‘sealing off portions of wilderness and their animal inhabitants, and by restricting or banning human intervention’. As Ingold argues, in this model the presence of Indigenous hunter-gatherers in these ‘wilderness’ regions proves problematic and embarrassing to conservationists. They have no place in the schema of scientific conservation, and can only be accommodated, Ingold asserts, as wildlife themselves. This is because the model of conservation calls for a detachment, ‘incompatible with the kind of involvement with the environment that is essential to hunting and gathering as a way of life’ (2000: 68).

The relationship between people and their environment has always been one of the central concerns of anthropology. Anthropologists have argued that concepts of nature and the environment are culturally relative, and are not universal but ‘culturally framed’ (Milton, 1996). There are no specific cultural understandings of nature, which differ radically across cultures. While it is possible that some cultures do not utilise concepts of nature, all human beings respond and interact with their surroundings, and all will have a way of talking about them. Cultural understandings of nature and the environment are, to borrow from John Berger (1972) ‘ways of seeing’: reliant on peoples’ cultural perceptions. Human separation from nature is emphasised in the Western philosophical tradition: that of both the Western Judeo-Christian approach of dominion, and the intellectual detachment of post-Enlightenment science (Brody, 1981; 2001). Descola (1994) proposes that Western science has been rooted in the separation of nature and culture:

The radical separation so long established by the West between the world of nature and the world of human beings does not have much meaning for other
peoples who, for their part, confer the attributes of social life upon plants and animals, regarding these as subjects rather than objects, and who could therefore not possibly expel them into an autonomous sphere upon which science and technology gradually come to impose their mathematical laws and control. To say that the Indians are 'close to nature' is a kind of nonsense for, since they confer upon the beings that people it a dignity equal to their own, their behaviour towards them is not significantly different from their behaviour towards one another. In order for anyone to be close to nature, nature must exist; and it is only the moderns who have proved capable of conceiving its existence, a fact that probably renders our cosmology more enigmatic and less sympathetic than the cosmologies of all the cultures that have preceded us (1994: 405-6).

Chief Tom Mexsis Happynook's view of human-nature relations draws a distinction between 'traditional' subsistence dependent peoples and Descola's science dependent 'moderns':

20 per cent of the world's pop lives in urban areas. 80 per cent live in rural areas. Let me answer it this way. In late 1999 there was this big epidemic - Y2K. Everybody was freaked out. They weren't going to be able to access their money, jets would crash, computers were all going to go nuts and take over the world. But you know what? A Sámi, living in Norway/Sweden on 1 January 2002 got up at four o'clock in the morning, put his boots on, checked to see how cold it was, checked to see how deep the snow was, went out to take care of his everyday business. It was just another goddamnday. That's the difference, a big difference. But you know we have hope, and you know why we have hope? Because 80 per cent of the population still live off the land. They still go hunting, they still collect their seafood-they still get up and make sure their livestock is there-that the rivers are clean-that the land is clean (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

This perceived contrast between the urban and rural is one central to Nuu-chah-nulth political discourse. While an arbitrary separation is implied in the reasoning of Happynook between the modern/urban and the rural/traditional, for the Nuu-chah-nulth this dichotomy is grounded in the reality of contemporary socioeconomic conditions. Half the population of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations now live in urban centres. Yet, the
line drawn between these ways of life, the 'modern' and 'traditional,' is a tenuous one in light of the interconnections between the local and the global; economic, social, cultural, and political. The reach of modernity is near absolute and all Indigenous peoples in the world have been transformed.

Yet, observed stewardship of the environment does persist. Chief Happynook indicates the Nuu-chah-nulth worldview of an ideal relationship between humans and the environment through his example of the use of the cedar tree.

There is a family in our tribe that has a sacred ceremony that they perform at potlatch. There is a mask that is associated with the ceremony. The teaching is that after the ceremony the family has to burn the mask and the rationale behind that is that whoever is responsible for carving the mask has to make sure that they teach the next generation how to carve the mask, so it is passed down from generation to generation. This family was holding a potlatch and this person didn’t have the cedar to carve this mask. He went out into the woods and he found an appropriate cedar tree and he carved the mask from the cedar tree.

What he did was he cut out the mask, and all he cut was the mask and that cedar tree continued to grow. Another example of what makes that family important within the traditional government structure and the community. That is how they did it. And I think that is an important example in terms of how we used to manage our resources. My grandmother is a world-renowned basket weaver. She makes baskets. We go out and we strip cedar bark, and it is the inner bark, you have the outside bark and inside there is another bark, and then the tree. And there are unwritten tribal laws around how to extract that particular resource, and in the old days the cedar bark was very important in our community. There were mats, bedding, baskets, all kinds of things, and you can only take a certain amount off the tree and it is best at a certain age and you can only harvest it in the spring, and it has to come off the certain side of the tree. This is an unwritten tribal law that dictates how to extract that resource and it is still practiced today. That is how it is done. And the reason is that that tree has to continue to grow. You don’t want to kill the tree. If you take too much of the bark off the tree will die, so if you travel throughout our traditional territory you’ll find that they are now called culturally modified trees and those were strip
barked trees. So in terms of the resource extraction there are very, very strict rules on how to do it (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

Nuu-chah-nulth engaged in political struggle over rights to environmental management in their territories acknowledge that cosmological principles as their guides in determining appropriate measures for resource extraction. Scientists, primarily biologists, are viewed as arrogant for claiming the right to dictate environmental policy measures within Nuu-chah-nulth territories without incorporating Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge founded on an extensive time period of habitation. There have been steps to remedy this in recent years. The provincial government claimed it would ensure correct policies for managing Clayoquot Sound environmentally. The Tla-o-qui-aht, Ahousaht and Hesquiaht First Nations accepted these measures but only once Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge had been incorporated. Cliff Atleo Sr. of the Ahousaht expresses his frustration on this subject.

They announced a [Clayoquot Sound] Scientific Panel to appease the environmental protestation, and the thing was to examine logging practices in Clayoquot Sound. They thought again that they [provincial government negotiators] were doing the right thing when they came to us during the negotiations and said, “we are going to announce this blue room panel of scientists and PhD’s from the Northwest U.S. and Canada. The best are going to come in and take a look at logging practices”. We looked at the list and we said, “how come there are no quu’us [Aboriginal peoples] on there?” What do you mean? We have PhDs, they don’t have them from universities, but they are multidisciplinary, not single discipline. We insist on being on that panel”. I think there are ways you can log without being as destructive as those processes. We, now in Clayoquot Sound, because of the adoption of the Scientific Panel, we comply with every provision that was recommended by that Scientific Panel. What it was intended to do through its recommendations was to reduce the negative impact on the environment, on other resources, by the application and recognition of the fact that all things are connected—all things are one (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003).

Tom Happynook of Huu-ay-aht asserts that science sometimes lags behind Nuu-chah-nulth oral history and knowledge. It is only when science ‘catches up’ that local
knowledge is accepted by provincial and federal governments in the courts or at the negotiation table. Orally transmitted Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge is given legitimacy through its verification by science.

It’s only been recently through the Delgamuukw case [1997] which went to the Supreme Court of Canada where the courts now have to take into consideration oral history and in 1964 an anthropologist (Eugene Arima) came to interview our head chief at the time whose name was Chief Louie Nookemis. We have ten tapes of him telling the history of Huu-ay-aht. He was telling the story of the Unuk-la-aht. Aht meaning people of. The people of Unukla. Unukla is Pachena Beach [Barkeley Sound]: a beautiful beach that we have. And that is where our village is today. He was saying on the tape that two hundred years ago there was a huge tidal wave that came in and wiped out the Unuk-la-aht people. In those days that’s what everybody thought it was: a story—a legend. Well as circumstances would have it there was a group of scientists who ended up in Japan doing some research and came across these documents from the 1760’s that talked about a huge earthquake that had a tidal wave and there was a tidal wave in Japan that also went west. All of a sudden science had verified our oral history so now all of a sudden our oral history has legitimacy: in fact also in the courts in Canada. It took that for them to legitimise our way of keeping history which is in our art, which is in our chiefs’ curtains, the chiefs have curtains right and on those curtains are images that depict who they are, where they came from, and times and history. It legitimised all that and I thought that was interesting. We weren’t believed before but because science now has proven within the context of scientific understanding that these events did happen, all of a sudden it is legitimate (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

The contemporary relevance of local subsistence economies is a matter of wide debate, both within and outside Nuu-chah-nulth political discourse. While Nuu-chah-nulth social systems are based on ranked hereditary seats, their local economies have been reliant upon reciprocity and collectivism to function. The annual salmon catch of each First Nation is distributed among the members of each nation. There remains strong reliance on local foods and sharing of natural resources. Sharing remains a strong support for community members’ economic survival. The following examples indicate
Nuu-chah-nulth resource use and utilisation that often supplements limited employment opportunities, and welfare dependence.

Hunting not only represents and supports economic needs it also allows a space for reaffirming male identity and worth. In communities suffering 80 per cent unemployment hunting is a means by which male identity may be redeemed. By providing meat for family members, elders in need, and the wider community when possible, Nuu-chah-nulth hunters gain a purpose and value within a local economy that values their achievements. As Bodenhorn (2000) observed, writing of sharing among the Inupiaq of northern Alaska, hunters told her they experienced a strong sense of tutqiksi (translated as contentment) through providing and sharing food. This allowed them a ‘sense of satisfaction’ and ‘peace of mind’, a joyful pride in fulfilling a role and responsibility, of worth to their community.

While I stayed in Maaqtsis I often went out on hunting trips with some young Ahousaht men who are of the few in the community who still hunt. Everyone pitched in for fuel and ammunition. These young hunters told me that some of the older men from the traditional hunting families would not eat their meat, claiming that they do not believe the animals have been killed respectfully with correct spiritual practice. One of the hunters, Dave commented, that as a young man talking to his elders, his answer was always respectful. He told them that they hunted to eat and to feed their families and they gave the meat they didn’t need to other people, especially elders who didn’t often get to taste deer meat, and missed the ‘old foods’. Dave told them that they were never taught the spiritual practice of hunting, ‘why didn’t the older men teach them he asked?’ He told me quietly that he believed the real reason behind the criticism and disrespect of these older men was their feelings of inadequacy for not fulfilling their role as hunters.

As the hunters prepared for the trip I talked with people stepping onto the dock from the “Ahousaht Pride” sea bus that had just pulled in. People climbed out of the boat with bags of groceries from the Tofino co-op in town. There is a grocery store on Maaqtsis but it is too expensive for most locals, sells limited and poor quality fresh produce, and is supposedly running at a loss due to the corruption of the manager, so goes the local gossip. Most people got their engine oil, ammunition, and fishing gear as they needed it from the Ahousaht General Store on the island but this was more expensive than buying it in town. A Euro-Canadian man who married an Ahousaht woman runs the store. The store is located at a separate boat dock past the village towards the open sea on the way out of the harbour at Ahousaht. It is reminiscent of an old western general store. In it are essentials for the hunters, fishermen, and clam diggers that come in for supplies, often
quite late at night. Many also pick up snacks to keep them going while they are out on the water, such as candy and soda pop-Pepsi and root beer are very popular. Most have thermoses of hot coffee and tea with them for the journey. Batteries for spotlights for searching the coastline for deer are also common purchases, as well as fishhooks, engine oil, and lamps. The store acts as a forum for discussion of good resource sites in the area, although people have become more guarded about the whereabouts of their good spots in recent decades as times have been harder financially. Many people don’t want too much competition for resources that provide badly needed food for their families.

The store was the last set off point before a deer hunting or clam-digging excursion. When I joined the hunters on their trips it was often extremely cold out on the water, but I enjoyed the journey, flying over the water in the dark night. The hunters, men in their mid twenties to thirties, navigated the waters with relaxed confidence, often using a handheld spotlight to navigate as the boats didn’t have expensive headlamps on its prow. This style of hunting involves gunning the boat a safe distance from the shoreline and shining the spotlight into the trees searching for the flash of deer eyes. If a deer is spotted the hunters drop the boat’s engine and coast in for a closer look. Shots may be fired from the boat or hunters may wade ashore to shoot from the tide line on the rocky beach. This is difficult as the rocks and shells make a lot of noise scaring the deer. In the past the stones alerted Nuu-chah-nulth to the sound of an approaching war party, waking them before another tribe struck.

On one occasion a group of hunters and I went over to Meares Island where they had an old car kept to drive through the logging roads. The car was Jack’s and was pretty rough from previous missions and an object of much humour among the group of hunters. In huge spray-painted letters on the hood/bonnet was written ‘OUCH!’ The doors shut fast, thankfully, and we all piled in and drove round the logging roads in the dark shining the spotlight through the forest looking for deer.

We managed to get a flat tyre and were driving on the rim for a while before we stopped. Jack then drove it back slowly to where knew he there was a discarded truck from which we could grab a tyre. This went without a hitch as we jacked it up, got it off and put on the fresh tyre. It occurred to me to tighten the bolts, which I did. Sam, one of the hunters, decided I hadn’t put enough muscle into it and gave it a huge wrench, cracking off the nut and leaving us without transport. We had to walk up to a small old Ahousaht run timber mill that failed financially some years back to use one of the discarded vehicles. Setting off, we needed to be sure we had a jack. We carried the
particularly sturdy one we had on our shoulders in turn for the four-hour walk there, and four hours back.

When we got up to the old timber mill we explored the place. It was covered in graffiti and still had a few good old vehicles and tools around. We found an old logging shuttle, a sort of large square Bedford van. We jumped into it thankful for the small shelter it offered, as it was now the middle of the night and deadly cold. Jack and the guys managed to get the great white beast started and we swung it down the logging road and back to the boat, only breaking down a few times through the journey. By the time we got back to the boat it was well into the morning and we were all exhausted and very cold.

This was an unsuccessful hunt. We had hiked through a long cold night with no food to show for it. Good spirits and sharp banter was the prevailing current of the morning trip back to the village. Someone had a thermos of warm tea left over in the boat, and some chocolate and tobacco. We shared what we had, and it was pretty good to be alive that morning with the sun rising in the sky and bouncing off the emerald greens of the water. I went out on a successful deer hunt with Ahousaht occurred soon after this: a hunt in which a deer was spotted from a night boat run along the coast of Vargas Island. One shot from the boat took down the deer, and the guys brought the boat into shore, and jumped out into the knee-deep tide striding straight up to the deer, cutting open its belly and pulling out its liver. Two of the hunters each bit out a piece of the liver and then offered it to me saying ‘Haaaaaaa, the New Zealander’s first deer and his first liver!’ I sat on the prow of the boat not jumping at the opportunity. They laughed before gutting the deer and hauling him back to the boat. It was now near morning and once again time for tea and sleep.

Dave and leaned against his house lazily while his son ran up and down with a toy car. The two dogs chased him back and forth, paws skidding on the wooden deck. The deer, shot just before day break hung from its hind legs on a piece of rope from the top of the house. If it’s really cold weather and the meat is frozen the dogs won’t touch it. Locals told me that they used to be able to leave meat hanging up outside their houses when there were only a few dogs scavenging around, yet there are now so many uncared for strays that the meat must go straight in the freezer.

Men down on the bay had their chain saws running, cutting firewood for the winter now beginning. Dave asked us inside where his wife was trying to feed their two boys who were playing on the floor. The house was very small, a trailer style, long and narrow. There are lots of trailer homes in Maaqtusiis, a cheaper option for people who
cannot yet afford to build their own home and had not come up on the housing list to receive public housing.

Dave offered us all a hot chocolate he was heating up on the stove. The walls were bare except for some drawings and writing, and some family photos. He showed me a drum he was making. The skin was quite new and pulled tight over the circular wooden frame. He had not decided on a design yet. Dave mentioned that they try and use every bit of the deer. A friend of Dave’s sat on the couch and was very quiet but smiled a welcome. His bare arms and chest were covered in home made tattoos, the ink blue black with names and crosses, the lines sharp and without curves from doing it with a knife or compass.

Hunters in Maaqtsiis, as well as Esowista and Opitsat, shoot bears on rare occasions. Today, if a bear is shot it is usually to ensure the safety of people living in the community. Bears that become habituated to human food from eating waste foods continue to return to villages to scavenge, and can become a danger to people in Nuu-chah-nulth communities, particularly children. The skins may be kept for ceremonial purposes. Dave asserted that when the bear’s fur is shaved they look like human beings and both he and the other hunters said they found this disconcerting. Dave claimed that when he sees a bear standing up on its hind legs he has to give it a second glance as from a distance they appear to be human. Duck hunting is a regular subsistence food for many people in Ahousaht. It was a crisp still morning, and we stopped off at the general store where I paid for the gas. After getting some supplies we jumped in the boat and pulled the outboard motor to life. The water was glass as we coasted out of the inside bay of Flores Island away from the village. We had not been out for long before we saw a cluster of ‘yellow eyes’, their black and white sections of feathers earning them the nickname among the hunters of Daffy Ducks. At the sound of the boat’s engine the birds lifted off the water and barked away from the shoreline in an arc. Tom turned the boat after the ducks and then stabilised so Murray could shoot. After a few shots from Murray’s automatic rifle two ducks dropped into the water. It was my job to pick them out of the water, ensure they were dead, and throw them into the back of the boat. Tom and Murray felt they had enough to feed both their families well, with a few ducks left over to take to Murray’s parents. Duck meat is usually boiled in a soup in Nuu-chah-nulth cooking style, and it has quite a gamy taste. ‘Black duck’ soup as it is called at Ahousaht and in most other communities where it is eaten (the flesh is very dark) is a rich oily soup made with potatoes and lots of black pepper. It is very much the same in
preparation as the salmon soup served at many Nuu-chah-nulth functions such as potlatches, feasts and conferences.

The preparation of the ducks begins with plucking the feathers and then singeing the down off with a small blowtorch. As Murray Jr. and his wife Annie took up this chore on the porch of their house Tom looked on laughing, commenting that in the old days Nuu-chah-nulth would do this by first starting a fire by rubbing two twigs together. Tom was always keen to mock European representations of ‘primitive’ or ‘traditional’ pre-contact First Nations cultures.

Once the ducks have been plucked and the remaining down burnt off the butchering was done. Annie worked in the kitchen with her two young boys watching on, and occasionally commenting with a ‘gross’, ‘yuck’, or ‘ewww’ as she butchered and cleaned the birds. I heard these exclamations of disgust from kids throughout my time living in Nuu-chah-nulth country, and it always amused the adults who did not share their distaste and would mimic them as they gutted a fish or skinned a deer. It is difficult to determine when this disgust with the direct realities of killing felt by young Nuu-chah-nulth began. It is certainly increasingly difficult for Nuu-chah-nulth parents to get their children interested in eating traditional foods. Television is partly responsible for this socialisation. Frozen beef burgers, white bread, and French fries seem to be more appealing to many children rather than salmon and rice, shellfish, or deer meat. All far superior foods, locally caught and considerably higher in nutrition than starchy store bought foods. Preserving the traditional diet, like the Nuu-chah-nulth language, is proving a significant challenge (see Chapter 8).

Seal hunting continues but they replied that there was only one family that hunted them regularly, a hereditary chief’s family whose traditional role was as hunters. While seals are occasionally hunted today, this is mainly to satisfy elders longing for their favourite ‘traditional’ foods. Few young Nuu-chah-nulth have any desire for this ‘old-timer’ food. I spent the following morning talking with Frank August, an Ahousaht hunter in his seventies who grew up in Maaqtusiis. Frank now lives in Tofino and talks about seal hunting and its place in Nuu-chah-nulth social cohesion:

Seal as far as I know where I come from in Ahousaht there are very few, maybe, I don’t think there is even half a dozen families that go for it anymore—it’s not what it used to be. It was a delicacy for us. It’s the same as a white man’s turkey, you know, you get it seasonally. You know, our people used to go and get a seal just to bring home and share with their
neighbours. Like what I was saying about my father, he would go out and get a seal and bring it home, cut up the whole thing and cook it all at once, only to eat with the elders of each house at home. That’s what sealing was all about. It wasn’t to brag about anything or anything. It was just to be neighbourly. That’s how they stuck together, the people on the west coast. I know some other families further up: Nootka, used to do the same thing. Nobody really bothers. Too much McDonalds [laughs]. But it was good [pause] we were taught only to take what we can use at that time when I was growing up. Just a certain time, the summer time we would go out, and they’d watch the tides. When the tides real big in the summer time my Dad would say hey we can go and get a seal, the fishing wasn’t very good at that time, because the tides were too strong. We couldn’t get much fish so we’d go out and get a seal and he would have a feast with his friends, his neighbours, and the elders of each house. There was lots of fun; I really enjoyed them old days. I get a seal now, but I don’t do what my Dad used to do, I keep it for home. I have - before the fish farms come into the inlet there I would go out quite a bit, and I’d bring some down to friends in Port Alberni, Adam Shewish and a guy named Lawrence Wilson, Jacob Gallic and them, just to bring some seal meat to them. That’s the way we were taught in my time: share. Not sell it, just share it. I enjoyed that. I lived for that a lot, just to share when I got a seal. I took some to Victoria, Vancouver, friends and relatives. That’s what sealing was all about when I was growing up, but you don’t do it today.

I never go up the inlet anymore because I’ve said it before and I’ll keep saying it because seals up there are no good now. We might get the odd healthy one but I wouldn’t trust it. I go out to the outside islands here now. That’s a good thing I was taught to hunt out there to, and my father used to go out there in a dugout. That’s really changed now. I know there was a lot of families at home when I was a young fella’ used to do that, my dad and the Tittans. There were other families who used to do the same thing. Same with clams and stuff like that. In the summertime we’d go to the outside beaches. Sea urchins and stuff like that. Bring a whole canoe load to the beach and holler for people to come down and share it. That’s the kind of
people we were at one time. I say we were because we don’t do that as much any more. We had it real good.

The seals are protected. We are not allowed to hunt for them anymore because the fisheries lifted that bounty they used to have on them. There used to be a five dollar bounty for every seal you got, you cut the nose off and hand it to a fisheries officer, you’d get five bucks a piece for that. Long time ago, my Dad and them used to do that. They lifted that and they got a market for the pelt for a while. Somebody opened up a market for the seal pelt. So we got some of those great hunters from town, guys come with high-powered rifles, scoped, and diving gear, and sit on the shoreline up here and they’d shoot the seals. Guy would go and swim it in. Take the pelt off, throw the carcass away. We don’t do that, it’s not in our practice of hunting, ways of hunting around here, us native people, we don’t hunt like that. We hunt what we can eat. I was told and I’m sure every family anywhere up and down the coast would say if your going to kill something you better be damn sure you can eat it. You don’t just kill something just for the sake of killing it. That’s our teaching. That’s how we lived. I think that’s how the old timers lived before my time to. That’s what I try to teach my boys. They want to go hunting, if you’re going to shoot something boy you better make sure you are going to bring it home to eat. Not just kill it and leave it there (August [Ahousaht], pers.comm: 2003).

While Frank teaches his boys to only hunt for what they are going to eat, he also explains how his father and other men would hunt seals to sell their pelts. Frank reinforces the ethics of human-animal relations in Nuu-chah-nulth cosmology, yet at the same time expresses the moral contradictions of this relationship when affected by economic concerns. A hunter, Ingold notes of the Cree, ‘narrates and interprets his experiences of encounters with animals in terms of a system of cosmological beliefs’ (Ingold, 2000: 14). Like the Cree, Nuu-chah-nulth cosmology presupposes the inherent humanity of animals. The Nuu-chah-nulth think of themselves as ‘salmon people’ so crucial is the salmon to their survival. The Raven, Beer, wolf, and other animals serve a distinct purpose in mythology and folklore: they are moral guides, either through their right or wrong action. Frank tells us how a lack of unemployment combined with
limited commercial resource access effects the economic stability of coastal Nuu-chah-nulth families:

I guess you’ve got to go into politics now to make a living. There’s no more manual labour: logging is gone, fishing is gone, like I say the gooseneck and clam digging and stuff like that is just a periodical thing, one or two days a month maybe, four days a month. Oh, it’s not a steady job and it’s no way to earn a living. It is just a help with whatever things they can put together through the month. Guys that struggle to make it that try to keep things joined together what money they make now and then. There’s a few guys started working on the fish farms I guess for a while but I don’t know if that’s still going. I know one of the main fish farm fish processing plant here shut down now. Won’t be open till somebody said I think till May. Where my wife works now she’s been there for over fifteen years I guess, but even at that you’re lucky to get two days a week. She works Tuesday and Thursday. You can’t make a living like that. Everybody wants to keep things afloat, you’ve got to take what comes in, scratch here and there (August [Ahousaht], pers.comm: 2003).

At the interst of ecology and social justice, Parajuli asserts (2004: 238) are 'ecological ethnicities': peoples who live in regions rich in natural economy but who are exploited and marginalised by the market economy. Parajuli states that the movements of ecological ethnicities are expressions of resistance against the appropriation of their territorial resources by others. While coastal Nuu-chah-nulth are engaged in the market economy through sporadic wage labour and the aspirations of economic development, their objective is autonomous self-sufficiency in both governance and economy.

The Nuu-chah-nulth, like Parajuli’s (2004) example of the Mayans of Chiapas and tribal groups of middle India do not command capital or have significant access to the market economy. Industries, which are beneficiaries of state subsidies and support such as forestry companies in Clayoquot Sound, are given access to resource rich regions at such low economic cost that they are unconcerned about wasteful and inefficient extraction methods. The Nuu-chah-nulth region, like the tribal belt of middle India, is rich in hydro, forest and mineral resources. While the Nuu-chah-nulth are citizens of a First World democratic state, unlike the third world tribal groups of India, they too have lost economic control of their resource base, and now participate in an unstable labour
market for their livelihood. The unsustainable economic practices of the forestry and fishing industries and the political successes of conservationists in Clayoquot Sound led to an economic downturn. This resulted in high rates of unemployment in both Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadian communities.

Parajuli asserts that ecological ethnicities in India suffer a double burden of ‘altered earth’ and ‘tortured bodies’. By tortured bodies Parajuli means the ways in which ecological and economic costs are borne by those marginalised peoples who, like the Nuu-chah-nulth, live in regions rich in natural resources and biodiversity, but are particularly exploited by the market economy.
WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY –

CENTRAL COAST NUU-CHAH-NULTH CONCERNS

Plate 71. People gather at Opitsat to raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual abuse in Nuu-chah-nulth communities. The signs call for women and children to be respected.
It was genocide. There was a difference though. In America they declared war on the Native Americans. They went out and shot them. In Canada they didn’t shoot them. They tried to meet their genocide objective through legislation, residential schools…(Tom Happynook [Huu-ay-aht], pers.comm: 2003).

In the communities of Opitsat, Maaqtusiis, and Esowista poverty leads to social violence and abuse. Add to this an unemployment level of around 80 per cent since the decline of the forestry and fishing industries. I felt a strong sense of recognition reading the ethnography of Guy Lanoue (1992: xii), who was deeply challenged by the violence and social suffering he encountered amongst the Sekani of northern British Columbia, of which he comments, ‘I was simply too overwhelmed by the personal tragedies around me to make consistent sense of what was left of their social relationships’. Environmental degradation of resource areas brought about by the extractive economic practices of outsiders (in the case of both the Sekani and Nuu-chah-nulth) has contributed to the breakdown of local economies. I argue, in the case of the Nuu-chah-nulth, that when community members no longer engage in collective economic livelihood activities, the social web of communities is threatened. In this chapter I show the lived impacts of loss of livelihood, through both the loss of resource access that constrains subsistence practices, and unemployment caused by the significant downturn of the industrial economy in the region. When living amongst the Nuu-chah-nulth I often felt, as Lanoue did of the Sekani, that ‘everyone had lost friends, family, the means of making a living and the sense of doing something worthwhile with their lives’ (xi).

Nuu-chah-nulth political leaders’ discourse is centred on achieving autonomous economic development: sustainability, stability, and self-sufficiency. When attending meetings it is common to hear variations on the theme of “when we have money, we will be able to solve our social problems”. While male politicians are at negotiation tables working towards the legal land settlements of a treaty in order to secure economic development for their nations, political empowerment has eluded women in many Nuu-chah-nulth communities. The very few women councillors, and other women who command respect in their communities, tell the men to remember social issues.

Colonialism has been a process of destruction and reconstruction. As Talal Asad put it ‘modern states destroy and rebuild moral and political options in characteristic ways’ (1993: 336). He asserts of the pressures of modernity on Indigenous lifeways that
changes imposed by the state based on colonial/postcolonial systems, ‘do not reflect a simple expansion of the range of individual choice, but the creation of conditions in which only new (i.e., modern) choices can be made’ (1993: 337). As Marx (1937) wrote, people make their own histories but not under conditions of their choosing. For the Nuu-chah-nulth this containment is actualised in legal restriction on the use of natural resources that has long threatened their subsistence economy, and government policies of assimilation that have sought to define the nature of Nuu-chah-nulth livelihood and development. These constraints have restricted choices in terms of how to be ‘persons’ in a world that devalues or restricts older Nuu-chah-nulth understandings but provides few meaningful alternatives.

Conflict between the old or ‘traditional’ and the new or ‘modern’ is central to political and economic tensions both within Nuu-chah-nulth communities, and in relations with industry and the agents of the state. Adelson (2001: 95) asserts that Aboriginality or the retaining of it as identity is not a matter of discarding the ‘non-Aboriginal’ or ‘modern’ but rather a concerted effort on the part of people to combine the local with outside concepts and ways. ‘Aboriginality’ is constructed as a merging and interrelating of old and new practices.

Castle (1993: 270) asserted of First Nation peoples, in the context of the ‘National Question’, that these ‘persistent peoples’ refused to become ‘new men’. The ‘National Question’ articulated by Marx and Engels (1972) came into being with the birth of the nation-state itself and is actualised through the domination and exploitation of one group by another. This is not only a class relationship but can also be based on ethnicity and cultural difference, as in the case of the Euro-Canadian majority and the Nuu-chah-nulth. Marxists have long been accused of ignoring Aboriginal claims to sovereignty and traditional forms of livelihood.

Distinctions between the traditional and the modern, and the opposition between them, have been central in internal Nuu-chah-nulth debates. This debate is often between generations who often share radically disparate visions of the world. Intergenerational conflicts are brought about by changing habitus, which by definition, disempowers those who operate by the values and rules of an older habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). It is common in any community to hear older people talk nostalgically about how things were better in the ‘old days’. The nostalgia of Nuu-chah-nulth elders goes beyond this, in regard to the extreme societal change they have experienced. Their testimony indicates the speed with which socioeconomic systems have transformed. Regina grew up in Hotsprings Cove, the main Hesquiaht village that lies northwest of Ahousaht.
territory. She talks with her husband Ray (Tla-o-qui-aht) about her perceptions of the strong community spirit of the past.

I’d help you if you needed help. You didn’t have to wait to be asked. You’d just go help, and I was telling my grandsons, when I was a young girl in Hotsprings [Hesquiaht territory], where I went to high school, oh I had dropped out of high school, they used to build houses and my brother Francis who lives over here [in Tla-o-qui-aht territory], he’d always be the foreman to get these guys to cut down the trees, take out the stumps. When that’s done he’d get them to start building the house, and they’d have maybe two three houses going, and from there us young girls we would go help whoever’s house they were building, and we’d give them their-they’d always called it dinner and then supper. And then they’d have their coffee breaks in between. See, all of this used to be done, no such thing as money, you know. It was just all helping each other. Then we made that road on the reserve, and I remember my brothers laying out the little trail that was going to be there. They worked on that and they put up a generator, made the shed, you know, but it’s not like that today.

Ray: Community spirit.

Regina: There was a lot of fun, and our Chief, we had Chief Ben-he was the one with the biggest house. They did it in three days; built his house, great big house. (Regina and Ray Martin, pers.comm: 2004)

The testimony of older Nuu-chah-nulth people often presents sharing as a social drive that has lost significance in Nuu-chah-nulth communities. Sharing is spoken of as a community spirit that young Nuu-chah-nulth purportedly no longer feel. Umeek [Richard Atleo] (2004), Ahousaht scholar, observes that amongst the Nuu-chah-nulth, one of the strongest criticisms of another’s character is to comment: ‘that person is not aphey [kind].’ To not feed a visitor at mealtimes is considered wiihkey (an unkind act). Umeek explains that traditionally people are taught and encouraged to depend on their neighbours when they are in need, thus creating a social climate of interdependency
considered a great strength in a Nuu-chah-nulth community. Another crucial family teaching Umeeck offers is hupee-ee-autilh (be helpful). This quality endears a person to work towards a common good in which Umeeck asserts, ‘the value of helpfulness is a call to cooperate with the original design of creation, which is characterised by oneness, wholeness, interconnectedness, and interrelationality. The antithesis of helpfulness is contrary to creation’ (Atleo, 2004: 12-14).

Rosie Swan is an Ahousaht elder who grew up in Maaquusiis, and spent much of her childhood at various seasonal resource sites during the annual economic round. She remembers her busy life as a girl helping her parents and wider family in the daily and seasonal activities of the subsistence economy. These structured Ahousaht life before significant dependence on the industrial economy began. This ‘new wealth’ facilitated the subsistence economy and both transformed and supported the local subsistence economy.

Rosie’s home doubles as a store where she sells candy, potato chips and soda drinks to many of the kids who live nearby. She buys the goods at the store in town and sells them at a mark-up for a little extra money. Rosie also bakes bread and cooks apple pies that are always in high demand. I knocked at her door and one of Rosie’s many grandchildren smiled shyly as I pulled off my muddy boots and rain gear. ‘Come in, come in, don’t let the heat out, have a cup of tea’, Rosie welcomed me. I got my tea and sat at the kitchen table opposite Rosie watching her fill pastry with freshly sliced apple, raisins, and cinnamon. When she had the pie in the oven, she settled in to talk. Like many Nuu-chah-nulth elders Rosie’s testimony indicates a complex mix of feelings and opinions on the transformations of modernity brought about in her lifetime. Rosie began by talking about the everyday collective subsistence practices she remembers as a girl in the 1930s.

We had to dry our fish cos’ we had no freezers. Mum had boxes in the smokehouse—we had to lay them this way: face down [fish had to be laid face down so the fat would run down]. Otherwise it would get mouldy cos’ fish is fat but first she’d do just a little bit for us to eat.

She’d do maybe 20, 30 and then later more, next time they went out. This is in October ah. Then end of October she’d do five hundred, three hundred, five hundred—she’d smoke that all—her and my Dad. She’d box it; do big boxes in the smokehouse. If it wasn’t turned up it would get mouldy so she
had to lay it face down, meat down, cos’ its fat but like she used to do more the end of October cos’ it wasn’t as fat any more. They knew!

Their smokehouses were as big as their house—they used to hold lots of fish—lots of fish. My Dad would put it in a canoe, an old canoe covered with canvas, next day my Mum would be putting it over like this [Rosie turns over her hands to show her Mum flipping the fish over to the other side]. My Dad would hang it up. Next day she would see that there would be no blood, no slime because it was half smoked, half dried, the meat. Ohhh—
we’d have lots of fish, and they never wasted anything, they’d take the spine and they’d put it on sticks with cedar bark tied up, then when they barbecued it both sides: cooked and smoked, they’d take it down cos’ it was ready on the cedar and he’d [Rosie’s Dad] hang it up in the smokehouse. It’s called kac’as [barbecued fish]. You’d have to soak that overnight or two days before you could eat it. They used to even leave the blood in there, and we ate it ah? [Rosie looks at sister Greta for confirmation sharing the memory] Cos’ it was this way, about five hanging with cedar—kac’as. They’d smoke the...[looks to her sister Greta] nixtin is it called? Do you know what nixtin is called? [Rosie looks to her son James]? [James replies, laughing a little as if to imply to Rosie, ‘of course you know what it means in English—fish eggs!’]

They’d make muqc’u [fermented fish eggs known in English as ‘stink eggs’]. They’d put it in sugar bags—it used to stink but we ate it! I like it. They put it with qawaili [salmonberries]. The older women had it [sitting] in a circle, and one lady would go out and get all that qawaili and some would have it with that muqc’u. Now they don’t do it. They get on the air and say ‘How are you?’ [Rosie means on the CB/short wave radio that nearly everyone have in their houses and use to communicate and go about their business in the village.] Long ago they’d invite ladies to have it. My Mother made homemade cakes too ah cos’ we had our own chickens. She’d always make homemade cakes—she’d do the whites—white part of the egg to make the icing. It was nice—it was good. When she made pies she made it in a cake pan and it was always raisins or rhubarb pie cos’ she had her own rhubarb all around her fence—certain time of the year too when its good rhubarb.
Nobody stole—now we can’t have anything outside cos’ they [Rosie means young people] steal! Smokehouse wasn’t even locked ah? [In the past.] With all the food in there—no rats, there were no rats. Priest used to come once a month and have mass in the homes before we got a church. Once a month [Rosie is quiet for a while]. We had a nurse living way out there. No matter what time of the night our parents would go and get them when we were real sick. I remember Greta had an earache—she come out. Now they go by [the nurses don’t drop in to each house]—she has to be at work at 9 o’clock and home at 5 [won’t work outside those hours], the nurse we have here [today], an Indian nurse. This was a white lady [in the past] called Miss Gerhardt—she was a kind lady. But they had Indian doctors here. The Indian doctor came before the nurse ah [looks to Greta]? She would shake something in the ear and say ‘here here—open the window!’ [Rosie makes a whooshing noise of air being sucked out window]. She [Greta] got over her earache. That’s the only time I seen a doctor [Greta agrees] but any time you sprain your leg there was a man and a lady [Indian doctors] who would put it back in place if you dislocated your arm or your leg.

Alice Johnson and Thomas Louie used to be the ones [Ahousaht doctors]. Now they have First Responders who send you to the doctor on a chartered boat. We never had that long ago. We never had shots, our babies never had shots, so when smallpox or measles comes some babies died cos’ they never had those shots like what they do now for babies. So it was very tough for us—even adults. My husband [Rosie stops for a short time and wipes her eyes] just about died—he was eighteen when he had measles—went to get his uncle—he came and knelt down on the floor next to him singing Indian songs to him in his ear [Rosie cups her hands around her mouth as if to sing]. James said to me—‘dry blankets’ he said—his temperature—we had no thermometers but he got cold, he wasn’t hot any more because he fell asleep with his Uncle singing. He never went to a doctor [Euro-Canadian doctor]. Changed his bedding, his clothes he had on, they [Indian doctors] used to make us sweat—wrap our babies up and make them sweat—they’d get better. There was no Tylenol! Nothing to put the temperature down.
That's our changes. Anybody would get hives they'd go and sit in salt water to get rid of their hives. Now they can give you medicine [puts hand as if spoon to mouth] to get rid of it. I don't know, you can put that what I'm telling you into pieces... (Swan, pers.comm: 2004) (Nuu-chah-nulth language drawn from dictionary published by the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 1991).

The testimonies of Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht elders express a common perception that as natural resource access has been further constrained by government authorities, and economic instability has led to unemployment, social relationships and concepts of togetherness such as respect and sharing have deteriorated. Historically in Nuu-chah-nulth society the economic and social has been bound through the collectivism of shared livelihood. In the villages of Maaqtusis, Esowista, and Opitsat social relationships were until recently defined through daily and seasonal tasks in which every individual had a specific purpose and role. Tom Happynook [Huu-ay-aht] talks of the social web of subsistence practice, and the sharply defined ranking that structured social life.

Everyone had a responsibility. Not all of them participated in the government-in the big house but everyone had a role and they were expected to undertake and to fulfill those roles. Now everyone is involved and everyone feels important. And if one of those elements is taken away then there is a problem. It doesn't work. So that is why it was important that families had responsibilities. For example the medicine people: they never shared their secrets with other people, except with their families, because that's what made them important. The halibut fishermen: that's what made them important. The deer hunters, that's what made them important. We had this structure in which there was definite ranking in terms of how we conducted ourselves and how we conducted our business but it made everyone feel important and as those families grew those roles and responsibilities grew to (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

Ingold (2000: 325) proposes that this shared work constitutes a *taskscape* representing 'the totality of tasks making up the pattern of activity of a community'. Ingold proposes that in 'traditional' societies there can be no real distinction between work and social life. Borrowing from sociologists' Sorekin and Merton's (1937: 628)
concept of social time, Ingold proposes its 'embeddedness in activities that are indexical of a person’s belonging to locality and community' (2000: 325). The social web of economic relations, the taskscape, has lost significance through colonial processes of displacement, confinement, and assimilation, as well as industrial labour dependence. The last two decades of 80 per cent unemployment has brought about a decrease in subsistence practices as people have less money and cannot afford gas and the upkeep of their boat in order to go out fishing, or to buy ammunition for their rifles.

The economic transformations of modernity have triggered parallel social transformations in which individual rather than collective autonomy is increasingly valued. Nuu-chah-nulth elders such as Rosie Swan emphasise the everyday social collectivism of the past, such as women berry picking together and sitting in a circle to enjoy them afterwards (pp. 167-71) that she remembers seeing as a child. It was also during this time that community politics and gossip was shared. Frank August's (pp. 159-61) memory of seal hunting with his father, and the visiting of houses to share out meat with different relations in Maaqtusiis and other villages, constitutes an ‘economic’ activity that facilitated sociality crucial for the reaffirming of wide collectivism. Ingold (2000) has critiqued anthropology’s usual characterisation of the subsistence practices of hunter and gatherer communities as non-social and purely mechanical and technical (Sahlins, 1972: 186 fn. 1). By this thinking the work or taskscape of collective labour is not a social one but one in which a group of individuals set about the same task. The social being is assumed when the resources are later shared (Palsson, 1991: 8). Ingold asserts then that if, as Durkheim (1976: 16) proposed, there are two parts to a person, then the hunter–gatherer is the individual, and the social being the one that shares the food afterwards. An ethic of individualism has gained an increasingly normalised prominence in Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

For a few nights I went out clam digging with the locals of Maaqtusiis. Two beaches in Ahousaht territory had been opened for a few days for a commercial dig. Nearly everyone, bar the very young and old, layered themselves in warm clothes and raingear and piled into boats. Many of those few with boats did a number of trips to get people out to the digging site. They took their boats as far in as they could and waded onto the beach laden with buckets, sacks, rakes, torches and lamps. The people worked in groups gossiping, talked about their plans and families, and most of all in true Nuu-chah-nulth style teased each other. People brought sandwiches and hot thermoses of tea and coffee and set to the task with great enthusiasm. Clam–digging is one of the only, albeit sporadic, natural resources in Clayoquot Sound they can presently exploit for cash
livelihood and for ‘home use’ to feed their families. As well as clam digging, for the young deer hunters I accompanied, hunting gave them an identity and purpose in a time of unemployment. Supplying meat to families who needed it, allowed them to feel the self-worth of fulfilling a purposeful and productive role in their community.

My ethnographic accounts of subsistence activities in this study bring forth the undeniable social benefit gained from shared livelihood, indicating its importance for Nuu-chah-nulth collectivism. When Nuu-chah-nulth elders criticise young people, it is for a perceived individualism they perceive as threatening the well being of community, an expression of empathy that most elders were socialised to view as imperative for the functioning of the group. With this sentiment comes the heavy heartedness of knowing the imparting of these values is in large part their responsibility. Yet there are many wide-reaching negative social and economic impacts that determine the attitudes and actions of some young Nuu-chah-nulth. Put simply it is a very different world they live in from their elders’ youth, and an uncertain future they face. Many children and young adults come from dysfunctional homes and are the victims of a cycle of abuse perpetrated by some members of the older generation, the same people that criticise them for antisocial behaviour.

The psychological affects of Residential School on many ex-students continues to cause societal pressure on Nuu-chah-nulth communities which is experienced through what Das and Kleinman (2001) call ‘social suffering’. Until the last school closed on the coast in the early 70s children were separated from their families by the state and kept in an existence of what Adelson (2001: 78) calls ‘virtual incarceration’. In some cases missionary zeal led children to literally, as one man put it to me, have the ‘Indian beaten out of them’. Many children died in the care of the schools. Of course, not all Nuu-chah-nulth experienced trauma from their school experience, but many who were not directly abused were affected by witnessing the abuse of other children. This structural violence led many children to grow up disconnected from their own culture, and to feel trapped between two worlds, no longer fully Nuu-chah-nulth nor European. The loss of identity and self-worth felt by students, a great many of which suffered emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, has led to social dysfunction. A high percentage of middle-aged and older adults went through the residential school system, and this experience is thought by many to be the prime cause of the culture of abuse that is widely prevalent in some First Nation communities. Adelson (2001: 78) asserts that the residential school experience remains a key factor singled out by First Nation people as contributing to their status as the most disenfranchised people in Canada.
For those Nuu-chah-nulth who did not attend residential school, it is difficult for them to comprehend what occurred. It is harder still for Euro-Canadians to empathise, many unaware that the schools even existed. Euro-Canadian views of First Nation people as violent and sexually immoral, and ‘racially’ predisposed to alcohol and drug addiction, are also complicit in the denial of residential schooling as a major cause of social dysfunction in Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nation communities. Accompanying this view is the implication that the high number of cases of sexual abuse and social violence among First Nation peoples are the result of a moral and cultural inferiority that has always been a characteristic of First Nation society, rather than the result of structural violence on the part of the state (see Furniss, 1999).

Following the establishment and report of a 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Federal Government issued a formal apology in January of 1998 to the victims of residential schools and established a $350 million "healing fund". According to the government, approximately 5,000 Nuu-chah-nulth people attended the schools. The Nuu-chah-nulth population is 6,400. The government and some churches have officially and publicly apologised to First Nation people for their subjection of children in their care to cultural, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. It is estimated that 100,000 cases throughout Canada are yet to be brought to the courts as people await decisions over financial compensation from churches and the federal government embroiled in determining their share of the responsibility, and thus their financial obligation.

On February 3, 1996 a First Class action lawsuit was brought against the United Church and government of Canada by fifteen survivors of the Alberni residential school in Port Alberni, making front-page headlines in the Vancouver Sun. Reverend Kevin Annett of the United Church sought to help Nuu-chah-nulth deal with past trauma from abuse that occurred at the school. Annett was regularly threatened, and later received death threats from other members of the Church who were nervous about financial claims against the church, as well as in some cases, prosecution. According to ex-students murder, rape and physical abuse all occurred while they were pupils at the school. Annett was dismissed from the Church and his right to ordain as a minister was taken from him. A number of Nuu-chah-nulth people had talked in his services about their abuse by staff and clergy at the United Church Alberni residential school. One ex-student spoke of how he had found the body of a seven-year-old girl who had been sexually assaulted in the school gardens. When he advised the headmaster, he was ordered not to speak of it to anyone or he would be beaten. Soon after the body of the
girl disappeared. The student was immediately sent to another school. Another woman who attended the school said she saw an administrator kick a six-year-old girl down the stairs who died soon after. The man, who is said to have killed two children at the school, was protected by the United Church and police and continued to run the school.

There have also been allegations of theft laid against the church for selling land allocated to churches within Nuu-chah-nulth territory. Residential school sites were often chosen with the worth of the land in mind. The Ahousaht council provided the land to the United Church as a site for the residential school on the understanding that the land would be retained for the community. In 1953 the Church sold the land to the grandson of the church minister. In 1994, the Ahousaht land was sold for approximately $1 million dollars to the United Church's financial benefactor, the logging corporation MacMillan Bloedel. The Ahousaht were not consulted or remunerated in any way.

Seventeen United Church officers ignored a Diplomatic Summons issued by a United Nations-affiliated Tribunal in June 1998, and refused to attend the Tribunal or answer charges of complicity in genocide brought against them. The United Church of Canada and its officers were found guilty in absentia of committing and concealing genocide against Aboriginal peoples under the United Nation's 1948 Convention on Genocide, which Canada ratified in 1952. The Church has not complied with international law and surrendered all guilty persons and evidence to the judgment of the International Criminal Court.

A friend of mine, who I'll call Jake, shared his experience of Catholic residential school and how this has impacted his life. Between the ages of six and eleven Jake was abused by a priest at his school. As we had lunch Jake ordered an orange soda and I mentioned to him that he had told me that sugar was bad for his health. He said that he had only just started drinking it again as it was something that triggered his memories of abuse. Drinking it made him feel in control of his emotions.

The Catholic priest that abused Jake used to entice him into his room with the promise of orange soda and when he had abused him would give him two bottles of it. Jake told me that this kind of abuse never leaves you. You just have to learn how to stop it controlling your behaviour in negative ways. He was also abused while at Catholic high school (he had not wanted to go to this school but he was in the legal charge of the priests and they decided for him). Here Jake had sexual relations with a Nun in her twenties when he was fifteen years old. Jake felt this experience led him to be very promiscuous. His friends would tell him that he didn’t have to behave that way, and that
he wasn’t being himself. He became an alcoholic for some years and went through therapy to try to deal with his abuse. Jake hasn’t had a drink for decades.

Jake [not real name] told me about one of his childhood friends from his village. The same priest abused Jake and his friend Tom. As a young man Tom enlisted for Vietnam. He became a Green Beret. He had wanted to die without knowing why, but said his memories of school were of ‘having the Indian beaten out of him’. The process of assimilation by force led many children to grow up disconnected from their own culture, and to feel trapped between two worlds, neither of which they felt they belonged in.

While Tom [not real name] was in Vietnam people lost they’re lives all around him, but he had told Jake, no matter how hard he tried he simply could not die. He has a deep hole in his stomach where a bullet went through him missing all his vital organs. Later, through taking part in the healing circles organised to deal with issues of his abuse suffered at residential school he recovered many memories of physical and sexual abuse, and realised why he had wanted to die. He began to understand his extreme patterns of behaviour. A common aspect of abuse, particularly in the case of abuse by church clergy and workers, is the blaming of victims for acts of abuse committed upon them. ‘This is just the way you are, and you ask for this’ is what the Jake remembers the priest saying to him after he abused him.

Many ex-students of residential schools have been traumatised by experiences of abuse and have sought solace in drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism. The social impacts of drug and alcohol abuse ruputres communities, splitting families and fracturing intergenerational relationships. Elders often live alone as they don’t want their children and grandchildren living with them for fear that they will use drugs and alcohol and make the home unsafe. Many parents and grandparents who had past personal problems with drugs and/or alcohol but are now clean, sober and often born again Christian, can not relate to their children and grandchildren who are now experimenting with drugs and alcohol themselves.

Mike [not real name], a ‘retired’ (retired being Mike’s euphemism for unwanted unemployment) Ahousahi logger whom I sometimes stayed with when I was in Maaqtusisi, commented that the village was hell and mentioned that he carried a knife when he walked at night. He advised that I do the same although I did not, and did not have any trouble while walking at night. The village had a reputation that meant many young people from other Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations were afraid to go there, particularly young women who told me they would visit for a meeting or celebration but did not want to stay in the village overnight.
There are often break-ins and the burglars listen to the VHF radio (nearly everyone in Maacquisis has a VHF radio with which they communicate with others and go about their business) to see who is going into town or leaving for a few days in which case they rob their house. People are rarely open about their whereabouts over the radio these days due to the amount of burglary and this has developed an imaginative use of code. Mike’s son Billy joked that he was ‘happy trailer parks existed so he knew this stuff happened to white people as well’.

As I have indicated in this study, poor Euro-Canadians living in Clayoquot Sound have, like the majority of Nuu-chah-nulth people, been marginalised by the fluctuations of the global economy, becoming as Bauman (2004) puts it, the ‘outcasts of modernity’. Also like a significant number of Nuu-chah-nulth families, their children have suffered the impacts of unemployment. Many loggers made up to 80,000 dollars a year before the industry began to be replaced by tourism in the region. There were many broken homes created as a result of this political and market driven change. Heavy drinking and drug use amongst these young Euro-Canadian people is also widespread.

Many young Nuu-chah-nulth people do not respect traditional values, care about the loss of native language, or want to return to living how Nuu-chah-nulth did in the past. They are true ‘moderns’ and seek an escape from what they see as the boredom and lack of opportunity in their isolated reserve homes. Elders criticise young Nuu-chah-nulth for their supposed lack of values and care for others that aids the common good in everyday community life, and yet there is ample evidence of sharing from the point of view of the guest. On countless occasions I was taken into peoples’ homes and given a meal. It is this empathy that elders feel young people have lost. For them, this comes with a sense of failed responsibility, knowing that the imparting of these values is in large part their responsibility. Yet there are many wide-reaching social and economic schema which factor in the attitudes and actions of young Nuu-chah-nulth; put simply it is a different world the young live in and a different future they face.

The lack of young Nuu-chah-nulth voices in my text may seem curious and it is certainly a failing; one may discern from my ethnography the common experiences and time I spent with young Nuu-chah-nulth people, out hunting, fishing, clam digging, or just hanging out, and yet they were very reluctant to offer personal feelings on issues that concerned them. This was sometimes due to a lack of self-esteem and an uncertainty of what to say about social issues that seemed beyond their control; sometimes they may not have trusted my potential representation of their lives.
Young people are bored, frustrated by the lack of organised activities for them. In Esowista the concrete basketball court has been broken up. The hoop and pole have been pulled down and smashed on more than one occasion. Due to this the council decided to not repair it another time, as they commented, the kids would only destroy it again, a logic that has bred negativity. When I walked through Esowista young teens would be walking up and down the short road through the community, visibly bored and frustrated. The extensions at Esowista are an effort to remedy not only housing shortages, but to build a community centre where young people can have activities, particularly through the long wet winters.

Many children and teenagers feel a sense of despair, a word used by adults when talking of their children and grandchildren. Drinking and taking drugs is a release from depression and feelings of hopelessness. On the weekend parents often leave for Port Alberni to visit friends and relatives, leaving older children and teenagers unattended. It is common for elders to complain about the attitudes of some teenagers, especially when drinking and fighting occurs, but they rarely take issue with the parents who neglect their children and leave them unattended in the community for many days. Due to the drinking and parties that result from the parents’ absence other people leave the community on weekends further exacerbating the problem, and the feelings of neglect among young Nuu-chah-nulth people. The results are often tragic.

Methamphetamines, while not yet widespread, are becoming a problem. Bootleggers and dealers bring in alcohol and marijuana. In Maaqtusiis and Opitsat they would do a boat run to Tofino at night to avoid being seen by other community members. There is competition and fights over drug (mainly marijuana and increasingly methamphetamines) and bootleg alcohol distribution between young males of two large families in Maaqtusiis. As no alcohol is sold in Nuu-chah-nulth communities this is a lucrative business.

I got to know the houses where kids would gather to hang out and I could smell cannabis and alcohol and hear gangster rap shaking the thin walls as I passed by. This has led to some children as young as ten drinking and using drugs. Some girls have been persuaded to come to parties in return for alcohol and drugs. Once intoxicated they have been raped. When I was in Maaqtusiis Mike’s son Billy [not real names] said that, ‘the girls go there because they want the drugs and probably know what is going to happen and partly want it in some way’. His wife Rose [not real name], was greatly angered and concerned by his comment, and said that this was not the case and the girls didn’t know what would happen.
Writing about acts of violence perpetrated by Nuu-chah-nulth within their community runs the risk of reinforcing negative perceptions of a marginalised people among unsympathetic readers. As these following examples were incidents shared with me second hand, often by the family members of the victims, they are not laden with the seductive poetics of first hand ethnography, and less likely to fascinate rather than inform. These are the real everyday lived causal affects of political and economic oppression.

As Bill’s son Henry [not real names in following accounts] walked home up the gravel road he saw a few young men walking down the road towards him. He couldn’t really make them out in the starless winter night. As he moved to pass them he recognised some of his nephews. One of them swung at him hard and he fell to the ground. They all kicked him until he began to lose consciousness. Before he passed out he saw one of his nephews pick up a large rock and hold it above his head. He realised the boy was about to kill him. Then he heard a yell and the boy dropped the rock and they ran off. The next thing he knew he woke up in hospital with serious injuries and spent three months being rehabilitated. Henry later discovered that his ex-common law wife had offered the boys seventy dollars to kill him in order to benefit from his life insurance. They agreed to do this, as they wanted the money to buy drugs. Bill’s grandson was killed on this same part of the road by some drunken teenagers who beat him about the head with a piece of wood.

One woman who lived on reserve was thought to be mentally unstable and often made advances towards many of the local men. At that time a couple of decades ago you could get an instant payout of some thousands of dollars in court if you were found to be a victim of rape. This legislation created a culture of deceit by which many men were sent to prison. Bill [not real name] was one of the men accused of rape by this woman. She took him to court to convict him for the alleged rape and the judge threw the case out. Bill admitted to me that he used Indian medicine throughout the trial and commented that the medicine was very strong. There was no way he was going to be wrongly convicted he said, when he had protected himself and his family so well with his medicine. He could not tell me what was in the medicine as it is sacred family knowledge, which is not shared with other Ahousaht families, let alone outsiders.

Bill [as before not real name] told me of another recent crime that befell his family. A young man from one of the powerful local families raped Bill’s teenage niece. The rape was so savage that she needed internal stitching and spent time in Tofino hospital. Due to the high standing of his family in the community the man was never brought to
trial. The two local RCMP officers did not secure adequate evidence such as DNA testing to identify the culprit, rather taking a bribe from the family to protect the young man from trial and imprisonment. Bill was sickened and angered by this and took the law into his own hands giving the young man a beating on the road outside his house, the same spot where Henry was beaten by his nephews. Bill was threatened by the young man’s family but told them not to even think about it as the boy had got the least he deserved for what he had done. The family had Bill arrested for assault and he was forced to go to court and defend himself. The boy admitted to the judge that he had done far worse to Bill’s family. The judge threw it out of court. Bill again confided to me that he had been using powerful medicine throughout the ordeal to protect himself and his family. As before, he had complete confidence in the power of his medicine to protect him and his loved ones.

In the last week I was staying in Maquatuisiis I was told that a thirteen-year-old boy had passed out drunk down by the dock. While he lay there he was raped by a number of men. None of these men have been arrested. I asked around and talked to people I knew about what they thought would be done. Would the family of the boy find these men or would the law be alerted? Everybody seemed pretty reticent about the possibility of finding the men although a few had a pretty good idea of the identity of a couple of them. It seemed nothing would be done.

I asked why much anti-social behaviour was tolerated and so many serious crimes left unpunished by the victims and their families. There was no one overarching cause I gained from the answers I received: ‘the police are useless, people feel they shouldn’t interfere with each other’s families and lives and that it is none of their business’. I was reminded of a conversation I had with Ucluelet elder Miriam [real name] who commented on the community breakdown she saw happening around her. Miriam felt that these issues used to be everybody’s business as they affected the whole community and its cohesiveness and happiness. Nowadays she said, ‘people don’t care what happens outside their own house. We have become like the white man, and we are losing our sense of community’ (Miriam Touchie, conversation in her store at Ucluelet: 2003).

Many community members indicate police corruption as rife, and that policemen sent to the reserve are rejects from small rural towns in mainland British Columbia where they were found to be negligent or corrupt. The past and present resident police officers are described as lazy, corrupt and too fearful to be of any help in potentially violent encounters. One Aboriginal ex-officer was said to have been understanding and
good with the locals, and 'was not afraid of the party houses'. Yet he was posted somewhere else. Officers are held to be easily corruptible. This is deemed the reason many perpetrators of violent crimes such as rape, and in a couple of cases murder, on the reserve are never prosecuted and are sometimes able to remain in the community.

Prevalent beliefs held among Euro-Canadians about First Nation people also factor in the complicity and laxness towards serious crimes displayed by many resident RCMP officers who have been posted to communities such as Maaquisis. Common to small-town British Columbia where the majority of officers are from, negative character traits are attributed to First Nation people as inherent to their nature as a 'race'. Characterised as morally and culturally inferior these views of First Nation people impact on social relations and sometimes lead officers to tolerate social behaviour and violence that they would not tolerate of a white community.

In Maaquisis a community police service is in the process of being established and there is a plan afoot to expel the RCMP. The Ahousaht police will comprise twelve local people aged in the twenties and thirties. All are clean living, some having struggled to overcome abuse of alcohol and drugs. If it goes ahead as planned they will be trained over three months in Regina in mainland British Columbia, and will be issued with uniforms including nightsticks and revolvers which will be unloaded. The officers will carry the shells separately as predicated under Canadian law.

The potential Ahousaht officers know the trouble people and the identity of many of the offenders. I asked people whether some of the past offenders who have got away with crimes would be apprehended and was told that this was the plan and they were to be made an example of. If successful these people will be expelled from the reserve permanently and be unable to return. Violent offenders such as rapists and murderers will be prosecuted under the law. Those who have been dealing drugs, stealing and bringing in bootleg alcohol will simply be expelled from the community. Bill's [not real name] son Henry [not real name] was to be trained as an officer and held the view that giving young people police records and imprisoning them did not effectively curb many of these crimes. This meant that many young people lost opportunities to transform their lives, become educated and take up gainful employment.

When I talked to local Tla-o-qui-aht living in Esowista at Long Beach and the village of Opitsat on Meares Island about my findings from staying out in Ahousaht it was commonly said, 'it is the same here'. I mentioned the rape and violence I had been told of by Ahousaht living at Maaquisis. The following is my paraphrasing of one man's account of a number of violent crimes at Esowista and Opitsat [he did not want to be
identified or recorded on audio tape on this subject. I have called him Sam and his and all other names mentioned in accounts of social violence in this chapter are created.

A murder occurred in Esowista involving a group of men who were having a drinking party at one of the houses down by the beach. There was loud music playing and locals living nearby remembered lots of shouting and screaming, as they got progressively drunk. One of the men on reserve who was a heavy drinker and drug user, but harmless, an ‘okay guy’ I was told, wandered down towards the party, probably to get a drink or a smoke off the guys. The man had reputedly owed them money for drugs for some time. Soon after he had gone down there people in nearby houses heard loud shouting. They began to beat the man badly. A young man found the body the next morning and said it was the most awful thing he had ever seen.

A young eleven-year-old girl was shot on the beach at Opitsat. At the time of her death her father had been away working at a logging camp, the working reality of many men at that time. He returned to Esowista and driving into the village noticed that there were no cars or people about and most of the houses had been closed up. He became concerned, as this sign in any Nuu-chah-nulth community often indicate that someone has died. He later found that his daughter had been over in Opitsat playing with some boys on the beach who had a rifle. They were firing at cans and driftwood as targets, and taking a shot at the odd seagull. At some point that afternoon the gun went off and she was killed.

The two boys involved were never arrested and brought to trial. They never did any time in Juvenile Detention, and were not reprimanded in any way. Like Bill in Ahousaht whose experiences of violence perpetrated against his family had left him feeling powerless, the father of the girl fantasised about taking the law into his own hands and killing the boys. One of the boys who he talked to was particularly remorseless and he told me he thought about killing this boy until his rage mellowed with time. The two boys are now grown men who continue to live in the area.

One man I talked with told me that his grandson planned and executed a robbery on the beachfront at Esowista and spent time in juvenile detention. He and his friend spotted a tourist couple walking on the beach and they ran back to the house to get some rubbish bags to tie around their shoes so they wouldn’t leave any prints. They grabbed knives and put on balaclavas and ran down onto the beach where they robbed the couple at knifepoint. They were caught and arrested.

He was taken in for this and was described by police as a model prisoner at the detention centre. Yet, this was not the case when he was at home his grandfather told
me. The young man has been sometimes in the care of his grandfather, as his parents are not prepared to discipline him. He commented that the boy scared him, and showed no remorse for any of the things he had done. When his grandson was let out and he went to pick him up the policeman remarked to the boy, 'I hope we won't be seeing you again'. The boy did not reply or say anything like 'definitely not', but just walked by and ignored him. This concerned his grandfather greatly who felt his silence might have represented a decision to continue with criminal activity. He told me that he sensed the young man's coldness and lack of emotion and remorse. He seemed unable to pass judgement on the situation and seemed to simply not care. The robbery and subsequent prosecution had not fazed him in the slightest, his grandfather said, and he wondered what he was capable of with this attitude and this really concerned him. The majority of theft on reserve amongst fellow community members goes unpunished. Many locals believe there is little point involving police, giving a young person a criminal record, holding them back in life, and perhaps making them more likely to lead a life of crime. A mistrust of police is another factor, contributing to a local culture of 'sorting out our own problems'. Many Nuu-chah-nulth see the affects of prison terms on young offenders, often returning to their communities more volatile and troubled after often-terrifying prison experiences.

One man told me that he had his house broken into and some pieces of his wife’s valuable jewellery and his watch taken. He found out that his nephews were responsible by hearing them bragging about it to their friends. He went and told his brother who came back with his watch but the jewellery was never returned. He said that he felt that they might have sold some of it. He had also had all his groceries stolen from his house in the days when everyone kept their doors unlocked. This is no longer the case.

On one of the last weekends before I finished my fieldwork period a local man told me that his niece and her friend had reported being raped at a house party in Opitsat. The girls had been drinking and became intoxicated, after which they were raped. They were not sure who had raped them as they were very intoxicated but knew they had been raped. Police were questioning one man but that was all anyone knew. The man told me that he had not wanted his now adult son and daughter to live on reserve, as it is too dangerous. He also did not want his grandson growing up 'on reserve'. Both his children lived in town.

Many coastal Nuu-chah-nulth leave their home communities for opportunities, particularly education and employment, while some are also asked to leave their communities because they have caused trouble for other community members. Young
Nuu-chah-nulth move to urban centres and establish new lives for themselves. Many flourish yet many fail without the support of family and community. Some are suffering severe emotional problems stemming from abuse suffered while growing up in their home community.

While I lived in Port Alberni for a couple of months at the beginning of my fieldwork, I met coastal Nuu-chah-nulth people who had left their reserve communities. My neighbour Jim [not his real name] and I got to know each other over coffee and cigarettes. I knew few people and I was happy to have someone to talk with in my first couple of months of fieldwork before I moved down to Clayoquot Sound.

Jim left home at thirteen when his father kicked him out. He is now thirty-three. He went to Vancouver and within a fortnight had a place to live and a job working at a pub on Hastings in downtown Vancouver, a poor part of the city known for its drug dealing and prostitution. Bands played in the pub every night and there were lots of fights. Jim’s mother died when he was a boy. There were nineteen children in the family. One brother shot himself. Two of Jim’s sisters, twins, died in a fire when they were young. His sister died of alcohol poisoning. Another sister drowned in the bath, and coroners found she had suffered a head wound and been concussed before she fell in the bath so there may have been foul play. The truth will likely never be known. Jim has been in treatment for cocaine addiction. He smoked crack cocaine for about five months and says he doesn’t miss it since treatment but he needs further treatment to keep him from drinking, which he says he hasn’t been doing for a while.

His father died last year and that sent him on a bender for a couple of months. He is about to start school to do his years 9 and 10, Maths and English. It should take a year and a half to graduate. I helped him a little with the English. He has nothing in his apartment. The Salvation Army dropped around with some furniture and the building manager cut him a break by giving him an apartment without any references on the condition he doesn’t let him down. Jim gave him his word and thanked him. He knows a lot of people wouldn’t have cut him a break. Jim is on a disability benefit as he broke his leg in a car accident. He now has a metal pin in his upper right leg. He told me he was drink driving. The schooling is in the nearby Nuu-chah-nulth community so is free. Disability covers his rent. He needs some work to get by as well, and seems to have something going nearby. I made him a coffee, gave him a couple of cigarettes. I read his poetry, which was very personal and powerful in experience. Jim said he hasn’t really shown anyone his writing apart from a teacher. Jim has been self-sufficient without his family since he was thirteen. He sometimes talks of a brother who worries about him
and wants him back in school. His late father, I guess feeling remorse, sent the older brother after Jim thinking he wouldn't make it in Vancouver on his own.

Jim had a five-year relationship with a girlfriend but they broke up recently as they were arguing and according to him she is paranoid and jealous. They were both heavy cocaine users. Jim told me that she was more heavily addicted to the cocaine than him and refused Jim's requests and demands to get help. He moved out, leaving her in Vancouver, and came back to the Island (Vancouver Island) to go to school and get his life sorted out.

Jim borrowed money off me after a few weeks. I had a couple of beers with him one night after much persuasion, as I knew he was already drunk and he needed company. He often knocked on my door to say hello, and after over a month of promises and a drunkenly and affectionately offered poster of Geronimo I received the thirty dollars.

Jim's daughter came to stay for a couple of days and he bought her a racy purple bike. She lives with her mother. The main thing that has kept him going in his battle to stay clean and sober is being a good father to his young daughter and son. It is hard to watch Jim struggling to do what he knows is right and slip back into drinking. His friends and cousins come around at night and shout for him to come into town for a drink. He relents and invites them in for a coffee yet they often bring beer with them. Sometimes he slips and has a beer and then finds he can't stop. The next day he is wracked with guilt and self-disgust. I went over one night and his friends all looked at me disparagingly until Jim sang my praises and they relaxed. That evening I took my leave after a can of beer. From my apartment next door I heard Jim and his cousin quickly slip into an argument, which soon became a fight. Shouting and the thudding of bodies into walls filled the apartment block, and I thought, Jim's done it now, they will throw him out and he has nowhere to go, and no bond to get another apartment. The building manager often asked me how Jim was going and I said fine, just fine, covering for him a little. I wonder how Jim is today and hope he has kept his spirit. I told him I was going out to Ahousaht and he told me to look up his nephew when I was there which I did.

Nuu-chah-nulth run healing centres have now become a normalised aspect of life in communities and everyone has family members who have used these services. Although a culture of denial and shame about acknowledging personal problems is prominent, as more people seek help others feel comfortable doing so. Nuu-chah-nulth efforts to heal the social impacts of colonialism, residential school abuse, and unemployment in their communities are innovative and draw on diverse traditions, Nuu-chah-nulth and other. It
is common for Nuu-chah-nulth people to express the challenge of healing social problems as an issue that must be solved collectively. I went to talk with Pam Frank who works at the Holistic Healing Centre in Maaqtusii. Being December I sloshed through the heavy rain up to the Centre. Pam talked with me about the Healing Centre efforts and methods.

We are finding that using our culture in a spiritual way helps to heal emotionally, physically, mentally. We don't leave spirituality out. By using spirituality we are expected to use our natural resources whether it is waters, or going into the mountains, into the forests, on the beaches, doing sacred ceremonies. It helps. It's something new that's coming around with this generation that hasn't been done so openly [in the past]. They were quite private and done only by family. But now because of the programmes we have here we have opened it up. Some families are forced into it because it only takes one person from that family to say that's what I want to do, that's what I want to learn about. And they keep telling me, 'I have to go to my family to find out how they do it' [ceremonies]. It's pretty neat. We're recognised by the federal and provincial systems, especially the Corrections Canada, the court system, the judicial system. Our cultural ways are recognised and can actually be used to help individuals who are going through the judicial system or who have been incarcerated to get back out into community, so it's part of reintegrating them back into community. When they left here they were unhealthy and perceived as a risk to our community. One offence can impact or have an effect on not only an individual but on a family and community as a whole because we are so close knit and related. People across the road I'm related to, people on the other side are related to me. You can't help it so somehow you have to have that connection of saying it's the wrong that's been done, not the persons themselves.

So it is a form of forgiveness?

It is. We work towards that. We work towards that. It's taking responsibility and accountability for your actions. People can go through the correctional facility or do their term and come out and still be the same person they went
in as. We bring them back to the community and they are expected to do healing, both theoretical, getting help from councillors, but they also get assistance and guidance from Elders through our cultural means (Pam Frank, pers.comm at the Holistic Centre, Maaqusiis: 2003).

While many Nuu-chah-nulth have gained strong support by attending First Nation run healing circles, particularly in regard to alcohol or drug abuse problems, the professed rehabilitation of rapists and child molesters has proven a very divisive issue in Nuu-chah-nulth communities. While cases such as drug use and stealing are dealt with by healing centres in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, there are also efforts to smooth the return of rapists and child molesters back into their home communities once they have served their time in prison. First Nation efforts to heal collectively often involve a strategy of bringing together the abuser and victim in order to facilitate forgiveness and remorse. In many cases this has proven to be a further traumatising experience for the victims (see LaRocque, 1997).

There is now a ‘suicide crisis’ in coastal villages. At the time of writing in Maaqusiis there have been two deaths by suicide and fourteen attempts in the past month. All were teenagers and young adults. The rate of youth suicide in First Nation communities far surpasses other ethnic groups in Canada. Nuu-chah-nulth adults told me that young people are ‘desperate’, and that is often what I saw. In regard to the health of youth in many First Nation communities, Warry (1998: 156) asserts, the utilisation of elders and spiritual leaders offering community activities, which ‘emphasise land skills, and traditional ecological knowledge, are perhaps the simplest and most effective suicide-prevention strategies’. I use this example to posit land and environment not only as a site for articulating power but also as a site of healing and cultural renewal.

Both Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht people talk of their reputation for community spirit and generosity to each other as well as to other Nuu-chah-nulth and outsiders. Their pride is justified and as an outsider I was often invited into people’s houses for a meal or a cup of coffee. Yet, locals talk of a culture of permissiveness, abuse, and denial, which underlies their everyday lives, not only in Maaqusiis, Esowista and Opitsat but also in other Nuu-chah-nulth communities. Nuu-chah-nulth efforts to heal have been innovative, courageous and resourceful, displaying a need to bring about wellbeing through collective commitment. But they face significant challenges.
HEREDITARY AND ELECTED RESPONSIBILITIES – THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CHANGE

Plate 72. Ahousaht chiefs' Stanley Sam and Billy Keitlah Jr. at Rights and Title Rally in Victoria, provincial capital of British Columbia.
There are two political systems in Nuu-chah-nulth society today, the hereditary and the elected. Today the Nuu-chah-nulth live in neither a truly kinship nor democratically political system, and as such are forced to navigate complex political understandings and relationships. Leach’s (1970) analysis of dual political systems is useful in understanding the complexity of contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth political and social life. For the Kachin of Burma, like the Nuu-chah-nulth, political organisation has long been unstable. In the case of the Nuu-chah-nulth this instability pre and early contact has been characterised by territorial warfare and amalgamations. Today, competing elected and hereditary systems heighten internal political conflicts. Leach asserts that the Kachin lived within a social organisation determined by two political systems, one aristocratic and autocratic, and the other equalitarian and democratic. For the Kachin, like the Nuu-chah-nulth today, ideal status relationships were inherently unstable, and the Kachin deferred to the authority of each system as it served them best. Like the Kachin model, Nuu-chah-nulth social reality involves reliance on an officially unacknowledged third system of handling group affairs, which constitutes a compromise between the hereditary and elected systems.

Successive federal and provincial governments have tried to manipulate First Nations into making a cognitive and political choice between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’: between a hereditary and an electoral political system; between subsistence livelihood and a cash economy; between a European Christian education and local knowledge and cosmology. Asad (1992: 337) asserts that the pressures of modernity on traditional Indigenous life means that changes, ‘do not reflect a simple expansion of the range of individual choice, but the creation of conditions in which only new (i.e., modern) choices can be made’.

The electoral democratic system was enforced by the Canadian state through the Indian Act in 1857, and as I outlined in Chapter 2 (page 46) involved the establishment of one elected head chief, thirteen councillors, the hereditary chiefs who were not to be replaced when they died, and the resident Indian Agent who oversaw every aspect of people’s lives, often in alliance with missionaries. These actions were bitterly resented by the Nuu-chah-nulth. Their political and ceremonial core of social life, the potlatch, was also banned at this time (see Chapter 9). While the Indian Agents are now gone from Nuu-chah-nulth communities, the hereditary chiefs continue to pass their chieftainships down to their sons.

The electoral system was established under colonialism, as it was in other parts of the world such as Africa (see Werbner, 1999). Imposed democratic systems tend towards
political instability and socially divide communities through the establishment of elites. The political elite is resented by Nuu-chah-nulth not benefiting from kin allegiances, who believe that many members of their leadership are corrupt and self-serving. While many in power work hard to improve the social conditions of their people, corruption exists, seen as a justifiable reward for their high position by some offending hereditary and elected chiefs. The elites of the colonised are tied to political structures of domination. The relationship between colonialism and the colonised is not simply one of hegemony and resistance, but as Jean and John Comaroff (1991: 26) elegantly define the history of colonialism, is 'a drawn out affair, such an intricate fugue of challenge and riposte, mastery and misery'.

Many Nuu-chah-nulth pointed out to me that divided loyalties can pit family members against one another, so impacting are the social ramifications of political allegiances. Yet, while their have been negative aspects of the electoral system, for many Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nations it has allowed a number of young, articulate, and educated leaders to take over the leadership by way of the Indian Act’s system of elected, fixed-term band councils from the older lifetime hereditary chiefs. This change did not occur to any lasting degree among central coast Nuu-chah-nulth, who have lost many of their young well-educated leaders to the wider realms of Aboriginal politics in Victoria and Ottawa. Older Nuu-chah-nulth men in power would often argue that these urban raised young men have been too influenced by Euro-Canadian culture, society and modes of governance to understand the importance of Nuu-chah-nulth traditions and teachings, nor the real needs of their isolated poor rural communities. Much of this criticism is due to the young chiefs’ threats to the old power base. The power of the Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary chiefs has never been extinguished on the central coast.

Since the electoral political system was introduced observance of the protocols and obligations of the ranked social system has declined. The concept of earning authority through community votes rather than bestowal by hereditary right is highly conflicting for Nuu-chah-nulth. Many people see the worth of both systems. Some pour scorn on what they view as a democracy represented in word only. This attitude applied to both provincial and federal government as well as their own elected councils. Regardless of the electoral system, voting choice is still largely predicated on kinship ties. By this I mean, “if my uncle gets in again I will keep my job in administration in my home community. If my uncle doesn’t get in the alternative candidate may not rehire me. I
cannot risk my job. Although I don’t think he did a good job of governing us last term, I will vote for him again. He takes care of me’.

The hereditary system involved the granting of resource use-rights by hereditary chiefs to commoners in return for their political loyalty and economic labour obligations. In return commoners received protection and the prestige and alliances of the chiefly house to which they were affiliated. Today, many Nu-chah-nulth still defer to their hereditary chiefs and will attend to their wishes as a matter of obligation. Depending on their skills, this may involve carving a chief a mask to be used at a potlatch, or bringing him a traditional food he particularly likes or may need for a ceremony or feast his family are holding. This respect is particularly shown to the head chiefs of families. Allegiance is also shown to some younger chiefs, some of who inherit the chiefly rights of their fathers when they are quite young. In their early thirties is common. Today some young men, eldest sons destined to be chiefs, are not seen to ‘live right’ and in some families chiefs may be on their deathbed before they name an heir. This is avoided at all costs as the seat is lost if a chief dies without naming an heir. Drinking, drug use, womanising, and criminality are attributes commonly seen as serious slights on the moral character of a potential young chief. Such a situation occurred recently for a Tla-o-qui-aht family. A chief suffering from seriously poor health was concerned about his son’s lifestyle and attitude and admonished him many times to change his behaviour and clean up his life so he could inherit the chiefly seat that was rightly his.

I outline the social relationships of the hereditary system to show that it is still very much a part of Nu-chah-nulth life with accompanying social and economic obligations. Among the Maori of New Zealand, social inequalities existing today within both the Maori tribal hierarchy lead some Maori scholars (Hop, 1999: 113) to ask whether the negotiations between state and Maori tribal elites will adequately benefit those ‘needy at the flaxroots’. In the case of the Nu-chah-nulth, while the hereditary system has been officially replaced by an electoral system of one acting chief and council the reality of the continuing power and influence of hereditary chiefs and their families is undeniable. The combined hereditary and elected political elites compete for funds and power with negative effects on the health and living standards of the people under their governance. The political and economic containment brought about by the imposition of reserve allocations and an alien political system has had far reaching impacts that continue to disrupt Nu-chah-nulth efforts towards autonomy. Leacock and Gailey (1992) observe these outcomes.
Reservation systems vary, but the usual result is that people must eventually seek work in the larger society or carve out minimal livelihoods on marginal lands. We should note that while prosperity differences can develop, class differences rarely emerge within the communities. What is far more typical is general impoverishment, the creation of would-be working class minorities, discriminated against in the workplace, when employment is to be had. The exceptions result from the privileging of a few (in terms of education and civil positions) groomed to be "tribal" administrators or brokers for extractive industries (Leacock & Gailey, 1992: 101).

The impoverishment I witnessed belies the popular view of 'rich Indians' with brand new trucks and fishing boats bought with treaty negotiation money paid for by the Canadian taxpayer. The few people living in reserve communities I saw with trappings of wealth were exceptions, the political elite, and a dozen or so men and, certainly amongst central coast Nuu-chah-nulth, no more than two women, who serve on council and receive a fair wage. The elected chief is paid more than councillors, but these wages are not exorbitant, at least amongst the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht. Those Nuu-chah-nulth who are members of the political elite and hold observable trappings of wealth have either made their money elsewhere in business and careers or returned to their reserve to enter into politics, are engaged in the misappropriation of federal funds or treaty process money, or act as 'brokers for extractive industries'. These brokering roles are not supposed to be entered into without the consent of the elected chief and council. In Clayoquot the main source of this personal revenue has been forestry companies trying to buy the compliance of chiefs in order to log in traditional lands without resistance. Presently it is the aquaculture industry, most prominently salmon fish farming. The Tla-o-qui-aht elected chief and council have repeatedly brought one particular councillor to task for his brokering/consultancy role with a fish farming business who have been attempting to buy the support of the Tla-o-qui-aht leadership. He was not forthright about his position and it was found out through gossip. Some Nuu-chah-nulth leaders utilise neotraditional rhetoric to endorse sharing as a value, a core element of Nuu-chah-nulth cultures and societies. Yet, no members of the communities in which I worked have received any monetary revenue from their First Nation councils.
The electoral system imposed on First Nations communities by the federal government has been deeply divisive. The electoral models, 'First Past the Post' and 'Block Vote', have not suited the social structure of small isolated communities. Reserve communities throughout BC and most of Canada are very small (Maaqusiis, the largest Nuu-chah-nulth community, has a population of 900 people, Esowista and Opitsat around 150 people). Elected leaders manage much of program funding involving services such as health, education, and housing, and control the allocation of the modest number of jealously pursued jobs available in the community.

Hereditary chiefs and their families express regret concerning socio-political and economic changes, and the loss of aristocratic privileges that colonialism and modernity have brought about. Many members of hereditary families claim that the hereditary system, far from being despotic, was intrinsically successful and well accepted by the people who felt valued for their specific role in Nuu-chah-nulth society. Chief Tom Meksis Happynook of the Huu-ay-ahth (southern region Nuu-chah-nulth) explains his perception of traditional Nuu-chah-nulth governance, and his obligations to his people.

"Am I able to fulfil my hereditary roles and responsibilities?" The answer is no right? But there is hope in terms of negotiating a treaty, and what we are doing in treaty is to try and define Aboriginal rights, bring some meaning to them, some clarity to them, and to unravel some of the legislation, policies, and regulations that don't allow me to fulfil my roles and responsibility as a hereditary family. There were no treaties for Nuu-chah-nulth. Our Aboriginal rights are protected by the constitution of Canada. That is the difference between us and say the Aborigines in Australia. Our rights, First Nations rights are protected under the highest law of this land. We are hoping within our treaty negotiations-in fact our tribe right now is in the process of developing and creating our Huu-ay-Aht constitution. It is part of treaty negotiations. We have to have our constitution developed by the end of Final Agreement [final stage of treaty negotiation] so it is included and constitutionally protected by the highest law in Canada so our constitution is legitimised—we are trying to figure out how to create a government structure that has the values and principles that have worked for us for thousands and thousands of years and marry it with this democratic kind of [laughs] system we have now right.
And you know people look at our traditional system and think that it is a kind of dictatorship where you have chiefs, which are making all these decisions. Well it didn’t really work that way. It was far more complex than that. I look at the democratic system that we have now and it doesn’t in my opinion feed into the natural and real needs and requirements of taking care of natural resources and managing the land. There is always a change every four years [in elected system]. In our system you were taught from birth about your role within the tribal government and your role as it related to management of the resources.

Each hereditary chief, each elder, the advisors, the *witvak* which was our justice people, our police, river keepers, mountain keepers, beach keepers—they all had a role to play and they were expected to fulfil those roles and they were passed down through families. It was a family function in which it was passed down to individuals and that’s why our system worked because everyone in the community had a role to play. Everyone had a responsibility. Not all of them participated in the government—in the big house—but everyone had a role and they were expected to undertake and to fulfil those roles. Everyone is involved and everyone feels important. And if one of those elements is taken away then there is a problem. It doesn’t work. So that is why it was important that families had responsibilities. For example the medicine people: they never shared their secrets with other people, except with their families, because that’s what made them important. The halibut fishermen, that’s what made them important. The deer hunters, that’s what made them important. We had this structure in which there was definite ranking in terms of how we conducted ourselves and how we conducted our business but it made everyone feel important and as those families grew those roles and responsibilities grew too. (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

Hereditary rights and the highly regulated social hierarchy that supported their management do not exist in practice today, as described by Happynook. At the time of Drucker’s (1951; 1955) writing hereditary privileges were fragmenting and becoming more rhetorical than actual as social and cultural systems began to be transformed through the forced assimilation efforts of missionary schools, the legislative banning of
ritual life such as the potlatch, and a more significant engagement in the cash economy. Today, rights and privileges, the *tuupaati* or wealth of a chief, are known and recounted by Nuu-chah-nulth historians at potlatches and feasts but both the use and vigorous protection of economic (resource) rights is rarely practiced.

The real fountainhead of chiefly power is clear. Whatever authority a chief had derived in final analysis from the various rights he had inherited. The head chiefs, the “real chiefs”, were those who held the most, the lower chiefs, those who owned less, and commoners were simply people who possessed none at all. The Nootkans carried the concept of ownership to an incredible extreme. Not only rivers and fishing places close at hand, but the waters of the sea for miles offshore, the land, houses, carvings on a house post, the right to marry in a certain way or the right to omit part of an ordinary marriage ceremony, names, songs, dances, medicines, and rituals, all were privately owned property. A broad classification of these privileges may be made by dividing them into two categories, the economic and the ceremonial (Drucker, 1951: 247).

Ceremonial rights to dances, songs, and modes of cultural expression have survived better than economic rights to resources despite a history of legislation that banned potlatches and confiscated family treasures. Drucker (1951: 247) talks of both ceremonial and economic categories of rights. Ceremonial rights are protected and passed down through oral history and are still practiced through regular potlatches in which family histories and dances are displayed and performed for others. These *tuupaati* hold stories within them: they are not artefacts but living beings and cultural vessels.

In contrast, in contemporary times, economic rights are nearly impossible to protect from the use of other community members, those of other First Nations, and particularly the common ignorance or disrespect of non-Aboriginal visitors to Clayoquot Sound. While a particular family in Ahousaht or Tla-o-qui-aht law and history may own a river mouth, which once produced prodigious numbers of salmon, other families [from both hereditary and commoner families] now use this area for their own resource acquisition, and no authority and reprimand falls upon them for doing so. Other Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation’s members also use resource areas without permission from the traditionally owning families, often knowing who holds rights to the area.
During the commercial clam digs of the Ahousaht in which a clam beach was to be open (dependent on the authority of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) for commercial digging for only a couple of days, the need for cash as well as food brought groups of Hesquiaht diggers to the beach to gather clams without asking permission from Ahousaht hereditary chiefs and the beach-keeper, who is the protector of their territory. They were told to leave by a couple of the hereditary chiefs and other diggers, but they returned, and the Ahousaht eventually let them dig, due I surmised to sympathy for other Nuu-chah-nulth people in a similar situation to them economically. At the time many Ahousaht commented that the Hesquiaht would not have been so forgiving if they were in their territory, adding that the Ahousaht owned Hesquiaht territory. As the history is told, the land was lent to a family in the past out of pity on a temporary basis but the family didn’t move and grew, establishing themselves in what is now known as the Hesquiaht Peninsula. This scenario indicates contention over boundaries between Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Larry Johnson of the Huu-ay-aht considers the effect the treaty process has on intertribal relations.

The problem right now for Nuu-chah-nulth is this treaty process because first of all they [Canadian and British Columbia governments] came out when the process started and said you are going to get 8 per cent of what you claim so right of the bat some of the tribes, I’m not going to say which, just some, went out there with a land grabbing mentality. The other problem with that there is going to be overlap all over the place. Now what the government has effectively done is tied us up into an in house squabble where we are all fighting each other about land. We are not even worried about the resources yet. The treaty process has broken up our relationships, which were tied by marriages and families because we are all related. If we could get past these lines on maps and just go back to what our relationship was before, it was tied to marriages and marriages were tied to the resources, the resources that the chiefs owned. So it was a very important part in my mind and that’s why I think this time in history, say the last ten years, and maybe the next ten years coming are probably the most important times for resource management because in my mind if we don’t do something now were not going to have big trees, were not going to have salmon, were not going to have hunting. Our Aboriginal rights are being
infringed upon, and our culture is just about lost anyway (Johnson, pers.comm: 2004).

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council has indicated that their existing reserve base should be converted to treaty settlement lands, and that the lands agreed on should be, according to the Nuu-chah-nulth Ha'Wiih Position on Lands, Waters, Air, and Natural Resources, 'sufficient to meet [their] cultural, spiritual, and community needs, including housing, recreation, infrastructure, and other uses, as well as to provide economic, recreational, and other opportunities for our members' (McKee, 2000). The political motivation to settle a treaty makes it essential for Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations to impose fixed boundaries, a European model of ownership foreign to Nuu-chah-nulth resource and territorial rights governance. While Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations have boundaries they are blurred by resource sharing agreements and rights, many of them granted through intertribal marriage alliances. Of primary contemporary importance to Nuu-chah-nulth is fish and ocean management in which Nuu-chah-nulth treaty negotiators attempt to persuade government treaty negotiators to recognise the cross-boundary nature of marine resources, their underlying message being that fish are a moving resource. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council has been working on fisheries legislation to present to the provincial and federal governments as part of treaty settlements to be negotiated.

The Tla-o-qui-aht and Ucluelet have been engaged in settling boundary disputes. While some researchers have questioned the existence of boundaries between hunter-gather groups (see Andrews, 1994: 66) there is no question that the Nuu-chah-nulth, long settled in their territories, practiced intricate systems of hereditary ownership and resource use. Whether and how these traditional Nuu-chah-nulth systems of governance and ownership still have power and relevance for Nuu-chah-nulth people today is one of the inquiries of this work. Ray Martin, a Tla-o-qui-aht counsellor, is in charge of mapping his nation’s territories to aid in negotiations and to ensure that knowledge of resource sites is not lost for the future:

It's difficult sometimes to get people in here to help me working on resource use because some of these people use these resources commercially and they are hot spots for some of our people because some of them are unemployed and money is scarce for them and they don't want to say "Here's where I go". I say that's fine, that's OK, that's all right. I respect
that. Now you were asking about boundary? Everything on this side is within the Tla-o-qui-aht traditional territory. Everything on the other side belongs to Ahousaht traditional territory. Now that there are clams here [in Tla-o-qui-aht territory] I think these guys [Ahousaht people in the past] just rowed over and got some. I don’t think they rowed all the way over here [pointing at resource map] to Hesquiaht to get some for their dinner. I think they only took what they needed [from Tla-o-qui-aht territory]. I don’t think they filled up their canoe with clams. I think they just got a bucket or a sack because a sack of clams goes a long ways; fifty pounds goes a long ways (Martin, pers.com: 2003).

An example of power struggle between elected and hereditary leaders came at a meeting to discuss territorial boundaries at the village of Opitsat. The elected chief Barney Williams Jr.’s family controlled much of the southern area of Tla-o-qui-aht territory. Within the kin-based power structure Barney is the Tla-o-qui-aht beach-keeper. It is his job to welcome outsiders into the territory and to explain the history of the area and how it came to be Tla-o-qui-aht. The Ucluelet were there to claim ownership of a certain area on the boundary of Ucluelet and Tla-o-qui-aht territory. Their claim is based on historical use of resources and in the coming weeks they would invite the Tla-o-qui-aht to their territory in order to hear their historical claim to the area. Barney put forward the point that his family had granted rights of use to the Ucluelet but that the Ucluelet had never held the rights to occupancy and the area remained Tla-o-qui-aht.

According to Tla-o-qui-aht protocol Barney was to tell the history of his family ‘seat’ which holds the area of territory disputed by Ucluelet. Barney is one of the few Tla-o-qui-aht fluent in his language, and able to engage correctly in historical oratory. Using Ray’s map, Barney pointed out the area and began to tell a little of his family history indicating their long occupancy in the area. To the concern of Ray and Barney, young hereditary chief Bruce Frank interjected without respect and proper regard for protocol. Bruce presented the political situation as he saw it, which involved a brief outline of commonly known historical political alliances between Ucluelet and Tla-o-qui-aht. Elder Dan David then spoke of the good relations between the tribes and called for a need to forget old grievances, saying that ‘Tla-o-qui-aht were pretty tough in the old days [wars in which smaller groups were forced to amalgamate with Tla-o-qui-aht] but you don’t have to be scared of us anymore, we are not like that today’. The comment
was subtly confrontational and called into contention the territorial claims of the Ucluelet.

Bruce Frank and Dan David had taken the force out of Barney’s delivery. Barney stood up and talked a little more about his family territory before leaving it up to Ucluelet to reply. The young elected chief Eddy Mack got up and thanked Tla-o-qui-aht for their hospitality, and for sharing aspects of their history, particularly that of Barney’s family. He then requested the opportunity to invite Tla-o-qui-aht to Ucluelet territory to present their side of the case to which the Tla-o-qui-aht accepted.

The 2004 Tla-o-qui-aht elections for a new Chief and council members are an example of the tensions and constraints created by the two political systems. To many Tla-o-qui-aht disenchanted with the past council Barney Williams was the only promising new voice in politics. He was trained in Nuu-chah-nulth spirituality and history by his grandparents and is often called upon by his people for his knowledge. A few days after this meeting an incident occurred in which another young hereditary chief attempted to dismiss the authority of Barney, a man in his sixties, as irrelevant, saying that the hereditary system was the ‘real’ Nuu-chah-nulth government process and this must be respected. The young man implicitly pointed out that Barney was in fact working for him and the other hereditary chiefs and that he must remember who really held the power. During Barney’s election campaign and through the early weeks of his successful move into the role of elected chief his boat was sunk on two occasions. His pay did not come through to him for a couple of months, and hereditary chiefs directly ignored his authority on many occasions. This was the result of his vocal promises to cut down on corruption and to end the costly honourariums paid to hereditary chiefs and elders for sitting on expert committees, deemed highly ineffective and farcical by many Tla-o-qui-aht community members.

Canadian sociologist Menno Bendt (1993: 130) observed that in the early stages of tribal elites’ appropriation of power over community affairs from the government, the ‘lower classes’ still identify with their ruling elites. Bendt, writing in 1993, asserted that this attitude is changing and animosity and resentment is increasingly directed towards local government rather than external government agencies among First Nations in Canada and the United States. Nuu-chah-nulth animosity towards their First Nation government has much to do with inadequacy of community services provided. Control of funding for services is passed from federal and provincial government to the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, and then on to First Nation councils. Local leaders are in
increasing control of finances set aside for health, housing, income support, and education.

In the communities in which I worked funds regularly disappeared and those suspected were rarely caught or prosecuted, while their identity was often known to community members. Perpetrators would disappear and work in another part of the province, lying low for a period before returning to a seemingly permissive community. This socio-political culture creates an atmosphere of desperation amongst community members who not only feel marginalised by wider Canadian society and the federal/provincial governments, but also by their own councils. Who, they ask, can they turn to for honest governance?

As the majority of community members are reliant on income support financial control by leaders can be formidable. Community members who are open about their First Nation council’s corruption and inability to offer adequate services have been threatened. Before one Tla-o-qui-aht election a few years ago it was said to me that a small group of Tla-o-qui-aht men, some who had served on their council and knew the culture that predominated released the budget and accountancy for that financial year. This was an effort to bring about financial transparency and accountability within the Tla-o-qui-aht council. These men and some of their family members were threatened and assaulted by those who benefited from corruption. Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht indicated that this was one of the reasons why resistance did not occur in the face of sometimes-open corruption and negligence in community affairs. When money goes missing Nuu-chah-nulth people suffer as services such as housing, sewerage, health, and education are neglected. Ray Martin of the Tla-o-qui-aht, who has served on his council, observes, ‘let me put it this way, if you’re dependent on the band for financial resources, let me put it that way, and you start to rock the boat, funding probably could be delayed or misplaced’ (Ray Martin, pers.comm: 2003).

Political infighting and corruption has contributed significantly to a state of decline in community services in Maaxtusiis, Opitsat, and Esowista. In one village the man paid by the council to collect garbage from people’s houses and deliver it to the dump does not do so for a number of weeks. He continues to be paid and will not be fired as he is a member of a ruling family with relatives in positions of power. The man responsible for the finance and upkeep of the roads has left town with the money. The school cannot be run properly as the year’s funding for teaching and learning materials has disappeared. The man in control of these funds has also disappeared. These levels of corruption and negligence are suffered by many Nuu-chah-nulth people, so much so that some locals
comment that they may have been better off when the government was in control of their services: a truly damning judgement from Nuu-chah-nulth people.

The binding of administrative and executive positions in many Nuu-chah-nulth councils removes the checks of less isolated municipalities. This coupled with kin-based loyalties, allowing family members to access the little employment available in reserve communities rather than other people who may be better qualified and suited for the position. These are difficult and challenging problems for people. Due to the realities of financial dependence on the federal government there is a disproportionate government presence in Nuu-chah-nulth peoples’ lives that is not present elsewhere. Past residential school experience reinforces this psychological tension. People want to be proud members of self-reliant nations yet their own band councils often do not act in their best interests. It is estimated that at least half of the Nuu-chah-nulth population have left their home communities for urban centres, many leaving to gain employment and access education, but also to escape communities with substandard housing and social services. Métis writer Howard Adams (1989) claims that most First Nation and Métis leaders are co-opted into a culture of bureaucracy by the government and fail to deal seriously with the social and economic needs of their people. Adams writes of leaders who are isolated from their people, whose talk of sovereignty and self-reliance is empty rhetoric, and asserts that,

Some of these men give themselves handsome salaries and expense accounts that often exceed $100,000 a year. They spend lavishly on luxurious automobiles, houses and furniture, clothes, costly entertainment, and expensive hotels. They are far removed from the actual circumstances of the masses of native people who live in poverty and wretchedness. The real function of these collaborator leaders from the government’s point of view is to prevent any mass radical movement from developing and to check social action that would embarrass or threaten the government (1989: 159).

Daryl Campbell (pers.comm: 2004), an Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian comments on leadership; ‘its kind of foolish for our Elders to go and pray and talk about respect, solutions, and then they turn the other direction in a greed mode, you know, praying to the creator but at the same time doing another thing. It’s crazy’. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians seek the assurance that First Nation governments will not
become dictatorial regimes in which leaders are unaccountable to their people. As the federal government’s all-encompassing Indian Act is disbanded and First Nation leaders hold greater power and governance concerns grow that male political elites will be able to rule despotically over their own communities (Tulley, 2000: 63). Aboriginal women particularly voice the need for transparency in financial affairs to ensure the desires of self-serving leaders do not take precedence over spending on social issues. Funding for housing, health, education and healing programmes, which would lessen the oppressive rates of abuse and suicide in their communities remain core concerns.

One afternoon Ray, his wife Regina, and I drove to Port Alberni to do some visiting. They have many relatives who live in the area. A considerable number of Nuu-chah-nulth from central coastal nations have moved to Port Alberni. It is the nearest major town offering employment and education, and for some a less isolated lifestyle. Regina grew up Hesquiaht but is now Tla-o-qui-aht through her marriage to Ray, and as such they have many relations throughout Vancouver Island. We went to see Tim Paul who is a Hesquiaht relative of Regina’s and a renowned painter and carver. Ray, Regina and I spent the afternoon with Tim, his wife Monica, and their grandson Ryland who is also Tim’s carving apprentice. We walked out the back to a workshop bathed in the smell of cedar to see a freshly finished mask of a thunderbird topped with a lightening snake. According to Ray who is also a carver, the mask had northern influences, primarily Kwakwaka’wakw lines and forms. This is a common influence on Nuu-chah-nulth design.

We spoke about the misrepresentation of Nuu-chah-nulth territorial ownership and family cultural teachings by many of the present chiefs. Tim made the point that the chiefs are responsible for the territories of their nations but they do not own them themselves. He offered that an analogy, first made by his widely respected Uncle, Moses Smith, now deceased, could be made between modern treaty politics and the English feudal system. In other words a king owns a kingdom as his own direct property, serfs work and hunt on his land, and they are beholden to the king for the majority of resources gathered, hunted, fished and grown. In Nuu-chah-nulth society the chiefs do not own the land, and their economic and political support is only guaranteed by their meeting of obligations to their people. Oral history features accounts of the dispatch of despotic chiefs who lost sight of their responsibilities to their people through greed and tyranny.

This is how Tim sees the contemporary political climate amongst Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. Tim commented that the present
day chiefs have lost their humbleness and are not working for the people but rather for their own gain. One point made in conversation was that many of the prominent coastal Nuu-chah-nulth politicians do not live in their communities. Like many Nuu-chah-nulth, some leave for education and job prospects or because they simply don’t want to live in their home community. Many leaders were not raised in their First Nation home territories but rather in towns where they experienced life as a minority within the school system and a working life dominated by Euro-Canadians. It is a view often expressed by those who live on reserve that some of these people, who are predominantly men, do not spend much time with their people, preferring the social company and worldviews of whites. Tim said that they speak for their people without knowing their people. Some Nuu-chah-nulth who grew up and live in reserve communities argue that these ‘city-born’ leaders do not understand the problems at home, and could not be expected to, as they do not know what it is like to live there. Many leaders do only rarely visit reserve communities for meetings, a potlatch, or for ceremonies held by family members.

Ray offered the example of a past problem of polluted water supply at Esowista (see Chapter 3) and the disinterest shown in this problem by council members and hereditary chiefs who lived ‘off reserve’ in Tofino or elsewhere and who were not personally affected by the problem. Such criticisms of particular political leaders were backed up by Tim Paul’s concern, drawing on the teachings of his Uncle Moses, that the contemporary understandings of hahuuldi (traditional territory) and ha’wiih (chiefs) are misguided and often used as a vehicle for personal attainment rather than community empowerment. Tim asserted that many contemporary chiefs say they are in control of the territory of their people in a way that implies personal ownership. He pointed out that in Nuu-chah-nulth traditions of governance chiefs merely hold the land, waters, and resources in trust.

We all had to agree. It was consensus. Today it’s just one or two people make a decision and that’s it you know. So we can’t say that “I stand here as a chief for my people”. Not today. It’s not happening! That’s very untrue you know, for somebody to stand up and say, “I’m here for my people”. Well then you shouldn’t say, “This is mine”. Hahuuli [territory] isn’t all this here, no, it’s just that one little creek down there might be mine and that’s all I have (Paul, pers.comm: 2004).
Poor leadership and governance of community affairs has a direct effect on the everyday living conditions of Nuu-chah-nulth, whether services are the arguable responsibility of the federal/provincial governments or elected Nuu-chah-nulth councils. Nuu-chah-nulth society, traditionally rigidly hierarchical, has perpetuated a status quo through the competing and combined electoral and hereditary political structures. The testimony of elders and the ethnographic material available indicates the transformation in Nuu-chah-nulth governance, affected by an imposed electoral system and a breakdown in local polities and economic systems that sustained communities.

Nuu-chah-nulth complain of the lack of engagement with social problems in reserve communities on the part of their leaders whose focus is attracting investment, development, and employment to their territories. Economic development is the majority agenda of the Nuu-chah-nulth leadership and the primary focus of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC). At political meetings people come forward to ask their leaders for decisive action to curb the high level of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and youth suicide in many Nuu-chah-nulth communities. An air of desperation can be felt amongst young Nuu-chah-nulth. When confronted with the depth of violence and abuse in small kin based communities, the question must be raised, as Das and Kleinman (2001: 4) contend that, ‘at the level of interpersonal relations, how does one contain and seal off the violence that might poison the life of future generations?’ In the communities in which I worked the ongoing effects of violence debilitates the health and future of many young people.

Cree writer Harold Cardinal (1999) outlines several major developments that must take place for First Nations to achieve equality of life with the rest of Canadian society, all of them based on self-reliance. Cardinal’s view is that the integrity of leadership is one of the most crucial determinants for change, and that it must be a leadership which

Cannot be corrupted or bought off by those who would support the status quo so that they may continue their stagnating and stifling hold on our people... Until all our leaders have learned to subordinate personal ambition to their peoples’ wishes, the Indians of Canada will remain weak and divided...the new generation of Indians looks to its leaders for guidance, for example, and for a sense of purpose. No more vital responsibility for the new leadership of our provincial organisations can be imagined’ (1999: 140).
Nuu-chah-nulth discuss the changes that they have seen come to pass within their communities. The lack of strong role models for young people is a common subject, as is the lack of 'real' elders. In Nuu-chah-nulth society the elders are the source of knowledge, the holders of laws and teachers of correct ways to live. This includes not only cosmology and history, but also the right way to live in a community and treat others. Systems of respect and reciprocity are central to Nuu-chah-nulth cultures, and smooth the everyday sociality of communities. These systems have been greatly eroded, and the sharing of knowledge by elders has lessened. Money is viewed as the primary cause of values changing for the worse, but specifically money brought by the treaty process.

Regina: Today it's getting so you don't know who an elder is any more.

Ray: No.

Regina: During the Hesquiaht band meeting this was brought up about the elders. You know—what are you looking at as an elder? What age are you looking at? I can't remember who it was that fired up, this person said anyway, 'the way that I can look at an elder is he can walk that talk. He has learnt whatever from his grandparents, if he passes on the knowledge that he acquired from them. To me that is an elder we can sit and talk to, feed back to us'. That's why I mentioned Tim Paul. I look at him as an elder [although he is younger by some years than Regina].

It is hard when you listen to some of the elders now because you think back to when you were younger, when I was a teenager, the abuse and everything that was happening, and that's why there's quite a few of our elders that are in the—what do you call it? They hadn't worked through the abuse that they had done, or the violence, all of that, and here they are up there talking. It's like what's he talking about, you know? So there's a lot of abuse that's happening and it's really hard - there's very few elders that I do have respect for now and that are very genuine too.

Ray: They are demanding respect some of these people. "You have to respect us, we're the elders". You know that kind of stuff and for me that's really hard to swallow. Just like what she's saying, My Aunt Carrie carried
that respect because she was knowledgeable. She was sincere, and she was one of the people that we used to see when we were looking for some guidance.

She’s also the sister of some of these people here, Alec Frank the chief from Opitsat; sister to Precious my Mother. It wasn’t only Tla-o-qui-aht people who went to go and see her. It was people from different tribes along the coast. She seemed to carry - there was something about her. It was exactly like you were saying. You feel really relaxed around her. Do you know what I mean? She had that type of a character about her.

Regina: Very humble. She’d always make you laugh too.

Ray: She was a very caring sort of a person you know (Regina and Ray Martin: pers.comm: 2003).

There is no specific age of an elder and no set achievements or skills which determine the holding of this ‘position’. An elder is someone wise whom you go to speak with about issues that concern you. There is no ranking or hereditary bestowal of elder as a position in society. Seemingly everyone seemed to feel certain about what social attributes constituted an individual as an elder. Traditionally, the duty of elders to their people was to share knowledge and wisdom in the interest of cultural continuity and the well being of collective community. This expectation of elders persists today. Many elders compete for fees in exchange for their knowledge within the economy of treaty politics. In communities with 80 per cent unemployment there is significant competition for fees. The transformation in the ethics of knowledge sharing has been brought about by over a decade of treaty negotiation that has rewarded ‘expert’ knowledge with fees. If a First Nation council works on a presentation to government negotiators concerning land or sea resources, they may need the specialist knowledge of an elder, often a member of a family which traditionally controlled certain resource areas. All manner of knowledge may be sought from elders who are presented to government negotiators and lawyers as the living holders of oral history. Histories of warfare and territorial expansion, ecological knowledge, resource sites, and cosmology are drawn on in order to prove long-standing use and occupancy of territory. Elders’ knowledge adds crucial legitimacy to treaty claims.
Treaty money has social consequences. As considered in the previous chapter, it has contributed to the creation of political elites. The elite is made up primarily of the elected chief and councillors and hereditary chiefs and family members. Hereditary chiefs are supposed to hold historical and cultural knowledge. In times past all hereditary chiefs received training from the elders' of their family in order to be leaders of their people. Today this training is becoming rare and some chiefs have little special knowledge to offer, yet command fees (honourariums) to attend committee meetings in which they are expected to share expert knowledge. While the elected council is officially in power, the Ha'wih (hereditary chiefs) remain in control through personal power and influence.

In Nuu-chah-nulth social organisation, kinship loyalties define which elders receive coveted fees for their knowledge. As there are limited funds available the competitive jealousy of elders and hereditary chiefs creates tension. While some elders share openly and willingly, others withhold knowledge required by community members until there is talk of payment. Alternatively elders not interested in payment will withhold knowledge in order to not involve themselves in a local (and provincial and national) political system they see as corrupt. They may not also see the worth of negotiating a treaty with the federal and provincial governments, a belief shared by many more 'radical' Nuu-chah-nulth. Monetary payment for knowledge represents the commoditisation of oral history and testimony held in the memories of elders. Loss of language fluency also constitutes a significant constraint on efforts to retain traditional values and teachings.

Nuu-chah-nulth people determine the residential schooling system as the greatest cause of knowledge and language loss (see Ch. 6). A culture of shaming existed at the Church schools and has had lasting psychological effects. Students were taught by priests, nuns, and school administrators to be ashamed of their cultures and ways of life. Shame was used against children and young people by perpetrators of sexual abuse who sought the silence of their victims. Students were emotionally and physically abused for speaking their language or engaging in native cultural expression. For this reason it is common for elders to have lost their language, or else to hold back knowledge and language from their families and others, such was the physical and emotional punishment they received for speaking their language or engaging in cultural expression.

For some children and young people, reintegration back into their families and communities proved difficult. Kelm, (1998: 79) writing of Aboriginal health in British
Columbia between 1900-50, notes that for some students the move back to their own family and community from school marked a crisis of identity in which they are, ‘described as cross-cultural zombies, empty bodies moving across a landscape of which they cannot quite be a part’. Residential schools were founded on the belief that First Nation children needed to be taken from their families, homes, and communities, in essence, taken away from their culture, in order to bring about their assimilation.

Schools promised that through health education and the influence of European civilisation young Nuu-chah-nulth would return to their communities better prepared to deal with an environment in which, as Kelm observes, ‘sanitary facilities were often lacking, where access to indigenous food resources was becoming increasingly restricted, and where tuberculosis stalked the young and old alike’ (1998: 80). Nuu-chah-nulth children returned transformed, in both mind and body, yet they were not stronger. Inadequate diet and hard labour proved debilitating. Students spent most of their time working towards the upkeep of the school rather than being educated. Significantly, at the time Kelm writes of (1900-1950) endemic tuberculosis was more prevalent in the schools than reserve communities. The majority of Nuu-chah-nulth elders and leaders in they’re fifties and older today experienced these conditions. Many are both the sufferers and perpetrators of abuse. For many people, psychological trauma led to alcohol and drug abuse and addiction.

The crisis of identity is based on a doubt in one’s own culture and traditions set in motion through the assimilation policies of the colonial and postcolonial Canadian state. This is an elusive trauma, yet the social impacts are obvious. Gregory Cajete (2001), an Native American (Tewa) educator explains the results of this disconnection.

American Indian people today live a dual existence. At times, it resembles a kind of schizophrenia characterised by constantly trying to adapt ourselves to a mainstream social, political, and cultural system that is not our own. We are constantly faced with living in a larger society that does not really understand or respect our traditional life symbols, our ecological perspectives, our understanding of relationship to the land, our traditional ways of remembering to remember who we are...many Indian people have moved away from a practiced and conscious relationship with place. This has resulted in many Indian communities experiencing the kind of “existential” problems, such as alcoholism, suicide, self-abuse, depression, and other social and spiritual ills that befall traditional peoples once they
begin to lose their direct connection to their spiritual ecology. Tewa people call this state of schizophrenic like existence, *p̱neh heh* ("split thought," or "thinking or doing things with only half your mind") (2001: 634-5).

I mention the experience of residential school common to Nuu-chah-nulth in this chapter in the context of cultural identity and political will. The school had a significant impact on both. Through punishment and denial residential schooling taught young Nuu-chah-nulth to doubt their identity and disregard their families and cultures. The majority of Nuu-chah-nulth people over the age of forty attended residential schools, and it is extremely rare for a Nuu-chah-nulth person under forty to be fluent in their native language. This is not a coincidence. I stress the effects of assimilative policies and residential school abuse on many elders and leaders, as the subsequent trauma they faced has adversely affected entire Nuu-chah-nulth communities. In regard to residential schooling’s affects on political consciousness and cultural identity, Paul Tennent (1990: 82) observes that a consequence was a, ‘diminished individual incentive to protect aboriginal interests (since attachment to tradition was weakened) and decreased the likelihood that individuals would take political action (since self-confidence was eroded and a sense of dependency was inculcated).’ Nuu-chah-nulth often criticize their leaders for lacking what they view as the necessary radical politicisation to bring about change. Anthropologist Naomi Adelson asserts that aboriginality, ‘encompasses contemporary political and social relations as Indigenous peoples negotiate their identities within the nation-state, and is manifested in part through the telling and acting upon a particular historical identity, however that history is negotiated in the present’ (2001: 95).

Government outlawing of land and resource claims activity and organisation in 1927 provoked little if any protest yet while First Nations political agency in British Columbia’s interior seemingly disappeared, it continued on the coast covertly (Tennant, 1990: 82). Political activity was reactivated in the 1950’s and 60’s on the coast when the 1927 prohibition was lifted. Political organisation did not achieve widespread support until the 1970s when the residential schools had been closed and a new generation of young Indian leaders emerged.

Systemic and structural violence on the part of the state, has been enacted through Federal/provincial legislation and policy directed at First Nations. While preaching assimilation the state has practiced marginalisation. Nugent (2002), commenting on the universalistic and seemingly inclusive political discourse of the Enlightenment, notes rather that its processes have been exclusionary. Dominant Euro-Canadian political
elites make meaningful participation in the political process of the state, 'contingent (in part) on the subaltern adopting “proper’ and “respectable” attitudes, practices and forms of behaviour. The result of this process was to shape subjectivity in “modern” directions and to produce a national citizenry and a more pliable labour force’ (2002: 319). The assimilative practices of the Canadian state and the present discourse and rhetoric of treaty negotiation relegates Nuu-chah-nulth political agency within the spheres of government defined power and control.

Coastal Nuu-chah-nulth leaders have endured decades of bitter political disappointments, particularly over resource access and fisheries legislation. Many Nuu-chah-nulth have lost faith in over a decade of treaty negotiation promises from their own leaders and from the state. Few can see any real improvements to their lives and communities, at present or to come, bar the comfortable livelihoods of a small political elite. The majority of Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht do not benefit from the political system and are tired of empty rhetoric. Talk of the traditional hereditary responsibilities of their chiefs, elders, and leaders, and of possible wealth through royalties from developments ‘held in trust’ are falling on deaf ears. There is a marked apathy and lack of political agency in the communities of Opitsat, Esowista, and Maaqtusis. Many feel a sense of hopelessness; none more so than the young living in isolated coastal reserve communities who see no future for themselves and often have little interest in their own culture, teachings, or native language (see Ch. 6). They would comment ‘what is the point in learning Nuu-chah-nulth when everyone speaks English?’ It is difficult logic to refute when issues of unemployment, health, and poverty weigh so much heavier in many people’s everyday concerns. Ray Martin of Tla-o-qui-aht talks here of the loss of language and knowledge:

Amongst our tribe there are eight hundred of us, and I think that speak it fluently, there is close to seventeen. Alec Frank is 85. Ernest David is 75; my mother is 75 years old. Mary Hayes is close to 90. Barney Williams is 64. Jesus, I have a hard time - Evelyn she is 75. Tommy Curley is in his sixties and I think he's quite fluent. Eugene Charlie is in his late sixties. Although us Nuu-chah-nulth people, people like Cliff [Atleo Sr. of Ahousaht] that speaks the language pretty fluently, although they get up and talk about it at these gatherings when all the politicians get together, they talk about how important it is to keep our language alive, but when you look at the numbers that come out to different programmes [language workshops]
it's not serious. It's just hot air. The programmes need the funding to get them off the ground right? I don’t know what’s going on, there are just very few of us, let's say Alec Frank, Ernest David, and them guys, when they pass in the next few years that’s going to be a big loss. We’ll be stuck with Dan David who is not in the greatest of health. He must be sixty. You’ll have to go and talk to him. He used to work here in the treaty office. He was the chief researcher out here. He’s pretty fluent. He does a fair bit of translation for our people. If someone gets up in a meeting and speaks entirely in their native tongue, 80 or 90 per cent of us don’t understand what the guy is saying. So Dan gets up and tells us what he was saying. His father had knowledge of some of our Tla-o-qui-aht history. Dan has some of that. What if we were to lose those guys in a year? It could happen. Barney’s not healthy, his tickers having problems. Danny’s got problems with diabetes, could be my Mother, prone to high blood pressure-I think we are in big trouble You go to my Mother’s for instance, she’s not speaking our native tongue, she will say, “Hello, how are you?” I think she’s ashamed of it. I think they are. Yeah, I think it was the way they were treated at school, from what they tell me that when they spoke their native tongue at school they were punished for that [my emphasis] (Martin, pers.comm: 2004).

It is common for Nuu-chah-nulth people to admit that they made little effort to teach their children and grandchildren their native language, as they were ashamed of it, and made a connection between the language and punishment. In this way the policies of residential schooling were highly effective. There are few Nuu-chah-nulth speakers today. Many elders, parents, and grandparents know this and tell me they have failed their young people. The pressures of modernity on traditional values are profound.

Using the example of language as a form for transmitting cultural knowledge, Frank August, Ahousaht elder, explains.

The worst part today is that we have lost our language—we don’t use it anymore. You go to a potlatch and it’s all English now, a little bit of our language but not much. It’s like that all over now, I guess I attended a big do in Victoria last week, a few days ago, the elder that’s a speaker there. He speaks in his own language and then he translates to English again because most of their young people don’t understand their language, like my
children they don’t understand me, but that is my fault, I didn’t teach them, I
have sixteen children living today and none of them can speak my language
so I failed in that respect. I should have taught them when they were kids,
little ones, because I grew up with my language, and it was easy for me, I
lived with my Great Grandmother and I learned a few things. My parents
spoke our language to me all the time. When it was my turn to raise children
I didn’t use it. I can speak it fluently but I don’t. But ah what we used to
do... (August, pers.comm: 2004).

In Nuu-chah-nulth society grandparents traditionally have as much, if not more, part
in the socialisation and upbringing of children as parents. This aspect of social life
continues today. Workers lived by the canneries for much of the year and in the case of
many men, in logging camps, or away on long fishing and sealing trips. Anthropologist
Claudia Lewis (1970) writes of a Salish community (the coast Salish are the First
Nations of the east coast of Vancouver Island) with very similar dynamics and
livelihood to Nuu-chah-nulth. Children were often left in the care of grandparents while
the mother was absent engaged in economic tasks such as gathering in the berry fields
or clam digging.

Lewis’s ethnography is based on fieldwork undertaken during the mid fifties and this
social schema between generations still holds in the Nuu-chah-nulth communities in
which I worked. The differences today is that young Nuu-chah-nulth women are now
more likely to be working in a shop in Tofino, a council administrative position in their
home communities, at the Tla-o-qui-aht resort Tin Wis, or in other aspects of the
tourism business. A few men are working on the fish farms or in logging, some as boat
drivers for the tourism industry.

Over 80 per cent are officially unemployed but some of these Nuu-chah-nulth are
engaged in everyday practices of livelihood, providing for their families through
resource extraction, fishing for cod and salmon from small dinghies with outboard
motors, spearing sea urchins, or hunting deer. Many without work in the cash economy
supplement their unemployment payments with subsistence livelihood.
Intergenerational relations invoke tensions naturally. Traditionalism and accompanying
nostalgia exists in parallel with the everyday realities of modernity. The role of
elders/grandparents in the lives of young Nuu-chah-nulth remains that of carer,
particularly common in cases of parental neglect and family breakdown, yet the gulf in
understanding between generations is increasingly problematic. Elders feel they are
failing their children and grandchildren in a world overwhelmingly transformed from the clear values that defined their lives as young people. If young Nuu-chah-nulth doubt the integrity of their elders this means the integrity of the cultural teachings is also doubted. And yet, young Nuu-chah-nulth feel they are without guidance.

The importance of intergenerational transmission in regard to socialisation, environmental perception, and cultural and self-awareness cannot be overstated. This process, which Ingold (2000: 416) names enculturation, is key to a young person’s development, and the ways in which the codes and signs of meaning and relevance are learnt. Through their depth of experience elders transmit cultural knowledge encoded in landscape and in social values, thereby teaching young people to know their place in the world. This knowledge is not only transmitted through only oral teachings but through showing and livelihood (2000: 21).
7

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS, DEVELOPMENT, AND MODERNITY

Plate 73: Momeck (Johnny) John out on his fishing boat
The relationship between development and Indigenous peoples is complex. Market thinking has long presented all development as a positive progressive force. Uncritical faith in neo-liberal economic efficiency is reconstituting marginalised groups in society. The larger political and economic systems of the nation state subsume and transform local economies. Powerful demands of state and industry for resources, land, and political and military control have characterised the expansionism of entrepreneurial capitalism. Tsing (2002) analysis of politics on the periphery of states asserts that these demands are threatening the autonomy and mobility of marginal cultural groups who live in once inaccessible places—rainforests, rugged mountains, deserts, and tundra. There are 630 First Nations throughout Canada, with a total population of about 1 million (INAC, 2000). In contemporary political discourse these are developing ‘nations’, but how First Nations develop, and on whose terms, is dependent on them successfully gaining political acknowledgement from the British Columbia and Canada governments.

Through networks of political agency defined in terms of similar struggles and visions the Nuu-chah-nulth are linked with other Indigenous peoples in North America and throughout the world. This network puts the ‘First Peoples’ of the world centre stage in development, environmentalist, and human rights discourse. The rise of an international Indigenous movement was consolidated in parallel with a North American boom in environmental activism in the mid-1980s. The Nuu-chah-nulth have been intensely engaged in recent decades in the struggle for provincial and federal acknowledgement of their title to territorial lands and waters.

The power they seek in real terms is equal partnership, at the least, in the development that occurs in their territories, and yet this power has been elusive. The ‘development industry’ operates by defining the parameters of power that exist. Development agencies, operating on behalf of the state, claim openness to ‘voice’ and ‘representation’, often sincerely, in management decision-making, but Indigenous people often remain at the periphery. This is not to discount real achievements by Nuu-chah-nulth negotiators and activists yet power in the discourse of development does not imply real shared control of resources and equal footing at the bargaining table.

The rhetoric of development agencies such as Parks Canada, provincial/federal government, and strongly established environmental organisations draws on Nuu-chah-nulth cosmological concepts and ethics concerning environmental management. Nuu-chah-nulth elders and leaders are invited to speak on committees and have their concerns and issues integrated into guidelines for the management of land and water
management. Yet real discussion of the power sharing and control of resources is strategically avoided.

A mystification of abused words such as ‘empowerment’ is observed by James, in which meanings have transformed in the political rhetoric of states. James asserts that ethnography can make ‘such forms of collusion visible in the present, as good history can do for the past’ (1999: 13). Werbner (1999: 59) points out that, in a Foucauldian analysis of power, ‘development speak’ offers terms such as ‘empowerment’, ‘community participation’, and ‘self-determination’ through a discourse in which people must take responsibility for attaining their own objectives. Thus development rhetoric calls for people marginalised by the decision making of the centres of power, and effectively left behind by the development process, to ‘empower’ themselves. Werbner asserts that this language of participation and empowerment thrives in the ‘secondary elaborations of belief’, borrowing Evans-Pritchard’s (1937) phrase for witchcraft. The allusion to magical language is an appropriate conception of the development language of government and industry, as it is of the treaty negotiations of both Euro-Canadian and Nuu-chah-nulth leaders engaged in their struggle for power.

Indigenous commentators of other colonised nations, such as Ngapare K. Hopa (1999: 103-4) of New Zealand, also comment that ‘development speak’ is used to conceal the social realities of marginalisation and disempowerment while promoting ‘empowerment’ through community participation in development programmes. The World Bank and IMF call for community self-help in the ‘the most efficient and cost-effective ways’ as part of a wider strategy to move the economic burden away from the public sector (Craig & Mayo, 1995: 2) The World Bank has acknowledged that the neoliberal market-driven strategies of ‘rolling back the state’ (James, 1999: 16) have failed to benefit the poor. Institutions such as the IMF, which set development policy, endorse strategies that instigate the reduction of state spending on social welfare, promoting alternative models such as the private sector, NGOs and self-help (Hopa, 1999: 104). Even in affluent nations this can devastate marginalised communities. The recent election win of the Conservative Party in Canada will see a heavier reliance on these neoliberal policies. Ahousaht treaty negotiator Cliff Atleo Sr. explains his frustration with regard to these power relationships.

I call them the junior governments [provincial/federal] because they’ve only been here for over 150 years or something like that - so I have no fears about our people taking control if that should ever happen, if the
government should ever make sense and come to the realisation that we are real, that we do have governing mechanisms, that those were invented by us, and they are not going to give us anything. We still own the land. We still own the resources. We still have rights and title. Even the law now recognises that as being parallel to Crown, sufficient to being able to say in the Supreme Court of Canada that indeed they must accommodate us, they must consult with us because there is title and ownership. I like to tell the governments self-government is not on the bargaining table. It is not on the bargaining table. They have this perception that they are going to give it to us. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. They can recognise it. That's the only way an agreement will come is if they recognise, and that new relationship we are going to create has to be on a government to government basis, not on paper but in reality, in practice (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003 my emphasis).

Tom Flanagan, political scientist and author of First Nations? Second Thoughts (2000), calls the notion of First Nations sovereignty a fiction. American born, Flanagan is a controversial academic in Canada, a senior fellow of the conservative think tank, the Fraser Institute, and regularly acts against First Nation title claims as a legal representative. The Fraser Institute was founded in 1974 with a grant from Canadian forestry company MacMillan Bloedel. He asks Canadians to put aside the moral dilemma of European expansion, discovery, and invasion and to acknowledge that 'in a free country like Canada aboriginal leaders can talk all they want about their own inherent sovereignty but the expression is only a rhetorical turn of phrase' (2000: 61). Flanagan proposes that 'the recognition of Indians and Inuit as aboriginal peoples, with certain special rights adhering to that status, is a product of Western, particularly British, civilisation in its Enlightenment phase' (2000: 26). Flanagan rejects the notion of 'special rights' and contends that being here first should confer no unique rights on First Nations. Anthropologist Colin Scott (2004) takes issue with Flanagan's premise, pointing out intrinsic problems in his ethnocentric ideals of the individual and freedom. Scott counters that Aboriginal rights are neither race-based nor racist, as Flanagan claims, but rather inherited; not unlike the European tradition of rights inheritance along family lines (2004: 303).

The conference of rights by the state upon its citizens depends on a belief in the state as a guarantor of those rights. Without the existence of the state, rights are meaningless. In the case of the Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nation peoples, rights must be won.
Rights willingly conferred by the Canadian state, those equal to all its citizens, do not protect Aboriginal rights and title. Within the Western discourse of rights the pre-contact sovereignty of First Nations is denied. First Nations leaders ask for legal acknowledgement of prior ownership and thus of rights to resources in their traditional territories. Even on a professed government-to-government negotiation basis this history of denial maintains inequality.

The need for international human rights provisions, which endeavour to prevent genocide and massacre, is obvious to most. The establishment of ensured rights to livelihood and the cultural autonomy of groups within an individual nation state are exceedingly more complex issues. The life ways of different societies differ radically, and it is problematic to subscribe to both the notion of universal human rights as well as a belief in the relativity of cultures. Many Euro-Canadians, like Flanagan (2000: 61), question the need for different rights for Indigenous peoples and the conferral of special rights predicated on ethnicity.

The low socioeconomic status of First Nation peoples such as the Nuu-chah-nulth is overlooked due to their locality within democratic First World rather than Third World states. Their political demands, however, situate them in what Lindau and Cook contend is ‘the most important global issue confronting the contemporary world, namely, the clash between globalising and localising forces’ (2000: 220). As Gledhill proposes, ‘understanding power relations in society certainly involves more than an understanding of the formal institutions of the state. It is also necessary to recognize that power remains incompletely centralised even in Western societies, and that the anthropological study of ‘local-level’ politics can play an important role’ (2002: 325).

Gardner and Lewis (1996: 12-16) point to ‘modernisation theory’ as thinking which dominates contemporary development practice. According to this theory progress is evolutionary and societies and peoples may be sited on a linear track, which leads inevitably to an industrialised urban society. These concepts have their roots in nineteenth and early twentieth century European political economy. Through this rationalist discourse, Gardner and Lewis note, ‘modern developed societies are seen as secular, universalistic and profit-motivated, [while] undeveloped societies are understood as seeped in tradition, particularistic and unmotivated to profit’ (1996: 12). Political progress and success amongst Nuu-chah-nulth leaders and treaty politicians is increasingly seen in economic terms, and is often explicitly territorial. There is no question in Nuu-chah-nulth political rhetoric as to the rightful ownership of land, sea, and resources in Clayoquot Sound. Political rhetoric swings between empathetic talk of
alliance and cooperation with non-Nuu-chah-nulth and sole economic and political
donmination of territory. Cliff Atleo Sr. is an Ahousaht leader who represents the
majority focus of Nuu-chah-nulth males involved in politics.

There is this perception that we were not involved in trade and commerce
before. We were involved in trade and commerce. We traded and bartered.
For convenience non-aboriginals think that doesn’t mean sale, which is
again a no-brainer. It’s like trying to say, “I’m not racist”. “Let’s keep these
beggars down as long as we can by whatever means we can” including the
changing of meanings of words. I reject the colonial terms of reserves. We
don’t have any “reserves”, we have places where we lived, and we don’t
have people that are living “off reserve”, we have people that are living
away from home, and I say that with very strong emphasis: We still own the
land. We still own the resources.

I think that we’ve proven that, in the Sound especially: We have a logging
company, it’s called Isaaak, we have bought MMB out, or Weyerhaeuser. We
have bought their total tenure. Our next target of course is Interfor [major
forestry company]. We’re going to buy them out. They don’t know that yet
but we’re going to buy them out and we’re going to control the whole
Sound. Like I always said we never fought to stop logging; we fought on
how to change logging. I can’t underscore enough how important it is that
we have sufficient principles, values, and knowledge to incorporate and
implement that will not allow indiscriminate or wasteful exploitation of our
resources. I don’t ever see that happening (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003).

Much has changed since McMillan (2000: 224) observed that fishing and logging
continue to be economic mainstays of many Nuu-chah-nulth communities, with tourism
playing an increasingly important role. Today logging and fishing in Clayoquot Sound
provides little employment, particularly for the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht, whose
territories are subsumed by conservationist authorities such as Parks Canada and the
UNESCO Biosphere. Where there were once hundreds of fishing boats on the coast,
now only a few are owned and operated by the Nuu-chah-nulth. A small number of men
in each community have sporadic logging work, usually outside Clayoquot Sound in
mainland British Columbia.
An example of partnership between First Nations and industry is the Hesquiat partnership with forestry company Interfor. The business relationship between the Hesquiat and logging company Interfor concerns conservationists. There is a logging block in Hesquiat territory over which Hesquiat leadership and Interfor have cut a deal. The company will build the logging access road further than is needed for their purposes into the Hesquiat community. This will give car access to the community for Hesquiat people. In exchange the Hesquiat leadership will allow the forest company to set up a logging camp in their territory. While seen as a positive agreement by some Hesquiat leaders, many community members are fearful that loggers will bring alcohol and drugs into the community, and cause problems for the local women. These concerns are justified and, in spite of the logging company’s assurance that the camp will remain dry, it is a difficult situation to police. Moreover, drugs and alcohol have been brought in by plane and boat, and by travellers staying at the nearby Hot Springs campsite—a popular tourist location.

Economic development has far reaching social impacts. Economic co-opting of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations is the contemporary business focus of extractive industries, such as fishing and logging, in Clayoquot Sound. Drombowski (2002: 95) (who has worked extensively on the politics of recognition of resource development politics and ‘Indigenism’ in Alaska) asserts that extractive industries throughout Canada are now claiming “recognition” from First Nations in efforts to legitimise resource development projects and to forego environmental restrictions. Dr Don Hall, Fisheries Manager for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, is a Euro-Canadian biologist whose years of work on fisheries resource access and management allow him a rare understanding of the issues.

I go to Vancouver and I get friends saying ‘Oh these natives are taking all the fish’. Generalisations that are real easy to grasp, and not only grasp but I think a lot of people are blatantly racist and they kind of want to believe it anyway right, so you’ve got a message that you are willing to accept and you are willing to believe it. People won’t admit to that. Business and government, they think of it in terms of money. But I think in terms of the more general public perception - I think business and government may feed on those blatant racist attitudes in the public but really what’s driving them is the bottom line. They want to control access to the resources and they don’t want First Nations gaining more access to the resources. I asked that
question to one of the executives of Canadian Fish a few years ago and he said it this way, “You know we made a lot of money on the west coast of Vancouver Island over the years, and we want it to continue. We know times are changing and we want to continue to work with people who are harvesting these resources”. From my perspective, what difference does it make to a fish processing company who is harvesting those resources whether it is a non-aboriginal Canadian or Nuu-chah-nulth? They are still going to get the product.

First Nations are seeing opportunities to do business with these companies and to provide some employment. The relationship between environmental movement and First Nations is always kind of interesting. It’s kind of a periodic convenience that each side will use for their advantage. Generally First Nations are interested in providing jobs for their communities and harvesting resources in their area. They are probably more interested in doing it in a bit more sustainable manner than the forestry companies have in the past, but they are not as conservation minded as ecological people would claim - environmentalists (Hall, pers.comm: 2003).

Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadian perceptions of environment differ dramatically: cultural perception is greatly shaped by economic factors (see Ingold 2000). Today, both Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadian entrepreneurs view Clayoquot Sound as a site of natural and economic abundance: as a landscape that can be utilised for financial gain. While the Nuu-chah-nulth have always viewed their environment as a site from which resources may be exploited for their livelihood, they have done so with ethical considerations based on the cosmology of received cultural teachings. Today, the parameters of these constraints are defined by a constant tension between cultural ideals and economic needs. I asked Cliff Atleo Sr., “What is your response to the commonly voiced sentiment of some environmentalists, non-Aboriginal fishermen/hunters and government agencies that claim that if Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations had economic control of resources in their territories they would just finish off the rest?”

They [Euro-Canadians] think we think like them and sometimes that doesn’t add up or make sense because if we did we wouldn’t be so bad off [laughs] but there is a difference in the thinking. There is no doubt in my mind that
there are sectors in our community who would perhaps live up to those negative expectations, but if we can establish a framework of [resource] management that actually applies different principles than what exists today then there would be controls on that type of thinking because all things are connected, because we wouldn’t just set it up without the importance of educating and informing. What I see for the future is very much based on what we know to be called hahuuli [territory], which is the responsibility of hawiit [hereditary chiefs]. They have hahuuli [territories]. Hawiit are chiefs, they are gifts from the creator, and they have guiding principles, which includes hishuk ish ts’awalk, which means all things are connected. Not only in this world but there is no disconnect with the spirit world and isaklenis, which means respect for self, for others, all things. Those are very powerful principles and hahuuli encompasses the territory, encompasses people and their land and the resources and the responsibility of that hawiit is to look after that hahuuli. In the past people were trained from a very young age to look after a river and families had that responsibility so they passed it on to their offspring, usually the eldest and they were taught everything there is to know about a river, how it is, it has a life. Observation, behaviour and that applied to everything. We had a totally sustainable community, a self-sustaining community and we had drought years, we had tough years, and we adapted, and what minimised disaster were the teachings of hishuk ish is’awalk, and isak, translated into simple terms: If you look after the land the resources it will look after you. So, we want to move back towards that. We want to instil the values we have into resource management: In partnership with the broader community, the non-Aboriginal community, and because they are new comers - because they are not going to go away. (Atleo Sr., pers.comm: 2003).

Nuu-chah-nulth attitudes to environmental management are increasingly determined by neoliberal capitalist conceptions of human-nature relationships. The implications of the tourism trade for Nuu-chah-nulth are many. Tourism changes the dynamics of resource access and the freedom of movement of local people. Logging barges once disturbed herring coming to spawn. Today it is aquaculture, whale and bear watching boats touring through herring spawning areas. Tour operators, kayakers, boaters, and sport fishers increasingly utilise their once isolated territories and turning them
territories into a playground for visitors. The increase in tourist activities has a number of ramifications for local Nuu-chah-nulth.

Hikers, kayakers, boaters, sport fishers and other recreational users of Clayoquot Sound utilise the natural resources of the area oblivious of the local community. Parks Canada or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are acknowledged by visitors as the authority, not the Tla-o-qui-aht or Ahousaht First Nations. Visitors catch fish, pick berries, and gather shellfish. These are the natural shared joys and rights of being Canadian to a majority population; they do not act out of concerted disrespect, but fail to conceptualise the fact that they are in Nuu-chah-nulth territory. While Nuu-chah-nulth authority over their territory must still be acknowledged in order to have gravitas, the legal fact remains that Nuu-chah-nulth never actually signed away their land. They thus base their claim for land and benefits on the fact that they never ceded or surrendered their title. This is ignored by most British Columbians, even some who are highly educated, and academically trained.

The increased tourism, and lack of authority, renders the Nuu-chah-nulth unable to ensure the safety of their sacred areas and burial sites, while thousands of kayakers and boaters explore local waterways and coastal areas every year. The lack of accountability of tourist presence prevents local Nuu-chah-nulth from utilising their environment for hunting, fishing, and gathering as they have in the past. Sacred sites such as burial caves are discovered and disturbed. Some have been looted and damaged. Since contact, considerable theft of material culture has occurred. Early last century many looters were professional anthropologists and archaeologists who, under the guise of ethnographic fieldwork stole from villages to sell to museums and private collectors (Cole, 1985).

In conversation with recreational users at Clayoquot Sound, Nuu-chah-nulth often question them as to their awareness of the territory's owners and the need to obtain permission to remove resources, if they are to do so at all. Many visitors either ignore, or are ignorant, of the implications of their presence and actions in Nuu-chah-nulth territories in Clayoquot Sound. Some are openly defiant. These issues of ownership and use resources are highly problematic for local First Nations. For authority to be effective it must be acknowledged and enforced. While Nuu-chah-nulth ownership and control of their territories is a fact without question for themselves, it is not so to the majority of Canadians who visit the area. I ask how the Nuu-chah-nulth make their claims understood in order to gain respect, acknowledgement, and compliance from a politically and economically powerful majority.
A related issue, for instance, is how Nuu-chah-nulth hunters can safely shoot deer and seals on outlaying islands and coastal areas in Clayoquot Sound when there are kayakers and hikers in the area who do not require permission from a Nuu-chah-nulth authority to be there. The number of kayakers/ hikers and the wide geographic radius they cover rules out large areas previously utilised by local hunters. Hunters cannot use rifles, as they are concerned for tourist’s safety. There are prohibitions on hunting and fishing enforced by outside authorities: Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Police, as well as First Nations Fisheries Officers such as the Ahousaht Fisheries Guardians.

Hikers and campers use beach and forest areas, not only within traditional territories but also within reserve lands without the permission of Nuu-chah-nulth councils, and often with the compliance of tour operators who inform tourists that it is not necessary. The majority of visitors do not consider the political ramifications of being in the region. Although they do acknowledge that they are within the authority and jurisdiction of the Pacific Rim National Park and the UNESCO Biosphere (see Chapter 3).

The harvesting of natural resources is considerably more problematic for Nuu-chah-nulth than in former times. Once bountiful resource areas have been lost to development, greatly depleted through overuse and the growing needs of industry. There is less to utilise and less to defend. For Nuu-chah-nulth there is increasing challenge and competition over resource use from non-Aboriginals. Many kayakers and hikers help themselves to natural resources such as shellfish within Nuu-chah-nulth territories. Elders Sidney Sam [Ahousaht] and Ernest David [Tla-o-qui-aht] commented on the use of their territories at the Clayoquot Symposium in 2003, a meeting of Nuu-chah-nulth, Parks Canada and Department of Fisheries officers, environmental research groups, and tourism operators.

Our sacred sites, it’s like a church there, you can’t go there, it should be marked off not to go there because you are going to something you shouldn’t be. Sacred things that are left out there on the graves of relatives have been taken or desecrated. Kayakers are everywhere so Ahousaht people can’t hunt, as they are afraid of shooting someone who is involved in recreation in the area. We have concerns about tourists taking food because it is free. They come out and take clams, oysters, sea urchins, etc. That is Nuu-chah-nulth food, Ahousaht food. There is a lot of disrespect. The Wildside Trail began and run by the Ahousaht: they are not receiving much
revenue as tourist boats and others drop off hiker’s part way along the walk, and they do not check in with the office and pay their fee for doing the walk on Ahousaht land. There is a lot of disrespect. The message is don’t eat our food (Sam, 2003)

People come in and eat our resources. What we need for our own people. We live here all of us (David, 2003).

Local Nuu-chah-nulth communities rarely receive any remuneration for the use of their territories and the resources within them while Parks Canada takes millions in revenue every year from tourist fees for using the park. To date and despite considerable rhetoric to the contrary, tourism as an industry has treated Nuu-chah-nulth as have other industries operating in Clayoquot Sound: with little if any consultation or acknowledgement of Nuu-chah-nulth authorities and rights in their territories. For the Nuu-chah-nulth these are actions of deep disrespect. Daryl Campbell (Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian) points out the inequity of the political and economic climate in Clayoquot Sound.

When I look at it I see all these kayakers, they stop all over our beaches, I see all the whale watchers that come in, all these guys in Tofino making the money out of our territory, and they say we’re not contributing? I had a run in with the Tofino Mayor when he was there about that, don’t you ever tell me that I’m not helping you pay your tax, you guys boast about your millions of whale watchers and kayakers that come into Clayoquot Sound and we own the majority of Clayoquot Sound, Ahousaht (Campbell, pers.commin: 2003).

The Wild Side Trail has been allowed to fall into disrepair due to Ahousaht disappointment at the failure to produce revenue. This is in large part due to local tour operators dropping off tourist hikers on the beach past the village office at Maaqtsusis so they do not have to pay the hiking fee. A group of Ahousaht women began the tourism venture to bring some revenue into the village of Maaqtsusis and to showcase the beauty of Flores Island. They began by promoting the trail as an eco-tourism destination. The group’s work was successful and hikers came to walk the trail. This was economically positive yet many Ahousaht and others had concerns about human impact on the
environment. The trail had begun to deteriorate by the mid 1990s and Ahousaht elders were concerned about environmental damage to culturally sensitive areas. A boardwalk and bridges was built which lessoned the impact. The work began in 1996 under the management of a joint venture between the Ahousaht and the Western Canadian Wilderness Committee, an environmental organisation. It took a group of 25 workers 7 months to complete the work, and many local Ahousaht and other Nuu-chah-nulth worked on the trail. Ahousaht living at the village of Maaqtusiis soon discovered that tour operators and private boaters were dropping off hikers further round the headlands of the coast to avoid the village of Maaqtusiis as well as the charge for hiking the trail. This was difficult to curb and with revenue dropping so did the local upkeep of the trail. Rubbish now overflows the bins on the trail, and many of the signs indicating places of cultural significance to the Ahousaht have faded and begun to fall apart.

Gibson Provincial Marine Park is immediately south of the Ahousaht village of Maaqtusiis. On the BC Parks website it notes that the Marine Park offers access to the “Walk the Wild Side” routes, and that the trail can be accessed from any of the beaches in the Park. There is no mention of the fact that Ahousaht people instigated the project and that the trail was built with the combined effort of Ahousaht and environmentalists. There is also no acknowledgement of the fact that the trail is within Ahousaht territory. This is characteristic of power relations in Clayoquot Sound.

Tourists bring millions of dollars in revenue to Clayoquot Sound every year and visitor numbers are fast increasing yet there is little benefit for Nuu-chah-nulth communities. Nuu-chah-nulth employed in Clayoquot Sound work in predominantly service positions within the tourism industry, some for the Tin Wis Best Western, as well as for the many Euro-Canadian owned and operated resorts, restaurants. A small number of Nuu-chah-nulth are employed seasonally by tour guide companies as tour boat operators and guide leaders highly valued for their deep knowledge of the area. In all these situations Nuu-chah-nulth workers, like local economies, are dependent on the whims and fluctuations of the global economy, and one I argue historically which is significantly unstable in comparison to the subsistence economy. In the relationship between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ (Nash, 1977) there are often economic disparities, particularly in the Third World or the marginalised areas of the First. This disparity can, like colonialism, engender feelings of superiority among the visitors as well as transforming the local economy into a service economy organised to meet the demands of tourists. Tourists are increasingly drawn to Clayoquot Sound for its cultural interest, namely the Nuu-chah-nulth people themselves. The marketing of Indigenous ‘culture’
and ‘spirituality’ is an increasingly lucrative aspect of tourism. In Clayoquot Sound the commoditisation of spirit and landscape is actualised in the real economic terms of tourist revenue. Nuu-chah-nulth spirituality and culture are utilised in tourist marketing without the consent of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. Visitors to Clayoquot are enticed by glossy tourism brochures offering a ‘land that time forgot’ featuring photographs of young Nuu-chah-nulth people dancing in traditional cedar cloaks and headbands, brandishing carved and painted canoe paddles and masks. Few Nuu-chah-nulth benefit financially from such representation but there are few: a dance troupe and a handful of local artists that sell their work at a Nuu-chah-nulth owned gallery. Yet, little progress has been made in the area of cultural tourism. Nuu-chah-nulth have generally felt uneasy about the idea of commercialising aspects of their culture, or have simply been insulted by the amount of money offered for their skills and performance, either by Nuu-chah-nulth organisers or non-Aboriginal tour operators attempting to maximise profits. Through Nuu-chah-nulth managed tourism enterprises, local First Nations can begin to take control of their representation to non-aboriginals.

A decade ago Tla-o-qui-aht established a hotel resort a few miles from the town of Tofino. In partnership with the Best Western hotels chain, Tin Wis (meaning ‘quiet waters’) is situated on land within traditional Tla-o-qui-aht territory, which was granted Indian Reserve status by the government. Tla-o-qui-aht agency and engagement in direct action brought about this change. The successfully completed Tin Wis development project was the result of this struggle and remains a matter of local pride for Tla-o-qui-aht as well as other Nuu-chah-nulth. Foremost in this positive series of changes in local status was that Tla-o-qui-aht ingenuity was the spur for the project rather than government.

The building of Tin Wis on the old site of the Bishop Christie Residential School where many Nuu-chah-nulth were students gave the project particularly emotive resonance. As I have asserted in Chapter 5 many Nuu-chah-nulth suffered sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at the school, and in earlier times sickness and death due to mistreatment, malnutrition, and tuberculosis and poor health brought about by the low conditions in which the students were kept: inadequate diet, overwork, and lack of heating. Bishop Christie was closed down three decades ago. Tla-o-qui-aht decided to put forward a land claim for the site to the government in order to get it Indian Reserve status. When this was achieved in 1991 Tla-o-qui-aht saw this as a great occasion, and many commented that it was time to ‘turn something bad into something good’. Many people had sad memories of abuse and suffering while students at the school. Due to
trauma suffered at the school the space is one which has been reclaimed and in a sense ‘reborn’ through Tla-o-qui-aht agency. The plan was develop it into something positive for their people.

The first step in starting the business and building the resort was in gaining the capital. This was a challenge given that the property, which has had reserve status since 1991, could not be used as collateral. As the site is Crown land it was deemed an insecure investment by the banks. The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council provided the investment capital allowing a partnership with Best Western to occur.

The partnership embraced the idea of presenting Nuu-chah-nulth story-telling programs, art exhibits, and adding traditional Nuu-chah-nulth foods to the menu. Yet, according to many Tla-o-qui-aht little of this cultural integration has occurred. The majority of art to be seen in the hotel is not of Nuu-chah-nulth origin but by other First Nation artists, and some local artists were surprised and angered to not have work commissioned by the hotel.

While some of the cultural aspirations have not yet been realised, it is a source of stable employment for local, particularly young, Nuu-chah-nulth. Coming out of high school or other training programs, First Nation members have been employed in sales, marketing or reception. About 70 percent of the summer season staff are Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nations. The hotel has offered jobs and experience, which would have been difficult to gain at other resorts in the area, many of which are said by local Nuu-chah-nulth to have an unofficial policy of not hiring First Nations people.

Ray Martin serves on the Tla-o-qui-aht council and is an ex-student of Bishop Christie. Ray comments on the local conflicts between Nuu-chah-nulth and other residents of the area brought about by Tla-o-qui-aht efforts to establish Indian Reserve status for the old school site. The land is situated on a coastal strip of established tourist developments owned by Euro-Canadians.

Ray: Anybody tell you about the struggle to get Indian Reserve status for this place? The Nuu-chah-nulth people: The central region, Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht people. We boycotted all the businesses here in town. The airline, the grocery stores, the liquor stores, things like that. In other words they quit spending their money here. They went elsewhere.

[My questions in italics hereforth] Why?
Basically because this chunk of land is in the municipal Tofino district and these people did not want IR [Indian Reserve] status for this, the townspeople. Some of the people were quite vocal about it. Mackenzie [local man who owns MacKenzie Resort next to Tin Wis] sees me one day, although I was totally out of the picture [working in forestry camps outside Clayoquot Sound]. He just happens to see me and he says, “We don’t want wrecked cars out here, we don’t want dogs out here, we don’t want smokehouses [for fish] out here”. He was saying “We’re trying to run a business out here”. And his business was the MacKenzie Beach Resort. This is right next to us, and he was pretty open about that, as I remember so were a number of other people. And so what Frances Frank and them [Tla-o-qui-aht chief negotiator at that time] decided, they got together with the other groups and they said “Hey we want Indian Reserve status for that chunk of land, and how we can get it is if we work together” and they did. They forced that issue. Not because they wanted to but because they had to. I remember coming home, no kidding, I came out of a logging camp down on Rivers Inlet, I came home here some time in November and I seen all these people around, some of them my family, my relatives and I said “Hey, what are you guys doing?” you know. And they said, “Oh, we’re going to Ucluelet to shop”. There’s this convoy of vans coming in by the Co-op [main supermarket in Tofino]. And I said “Why not here?” They said “Oh we’re boycotting”. And they told me “we’re not shopping here”. I think that was 93. They were thinking of opportunities. Some of these guys were already thinking “If we have this land then we can generate some income out of it and create some work for our people”. Basically, they just really don’t hire Indians round here. If you go to town there how many Indians do you see working? None. So they had a look at that. That was interesting, and they were all headed out of town to do their shopping, and it worked.

Do you think a majority of non-Nuu-chah-nulth in town didn’t want it?

No, no, no, everybody around on side didn’t want it to happen. They didn’t want us around. They still don’t.

Tofino has this reputation of being very politically correct?
As opposed to Ucluelet? [Primarily working class logging community] Yeah, yeah and I reminded Moses Martin [elected Chief at time] of these things some time ago when we were talking about expansion negotiations [expansion of the Esowista community on land reclaimed from the Pacific Rim National Park, see Chapter 3], because things were not going well for us. We were talking about doing some direct action. By direct action I mean just going out and clearing land and occupying it, that’s what we meant. I reminded him about direct action to produce results as opposed to negotiations some time, and reminded him about the action he took on the Meares Island issue, and I said when you people stood up and fought for what you believe in and then they took notice of you. I said when you guys fought for IR [Indian Reserve] status for Tin Wis in the nineties and boycotted the businesses they paid attention to you. When you negotiate they don’t pay a whole lot of attention.

I don’t know if they’ll [non-Aboriginal residents and business owners of Tofino and surrounding area] readily admit it but that’s what happened. Actually, I got - twice I was hit. I used to come home in them days. I was working on the east coast of Vancouver Island and up on the mainland logging then. I would come home sometimes to visit my girl and while I’m visiting I visit other people. I mean you can’t help but run into people in town. And some of them would fill me in on what was going on. I ran into MacKenzie and we talked about that “smokehouses, dogs, wrecked cars” stuff, and he was pretty blunt about that. Another guy I ran into another time was a fella who used to run the airlines down there. Gary Richards was running it then. He works down there once in a while, I don’t know if he’s got anything to do with it now? But I remember, he was, him and Kenny Gibson were coming out of the post house as I was doing the same thing. And I knew Gary from years ago, from the logging camps around here, so I knew him for a long time, and I knew Gibson because he was my neighbour. I lived here in town with him, and Gary was talking pretty frankly about the boycott. How it affected his business and he was actually pissed off with us Indians. He said he’d had to sell one plane because of the lack of business. It was our fault. He said that basically because a lot of our
people used to fly in and out of Ahousaht and Hesquiaht to come down here to do business or whatever and because they did their business elsewhere it affected him. And he was pretty cheesed off about that to me. I think they were basically taking it out on any Indian that happened to be around at that time, and I just happened to be around. Yeah, there were some hard feelings about this place, but Francis Frank [chief negotiator] was running the show and I think we need to remind those guys now and then [of the effectiveness of direct action]. I remind them once in a while, unless we take a stand they’re not going to pay attention to us. I believe you’ve got to do radical things once in a while to achieve results, not in everything but there is a time for negotiation and there is a time for action. It’s just knowing when to do one or the other and if you don’t know you’re in trouble. Wonder if we’ll get anywhere ah? (Martin, pers.comm: 2004).

These tensions will only continue as tourism grows in the region. From the fur trade to forestry, different industries have held prominence in Clayoquot Sound. All have led to divisions in and between Euro-Canadian and Nuu-chah-nulth communities. Much of the contemporary conflict has been over economic control of the landscape, between a ‘working forest’ and the aesthetics of a pristine ‘viewscape’ as Tofino residents put it when Meares Island was threatened by logging. From past conflicts over whether to sacrifice the beauty of the natural environment of Clayoquot Sound, the issue is now who controls the right to market its beauty to tourists. Tour and resort operators do not want extractive industry such as industrial logging and fishing in the region: they want their guests to be able to sport fish, kayak, hike and be drawn to the region for its aesthetic beauty.

The town of Tofino is the commercial centre of Clayoquot Sound, and where everyone does their business. In town there are two youth hostels, various bed and breakfasts and along the coastline lie a handful of high-end hotel resorts. A luxury hunting and fishing lodge style is popular with wealthy urban patrons. Growing tourist revenue is slowly transforming Tofino into a chic resort town. Various practitioners of the healing arts have set up shop: wellness and massage studios, therapeutic bodywork, health spas and other therapies. These attractions are complemented by a store selling clothing made of organic cotton or hemp, a juice bar, a whole foods bakery, gift shops and galleries, two of which are owned by local Nuu-chah-nulth. Clayoquot Sound is a major destination for sea kayakers, hikers, and surfers and there are a handful of kayak
tour companies and surf schools and shops. It is a town in which locals are forced to pay tourist prices and many residents are migrants from other places. The bulk of tourist revenue goes to Euro-Canadian people in town.

Nuu-chah-nulth and Euro-Canadians do to some small degree mix and intermarr, run businesses, and socialise with each other, more than in most rural British Columbian towns. There is a high percentage of educated politically liberal Euro-Canadians who are openly supportive of Nuu-chah-nulth communities and for whom Nuu-chah-nulth people count as their friends and business associates. Yet, in the examples I have given in my study, such as the dangerous water supply at Esowista, the establishment of the Tin Wis hotel, and the injunction on the potential logging of Meares Island, in which Nuu-chah-nulth people resist economic developments that are imposed on them, or threaten Euro-Canadian economic livelihood through boycotts and blockades, an easy everyday familiarity quickly turns to deep contempt. The divisive everyday ‘common sense racism’ (Furniss, 1999), some Euro-Canadians direct towards Nuu-chah-nulth people is heightened in a period in which First Nations are increasingly political assertive, and in which treaties are being negotiated that will undoubtedly affect Euro-Canadian livelihood in Clayoquot Sound. While Euro-Canadian attitudes to First Nation people are diverse in every community, from open antagonism to full support, a discourse of negative stereotyping is often a dominant part in the everyday dialogue of Euro-Canadian community life.

Acts of racism are the ground level tensions that result when, as Blaser (2004) contends, the ‘life projects’ of Indigenous peoples conflict with the development projects of the state and market. Life projects are the visions and aspirations of Indigenous peoples, determined in separation from the neoliberal and entrepreneurial visions of state and industry, which view Indigenous territories as natural resource sites to appropriate with or without their consent. The Tla-o-qui-aht hotel development project raises complex issues of power in the context of an Indigenous instigated business ventures and the many obstacles to be faced. Blaser, Feit and McRae (2004: 8), endorsing the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples report (RCAP, 1996) observe that,

In recent years, the continuing resource developments on Indigenous lands despite recognitions of legal rights, the growing conservatism and declining sympathies of a public that itself feels less secure in its affluence under neoliberal changes, and the continuing gap between the living standards of
Indigenous peoples and other North Americans have led to a new urgency and recognition by many Indigenous communities that they need to participate in some forms of development (2004: 8).

Nuu-chah-nulth security within the cash economy has been dependent on economic and political relationships with the state and industry. Over-exploitation of natural resources in Clayoquot Sound has resulted in major swings in employment for local Nuu-chah-nulth. The extremes of the commercial fishing industry led to government imposed and scientifically informed quotas. This led to the marginalisation of Nuu-chah-nulth fishermen to the needs of major Canadian fishing and packing consortiums. The clearcut logging practices of the forestry industry led to mass protests, the establishment of the Pacific Rim National Park and the cancelling of huge overseas contracts for wood products sourced from Clayoquot Sound old growth rainforest. As a consequence mass layoffs in the logging industry occurred, causing bitter rifts between locals, many of who felt environmental protesters and First Nations had extinguished their livelihoods. Many Nuu-chah-nulth men who had worked as loggers feel the same way about Nuu-chah-nulth protestors, as did their families who rely on them, as logging was the major employer in the area. As Matthews and Wakefield (1997: 192-3) observe in their legal and business guide, Aboriginal Issues Today.

Activities by developers intrude on the traditional uses that Aboriginal peoples have made (and continue to make) of these lands, such as trapping, fishing, harvesting, and hunting. Indiscriminate development can also interfere with spiritual, cultural, and special values by intruding on important spiritual, community, or burial sites. The influx of non-Aboriginal developers, bent on realising a profit from the land, continues to strain the cultural values of the Aboriginal communities, sometimes pitting younger members against their elder’s beliefs, as a resource-based wage economy competes with the traditional ways of the communities. At the same time, resource activities if not conducted responsibly, may also cause significant environmental damage (1997: 192-3)
Plate 74. Drum nearly completed by Ray Martin for his grandson Taylor. The skin is deer, and the main painted motif is the Lightening Serpent so important in Tla-o-qui-aht cosmology.
Ahousaht Chief and author Umeek (E. Richard Atleo) (2004) has noted that the word potlatch used by North American anthropology to refer to the diverse myriad of give-aways practiced by the peoples of the Northwest coast is more likely to bring to mind the Kwakiutl or Haida due to the extensive ethnography done in their territories. Yet, the word originates from a Nuu-chah-nulth verb *pachitle* (to give). There are appropriate (with humility) and inappropriate ways to *pachitle*. The selfish antics of the Ahousaht culture hero *Son of Raven* are used as moral guides to show young Nuu-chah-nulth how not to behave. Umeek notes that the word *potlatch* in English has taken on various social, economic, and political Western constructs as well as being utilised as a general classification for every type of feasting. Potlatches, both precontact and contemporary, may be held for many purposes: a marriage, a memorial, an adoption, a rite of passage, or the transference of a chieftainship seat. Guests are invited to bear witness. Tom Mexsis Happynook [Huu-ay-aht] briefly explains the diversity, purpose, and importance of the potlatch.

There is a whole pile of different potlatches. There are memorial potlatches, marriage potlatches, and all different kinds that are where we conducted our business. Witnesses were brought in, as we were an oral society. We would invite hereditary chiefs; big chiefs from up the coast would come and witness these potlatches, because that’s what would give authenticity and authorisation to the business we were conducting as a tribe through the witness system (Happynook, pers.comm: 2003).

The act of witnessing is one of the core purposes of the potlatch. The giving of gifts must be publicly witnessed in order to be effective politically. What is at stake is reputation, now but particularly in the future.

I attended a number of potlatches while I lived on Vancouver Island. During the early stages of my fieldwork I was invited to potlatches held in Port Alberni by Tseshah and Huu-ay-aht, and while living on the central coast I attended a number held by the Ahousaht in Maaquasis on Flores Island. I attended a memorial to the loss of a teenage boy by his family, an adoption of a teenage girl, and the transference of a chieftainship seat from father to son. The last was a large feast I attended with hundreds of Ahousaht and other Nuu-chah-nulth.

I walked up the dirt road from the beach to Thunderbird Hall, my boots kicking up dust as we made our way to the potlatch at which we would witness the handing down
of a chieftainship to Billy Keitlah. People watched from the windows, taking note of those who had come. Tla-o-qui-aht and Hesquiat chiefs and their families made their way up the hill carrying boxes of fresh fruit, dance shawls, and other gifts to give away at the potlatch. I ran back down the hill with my camera when I saw canoes arriving at the beach.

As two full canoes from Tla-o-qui-aht came into view Ahousaht men on the beach formed a large circle and began to sing welcoming songs in which Tla-o-qui-aht were invited in peace to Ahousaht territory. Elder Stanley Sam and his son were drumming and singing a welcoming song.

We made our way back up to road to the hall, led by Billy Keitlah Jr., his father and uncles. Billy and his father wore cedar cloaks adorned with eagle feathers and sea otter pelt. Billy wore a cedar headband with a disk of abalone at his temple shining in the sun. Billy was very welcoming and talked with everyone as we walked back up the hill. This was to be perhaps the most important day of Billy’s life. His family’s hereditary seat was to be handed down from his father to himself, involving attached responsibilities, ceremonial privileges, and resource rights. Others would help with the job of imparting oratory and family history at ceremonies and potlatches if Billy was not fluent enough in his language and culture. Yet as tradition dictates Billy would have been brought up in expectation of these responsibilities.

As I came up to the hall there stood some large plastic bins filled with purple and orange sea urchins with some very happy elderly women cracking them open and passing them to those wandering by. I was offered some warm smiles and three or four urchins. One small boy smashed away at the urchin shells spraying everyone around him with the highly aromatic juice. He grinned at me and kept at it ignoring the gentle scolding of the older women around him.

Hundreds had filed into the hall to take their seats at the long lines of tables covered in white paper table clothes. Young Ahousaht placed cartons of juice on the table doing relays to help the women cooking in the large kitchen at the back of the hall. The women and girls could be seen through the large serving window boiling potatoes and salmon and greeting friends and family that poked their heads in for a joke or a bit of gossip. People sat on the benches along the walls of the hall as they did when watching their local boys play basketball against visiting teams from around Nuu-chah-nulth country and elsewhere. The elders took their seats first, particularly the old chiefs who were seated first. In times past everyone would be seated by rank and fed in that order.
While the protocol of rigidly stratified ranking is not observed today the tradition of feeding the hereditary chiefs and their families first continues.

I was asked to sit chiefs at one end of the long table at this potlatch and as plates of food were brought around I helped take plates from the hands of a young woman who was bringing food out to the chiefs. Once I had done so she put down a plate for me. After talking with them for a while I began to eat, quite overcome with the hunger of a long day. A slightly shocked amusement came over the faces of those around me, and a young man lent down and said in my ear, “you are not to start eating before the chiefs!” I looked over at Chief Louie George and his companions who were watching me with not unkind bemusement. I put down my knife and fork and apologised saying I did not realise the protocol, and was overcome by hunger. The chiefs laughed at this and put me at ease by teasing me a little.

One of the chiefs’ sons sitting by me asked me many questions about New Zealand and Maori while drawing a lightning serpent on the paper tablecloth with real skill. Once people had neared completion of their meals and second helpings had been brought round, the welcoming of visitors to Ahousaht territory began: those from Tla-o-qui-aht and Hesquihaht were welcomed in line with cultural protocol and historical alliances and clashes recounted: alliances celebrated and conflicts put into the past. The oratory was carried out in Nuu-chah-nulth meaning that neither I, nor the majority of those in the hall could understand anything but the odd word or phrase. My understanding of the meanings and narrative of the long oratory was gleaned from chiefs around me who occasionally said such things as ‘now they are telling the story of the war between the Tla-o-qui-aht and the Ahousaht’ or ‘now he is talking about all the relations between Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht through marriage and about how we are all related’. These chiefs are some of the no more than twenty-five or so fluent Nuu-chah-nulth speakers within a nation of over nine hundred people. It was strange and sad to watch hundreds and hundreds of people listening quite intently to a man speaking in their own language and the great majority of his people unable to understand his meanings. This is largely due to the effects of modernity and legislated residential schools where speaking one’s native tongue brought about physical punishment. The few elders who can still speak their language fluently are usually those who were hidden from government authorities so as to avoid being taken away to residential schools. Through the teachings and training of family elders and the wider community they learnt the correct protocols and organisation of Nuu-chah-nulth social structure. The reason that few Nuu-chah-nulth possess this knowledge today is that language and
cosmology is lost as elders pass on. The majority of young Nuu-chah-nulth are not brought up speaking and learning their native language, and the teachings, philosophies, and spirituality that is expressed through it.

Once the welcoming and tribal alliances and relations were established through oral histories the Ahousaht began to dance and drum their stories and songs. Behind the painted curtain, which stretched the width of the formidable hall, dancers prepare shielded from the eyes of the onlookers. The little girl dancers came out from behind the curtain first in brown dresses with feathers in their hair stamping their feet in unison and in time with the beating drums and singers behind them to the left of the curtain. Then the boys came out dressed in shorts and dance shawls, bare-chested. They wore woven cedar bark headbands and moved out through the dance floor, their cedar strip shawls arching in the air as they danced. After the children danced, the men and women dancers of the Ahousaht and the visiting Hesquiaht and Tla-o-qui-aht sang, danced and drummed their stories, shared their histories, and gifted the prominent and honoured members of each others families with blankets, money, and other gifts. Shared oratory and dances lasted until seven o’clock the following morning when only a few teenagers remained on the benches, and a few elders sat watching and listening to continuing speeches of thanks and the reinforcing of kinship. The elders, many of whom were used to the potlatches of their younger years which lasted days rather hours, stayed through to the end, observing correct protocol and respecting those speaking.

Tommy Curley, a Tla-o-qui-aht man in his late sixties recounted to me the grandeur and excitement of the potlatches he attended as a child. As a boy living at Opitsat he recalls being in the tyee’s (first or ‘head’ hereditary chief) house. Mattresses were laid out for all the children from where they watched the proceedings of the ceremonial potlatch or slept, as they needed. Tommy sat staring at the elaborately painted curtain hanging across the back section of the chief’s large plank house. The curtain depicted an image owned by the head chief’s family, a powerful Thunderbird holding a whale in its talons as an eagle does a salmon. The Thunderbird is symbolically linked with whaling in Tla-o-qui-aht thought, and it is one of the most important beings in their visual culture, possibly extending back as far as two millennia.

The sound built and built until the children were quiet with fear. From behind the curtain came the Thunderbird, a huge carved wooden mask beaked and fierce. Tommy told me he hadn’t known there was a man behind the curtain shaking a sheet of copper. The eyes rolled and even sparkled but Tommy was not sure how this was done. The great painted wings were hinged and movable, and as it moved across the curtain to the
other side of the chief’s house everyone present heard the lightening crack and the children jumped. Then out came a man in a sea serpent mask with a long snout turning his head back and forth as if pushing and rising through the water. The noise of the Thunderbird and the Lightening Serpent sounded so real to him when he was a boy. During the winter in Clayoquot Sound you often hear a deep rumbling thunder build in strength accompanied by deafening lightening flashes indicating a storm.

The ties and obligations of kin-based relationships remain strong amongst the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht, and other Nuu-chah-nulth, and the holding of potlatches continues to function as a reinforcement of social relationships. These relationships are strengthened and renewed through collective involvement in the considerable preparations needed to ensure a successful potlatch. One man was engaged for some months carving a sea-serpent mask for a head chief who is his great-uncle. It was to be danced at a potlatch to represent the traditions, resource and ceremonial rights, and alliances of the chief’s family or ‘house’. Many women, as well as some men, in the family were busy weaving cedar headbands and sewing shawls for the dancers. Much of the large extended kin group connected to that chief become involved in the preparations, as do many others in the community. As was said to me often, ‘we are a tribal people and we are all family’. Others help on the day with food preparation and organising the hall and seating. The hunters and fishermen will go out for food. Nevertheless, this pervasive overwhelming Nuu-chah-nulth nostalgia for times gone by is not only applied to the potlatch during the childhood memories of elders, but to twenty years past. Ray and Regina Martin share their understandings of the potlatch tradition for the Tla-o-qui-aht and Hesquiaht (Regina’s nation before she married Ray, becoming a Tla-o-qui-aht member), and contend that in the 1980s the potlatch culture was more abundant. This is prior to the economic downturn in Clayoquot Sound when commercial logging and fishing were at their height and men in the community were well paid. Ray contends that it there was a stronger collective involvement in the preparation of a potlatch in the 1980s. The social change and lessening of commitment that has occurred is due to a substantial drop in wealth in communities. Not only do people have less money to contribute to family potlatches, they have less optimism.

It used to be a community effort or a family effort back in the eighties when Alec Frank [hereditary chief of Ray’s family on mother’s side, and his Uncle] did something we just did it! You know there was this one old man, he was well into his nineties, and we were talking very much like how we
are here. He was talking about how things were when these potlatches happened, they didn’t do it for twelve hours. They did it for days. You know, and he was telling me they used to dance right throughout the night, do what they do, and the speakers used to speak for hours about the history of this chief and talk about the songs, the dances, associated with their rights to territory. He was telling me that he had seen a lot of changes. Twelve hours may seem like a long time to you. My Aunt Carrie did say too they used to go for hours and days these people. Things are changing very rapidly.

It is mainly the chiefs that have the songs, the dances, the rights to those things, although they can give privileges, which sometimes happens. Usually what happens if for instance one of my sisters gets married, which has happened, who happens to be the niece of Alec Frank, he will send with my sister a song - or maybe it’s a song and a dance that go together. In this case Hinkeet’sam so she takes with her that song and that dance but she doesn’t own it. She doesn’t have rights to use it. It’s not hers to give. Hinkeet’sam means the sea serpent, hin-keets, hinkeet’ksam. They are all sea serpent masks.

Some of those Hinkeet’sam do have wolf looking constructions you could say. The story that goes with that is that a sea serpent had the head of a wolf, you know these creatures, and there are some various types but they are all constructed in the box type. They all look very similar and some of them are mechanical, for instance by mechanical I mean moving parts. Either the eyes will open or some of them will open up and inside you’ll see another bird or a human carved mask, a portrait mask we call them, or they’ll be a bird or something like a puppet figure carved of the human or something. They lay down in there or they come up mechanically. The dancer operates that at certain times of the dance. He doesn’t do it when he feels like it. The dancers are very familiar with the songs that are being sung, and certain parts of that song they will do, for instance open the mask or the little puppet figure will come up, or the human face will come up and go back down, or the eyes will roll, and they are all handled, the dancer controls that. His knowledge of the songs and dances, the history of that song he’ll know
when to do it through the training and the practice that goes into it. There’s a lot of practicing and things that are related going into the dances. Not just anyone can get up and do it you know? Some of these chiefs have a great deal of regalia, some of these chiefs; some of them have lots of history. Where it’s been lost I should say, forgotten Some people are very knowledgeable about songs and the chiefs, some of those people have that, and these are the people that come and help the chief when he is having a potlatch because they are knowledgeable. They seem to have that gift of remembering songs and the voice that goes with it, and they’ve got that quality in them to lead the other singers as well. They will follow him. Some people have that skill to do that. They can remember many, many songs, not just ten, but many songs, same with the dancing, same with the native - same with our dancers. There’s some people that are very good dancers, but not all of them can pass that on down. Some of these people have that gift to teach our younger dancers how to do these dances respectfully. That type of thing, so there were certain key people who are very involved in the activities of the chief when he’s doing a potlatch. There are some people that are very good at cooking, organising the activities in the kitchen, and there’s some people that are just good at organising the people, there’s some people who have very good memories. We used to have someone at the door that would usher, you know ushers not the term: but bring these people in and seat them at one time [according to hereditary rank and title]. That practice has basically fallen through the cracks.

They were very knowledgeable about the ranking of these chiefs from different tribes, you see when something like an important event happens, lets say Alec Frank will be passing on his chieftainship for instance, down to his next son, then there would be someone that knows all of the chiefs along the coast. These people have seats right, they have their rank, but right now today they just kind of wander in and sit wherever they want. They do it to some degree still practise that [seating by hereditary ranking] but not to the extent that they did years ago.

In these events there’s gifts that are distributed and these people who have their ranks are the ones that receive gifts first according to their rank
and their links to the person who is hosting the deal [potlatch] (Ray and Regina Martin, pers.comm: 2004).

The acknowledgements of rank are less prevalent today but to some extent are still observed. Hereditary chiefs are seated at the heads of tables and are served first. The symbolic meanings of space in the potlatch were expressed through the ranked seating of hereditary chiefs. This use of space to reinforce rank and power was used in Nuu-chah-nulth housing until the nineteenth century, in which each large plank house represented a family ‘house’ or group. The floor plan of these large houses, like the seating at the potlatch, was separated into ranked sections. The introduction of nuclear family sized ‘European style’ houses was a significant factor in the dismantling of the strength of the extended family group. The continuation of the potlatch positions it as the most significantly binding social event in Nuu-chah-nulth life in which hundreds of people are generously fed with traditional style foods; salmon, halibut, herring, sea urchins, herring roe-on-kelp, duck soup, are some of the traditional foods. More recent adoptions since contact are corn, potatoes, rice, fruit juices, soft drinks, white bread and butter, tea and coffee.

Some elders will not attend because the food is “not done right” and “not like the old days”. Everything has changed they say and none of it for the better. While far less closely observed the Nuu-chah-nulth continue to use food to distinguish rank. Chiefs receive food at potlatches that the rest of the people do not such as seal meat. When a seal or whale was sectioned for distribution among the chiefs the head chiefs would receive certain pieces of meat as pertained to their rank. Ahousaht elder Frank August talks of hunting seal with his father and sharing the meat among the heads of each ‘house’ in the community.

We’d go out and get a seal and he [father] would have a feast with his friends, his neighbours, and the elders of each house. There was lots of fun; I really enjoyed them old days. I get a seal now, but I don’t do what my Dad used to do, I keep it for home. Before the fish farms come into the [Tofino] inlet there I would go out quite a bit, and I’d bring some down to friends in Port Alberni, Adam Shewish and a guy named Lawrence Wilson, Jacob Gallic and them, just to bring some seal meat to them. That’s the way we were taught in my time: share. Not sell it, just share it. I enjoyed that; I lived for that a lot, just to share when I got a seal. I took some to Victoria,
Vancouver, friends and relatives. That’s what scaling was all about when I was growing up, but you don’t do it today (August, pers.comm: 2003).

As I have stated throughout my thesis contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth people correlate a loss of cultural traditions and social relations with the lessening of access to food resources. For Nuu-chah-nulth eating nourishing ‘traditional’ foods such as salmon, halibut, herring fish and roe, seal, deer, salmon and salmonberries, and wild vegetables such as mushrooms and camas (similar to spring onions), is not only viewed as superior in health to a Western style diet, but also symbolises a way back to the ‘pure’ lives of Nuu-chah-nulth pre-European contact.

Older Nuu-chah-nulth express concerns about their children and young people preferring highly processed store bought foods to traditional foods. Western foods are seen by Nuu-chah-nulth to literally be ‘killing our people’ with heart disease and diabetes. As Tom Happynook [Huuy-ay-aht] explains, ‘we are all dying from rheumatism, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis. The list goes on and on and on. The food that we have had introduced to us is killing us (pers.comm 2003). In parallel to this refusal to eat traditional foods is the perception that young Nuu-chah-nulth do not care about their community and the Nuu-chah-nulth ‘way of life’ often signified as rural, subsistence, and geographically based in original territories.

Adoption of the material goods of modernity is perfectly justifiable as Nuu-chah-nulth have always utilised outside technology gained through trade, yet it is commonly held that the traditions, language, and diet must not be forgotten. During the 1930’s Depression economic crises in the canneries saw an increased Nuu-chah-nulth reliance on government ‘relief’ rations. Ahousaht chief Cliff Atleo Sr. told me that when he was a little boy a case of such provisions turned up on the dock at Maatutsis. These were foods of poor nutritional value such as sugar, white flour, salt, and white rice. All his life he had felt certain that the best thing they could have done was leave it there to rot, as its acceptance signalled the beginning of the welfare reliance which he sees as having crippled his people’s spirit.

The opportunity to eat traditional foods together is seen as a significant element in the sustenance of community and collective culture. Food is an affirmation of ‘being Nuu-chah-nulth’. Tla-o-qui-ahl carver and painter Joe David (Tla-kish-wha-to-ahl/ Stands with his Chiefs) holds that the loss of physical strength and wellbeing is one of the paramount causes of Nuu-chah-nulth social problems. This decline in strength is
brought about by changes in diet and the acculturation of unhealthy living habits. The potlatch offers the community an opportunity to eat traditional foods.

It was a powerful time because the people were powerful. The people ate the most natural and powerful of foods: deer, salmon, seal, and whale. All these things were in their glory period, when their environment was pure. With that power the people were able to stand supernatural experiences that we nowadays couldn't, because we're filled with McDonalds and Coca-Cola, things like that. We're just much weaker people now—in our brain, in our emotion, in everything—than the older people (David in Duffek, 2000: 360).

David emphasises modern foods as pollutants, both physical and spiritual. Nuu-chah-nulth identity is strongly reliant on place for continuity and power, but also on food and traditional diet. Food has been at the core of social and kin relationships. For the Nuu-chah-nulth of Clayoquot Sound ownership of resources, much of past warfare, and contemporary internal (boundary disputes between nations)/external political struggles (gaining control of territorial resources from provincial and federal government) has been, and remains, over access to traditional foods. In this way 'traditional', 'wild', or 'country' foods signify the continuation of Nuu-chah-nulth cultures, as well as the vehicle back to a healthier lifestyle and communities. Health is talked of in the widest sense, not only physical, but also spiritual and moral. A return to the traditional Nuu-chah-nulth diet is perceived as a return to strength as a people. As Kelm (1998: 19) asserts of British Columbia First Nations, 'when elders speak of the strength of their people, they invariably mention food'. When First Nations negotiated with Euro-Canadians they did so over a well-laid table, and Kelm (1998) points out, 'over that table, ownership of land and resources was hotly debated, for subsistence meant strength and, through access to food, the 'land question' was reified in Aboriginal bodies'.

Many people are returning to a more traditional diet as prolonged awareness of the connection between high sugars and starch processed foods and negative health effects, particularly diabetes and heart disease, affects public opinion in families and communities. Daryl Campbell, Ahousaht Fisheries Guardian asserts that Ahousaht Fisheries now provides most of the resources to the community, and believes this is increasing the community intake of traditional foods. 'We gather a lot of the foods for our people because our people don't have boats or can't afford to get out there because
of high unemployment and all that but I guess one of the positive spin-offs of that is that we’re seeing a lot more of our youth eating traditional foods, ah?” (pers.comm: 2003).

Food sustains us and gives meaning and order to our lives, as well as reflecting the symbolism in our ideological systems. Food plays an important part in identity construction, religious practices, and socialisation. As a return to a more substantially ‘traditional’ diet gains appeal, increased access to resources will be central to improving community health.

The few hunters in Esowista, Opitsat, and Maaqtusiis who regularly go out for wild food are vital to community health and welfare. Hunting is a resistance to poverty in which individual hunters take social responsibility for aspects of the welfare of their fellow community members, negatively affected as they are by global market fluctuations, labour instability, and inequitable economic access to modes of development. The fluctuations of the wider economy create social outside the control of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Subsistence practices constitute a local economy in which people can exercise some control, regardless of the constraints on resource use put in place by Parks Canada and other conservationist bodies in Clayoquot Sound.
CONCLUSION: COMMON WEALTH?

Plate 75. Salmon heads for soup after a day of filleting.
Nuu-chah-nulth adaptations and responses to the economic and political transformations that have reached their shores shows the political sophistication with which Nuu-chah-nulth people have both resisted and embraced this change.

In this study I have analysed the contemporary social impacts of what I have shown to be an ongoing colonialism and oppression, as well as the economic marginalisation of Nuu-chah-nulth communities from their traditional livelihoods and resources. I have analysed the lived effects of the structural violence of the state. I have determined that through the assimilation efforts of Canada in alliance with churches, Nuu-chah-nulth have been forced to cope with a systematic offensive waged upon their cultures and ways of life. As I have argued in my study, the Canadian state has worked towards this end by way of bureaucratic and structural modes of oppression rather than direct violence (see Neu & Thierren, 2003). Native Americans often contend with both bureaucratic and violent treatment on the part of the state (Churchill, 1999; Matthisessen, 1992).

The refusal of the Nuu-chah-nulth to give up their way of life, sign away their Aboriginal rights, to accept the professed extinguishment of their title territories, and to be wholly assimilated into the urban multiculturalism of a ‘modern’ Canada sees them marginalised in their own lands. As one Nuu-chah-nulth person described her feelings of containment and constraint to me, ‘We have no where else to go, we are not from somewhere else like other Canadians, we have nowhere else to go back to, no Europe, for us this is it’. These are the costs of seeking self-determination and attempting to ‘play the game’ of modernity by their own rules.

Efforts on the part of Canadian and British Columbia governments to transform the Nuu-chah-nulth and other First Nation peoples into a pool of low income urban labour has failed due to a refusal by Nuu-chah-nulth people to give up a way of life, and to the global market fluctuations which have brought about a significant growth in the welfare dependent underclass in Canada. The desired outcome of this policy was, and I argue is, to access the land and resources left behind by the hoped for exodus to the towns and cities of the industrial economy.

What is now apparent is how well First Nations people have used the industrial economy to support their ways of life, continuing to practice cultural traditions once directly repressed by the state. While a significant aspect of this study constitutes a commitment to showing that consistently paternalistic policies of both assimilation (see the failed First Nations Governance Act) and exclusion continue to undermine Nuu-chah-nulth movements towards autonomy, this in no way presupposes a lack of political
agency on the part of Nuu-chah-nulth. Nevertheless, I contend that the impacts of government policy, and accompanying neoliberal economic practices are becoming overwhelming, particularly for young Nuu-chah-nulth people, many of who look to the future without hope.

These impacts not only affect Indigenous peoples such as the Nuu-chah-nulth, but all those marginalised by political and economic processes beyond their control. Increasingly the poor are experiencing life as what sociologist Zygmunt Bauman terms, ‘the outcasts of modernity’ (2004). I have analysed the ways in which the Nuu-chah-nulth articulate their resistance and vision for the future in the face of an allied government and industry who articulate a discourse of negotiation, consultation, and settlement, but in the eyes of Nuu-chah-nulth and their non-Aboriginal allies, offer little of substance. Nuu-chah-nulth people are aware that while their leaders sit in boardrooms with government lawyers and negotiators vast wealth continues to be extracted from their territories without regard for health and livelihood, or the environment their children and grandchildren will inherit. As Josephson observes, ‘a constant tension exists between those who see a world increasingly on the brink of environmental disaster and those who believe the risks are overstated’ (2004: 3).

In a subject of social analysis so value laden as environmental practice it is cogent to put different sources of knowledge in perspective. The Nuu-chah-nulth aspire to gain control of natural resources for both home and commercial use through Nuu-chah-nulth controlled development, and thereby create employment and wealth. Efforts by Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations on the central coast have involved the establishment of shellfish aquaculture projects, sustainable logging within their territories, often through co-management with forestry companies, the harvesting of ‘wild foods’ such as mushrooms and berries, and the continuing growth of the Nuu-chah-nulth art market. While these economic activities at present only involve small numbers of Nuu-chah-nulth people, there is significant and growing confidence and pride in these achievements.

Of particular note is the growing awareness of tourist interest in Nuu-chah-nulth cultures and ways of life. The Tla-o-qui-aht canoe tour company Tla-ook Cultural Adventures, run by Gisele Martin and her family, has gained considerable media attention, and is seen as a unique and enlightening experience by many visitors to Clayoquot Sound. For the Ahousaht, with Maaqtusis forty-five minutes by boat from the tourist hub of Tofino, it has been difficult to attract tourism dollars.
As I have indicated in this thesis, hikers, kayakers, and fishermen all use Nuu-chah-nulth territories without any significant benefit to Nuu-chah-nulth people. Impacts include foods gathered by visitors, and burial sites damaged and looted. A number of Ahousaht in Maaquusiis are working on bringing more tourists to their shores. Whether tourist interest and revenue will bring largely positive or negative results is a topic much debated by Nuu-chah-nulth people. Many have serious reservations about sharing their culture with outsiders. Family ownership of songs and dances remains important, as does the secrecy of special spiritual places and medicine gathering sites.

I have asked which cultural conceptions of wealth may take precedence in First Nation people’s aspirations for the future. This is a critical issue for Indigenous peoples’ development of their lands throughout the world. My time in Nuu-chah-nulth country showed me that cultural viability requires economic viability in order to sustain people and their communities. There is a remarkable resilience and perseverance of identity amongst the Nuu-chah-nulth. While they fear the creeping loss of their native dialects, and talk of other First Nations who still retain a high level of fluency, other First Nation peoples admire the Nuu-chah-nulth for their cultural and political strength, and long history of committed resistance. The poverty of communities suffering from welfare reliance and social dysfunction seemed to be put aside during potlatches at which I witnessed a chieftainship handed down to a young man, or a young woman came of age. The community would work together to bring off the occasion; feeding hundreds of people and making outsiders feel welcome. Yet, the extent to which ‘communities’ exist in the context of the Nuu-chah-nulth, with half their members living in urban centres, is difficult to measure. As analytical constructs the word community, like society, has little worth. In the context of my study the term has served as a way to discuss Nuu-chah-nulth people’s social relationships and the collective understandings they use to identify themselves with each other.

I have argued that social cohesiveness is reinforced through shared livelihood. Local economies and livelihood have been largely replaced by reliance on the industrial economy, which no longer provides Nuu-chah-nulth people a viable livelihood. As Hugh Brody (1981: 273) observes, ‘neither cultural distinctiveness nor political institutions can alone ensure that those Indians wishing to continue to live by hunting, trapping, and fishing will be able to do so. Concessions are made to Indian leaders so long as they do not demand a real recognition of the Indian economy’. Brody asserts
that while pluralism is a North American ideal, in reality there is no room made for different economic systems, asserting that ‘exotic languages do not get in the way of pipelines; hunting and trapping economies might’ (1981: 273).

Despite anthropology’s theoretical issue with the distinction and dichotomy made between modern and traditional life, it is inarguably a valid one for Nuu-chah-nulth people who struggle with an identity and way of life that has changed radically. As Adelson observes of the Cree, ‘hearing stories from the past, videotaping the present, scraping hides, drinking sodas while eating bush foods’ are all authentic lived expressions of identity (2001: 95). As Clifford points out, ‘struggles for integrity and power within and against globalising systems need to deploy both tradition and modernity, authenticity and hybridity—in complex counterpoints’ (1997: 178). This liminal state, often skilfully manoeuvred by Nuu-chah-nulth, demands a constant reimagining of possible modes of livelihood and ways of viewing the wider world. Yet, essentially the tensions of community life are those of any economically marginalised group: unemployment, inadequate social services, sometimes corrupt local politics, and a powerlessness brought about by outsider managed development projects which offer little if any benefits to local Nuu-chah-nulth people.

Nuu-chah-nulth talk of their aspirations to re-establish traditional modes of subsistence in order to supplement the unreliability of the cash economy’s wage labour and bring proposes that ‘if social suffering about greater social solidarity through shared livelihood. This hope stands in contrast to the consistent rhetoric of leaders, who present economic development as the cure for all social ills. In the context of the lived experience of Nuu-chah-nulth, Adelson derives from a colonial and postcolonial history of disenfranchisement and attempts to eradicate a cultural history, then the proper response to that suffering must include the reconstitution and reaffirmation of social identity’ (2001: 97). The continuing vitality of Nuu-chah-nulth traditions holds this promise.

Analysis of economic development involves consideration of ecological, cultural and moral implications. I have asked how development affects the environment and human rights, and on whose terms the nature of development is defined. I have argued that for the Nuu-chah-nulth the environment is a site through which aspirations for economic and cultural renewal and continuity are articulated, centred in overcoming the indignities of welfare colonialism, and initiating autonomous development, which serves Nuu-chah-nulth interests rather than the economic and political desires of outsiders. These economic patterns can be seen in many First Nations communities
elsewhere in North America. Without a significant social shift towards political agency on the part of the majority of Nuu-chah-nulth people, it is unlikely there will be any common wealth.

Few people within the Nuu-chah-nulth or Euro-Canadian elites are asking their people what they want from the treaty process, from economic development, of how they envision the future of their communities for their children and grandchildren. In years to come tensions between Nuu-chah-nulth and other Canadians over lands and waters, resources and development, will deepen if there are not transparent processes of governance and finance: by municipal, provincial, and federal governments, as well as by Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations.

Nuu-chah-nulth resistance has been forceful, persistent and non-violent, as they have struggled with the contradictions of modernity. They have blockaded logging trucks from forests many of their people worked in, and fought for their right to sell fish from their customary resource sites. As Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations gain increasing control over their financial and political affairs the tension between ‘old’ and ‘new’ ways of living will continue. Yet, Nuu-chah-nulth people have always adopted new economies into their pantheon of trade and exchange. The transformations in Nuu-chah-nulth identity brought about by entering the industrial economy were, for the most part, successfully navigated. The failure of that economy to provide continuing livelihood has proven far more challenging, and significantly more impacting on the wellbeing of their communities. These same global market forces have constrained and threatened their ability to rely on the subsistence economy. With Nuu-chah-nulth people marginalised from both these economies today, the challenge to community health in the widest sense is profound. Nuu-chah-nulth people will need to be ever more sophisticated in creating a space within this increasingly unbound global economy.
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