

Casting Light to Fill Shadow: A Decolonial Aesthesis in Secwepemcúl'ecw

by

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Casting Light to Fill Shadow: A Decolonial Aesthetics in Secwepemcúl'ecw

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Abstract

The basis of this thesis is to link research into the physical anthropology of Interior Salish people in the early colonial period in British Columbia with the measuring and dislocating of Indigenous lands as expropriated by Settler policies in a research creation model to be exhibited as an installation and exhibition.

By examining physical anthropological records, anthropometric data and ethnographic life-casts of Interior Salish people made during the North Pacific Jesup expedition (collection of the American Museum of Natural History, NY) and an Interior Chief's delegation to Ottawa in 1916 (collection of the Museum of History, QC) my research will connect the practice of anthropometric measurements with government policies of land dispossession as problematized methods of the colonial politics of measurement and survey. My thesis project attempts to locate, within the subjects of the study, a political imperative of land rights struggle through relational and installation based artworks within these conceptual paradigms.

Using methods of *Indigenous ways of knowing* like: *decolonial aesthetics*, the politics of *refusal* and the Secwepémc concept of *kweselktnéws*, a culturally specific concept of relationality, grounds my research within my family, responsibility, community and territory.

My MFA thesis project, *Casting Light to Fill Shadow: A Decolonial Aesthetics in Secwepemcúl'ecw*, will model alternative ways to engage with and value Indigenous knowledge(s) in relation to decolonial aesthetics. Through this project I will draw out the connections between ethnographic study, Indigenous land rights and contemporary art practice adding to the bodies of knowledge around Indigenous and decolonial aesthetics.

Lay Summary

My research concerns plaster life-casts of Secwépemc people held in museum collections at the American Museum of History (New York, USA) and The Museum of History (Gatineau, QC). These life casts were made in association with the North Pacific Jesup Expedition (1897-1902) and a Chief's land rights delegation to Ottawa (1916) and were part of a body of physical anthropology of Interior Salish Indigenous peoples. Using these plaster casts as a symbol of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, my MFA thesis project, through this paper and installation art practices, draws parallels between the measuring and surveying of Indigenous lands for settler occupation and the measurement of Indigenous bodies in the wake of settler dispossession and disappearance of Indigenous identity. Rejecting the colonial policies of disappearing and dispossessed Indigenous identities, my project centres Indigenous lands and land rights struggle through my own artistic practice in a series of exhibitions and installations.

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This thesis would not have been possible without many levels of support; firstly my Secwepemctsin language teachers, most recently elder Mona Jules and Marianne Ignace but also Janice Dick Billy, John Jules, Kathy Manuel, Kathy Michel and the staff, elders and founders at Chief Ataham School, my own children Skyelar and Leo Adam and my partner Kevin Adam. Secondly my supervisor Stephen Foster and UBCO department of Graduate Studies as well as committee members Jeannette Armstrong, Renay Egami and Ashok Mathur for their support in accessing the archives both financially and administratively – it is amazing what a university letterhead can get you access to. Thirdly, my peers and artist collaborators and activators and visitors at BUSH gallery: Gabrielle Hill, Peter Morin, Jeneen Frei Njootli, Chandra Meltingtallow, Amy Kazmerchyk, Toby Lawrence, Ashok Mathur, Michael Turner, Rosalin Williams, Aaron Leon, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Joseph Naytowhow, Dion Kaszas, Demian DinéYazhi', Mariel Belanger and others. I thank the land itself and my great-grandfather, Isaac Willard who, together with my mother and my dad, saw enough of our future to acquire the land that would become my home, my inspiration, my love and my gallery. To them and to the land I give my endless thanks, *kukstec-kuc wel me7 yews wel me7 yews*.

Dedication

Kúkstsemc re sqwse7 Skyelar ell Leo ell re sxélwe Kevin Adam ell xwexewyt t'e re kwesélkten.

Kúkstec-kuc Tqelt Kúpi7 t'e sketec-kuc xwexewyt t'e stem ne7elye ne tmícw.

Chapter 1: Existence as Resistance

“Everything within a settler colonial society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land ” (Tuck, Yang, p9)

I am not disappearing.

The purpose of this thesis is to challenge ideas of extinction inherent in salvage anthropology of the 19th and 20th centuries¹ (that continue to inform current Canadian governmental policies of extinguishment of land rights, such as the BC treaty process), in order to reposition and refract anthropological collections of Indigenous bodies and objects in an act of 'reciprocal recognition and generative refusal'² (L. Simpson 175). By refusing the ascribed anthropological narratives of extinction and recognizing the agency, power and voice embodied in collections of material culture and artifacts collected in the era of salvage anthropology this thesis rejects dominant institutional methods of archive management like restriction and preservation. Restricting collections based on who can access the archive, where in relation to Indigenous home territories collections are kept and the removal of artifacts as an act of preservation have cast a shadow on the bodies of knowledge artifacts contain. My work seeks to bring the voices, spirits and ancestors within these collections back into circulation, as opposed to restricted, and to actively reconnect them to community and Indigenous political thought as an assertion of futurity, a future that includes our lands and languages and our 'belongings'³.

¹ One might argue that salvage anthropology continues today, at least within the practice of archeology. In my own community (Neskonlith Indian Band) even though we are the agents undertaking the archeological surveys it is often in response to Canadian or British Columbian infrastructure projects. The face of ongoing extraction and 'development' of Indigenous territory is often the instigation for archeological examinations and these are all too often rushed and incomplete.

² As Leanne Simpson discusses in, *As We Have Always Done* (2017) articulated in response to Audra Simpson's- *Mohawk Interruptus* (2014)

³ Jordan Wilson explains the use of the term, belongings in response to the alienating terms artifacts or object in the archive in the preface to the second edition of, Susan Roy's *These Mysterious*

People,

Shaping History and Archeology in a Northwest Coast Community, page xxi, McGill -Queen's University Press, 2016.

In refusing narratives of extinction and disappearance present in the vanishing race theory and the salvage paradigm of late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology, I am starting this paper with asserting who I am as a Secwépemc person. In learning Secwepemcstín, one of the first teachings was learning to introduce myself in our language, who we are, who our family is and where we live. This powerful method, of what we might call in the field of academic disciplines, auto-ethnography, works to connect me to my work, my family, the community, and, reciprocally to make me responsible to these groups. Next, the Secwépemc language is used to weave together this thesis within a Secwépemc view or a *de-colonizing lens* (Kovachs 76). Summarizing the last two years of my thesis research and translating it back into Secwepemcstín further asserts the contemporary resurgent Indigenous practices that I use within the text and in my exhibition associated with this thesis, *Anthro(a)pologizing* (2018). Chapters and subheadings appear in this thesis in groups of four, honouring the four directions and the narrative structure of Secwépemc worldview articulated in stseptékwle (creation/origin stories) that emphasize recurrence and practice in multiples of four.

After introducing myself, and the Secwépemc methodologies and language that guide my work I discuss, within a framework of decolonial aesthetics, the subject of my research – the physical anthropology of Secwépemc people and our material culture located within institutional museum collections. Describing methods of intuition and artistic interventions in the archives, I then attempt to read new perspectives into Secwépemc artifacts and interpret from the Secwépemc voice and worldview encoded in them. Through disarticulating the impacts of salvage anthropology, this thesis frames plaster-casting, a practice of physical anthropology, as an informational process that can lead us to contextualize the importance of land-based struggle, histories, decolonial aesthetics and interconnectedness by an interlinear reading of artifact and contextual secwépemc worldview. The importance of a method of decolonial aestheSis⁴ in this analysis is embodied in the concept of the valuing and modeling of

⁴ In this text I use the spelling of AestheSis in concert with Mingolo and Vázquez's emphasis between aesthTics and aestheSis. For further clarification see page 17 and 18 of this paper.

Secwépemc ways of life and interconnected relationships to land as a process of sensing and perception, or an aesthesis of art, community and land. Conversely, the Western notions of aesthetics as a category of beauty, or, as Roland Vázquez and Walter Mingolo describe the concept of aesthetics, “an aspect of the colonial matrix of power, of the imperial structure of control” (Mingolo and Vázquez).

The title of this thesis, *Casting Light to Fill Shadow* refers to the long shadow of colonial history and injustice as represented in archival images, documents and collections and the ways in which I have attempted to bring my light to understanding them. In, *As We Have Always Done* (2017), Leanne Simpson describes, through Nishnaabeg conceptualization, “seeing someone's light is akin to working to see the energy they have put into the universe through their interactions with the land, themselves, their family, and their community” (181). So in my light as a great grandchild, as a future ancestor, as a mother and as a living present Indigenous body, I am acting out a *resistance of existence*. Using artistic practice with an emphasis on decolonial aesthesis and intuitive methods of visiting ancestors in the archive, my work then leads me to contextualizing land-rights struggle as a defining characteristic of Secwépemc identity. Finally by centering land rights and land based experiential knowledge I position the methods used throughout this research and thesis in innovative and resurgent Indigenous contemporary art practice that is considered on a continuum with ancestral practices and aesthesis.

1.1 Re Kwesélkten (My Family)

My own space as a Secwépemc woman is connected to the histories of land rights with which this paper and research project are engaged. In 1926 William Pierish my great-great uncle travelled to London to petition King Edward on land rights (Willard, Duffek 127). It is through the work of Haida/Tsimshian scholar Marcia Crosby and her photographic essay in the catalogue for the exhibition I co-curated, *Unceded Territories: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun*

(2016) that I have come to know this. Additionally I am aware of the Pierish⁵ name through the work of my Aunty Joyce Willard and her laboured work on the Willard family tree and genealogy. In order to point to methodologies of interconnectedness and to *locate* and *situate* myself (Kovachs 109) in Secwépemc cultural frameworks I am using this space to introduce myself as per Secwepemctsin language and custom.



Figure 1. Land Rights Delegation with (right to left) Chief Johnny Chilihitsa, Chief Basil David, Mrs. Charles Williams, Chief William Pierish, 1926, Kamloops Museum Association photograph #1173 from *Inland Sentinel*, Kamloops BC.

⁵ Etymologically the Pierrish name possibly descends from the French for Patrick. According to Dr. Marianne Ignace early missionaries gave French names to Secwépemc people and secwépemc pronunciation of French sounds were combined to phoeneticize Patrick (English)-Patrice (French)-Pierrish (secwépemc pronunciation).

*Weyt'k, re skwest Tania Willard, st'ek ke t'e Legwiké ne
Secwepemcúl'ecw. Re tsétswe7 pell sesqwse7 skwest.s Skyelar ell Leo
Adam ell Kevin Adam re sxélwe. Mike Willard re qé7tse, Kelly Muskett
re kíc7e. Re kic skwest.s Tara Willard, ell Dustin Willard re sítse.
Leonard Willard le slé7e lu7 ell Ethel Jones le kyé7e lu7, Le Ethel m-
st'ekwes te Splatsin ell Leonard Willard m-st'ekwes te Nesqénell . Le
xpe7e7úy lu7 skwest.s Isaac Willard ell Adeline Willard le qné7e lu7. Le
Isaac Willard m-st'ekwes te T'kemlúps.*

Within my own family the experience of cultural loss as an effect of colonization is intertwined with anthropology. My great grandparents, Adeline and Isaac Willard as well as Adeline's sister Aimee August were cultural consultants for Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy's publication *Shuswap Stories* (1979). My great grandfather Isaac Willard was one of the last to have lived in a traditional underground home called a c7ístkten' (also called a kekuli in Chinook jargon). Isaac Willard consulted for the kekuli display at the Royal BC Museum (Victoria, BC). Isaac Willard was the unattributed 'local' who was instrumental in the important archeological find, the Chase Burial (1960). On Adeline Willard's, my great grandmother's side of the family, we are connected to Kúkwpi7 (Chief) Nesqénell (Neskonlith). Kúkwpi7 Nesqénell set out the boundaries of our original Neskonlith-Douglas reserve (1862) which were invalidated under Joseph Trutch and Kúkwpi7 Nesqénell's survey markers were removed and our current smaller Neskonlith Indian reservation #1, #2, and #3 allotted by the Indian Reserve Commission (1877). Past Neskonlith Indian Band Kúkwpi7 Chief Arthur Manuel discusses elements of this history in *Unsettling Canada, A National Wake Up Call*, through his analysis of Indigenous poverty created through land dispossession, the national disparity of Indigenous lands as .02% of the 99.8 per cent controlled Canadian or Crown lands (8).

My own interconnectedness with the legacy of political land struggle is where I locate my interest in this research as well as my privilege and responsibility in being able to do so. I also acknowledge that I am of Euro-Canadian descent, mostly Scottish and Irish heritage, on my mother's side. The Roane's, my matrilineal side, were an early family in the Scotch Creek area, and operated a horse riding ranch in the 1960s-1990s called *Lazy R Ranch*. In some ways now that I have relocated back home I construct my identity as heavily *Shuswap*, the land has informed both settler and Indigenous sides of my family.

I elucidate my family history because it places me in relation to the research and my stake in it. I am accompanied by the dreams of ancestors. In this research I seek to re-awaken these dreams into a reality wherein our people are empowered and our histories are recognized, our land claims are honoured and our belongings and ancestral remains returned. Of course this is a tall order, but it is in faith of the ways in which our work resonates, the *metaphysics* (Frideres 42) of ancestral knowledge that I place this dream. I like to think that part of our ancestors rationale for depositing their knowledge in museums was that they dreamed that one day we, as future grandchildren, would find this knowledge and bring it back. My Aunt, Joyce Willard, has said of Isaac Willard's work with anthropologists and his depositing of archaeological finds to the Kamloops Museum and other institutions that he had told her it was more like a temporary housing until our people could take better care of these things (in a period of extreme social distress prompted by colonization). It is this greater responsibility that informs my work.

1.2 Me7 Lexéxye re S'7elkst (The Story of my Work)

Now that I have introduced myself, my family, my ancestors and the ways in which I am part of the interconnected orbit of this research I want to introduce my work, in my language. Part of the methods of decolonial aesthesis emphasize the pre-colonial and pre-existing artistic methods that were often derided in the face of western concepts of aesthetics. These elements

of perception and experience encompassed our languages as a key part of our aesthetics which were equally eroded and attacked under colonization. As Mingolo and Vázquez argue, “[m]odern aesthetics have played a key role in configuring a canon, a normativity that enabled the disdain and the rejection of other forms of aesthetic practices, or, more precisely, other forms of aestheSis, of sensing and perceiving.” Mingolo and Vázquez go on to discuss the differences between a decolonial aestheTics and aestheSis as,

“two currents of what has come to be called ‘decolonial aesthetics’ (now ‘decolonial AestheSis’). One is aestheSis, which has been denied validity under the modern aestheTics hegemony, and which precedes any naming of the decolonial...the other current, which is of course in communication with the first, is decolonial aestheSis, seen as a critical intervention within the world of the contemporary arts:”

It is within the pre-existing practices of Secwépemc art, philosophy, narrative, language and history that I contextualize my work and this research. I offer a critique of the systems of aesthetics to emphasize the worlds of knowledge in our language and to introduce my work not only to the academy but to my community and ancestors.

The following translation was written in consultation with Elder Mona Jules and Linguist Dr. Marianne Ignace as well as Kúkwpi7 Ron Ignace (Skeetchestn) through classes delivered by Mona Jules and Dr. Marianne Ignace in Western dialect Secwepemcstín. Nishnaabeg theorist Leanne Simpson might refer to this process as “reciprocal recognition and generative refusal” (175). To be in relation to Indigenous heritage, culture and land is a rejection and refusal of “settler colonial recognition” (180) that instead, recognizes ourselves and in doing so recognizes our power. I also offer this translation and my humble learning in our language as a profound connection to my ancestors, so that they might know the work their future grandchildren are doing and how, through resurgent Indigenous methods, we are coming into our power, our language and our rights again as the future of our great great grandchildren is blossoming. One of the effects of physical anthropology on Indigenous bodies is the removal of

voice from the subject: to be measured and essentialized by your race removes your voice. This research project centers intuition, language and land to arrive at new models of Indigenous and decolonial aesthetics that link future, past and present by exercising our rights to land, to language and to our culture, past, present and future. In discussing the powers of land, Kúkwpí7 Ron Ignace in his doctoral thesis, *Our Oral Histories are Our Iron Posts: Secwepemc Stories and Historical Consciousness*, states, “we communicate with its powers and it communicates with us. The powers in our universe include past ancestors, i.e. the deceased who act on us and influence the course of events.”(218). It is in this method of asking for our ancestors to act upon our times that I discuss my work in our language below.

Le q'7ésés lu7 ne 1897, m-kwelk'wlúsctem⁶ te sk'épqens re Clexléxqen [Chief Louis of Kamloops], Louis Fallardeau, Edward Hyarsarthe, [k'wséltktens le Sisiyésqt, re kukwpí7s re Skeetchestnemc], Gabriel Chapman, Thomas Benjamin ell Aleck [?] Sarent ne Tk'emlúps.

A long time ago in 1897, they made plaster casts of the heads of Chief Louis, Louis Fallerdeau, Edward Hyacinth (brother of Chief Sisiyésqt of the Skeetchestn people, Gabriel Chapman, Thomas Benjamin and Alex [?] Sarent in Kamloops.

Re *anthropologists* qwenmíns es xpqenwén's k stecwt'ícwells tek qelmúcw.M-tsuntem re kúkwpí7 Louis te Smith, “E sk'wlúsentst me7 kectém ri7 re ki7ces re semséme7 (*Queen*).”

The anthropologists thought they could come to know the differences between people (race) . They said to Chief Louis, “ I will give your plaster bust to the Queen.”

Re kukwpí7 Louis re sptínesems, “e xilm-et, re ki7ces re semséme7 me7 p'7e7cw k stselxemstéls ell es xyemstéls ne tmicw-kt.

⁶ kwelk'wlúsctem is a benefactive construction translates to, 'he made a face of him' and was offered by Ron Ignace in presentation of my research to the SFU Secwepemctsín class in Kamloops (November 2017). An alternate way of describing the plaster casts in Secwepemctsín from a subsequent discussion (February 2018) was given by Ron Ignace as t'ultúsctem which is using the concept of t'ult being frozen to stone that appears in stseptékwle foundations secwépemc worldview narratives. I am using kwelk'wlúsctem but refer to t'ult when I discuss metaphoric meanings of the casts in Chapter 2.

For Chief Louis this meant the Queen would come to know more about us and respect our land rights.

Ta7 lu7 k m-skectém re skwelkw'elúsems re ki7ces re semséme7, qwelqwílentem lu7. K'é mell m-tntem ne wel p'7e7cw te sxetspqíqenkst te swucwt. Tsukw re sq'eyentém neri7 ne sk'wlúsentem “Shuswap Indian,” ta7 k sq'eyentés re skwest.s

The portrait was never given to the Queen. It was put in the American Museum of Natural History for more than 100 years. On the plaster bust, it says “Shuswap Indian.” not their names.

Cú7tsem re s7i7llcw re sk'wlúsems lu7 ne 1916 le melk'wilcwes re kukúkwi7 te Ottawa. M-pekpíksentem ell k'wlúsentmes ne *Canadian Museum of History*.

Le *anthropologists* qwenmíns es tsq'ey'cit.s tsukw re stseptékwlls ell re setsíntens, k'é mell ta7 k m-q'ey'cít.s le kupkúkwi7 re spellqwílut.s ne tmicws.

Another series of casts was taken of members of a 1916 delegation to Ottawa. They were photographed and cast in 1916 at the museum. Anthropologists wanted to record their stories and songs but, they did not record the chiefs' statements about our land rights.

Ta7 k súcwentem es qelmúcws, tecwt'ícwellstem. Tel ri7 yem ta7 k m-súcwenctem te pellstsq'ey's ne tmicws.

They were not recognized as human beings, instead they were made into “others.” and their land rights were not recognized or protected.

1.3 Anthro(a)pologizing

Now, after these acts of translation and introduction to frame and contextualize the subject of my research, I will move onto articulating the research itself, the physical anthropological records and material culture of the following: Secwépemc men during the Jesup expedition, Indigenous leadership from BC involved in a land rights delegation, Secwépemc

material culture as made by unattributed Indigenous women artists (1897-1916). All of the materials researched are housed primarily in the American Museum of Natural History (New York City, NY) and the Canadian Museum of History (Gatineau, QC). My methodology in pursuing these collections has been to centre “women's intuition” as a feminist praxis, as well as an Indigenous way of knowing and to engage with my community context. Allowing myself to be a conduit for connectivity and circulation of the materials researched, the lives, voices, philosophies and teachings embedded in artifacts, which I will refer to as belongings in the rest of this paper.

As an artist and curator, my methods of understanding this material obtained as part of salvage anthropology is to contextualize its complex relationship to colonialism, land expropriation and historical and ongoing injustice in order to interpret political and land rights agendas through Secwépemc material culture and anthropological collections. Centering my agency as a Secwépemc woman and how the material speaks to me, validates my living body as connected to my land allowing experiential and intuitive readings based on genealogical connection, language and culture teachings. This thesis constructs a story of my journey in visiting the ancestors in the archives, the challenges of access to collections and asserting Indigenous rights amid the institution, and finding creative ways to make meaning, share knowledge and activate my work in community and land-based contexts.

In approaching research based within this Western knowledge system that preferences universality and rational traditions of thought, which seek to isolate and draw conclusions from a micro-view, how does an Indigenous artist/researcher look at early ethnographic records? One overarching concept has been again to frame a decolonial aestheSis that asserts a plurality of viewpoints and that calls for, “a process of recognizing the colonial wounds” or further:

Decolonial aestheSis departs from an embodied consciousness of the colonial wound and moves toward healing. It is a heterogeneous historico-embodied move, it perceives

the wound of coloniality hidden under the rhetoric of modernity, the rhetoric of salvation. Decoloniality is at once the unveiling of the wound and the possibility of healing. It makes the wound visible, tangible; it voices the scream. And at the same time decolonial aesthetic moves towards the healing, the recognition, the dignity of those aesthetic practices that have been written out of the canon of modern aesthetics. (Mingolo, and Vázquez)

My thesis research and my artistic process has drawn me to ethnographic records from Teit's compendium and Boas's earlier work for the North Pacific Jesup Expedition on *The Shuswap* and the role of anthropologists like Harlan Ingersoll Smith whose career in museums overlaps with most of the research material discussed in this thesis. Using a decolonial approach I have come to consider the agency of the cultural consultants whose words and knowledge were harvested by anthropologists and researchers. In concert with Battiste and Henderson's writing on *Ethical Issues in Research* I support the idea that, "Indigenous peoples, knowledge and heritage are not commodities, nor are they property of the nation-states and their researchers. Indigenous knowledge and heritage are sacred gifts and responsibilities that must be honoured and held for the benefit of future generations" (144). I contend that our ancestors left these words and this knowledge for us through these researchers and anthropologists, as a kind of conduit. The museums have *borrowed* Indigenous knowledges, as I described in the introduction as how my great grandfather Isaac Willard considered it. While this knowledge was taken, or borrowed, for a period of time, we are coming into an era of repatriation and *rematriation*⁷. Battiste and Henderson's concept of Indigenous Heritage Rights that, "knowledge may sometimes be shared...for a specific time and purpose" (67) further reinforces this. To discuss rematriation as a concept functions to centre Indigenous women who were very often left out of the picture of cultural work until the more contemporary period. However it also invokes the power of *women's intuition*, which perhaps can be thought of in ways that relate to Frideres' metaphysics of Indigenous ways of knowing (Frideres 42). In any sense this intuitiveness, perhaps dually through Indigenous ways of knowing and feminist

⁷ I am referencing the current work of the artist collective, *Rematriate*.

praxis, acts as my way-finding method in navigating colonial museum collections and anthropological sources.

1.4 An Archive of Intuition

Using intuition in the archive as a practice, I end up stumbling into interesting and often sensitive localities of archival and museum collections of Indigenous material. My current inquiries have led me to creative research that is based on the work of anthropologists James Teit, Franz Boas, Livingston Farrand and Harlan Ingersoll Smith and their early work with the North Pacific Jesup Expedition followed by Smith's ethnographic films and 27-plus year career with the Geological Survey of Canada (now the Canadian Museum of History). Many researchers would tend to focus on Boas, Smith, Teit or Farrand's biography and the context of their work but I am strategic in de-centring⁸ their profiles, in order to privilege the Indigenous viewpoints within their work, acknowledging their sources, though at times unnamed and unattributed, especially in the case of Indigenous women. Though much is allotted to Teit and Boas' work to record Indigenous cultures it is important to understand that within the context of their work this was in fact acting in accordance with the State's disappearing and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their land. Audra Simpson in her article, *Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, The Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession* articulates, “[y]et what was being lost was not culture but land – Indian land, and lots of it.” (169)

In the volume of material Harlan Smith, James Teit, Livingston Farrand and Franz Boas collected or *borrowed*⁹ and dispersed to various museums, particular Secwépemc objects, references and cultural data are represented. One form of collected material that I was interested in exploring were the ethnographic life casts he made of Secwépemc people during

⁸ Though Smith's work is lesser-known, Ron and Marianne Ignace discuss much of his work in their 2017 publication cited here and Wendy Wickwire has done important work from a Nlaka'pamux worldview on Teit's work.

⁹ I use *borrow* here to remind the reader of the earlier assertion of Indigenous voice within the collection who may have loaned their belongings for a time as opposed to sold or gave away.

the Jesup North Pacific Expedition in 1897. These plaster casts are held in the American Museum of Natural History [AMNH] in New York City (NY). The casts are not in the online database and are quirky as museum objects; they are life casts or life-masks and not to be confused with death masks. The men were convinced to participate in the process through Father Le Jeune a local minister who worked extensively in the Secwépemc communities in T'kemplúps (Kamloops, BC) and who worked with James Teit, an anthropologist married into Nlaka'pamux community at Spences Bridge. The casts themselves exist now in a state of limbo; they are not cultural remains subject to repatriation or the protection of the *Native American Graves and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA 1990) or other Indigenous Heritage Rights protocols. However, they are an important legacy of the impacts of physical anthropology and dominant colonial thought on Secwépemc communities. They are a confluence of modernity and coloniality in their aesthetic form that draws from classical European portrait busts together with the decoloniality of the self-determined Secwépemc body represented. They are a perfect juxtaposition of my discussion of a decolonial aestheSis juxtaposed by their aestheTic/settler derived form. In this thesis I share ideas about the symbolic meanings that can be associated with a decolonial and Secwépemc based perspective on these casts and how they can direct us to a generative embrace of our land rights as a bundle of relationships, practices, arts and philosophies. As Secwépemc scholar Ron Ignace points out,

In the aftermath of the cultural and physical genocide wreaked upon our people during the nineteenth century, and throughout much of the twentieth century, it is up to the current generation of Secwépemc to fix the broken cup of knowledge about the past, and the laws that guide our activities and ways of giving meaning to the world. (3)

Ignace goes on to offer strategies that I see as congruent with my research into the plaster casts by stating, “we can do this by finding out from our elders, by consulting the many scattered stories and bits of information recorded from past ancestors, and by engaging these in a dialogue with what outsiders wrote about us” (3).

I am approaching this research as an artist who is from the Nation which was the subject of the research and I consider my own rights and responsibilities in the milieu of the interconnected families (including my own) and histories present in these objects. Kovach's concept of *tâpwê* (2009) informs my process related to thinking through my self-reflection and interest in the material. In Kovach's discussion of *tâpwê* she imparts the importance of cultural specificity – *tâpwê* representing Cree worldview and language. In accordance with this methodology I am using concepts of *kweselktnéws* from Secwépemc cosmology. *Kweselktnéws* is a concept employed by Secwépemc scholars like Dr. Kathryn Michel, Dr. Janice Billy, Dr. Dorothy Christian and Dr. Ron Ignace. The defining of *kweselktnéws* as a core Secwépemc value is attributed to Secwépemc elders and I have come to know the concept through the Chief Ataham Secwepemctsín immersion school on Adams Lake reserve near Chase, BC. As a concept, *kweselktnéws*, represents not only family lineage but an interrelatedness of people to the world and nature around them in a complex web of ecology meaning and reciprocal beingness. Ron Ignace describes it (along with the concept of *xyemstwécw*) as embodying, “our social, political and spiritual connection with one another as Secwépemc, all of which, again are anchored in our experience on the land”. (50)

The Secwepemc concept of *Kweselktnéws*, which is translated as we are all related or we are in relation to one another¹⁰ is the *de-colonizing lens* (Kovachs 76) through which I consider this research as it relates to the specific histories and contemporary art conversations I am invested in. This Secwépemc concept can be linked to many Indigenous epistemologies but also allows me to think through my interconnected work as a mother, artist and curator in dialogue and relationship with the world of contemporary art, peers, family and the natural world. This concept is also discussed in eco-art and dialogical or relational and/or socially

¹⁰ The Chief Ataham immersion school uses the principal of *kweselktnéws* in their mission statement, both my children attend the immersion school and I first came to know this principle through the school. For a first hand account of the formation of the Chief Ataham immersion school see *Trickster's Path to Language Transformation: Stories of Secwepemc Immersion from Chief Atahm School* by Kathryn A. Michel (2012).

engaged art practices, but linking it to pre-existing Indigenous concepts is important for me to locate the ways in which Indigenous concepts are congruent with but often appropriated by dominant discourses. This appropriation is not an accident but instead is part of the systemic policy and governance in Canada that sought to dislocate Indigenous bodies and what remained of our lands onto reservations segregated from the Canadian experience.

I started this inquiry into the plaster casts in an intuitive way, by valuing Indigenous ways of knowing that emphasize the mystical (Frideres 42) or unmapped Indigenous methodologies of gaining knowledge from dreaming, for example, as discussed by Kovachs (57-58). I found hints about the plaster casting of Indigenous subjects in articles about the Jesup North Pacific expedition most influentially in Brian Thom's 2000 article, *Precairous Rapport: Harlan I. Smith and the Jesup North Pacific Expedition* that I encountered at some point several years back in a bout of Internet searching about 'Secwepemc'. Over time, I pieced together more of a picture of the kinds of 'records' and 'specimens' that had been created by anthropologists of Secwépemc people. My inquiry into the set of casts taken of Tekemlúpsemc men in 1897 also led to looking at a parallel set of casts taken in 1916 housed at the Museum of History in Gatineau, QC. This set of casts taken at a later date support the ideation that these artifacts of physical anthropology represented something more to the Secwépemc people who agreed to sit for them. In the case of the latter casts this can also understood through their context. The subjects of the casts that were taken in 1916 were a delegation of Chief's from the (recently formed in 1916) Indian Rights Association who were petitioning the Canadian Government for their land rights. These delegates were: Kamloops Chief Elie Larue (Secwépemc) [Figure 9]; Thompson Chief John Tetlenitsa (Nlaka'pamux)[Figure 11]; James Teit (anthropologist and secretary for Indian Rights Alliance and later aboriginal rights groups); Xaxl'ip Chief Thomas Adolph (St'át'imc)[Figure 12]; and Lil'wat Chief William Pascal (St'át'imc)[Figure 15]. T'it'q'et Chief James Raitasket (St'át'imc)[Figure 10]; Douglas Lake Chief John Chelahitsa (Nlaka'pamux);

Tobacco Plains Chief Paul David (Ktunaxa)[Figure 14]; and Bonaparte Chief Basil Dick (Secwépemc)[Figure 13].

I have asked in this research why these men, many of whom were chiefs, would have agreed to this process of measuring and plaster-casting, an uncomfortable and vulnerable procedure wherein the sitters are required to have straws placed up their noses and their face entirely encased in gypsum material. The sitters were convinced, in the case of the Jesup expedition in 1897, to sit for these anthropometric measurements, ethnographic photography and plaster casting through translation by missionary Father Le Jeune. Le Jeune, acting as the community contact, worked with Harlan I Smith to convince the people into accepting the practice by saying their representations would go to museums and places where people would come to learn about their culture. Of course the church at this point in time also held a lot of authority in Indigenous communities as missionizing was in an active period in BC. In recent scholarship Marianne and Ron Ignace document Smith describing the ruse used to get Chief Louis to consent to the physical anthropological investigation:

I am afraid that in trying to coax him to submit to the operation, I gave him a rather wrong impression in regard to the character of our work...I told him that the queen desired to see the great chief of the Shuswap, and since she was too old to visit him, I had been requested to take his portrait and bring it to her, and that at the same time she had asked me to present him with his own bust, which he was to place in his house, so that his people might understand how important a man he was. This argument removed all his objections, and after he had consented, there was of course no difficulty in getting just as many men of his tribe as I pleased. (75)

As Ignace continues, “[o]f course for Chief Louis and other Interior Chiefs the Crown symbolized unextinguished title and land rights” (75). It is also quite clear that while Smith was consulting with the community to get sitters to participate in the casting process, at other times he was taking ancestral remains and burial items without consent (Roy 41-44; Ignace, Ignace 74). It is also perhaps in locating these ancestral remains that intuition and the casts are also

implicated in a future possible repatriation of these remains and others Smith returned to collect in 1898 and 1899.

I ask myself what does it mean now for myself, for my community, for my Nation and for other audiences to resurrect this fraught anthropological gaze, to bring light to these shadows of ethnology. If we look at the plaster- casts within their colonial context that exploited lands and concurrently bodies of Indigenous peoples through measurement and dispossession, we come to cast light on the Boasnian way that anthropologists failed to see the fundamental settler project that was the cause of the 'vanishing race' they demonstrated:

“an inability to see or read Indigenous sovereignty and politics in any form other than the reduced, the primitive, or the ethnographically classic, a reading that disappears Indigenous political form, is blind to or, easily hitches it to other things, or dismisses it altogether. The settler governance of Boas's time and of ours loves this sort of social science because it keeps things-and people-in a possessive form and, presumably, thus in place.” (A. Simpson, *Why White People Love Franz Boas*, 178)

Simpson describes the further goal of the governability of Indigenous populations through the social science of studying Indigenous kinship and cultures as another kind of disappearance that “would serve the intellectual and political project of settler governance well indeed” (178). Therefore in activating a decolonizing lens and a culturally specific Secwépemc set of concepts, like *kwselktréws*, is to reject these methods of disappearance and dispossession. To combine this with the naming of the sitters whose identities were disappeared through the racializing inscription, “Shuswap Indian” that appears on their busts is to engage directly with their power, their agency and to symbolically engage in a dialogue that centers their land rights, a practice that attempts to “heal the colonial wound” (Mingolo and Vázquez) and to reject the ways that the colonial gaze sought to fix, consume and disappear them.

They are not disappeared, they are found.

Chapter 2: Visiting Ancestors in the Archive

The North Pacific Jesup Expedition was an example of the salvage paradigm of anthropology – the wilderness of BC in the early colonial period represented a great unknown with many diverse instances of resources and material culture to be explored, expropriated and extirpated. The auspices of the salvage paradigm was aligned with the 'inevitable' disappearance of wilderness and Indigenous people in the wake of development and exploitation wrought by settlers. Often in this anthropological view, displays of Indigenous materials were placed within a timeline of the 'prehistoric' and were shown with mineral samples and taxidermy animals in early museums. Even today, the plaster casts and Indigenous materials from the North Pacific Jesup Expedition are held in the American Museum of Natural History which is also noted for its dinosaur and geological displays. This categorization of pre-history has long troubled Indigenous agency and rights. As Susan Roy describes in *These Mysterious People*

“the distinction between “prehistoric” and “contemporary” had powerful and long-lasting political implications. Indians and places marked with Indianness, such as pictographs, fishing sites and burial grounds, were organized around the discursive binaries of dead/living, unoccupied/occupied, midden/burial ground, and traditional/modern.”

(41).

It is in the act of recognizing the agency of our ancestors within a concept of strength and not simply as victims of the march of progress that I locate the story, the narrative and the voices inherent in these objects. To give names, story and interrelatedness back to these objects by undertaking this research journey is an act of visiting similar to what Metis artist Dylan Miner calls a 'methodology of visiting'. Though, in Miner's work, he applies this to visiting elders/knowledge keepers/community members and the knowledges shared in these exchanges. He says about ideas of visiting, “[f]or me, employing and living the elders' teaching

about visiting allowed me to intentionally shift how I see my practice – or work if you use this term –away from its general focus on aya'iin // things and instead see how being together and visiting does the work of creating and maintaining community. Put another way, by just visiting – mawadisidiwag // they visit each other – we are already doing and making in important ways.” (Miner “Mawadisidiwag miinawaa Wiidanokiindiwag // They Visit and Work Together”). I posit that this same methodology can be activated in the archive. The stories of these casts are a part of the land and the land is part of the story. By empowering the narratives of our ancestors, who struggled against active colonial oppression and genocidal policies, to have a voice, to express their rights and to dream of a future where our rights would be recognized and past infringements addressed, we could come to share in the future of the land.

This thesis posits the period of the research as part of the interrelated dialogue, a practice of intuitive acts and visitations in the archive and a set of dialogical interactions and experiences in a reciprocal exchange of culture and language that Ron Ignace describes as xyemstwécw – mutual respect – (R. Ignace 50) that have led to this paper and supporting exhibition. Elements of this deeply engaged process are at times visible and represented, and at other times, are left unshared and work subtly in the text and art works to inform their making and subsequent experience for those who are viewing the work. In this process of revealing and shielding I am strategic in using this paper to more appropriately articulate the histories of the plaster casts, how and why they were made, and under what contexts in order to implicate both the settler project as well as to highlight Indigenous land rights within a reading of the objects that un-disappears them.

2.1 Moving Through Shadows

Firstly, gaining access to the casts was an exercise in perseverance. Having seen them mentioned in just a few research texts (Thom, *Precarious Rapport*, 2000 and Roy, *These Mysterious People*, 2016) they were not on view in the museum's respective digital collections

and did not appear online. Through a process of inquiry and instinct I was able to locate them and confirm their existence but accessing them and the resources it took to travel to New York and Ottawa was another task. It was through a panel discussion for the College Art Association Conference in NYC (2017) that I was able to, with support from my university, travel to the first viewing of the casts. Mobilizing another artwork and exhibition context for #callresponse, a touring exhibition with Tarah Hogue and Maria Hupfield, I drew out connections between artwork in this exhibition and work for the *Anthro(a)poloigizing series* featuring the casts. *Only Available Light*, in the #callresponse exhibition took anthropologist Harlan Smith's 1928 film, *The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia*, as a point of departure. This is significant because the work touring in #callresponse, *Only Available Light*, was the spark that led me to more closely examine Smith's work and to learn of the casts. So it was a confluence of my intuitive practice as an artist, my existing community relationships and my strategic leverage as an artist and organizer along with the validation of being enrolled as a UBCO student/researcher that opened the doors to this research. I had earlier emailed and approached the collections but with no institutional support or finances, my requests were answered with cursory information. This is the reality for many Indigenous peoples – the extraordinary resources and labour it costs to retrieve and repatriate/rematriate our belongings is great. There are now some recently announced sources of funding for this kind of work but it remains challenging to be able to negotiate with museums and collections. The path I took offers some consideration of using art and culture as access points, of course, and in many ways artists before me have done just this, especially in the case of Northwest Coast Nations, like the Haida, who have really led a charge in repatriation offering a legacy and a foundation for continuing this work in other Nations.

The process of accessing museum collections, of course, varies in different institutions. The differences I found between the relative unbridled access I had at the American Museum of Natural History versus the Canadian Museum of History is worth discussing. In the introduction of this paper I articulated the important differences in settler versus Indigenous philosophies of

'collections' by using Musqueam curator Jordan Wilson's articulation of objects in museums as 'belongings'. This can be further exemplified by looking at processes of accessing collections and the institutional practice concerned with restricting access versus an Indigenous concept of interconnected and interrelatedness. The casts in particular seemed sensitive to these museums, in part because of their pseudo-scientifically racist assumptions that are not far removed from eugenics and phrenology. And, in part, because museums are containers of colonial power, or as Indigenous artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, says the 'Indian morgue' (Duffek, Willard 19), they have been a place for the deactivated and denuded objects that once functioned in interconnected ways that wove together people, lands and animals in containers of knowledge. This overarching Indigenous concept emphasizes connection versus archival preservation and restriction through isolation that defines the process and policies that functioned to disappear these objects from their interconnected context.

To foster the re-connection of these objects, histories, worlds and knowledges is to act in a decolonial method, an aesthesis of perception and connection that unravels through time. From sharing discussions of the work at my Secwepemcstín language classes to the permissions for my research granted by the T'kemplúps te Secwépemc and the Secwépemc Museum and Heritage Park, the exhibition activates Secwépemc land through materiality in the artworks and hopefully the way the work continues to circulate in different ways in the community. The importance of sharing this work though is in contrast to the requirements placed upon me as a researcher wherein navigating the museum's codes and copyright infringe upon my rights as a member of the Secwépemc Nation to have a relationship and exchange with these materials and to access the embedded cultural knowledge and practices within them. My own work as an artist takes its protocol from my community of origin as opposed to an outside institution. This can place me in conflict with the agreements the museum requests including publishing and copyright restrictions. In my experience of being finger-printed and required to sign documents, specifically drafted for my research, at the Canadian Museum of

History, I reflected on how after more than 100 years of the lies that were used to acquire the casts, their displacement continues to be in contradiction of Chief Louis' consent, who understood they would be gifted to the Queen. The radical act then of circulating these knowledges back within our community contexts can operate in ways that create a foundation of empowerment and re-awakening and can have unanticipated affects.

In *The Force of Family: Repatriation, Kinship and Memory on Haida Gwaii* authour Cara Krmpotich discusses the ethnography of Haida repatriation that reiterate the multidimensional ways Haida interact with repatriation process and outcomes. Through a series of interviews Krmpotich relates ideas of memory, kinship, collectivity and connectedness to the more than 460 Haida ancestral remains that have been repatriated and the ongoing work of repatriation in Haida Gwaii. Stating that repatriated material culture and the process of repatriation, “evoked past, present and future relationships, especially relations of kinship.” She goes on to discuss what one of her Elder interview subjects thought of repatriation: “Irene Mills spoke to me of a hope that repatriated ancestors will, once rested, reincarnate and bring with them old skills and knowledge” (40). This profound act of connection and circulation activates much more than just the dispossessed object or skeletal remains, like an awakening the whole body of a Nation's life blood circulates again connecting us simultaneously to the ancestral and the future through our lands and ancestors.

2.2 Casting Light

A viewing of the casts themselves shows they were very racially indistinct in the ways they replicated the aesthetics of European sculptural portrait busts. I had expected most of the casts to resemble the familiar artistic process, where gypsum bandages are applied to the face and then plaster is poured into the negative (gypsum bandages) to produce a three dimensional copy of a face. I was surprised in visiting the collections that some were sculpted principally by museum employees (Casper Meyer and Belaschy in the case of a set of casts of Coastal

Indigenous people that were gifted to the Canadian Museum of History in 1911, Plate XV), into head and shoulder busts common in European aesthetics and sculptural practices. Their final form collides Western European aesthetics and the Indigenous body as a site of decoloniality. The field casts (poured plaster renditions) of the faces were of the face principally up to the forehead with the exclusion of two busts from the CMH collection in 1916, one of Nlaka'pamux leader Tetelenitsa and one of Chief Paul David of the Ktunaxa, who were cast in head and shoulders. The former, Ktunaxa Chief Paul David, having a part of his actual braids cast. The qualities of the dental plaster as applied by FHS Knowles, CMH technician at the time, are exceptionally detailed in the set of 1916 casts whereas the field casts of the Jesup expedition are of lesser quality and likely served more as a guide for the forensic-like sculpting of AMNH museums 'plaster man' Casper Meyer (Smith correspondence to Boas, 1902), or in the comparable sculptural busts by Belaschy (received from AMNH by CMH in 1911).

Comparatively almost 20 years separates the two sets of casts that I have had a chance to look at from the AMNH and CMH collections. The interrelatedness of the two sets of casts from 1897 and 1916 along with the roles played by anthropologists Harlan Smith, James Teit, Livingston Farrand and Franz Boas are further indicated through another set of ethnographic portrait busts that were gifted to the CMH from the AMNH in 1911 (CMH museum records). These bronze coloured painted plaster busts are similar to the one's produced by Casper Myer but were made and signed by Belaschy¹¹. There are also several files of correspondence between Smith and Teit that reveal there are another set of casts, parallel to the 1916 set, made in 1912 as documented in the CMH correspondence between Smith and Teit. The nature of the 1912 set of casts are also tied to land rights petitions to the Canadian government in Ottawa¹²

¹¹ It is assumed that like Caspar Myer, Belaschy was more of a museum technician contributing replicas and casts of artifacts for museum display a employed by the American Museum of Natural History.

¹² I believe this to be the 1912 delegation discussed in Ron Ignace's thesis, he says of this delegation, "In January 1912, the Indian Rights Association, along with several Interior Chiefs (including Chief Louis, by then 82 years old, Basil Dick, Francois Selpaxen, Baptiste William and James Retasket), went to Ottawa and presented a Petition to Prime Minister Borden, reminding him of their previous attempts, and asking, " If you have neither the power not the inclination to help us in the obtaining of our rights, then please recommend to England they settle the case for us."

by Indigenous people. What is striking in the correspondence about the 1912 delegation (CMH textual records Sapir-Teit) is the emphasis on the logistics of the journey; for example many hotels did not accept Indigenous guests and so organizing this travel was left principally to Teit and his connections at the museum and was essentially conducted at a time of racial apartheid in Canada. While Teit's role with the Allied Tribes and Nlaka'pamux communities has been acknowledged as one more rooted in reciprocity, we can see in the correspondence that Harlan Smith was not as inclined to benefit communities through their research at the museum. Smith responds to requests by Teit for copies of photographs, records etc. made by community through Teit, but is much more concerned with acquiring human remains and material culture with an urgency that reflects the race to collect under the presumption of an imminent decline and collapse of Indigenous life and consistent with settler state violence. Audra Simpson describes this dynamic as, “[a]ll Indians have to do is be Indians to ensure that settlers will attempt to eliminate them, for to be Indian is to be defined materially, in relation to a stretch of territory, and thus to be in the way” (171). Therefore it becomes imperative that the restoration of Chief Louis', and the other sitters', purpose in allowing themselves to be cast and measured was clear: “they consciously did so in the context of their struggle for Secwépemc rights and title.” (Ignace, Ignace 76).

We can see in review that land and Indigenous rights are deeply intertwined in the contextualization of the busts and the practice of physical anthropology from a Secwépemc perspective. Deep juxtapositions between settler and Indigenous perspectives are embedded in the casts and it is the original context, of land rights, that needs to be discussed in conjunction with them.

2.3 Echoing Bones

Smith's role as an expropriator of human remains is indicated throughout correspondence with Boas during the JNPE and included in Marianne and Ron Ignace's important contribution to Secwépemc scholarship, *Secwépemc People, Land, and Laws : Yeri7*

re Stsq'ey's-kucw. There are important instances documented where fieldwork had Smith engaging in the physical anthropology of Secwépemc people while simultaneously digging and removing ancestral remains.

Smith (1897) reported, "Indians here object to my taking bones away – They are friendly & will allow me to dig graves & take all but the bones...After Father Le Jeune at a big council meeting supported Smith's request to "take a few bones" in order to "teach" people in New York about the Secwépemc, and after Smith showed the council photographs of the Northwest Coast Hall of the American Museum of Natural History, which displayed the "wonderful works of the Indians"(Smith 1898, 101-2), he was allowed to work at a burial mound and at village sites on the Kamloops Indian Reserve, resulting in a substantial collection of human remains and artifacts, which he sent to museums." (Ignace and Ignace 74)

The correspondence between Teit and Smith as well as Boas and Smith and Teit with Sapir is punctuated on numerous intervals with quips about human remains being found, bought, removed and transported, as evidenced in quickly scrawled telegram, notes punctuated by statements like, "1 Indian skull gift' (Smith to Boas June 24th, 1901). In fact this can be evidenced in the discrepancy with ascension numbers of the plaster casts from the CMH collection. It was noted during my visit to the CMH museum to view the 1916 casts that some of this confusion stems from the fact that the plaster casts should have accession numbers with lower case letters but in fact have upper case letters which are normally only used with human remains. Thus making the distinction between the casts and ancestral remains even fuzzier¹³.

In creating a framework for how I might consider moving forward I began with a self-reflection on why I am interested in the life-casts and how they might function as a *de-colonizing lens* (Kovachs 76). By examining the casts as a negotiation device requiring consent I locate the ways in which Secwépemc people used many methods to develop their political argument for land rights. The casts, as a legacy of physical anthropology, are representative of the ways in

¹³ It is quite clear in the case of human remains that Smith exhumed in 1898 and 1899 in Kamloops that these were sent and deposited in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

which “[i]n the colonization of Indigenous peoples, science was used to support an ideological and racist justification for subjecting Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing” (Kovachs 77). Because the life-casts were made in concert with sets of measurements or anthropometric data, and photographs in the convention of side, profile and three-quarter view and made in the period where salvage anthropology emphasized the assumed superiority of Settler culture, the casts themselves become a vessel for the conflict between these ways of knowing. They have become t’ult a process of ‘freezing’ to stone expressed in Secwépemc narrative that often relate to geological formations that mark out Secwépemc territoriality and cosmology onto the land. In the act of way-finding and visiting these ancestors I consider the concept of t’ult as a method of connecting our contemporary experience with our stseptékwle, or creation stories, as they represent, as Ron Ignace says, the “charter for our social institutions.” He continues,

“They [stseptékwle] continue to do this by reminding us in palaces throughout our land, through rock-paintings, rock formations where past people were “frozen” into stone (t’ult), of the deeds of the stseptékwle, anchored to the land the land to stories that tell us what happened.” (90)

In addressing the colonial frame the subjects of plaster-casting were ‘frozen’ into I have attempted to re-inscribe their names in numbered plates I -XIII in this paper and they are referenced by name in my final exhibition works. During the North Pacific Jesup Expedition Smith cast several¹⁴ individuals at Kamloops. I located the following six and within this thesis paper and corresponding art exhibition I have reunited them with their names by correlating their photographs and anthropometric schedules (see plates I-VI); Clexléxqen Chief Louis , Louis Fallerdeau, Edward Hyacinth (Edward Hyasarte in AMNH photographic records), Gabriel Chapman, Thomas Benjamin and Alek(x?) S(L)arent¹⁵. Their names do not appear on the casts themselves – instead the inscription, ‘Shuswap Indian’ appears as an anonymizing and racializing epithet. Reconstructing their names and agency and ‘purpose’ related to Secwépemc

¹⁴ There are 7 entries in the Expedition manifest but it is unclear as only six are named if this means there were six or seven.

¹⁵ Spelling differs between expedition manifest records and photograph material.

rights and title are paramount to my research, it is also emphasized that it is not possible to fully articulate their histories or biographies here. I am not a historian; I am an artist choosing to stage an intervention into the archive to 'restory' (Michel 2012) the Secwépemc people and belongings therein.

2.4 Measuring Dispossession

Corresponding anthropometric measurements for the sitters of the portrait busts are filed away in thick folders in the AMNH collection with other individual measurements made at the Kamloops mission school in 1897 (another set that involves other Indigenous nations were taken by Boas himself in 1894 at different locations in BC). There are 240 records of 'Shushwap' males and 149 of females. It is likely these racially charged documents, produced as a template form designed by Boas, were conducted by the young Harlan Smith. In discussing the social scientist approach and Boas' arguments that both disproved racial theories of superiority but also continued to re-ascribe colonial methods, Audra Simpson says that Boas "worked in concert with a settler state that sought to disappear Indian life and land in order to possess that land and absorb that difference into a normative sociopolitical order" (167). These social science methods were not neutral, they were absolutely in concert with the colonial project of extinction or, at the least, a more liberal, assimilation. These measurements, of children, of lands, of bodies, became a survey of extinction and these folders attest to the simultaneity of the settler project of land dispossession, the dispossession of families and children and the dispossession of voice and agency. Disrupting these measures then is an act of defiance: disregarding the surveys, interrupting racism and redefining these archives to expose their injustice and frame the context of settler dominance and superiority is one way in which Indigenous artists can become essential in the archive.

Many of the photographs, casts and measurements in the collections I have researched, as well as the ethnographic record of the late 1800s and early 1900's in British Columbia, were

all correlated with infrastructure and settler land 'development' projects that sought to inventory and measure the land, like the Geological Survey of Canada. In my artwork I use materials that reference survey, of both land and bodies: survey tape, calipers, stakes, land marking paint, and other references creatively point back to the interrelated colonial process of land expropriation and our rights. Drawing a parallel between anthropometric measurements and land measurements reveals the purpose of survey and physical anthropology as tools of colonial domination.

In viewing the collection of Secwépemc (Shuswap) material at the AMNH I viewed a child's marmot skin cape, a lovingly made cape with a plaid flannel lining and delicate fringe at the nape (Catalog No: 16/9335). Using concepts of Indigenous epistemology, my resulting artwork, *small measures*, references my research into these data sets of anthropometric measurements. The subtlety of caring for these archival objects that have been dislocated from their context is represented in my work by the domestic and intimate act of sewing a replica cape. The projection of an image of the original onto the surface of the replica object is a further recasting and reduplicating of the original. The cape is not the exact same size as the projection of the original, I sewed it a bit differently and used my son to model the size. Using the concept of decolonial aesthetics I added an element of healing to the work by sewing in medicines into the layers of fabric. This medicine, a traditional smoking mix, very subtly infused the work with the physical medicines that respond to the resurgent practices of awakening museum objects into agents of Indigenous cultural practice, as opposed to displaced objects denuded from their cultural contexts and lands. I am not allowed to touch the pipes on display in the Northwest Coast Hall at the New York museum but I know their purpose was to send prayer. I am adding prayer here by using these medicines in the artwork, to pray for the children and the child who this marmot-skin cape once belonged to.

In defiance of their measurements, I have used strategies of marking or *tsq'iyúl'ecw* in concert with Ron Ignace's ideation that, "tsq'iyúl'ecw means to 'mark the land' in the way our

ancestors marked the landscape with their deeds, gave names to places, and thus claimed the land as Secwepemcúl'ecw.” (2008). In marking the busts as an artistic act, through naming and signing the busts after 3D scanning (a process I will explain further in Chapter 4), I am claiming and asserting their significance both as individuals with their personal and familial stories to tell but also in the articulation of Secwépemc rights and title. I use the next 2 chapters to describe my interventions and artistic acts as an activation of the research that constructed these former chapters.

Chapter 3: ARTiFACTS, Creative Resurgent Art Practice

Resurgence as reincarnation is implied by instrumental Secwepemc language advocate Robert Mathew in his introduction to, *Behind Closed Doors Stories from the Kamloops Residential School*; “[h]istorically, Coyote has faced many dangers and challenges...For over 100 years the people have been oppressed, but today like the Coyote they have returned to life” (viii). In this introduction Matthew also discusses the creative potential of storytelling to educate and heal, an idea consistent with Kathryn Michel, founder of the Chief Ataham immersion school's concept of restorying that she uses to reframe the resiliency and futurity of Secwepemctsin language learning. I suppose I am trying to understand this story, the story of these anthropologists and the story of Secwépemc people who encountered them and how this all leads us to where we are at in our contemporary space of land struggles and cultural resiliency amid neo-colonial struggles. Anthropologist Andie Diane Palmer working in the 80s in Esk'et (Alkali Lake Indian Reserve No 1) relates, “Thus, the history of the archive concerned with the Secwépemc is not separable from that of the oral record; each is part of a more fully developed history, one that is now more firmly intertwined in local social action”(28). It is within this 'intertwined' positionality that the plaster casts have become the basis for an artist intervention in the archive.

This artistic intervention first used intuition in locating the plaster casts; next employing a *de-colonizing lens* I sought out a dialogical model in visiting ancestors in the archive. Later I intervened in the constructed histories of these objects by contextualizing and connecting them to lived Secwépemc experience and conceptualization. In the following two chapters I both expand the research of the casts to globally circulating Western knowledge production systems as well as relate my artistic process and production, using a land-based approach, that strategically asserts Secwépemc rights and title. I use my own art and curatorial practice as a proposed model of decentring colonial artist production models which emphasize the individual artist and the creation of the 'new' as disconnected from the past. Instead my work has

attempted to assume a position of decolonial aesthetic that preferences understanding our land claims and our communities are part of and related to the resultant artwork. This employs tacitly different art production strategies that are encoded in Indigenous experience which, as Syilx scholar Jeanette Armstrong states, is an “ability to bring imagination into physical being through action [as] the creative process.” (Armstrong, Cardinal, Young In 46).

3.1 Land Rights as Cultural Expression

By focusing on the transformative potential of contemporary Indigenous art in interfering with or refusing the anthropological gaze I assert that new relationships with anthropological material are possible within contemporary Indigenous art practice. The hierarchy of social and cultural 'development' that historically placed Coastal nations on a higher continuum of human development above the Interior Salish is part of the consumptive exoticism and othering of Indigenous people by colonial audiences. Many historical ethnographic studies placed Plateau culture, in terms of 'progress' as a transitional culture, in between Coastal and Plains culture but considered in and of itself not a site of higher cultural development. Harlan I Smith, published a bulletin for the Canada Department of Mines, Anthropological Series in 1923 on *Prehistoric Canadian Art*, that appealed to manufacturers to appropriate Indigenous design from museum sources to develop, “products of purely Canadian Design” (1) that could be used in place of European design following import restrictions after World War I. In this bulletin he describes Plateau art and cultural development in a few dismissive lines,

“The Indians of the Interior Plateau and Mackenzie basin, at least recently, had a less realistic art, which was largely geometric and pictographic, highly conventionalized and symbolic, although occasional specimens seems to have been brought from the coast or made in imitation of the coast art. They were without pottery and had a less highly developed social organization and financial system than the coast tribes.” (2)

This derisive paragraph within this treatise of appropriation on 'pre-historic' Canadian art is surprising given Smith's deep engagement through the Jesup expedition with Interior Salish peoples and disregards many anthropological studies from Farrand's study of Interior Salish Basketry to Boas' work in the 1840s that sought out and attributed resources to Interior Salish or Plateau language, narrative and art forms. However each regional area Smith discusses is only given a small paragraph as his main purpose is to introduce a series of illustrations and compel Canadian designers to take up Indigenous designs, without any suggested attribution or context. The belief that Plateau culture was a derivation on the authenticity of Plains or Coastal culture, that Smith expressed in the above quote, has meant that scholarly attention (with attending benefits of recognition and correlating advances in careers for researchers) has remained largely on Plains and Coastal Indigenous cultures in earlier anthropological study.

One of the legacies of Interior Salish Nations that I am trying to develop a clearer picture of, within the context of the historic anthropological devaluing of Plateau culture, is our legacy of land rights negotiation and politics. This express political content does not feed into populist settler imaginations of the *primitive* and so is actually usually attributed within studies of *acculturation* (Druker, 1958) and again subdued by ideas of the inauthentic. Documented legal, political and cultural negotiation with Interior Salish Nations started very early on in the relationship of Settler and Indigenous populations. Events like the Tsilhqot'in War (1864), gatherings of Interior chiefs and multiple delegations of chiefs to the King and Queen (1906, 1926), the petitioning of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1910), and protestations to the results of the downsizing of reservations through the McKenna-McBride commission (1912-1916), and other important occasions can be looked to as corroborating this assertion. Of course Coast Salish were active in these ways as well, Marcia Crosby's photographic essay on the 1906 delegation by Chief Joe Capilano, Chillaheetza and Basil David (Dick) to petition King Edward is one account (Duffek, Willard, Crosby, 109-129,). For further reading on Interior Allied Tribes and Indigenous land rights and title see Ron Ignace's thesis. The focus of my research however is

on Interior Salish and, specifically, Secwépemc communities and the record of anthropological and ethnographic collecting and publishing within a context of the historically dismissive approach to our cultures. The reason for this focus is to counter the historic assumptions of 'primitivism' that positioned Interior Salish as less advanced, authentic or artistic when compared to other BC coastal tribes. Instead, I suggest that settlers and settler anthropologists did not understand Interior Salish or Plateau art forms that drew heavily on interconnectedness with the land, land rights, relationality and what we now call socially-engaged or dialogical art practices.

Aspects of colonial thought, like demarcating the areas of higher cultural development, framed white supremacy in contrast to primitivist racial types of Indigenous peoples, and European ethnocentric assumptions drove the practice of physical anthropology. Anthropometric measurements and plaster casting as well as ethnographic documentary photographs were taken throughout British Columbia and Canada of different Indigenous peoples. As Susan Roy points out in describing the collecting of physical anthropological specimens this thinking went hand in hand with ideas of salvage anthropology, "Smith's attempts to salvage disappearing facial features reflected the perception that Aboriginal culture was vanishing before the onslaught of European culture" (20) and that the plaster casting was the "epitome of anthropology as colonialism" (20). Roy goes on to discuss the reasons why Aboriginal people may have agreed to this process. There was an exchange of money involved but also Indigenous peoples were, "quick to adopt the status of the portrait in different forms and quickly appropriated, for their own uses, portraits and photographs sometimes in secular and ceremonial practice" (20). This distancing and dispossessing of the individual agency of the subjects of ethnographic photography and plaster casting remained removed from cultural context, as Roy describes, until the late twentieth century in association with community research projects often in the service of Indigenous land claims. Here again the association between museum research and Indigenous perspectives on our belongings housed there and

the corollary with land-claims are emphasized. It is through our ancestors belongings resting in museum's that we assert the land, it's dispossession and our attendant rights and reciprocal responsibilities within our territories and frame new meanings and understandings of artifacts as living and embodies representations of our land.

3.2 The decolonial lens in practice

Maori artist Fiona Pardington in her series of work *Āhua* examines a parallel legacy of life casts of Indigenous Pacific peoples taken in the early 20th century that are also codified and implicated in the colonial project. In the 2011 publication about this series of Pardington's work, Kriselle Baker and Elizabeth Rankin describe Pardington's experience both finding and seeing representations of these life casts through an intuitive and associative process of chance, not unlike my own process. This trust in instinct within the archive is directly referenced as part of Pardington's creative process (Baker and Rankin 13)

'On first seeing the casts the complications that existed between 'likeness' (the *āhua* of the life casts), photography, and portraiture were immediately obvious to Pardington: 'I instantly saw the complexity and unique way these life casts could speak through an additional layer of meaning in the form of the photographic portrait'.(Baker and Rankin 13)

I learned of Pardington's work as an Aboriginal curator on a trip to Aotearoa and Australia in 2010 to attend the 17th annual Sydney Biennale, but have not revisited Pardington's work until recently in pondering the life casts of Secwépemc individuals.

In fact my artistic process and methodology of sun printing is also interrelated to the title of Pardginton's publication, *The Pressure of Sunlight Falling* (Baker and Rankin 2011). The title itself makes the conceptual links between the duration of the plaster drying, the mimesis of the face as set in plaster and the influence of light in the photographic process. Here the influence of light on the land is implicated in the

conceptual relationship of the artistic medium. In the case of the casts Pardington looked at, they were made primarily by Pierre -Marie Alexandre Dumoulin, a phrenologist, who was present on French voyages to New Zealand (1837-40). The link is clear between the the racist social science approach Dumoulin used in phrenology and the same methods that were employed in the Secwépemc casts. The binary of knowledge systems represented by the Indigenous face casts within the medium of European aesthetic languages, in this case the sculptural bust, point to the disparity between Indigenous knowledge systems and the reductionism, subservience of nature and realism of Western knowledge systems (Battiste and Henderson, 43-46) .

I have worked previously with the idea of the ethnographic documentary in looking at Harlan Smith's '*Shuswap Indians of BC*', a film from a series of nine produced by Smith in 1927-28 and used for public lectures at the popular children's museum seminars held at the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa, ON. In recent scholarship, Ann Marie Murnaghan and Tyler McCreary published an article in 2016, *Projections of Race, Nature, and Ethnographic Childhood in Early Educational Cinema at the National Museum of Canada*. In this article Mcreary and Murnaghan articulate the ways in which the films served as a voyeuristic symbol of Canadian dominion over Indigenous lands and bodies far off in the West, "Through the museum in Ottawa, (white) children were trained in knowledge of nature and Aboriginality as the foundation of their national inheritance" (38). It is this very entitlement to Indigenous culture and land that is the legacy of salvage anthropology and by extension the measuring and dispossession of Indigenous land through survey, policy, mapping and Canadian law.

In my recent art project, *Only Available Light*, that also took Smith's work, in particular his ethnographic film series, as its starting point, I looked to ideas of *refusal* as Audra Simpson articulates in her work in relation to the anthropological gaze. Using an elemental reference to the casts, I worked with selenite crystals which are the crystal form of gypsum, the main

ingredient in plaster. I projected the film through transparent selenite and quartz crystals which obstruct and refract the image with an ethereal blurring. Casting the light of the film, through crystal refraction, onto nearby walls and surfaces acts as an intervention that disrupts the composed linearity of the film and the consuming of the ethnographic subject. It was my intention to disrupt the film, to consider the influence of the editor, anthropologist Harlan Smith, and his resonant connections with the physical anthropology of our people as well as his role as a grave robber.

The casts considered together with the Smith's film reinforce Western knowledge system biases and the casts act as another focal point of the consuming gaze of the colonial. Thus, artistic interventions through strategies of refusal or intervention can *cast light* from Indigenous knowledges into the colonial shadows. In Pardington's work, re-photographing the casts, she emphasized the intimacy of the moment of connection to the casts and as she experiences this connection, they become reframed in a way that positions ancestral voices within the reading of the work.

Another example of artist's working directly with museum artifacts and repatriation is found in the work of artist Stephen Jackson and his father Nathan Jackson. In my first research visit Leni Lenape territory (New York) I met with T'lingit artist Stephen Jackson, whose experience as an artist involved with an act of 'propatriation' (Moore, 79) or repatriation [rematriation] of cultural belongings is an important example. Jackson's work stems from the 1899 Alaskan Harriman expedition and their expropriation of material culture from the T'lingit village of Gaash. There is also a wealth of T'lingit material culture or *at.óow* in the Jesup expedition collection and display in New York. The timeframes being close in terms of the Jesup expedition in 1897 and the Harriman in 1899 function as a way to corroborate dominant ideologies and examine similarities between the two. For example, the encounter at Gaash was construed by the expedition and recorded in museums as encountering a 'deserted' village site.

In T'lingit perspective communities had shifted due to smallpox in 1894 but *at.óow* as Moore discusses does not expire and people did not view their material culture or village as 'deserted', and, the Sanyaa Kwáan retain their rights to cultural belongings. The artistic process the Jackson's used demonstrate *at.óow* and hold agency and rights for artists from this lineage to reimagine their cultural and aesthetic forms. Jackson was commissioned along with his father to carve replacement posts for the Burke Museum who were repatriating a set of house posts taken from the 'deserted' village. Neither Jackson nor his father chose to replicate the poles but instead to make new poles within their own unique and interconnected views. Jackson senior worked in cedar and his son, Stephen Jackson, worked with aluminum and resin molds. Both poles, which replaced the Kaat's poles from the Harriman expedition, were uniquely repositioned to stand as supporting columns in the museum holding with their original function as architectural support posts and also symbolically holding up agency through contemporary *at.óow*.

The work of Indigenous artists re-contextualizing and restorying artifacts can be profound. There are numerous other examples that have been significant to Indigenous peoples in the contemporary period. It is through the work of the museum in dialogue with Indigenous communities that coloniality can be shifted and the relationship with artifacts, objects and ancestral remains can be brought into relationality and circulation within Indigenous communities.

3.3 Refracting Racist Knowledge Production

Opposing knowledge systems, Indigenous and Western, are evidenced in the collecting of specimens of Indigenous peoples as archives of the past and are echoed in Franz Boas' role in the physical anthropology (1894 in person and 1897 in directorship of the Jesup expedition) of Secwépemc and other Indigenous peoples of BC. Boas, known widely as the father of American anthropology, was also a reference point in the ways in which Western knowledge

systems were distributing information about Indigenous people. For example, throughout this process of navigating and intuiting the threads of this research I found a copy, on the UBC Okanagan campus, of Sigmund Freud's translated series of essays from 1919, *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. In leafing through the book I found an interesting passage about the Shuswap. This seemed somewhat extraordinary to me that the infamous Freud would have been writing in 1919 about our people. In the passage, Freud discusses customs of mourning the dead; there are errors of course in his deductions about us and the whole series of essays in *Totem and Taboo* is predicated on cherry-picking from different ethnographic studies of the times, and was criticized in its day as such. Nevertheless, ideas *about* Indigenous people were circulating globally, while the people themselves were simultaneously being dispossessed of land, culture and belongings in the pursuit of *universal* knowledge. I offer this passage below, from Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, to consider how Secwépemc people were framed within this circulation of coloniality while being simultaneously restricted in our own lands.

“Among the Shuswap in British-Columbia widows and widowers have to remain segregated during their period of mourning; they must not use their hands to touch the body or the head and all utensils used by them must not be used by any one else. No hunter will want to approach the hut in which such mourners live, for that would bring misfortune; if the shadow of one of the mourners should fall on him he would become ill. The mourners sleep on thorn bushes, with which they also surround their beds. This last precaution is meant to keep off the spirit of the deceased; plainer still is the reported custom of other North American tribes where the widow, after the death of her husband, has to wear a kind of trousers of dried grass in order to make herself inaccessible to the approach of the spirit. Thus it is quite obvious that touching ‘in the transferred sense’ is after all understood only as bodily contact, since the spirit of the deceased does not leave his kin and does not desist from ‘hovering about them’, during the period of mourning.”
(Freud 53)

These passages, in Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, are directly referenced from Boas' work in the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. The emphasis on mourning practices is, for me, a profound layering of thinking about my work visting ancestors in the archive.

Understanding the circulation of our *likeness* (Baker, Rankin, 13) through Western global knowledge circulation is important in stitching together our claims to our collected knowledge and material culture. Indigenous photographers looking at ethnographic documentary images have often commented on this uneasy relationship between ethnography and photography, and found ways to re-appropriate and transform these legacies of interruption into ones that align Indigenous agency within the frame. In the important exhibition, *Emergence From the Shadow; First People's Photographic Perspectives* (2001), artist and curator Jeff Thomas writes:

I began to think that the people depicted in these early anthropological portraits imparted something. They were part of the process; they just didn't sit there – there was a reason why they sat there. What was that? Were they looking to their future generations and thinking, yes, our culture is changing but we want our descendants to know what we look like..When I began looking, I realized there is a voice that is better than those anthropological photographs and that the reason it has not emerged until this time is because we have not been looking at them in the way that I have described. Now that we are, the dynamics around those images will begin to change. (Thomas)

Through a repositioning of the colonial gaze and through the inclusion of Indigenous perspective within a *de-colonizing lens* we can see that new perspective and knowledge can be brought to Indigenous interpretations through artistic activations of archival materials.

3.4 Translating and Transforming

This paper and the exhibition for my thesis, *Casting Light to Fill Shadow: A Decolonial Aesthesis in Secwepemcúl'ecw* work with several artistic strategies of mimesis, transformation and translation in researching the plaster-casts through art practice, as well as circulating

knowledge and agency within the Secwépemc Nation. One of the significant ways that I have worked with the casts in my art practice has been in arranging and coordinating the 3D scanning of them, at the AMNH in New York, and sharing the files with the T'kemplúps te Secwépemc and the Secwépemc Museum and Heritage Park as well as, less formally, with my peers, community members and Secwépemc scholars, thus moving them from restricted isolation in the archival mode of preservation into modes of circulation in a community context. Working with a mobile 3D company in Brooklyn I had the plaster busts scanned at high resolution, further translating the form of the busts into a series of planes that can be interpreted and printed via a 3D printer or CNC machine. I had five of the individual plaster busts scanned. I was not able to scan Thomas Benjamin's facial cast; however, I have scanned the other individuals: Chief Louis, Louis Fallerdeau, Edward Hyacinth, Gabriel Chapman and Aleck Sarent.

Once the busts had been scanned it became possible to then alter the files, to intervene in the 'artifact' itself by digitally erasing the 'Shuswap Indian' inscription, in the case of the bust of Chief Louis, and adding his name, both in English and Secwepemctsin – Chief Louis, Clexléxqen. One other transformation was made to this cast – in the place of the signature of museum technician who made the cast, Casper Myer, I added my signature as T. Willard appearing where Casper's signature had been. These alterations are an interruption and an intervention in the racist construction of the busts, a 'healing of the decolonial wound' (Mingolo and Vázquez) that betrayed these ancestors and continues to betray our Secwépemc rights and title in British Columbia. This decolonial intervention is a conceptual and dialogical work that claims artistic agency through the 're-storying' of this colonial artifact. Righting the wrong that froze them into the racializing social science of the day and framed them subsequently as 'primitive' or as representations of a vanishing race to validate settler land and resource expropriation. These plaster casts are a land-claim.

In materiality and in context the busts represent a tectonic shift within the fault line of colonization. I chose the bust of Chief Louis to be developed into a sculptural representation of my research because of his known contributions to land-rights. Working from the 3D scan I used a seasoned maple burl and a CNC router, a computer controlled cutting machine, to translate the bust and 'print' it into the burl. Preserving the natural formation of the burl at the back, the bas-relief presents a translated replica of the bust that had been seasoned on my land in Secwepemcúl'ecw. My dad had preserved the burl when he was doing bush work clearing land to make it safer for forest fire concerns and the burl sat near the entrance to our land for several years. This meta narrative of land as material imbues the contemporary sculpture with a sense of ecology, as an intervention and translation, of the original museum artifact – one that contrasts the idea of preservation as isolation with a sense of kweselktnéws and connected beingness.

In the final works that are displayed in my thesis exhibition, *Athro(a)pologizing*, I have included: images of the casts that I photographed while at the museum, these ancestors and their names, in order to locate their role in the present and historic struggle for our land rights. I have used laser etching on reflective fabric to render the photographs presenting another kind of refraction, as in the work with Smith's film on the Shuswap, that also encompasses reflection. The reflective material is the same fabric used in safety vests and other work-safe gear, the reflected light is produced through a process called retro-reflection. Textiles are coated with adhesive and tiny glass beads that are coated with aluminum to boost the reflected light. The glass beads acts as prisms collecting light and reflecting focused light back only to individual's or objects in line with it. Very little light is scattered in this retro-reflective process as the beam is directed and focused in it's reflexivity. Metaphorically this process is consistent and builds on ideas in the work, *Only Available Light*, that uses refraction of light to represent the complicated intersections of colonial imposition and decolonial interpretation. The gallery is dimly lit and exhibition visitors use keychain flashlights to view works bringing them into refraction and

reflection with the work and their attendant histories in confronting racist ideologies present in historic anthropology.

Chapter 4: Site(a)tion: The Influence of Light on Land

“We have always thought of the bush as a networked series of international relationships.”

–Simpson, 56

This is the point at which I bring this story of the research back to my community and back to the land in Secwepemcúl'ecw and into my art practice and understanding of our history, language and governance – our strength. Perhaps what I fill the shadow with is the context of the stories, peoples and communities the sitters came from to indicate the reasons for the loss and the ways in which we might give license to art to fill the gap, to dream the past, to know the future. To make a claim to the future of this song, this art, and acts of visiting ancestors in museums. Battiste and Henderson's concept of Indigenous heritage as a 'bundle of relationships' (Battiste, Henderson 71) and Simpson's above quote are apt in thinking through this complexity, as bundles of networks and relationships. It is in the ideas of Indigenous futurism that I have come to approach these archives, to know that the time Indigenous belongings were allowed to be borrowed is ending and to understand that under The Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples (1995) our rights to knowledge and heritage extend into the future. As Leanne Simpson asserts,

And our struggle is a beautiful, righteous struggle that is our collective gift to Indigenous worlds, because this way of living necessarily continually gives birth to ancient Indigenous futures in the present. (21)

Perhaps those ancestors knew this the whole time; they knew the whole story.

In thinking about the plaster casts from the Jesup expedition and the 1916 delegation as described earlier in this paper, I came to think of stseptékwle through reading other Secwépemc scholars theses (Michel 2012, Ignace 2008, Christian 2017) and their relating of origin stories, stseptékwle. Many of these stories feature acts of *t'ult*, the transformation or, freezing into stone,

as a process of transformation that is embedded in the landscape. For example, geological formations on our territory are imbued with narrative and transformation and with the rightt Elder or storyteller they become animated, connected and historic. These geological features represent narrative, emplacement, the history of Secwépemc land rights, concepts of nationhood, and a landscape-wide aesthesis of form as interrelated to land as territory.

The plaster casts themselves can be thought of in this way: they have been frozen at a moment of increased settler encroachment into our lands and through finding them again we awaken the land rights agenda and we bring back the strength of these ancestors. This strength that they perhaps found in ceremony and relationship to our lands has come full circle, awakened into positive futurity or as Secwépemc politician and activist Arthur Manuel states in *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake Up Call*, “[o]ne thing is certain: the flood waters of colonialism are, at long last, receding” (223).

These concepts of land-based transformation are deeply encoded Indigenous philosophical ideas that find form in contemporary resurgent strategies. Leanne Simpson calls this "embodied resurgent practice and coded disruption" in her examination of Anishinaabe aesthetic strategies that call for 'grounding ourselves and our nations in everyday place-based practices of resurgence.'" (192) She describes this as the potentiality for an Indigenous future that is radically decoupled from the domination of colonialism where Indigenous freedom is centred. She goes on to say,

This is so crucial in the context of resurgence. My Ancestors are not in the past. The spiritual world does not exist in some mystical realm. These forces are right here beside me-inspiring, loving and caring for each moment and compelling me to do the same. It is my responsibility with them and those yet unborn to continuously give birth to my Indigenous present. (192)

In these receding waters, of the flood of colonization, along with the articulation of decolonial aesthetics, I place my work with the casts as a challenge to our understandings of history from the vantage point of the colonizer and as a statement of futurity that re-inscribes narrative onto the landscape.

4.1 Land as Future Past and History Present

One might question my concentration on the past within my research and its context in contemporary art, and how that relates to wider contemporary art conversations and what can an examination of the local and specific nature of these historical works bring to an understanding of contemporary practice? One obvious response to this line of questioning is that the land question in Canada remains unanswered and the historical *is* the present in the relationship to ongoing colonization in Canada and particularly in *British* Columbia. Though I am not attempting to get into a large survey of land rights I want to bring back an examination of the political negotiation present in the plaster casts as they represent Chiefs and leaders from Indigenous communities.

It is important to bring these collective voices of land rights here into the light of this paper and this line of inquiry. To do this I look to the 1910 Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial a land rights document written by Chiefs from the Secwépemc, Syilx and Nlaka'pamux Nations, with their secretary James Teit, and delivered to then Prime Minister of Canada Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Kukpi7 Clexlexqén, Chief Louis, was present in the reading of the Memorial in 1910. This historical information is meant to frame a contemporary understanding of the casts and how they contribute to a global questions about land and belonging. How does re-inscribing the narrative of the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier affect an understanding of the cast of Chief Louis as a container of narrative?

The Memorial itself is an incredibly important document to Interior Salish people. It articulates a generous or affirmative refusal of settler claims to our land while elegantly

appealing to or trying to relate to a kinship of ideas and metaphor around land and settler dispossession. Ultimately the Memorial is more than a declaration of our rights; it is an attempt to, through kinship metaphors that refer to settlers as our 'brothers', enact Secwépemc philosophy and governance. The metaphors and narrative devices employed in the Memorial can be understood to have agency and power. The political text also functions as mnemonic device and spiritual intention that I understand to be working in the present day and through the body of research I have conducted on the plaster casts. The full Memorial is included in the appendix A and is meant to be read within the exhibition installation to give context and presence to ancestral voices and to articulate my positionality as a Secwépemc artist in Syilx lands.

Sections of the Memorial I have selected to use within this text were originally used in a talk given at Savvy Contemporary in Berlin Germany (2018) for their *Invocations* program, *Whose Land Have I Lit on Now? Contemplations on the Notion of Hospitality*, that curatorially framed Derrida's concepts of hospitality within the context of rising nationalism, anti-immigration and anti-refugee sentiment in Germany. Though this context was outside of the original envisioning of this document, its direct use of the metaphor of hospitality to conceptualize and appeal to Settler government and its galvanizing of Indigenous land rights, within an international arena, make it apt in both historical positioning and future imagining:

We never asked them to come here, but nevertheless we treated them kindly and hospitably and helped them all we could. They have made themselves (as it were) our guests. (Laurier Memorial 1910)

This statement can be understood as an inverse of Settler justification for land theft that focused on the disappearance of Indigenous people from the land. The Memorial starts from a position that we were here on the land when newcomers came and that we honoured them as guests even though their methods of being a guest, a sacred act of witnessing, were absent. It is in the absence of reciprocity that the Settler defines their position as one of hostility.

This realization would have been present to each and every one of the subjects of the plaster casts I have been studying and using in my own assertion of futurity in an Indigenous creative process. The sitters were land rights campaigners who sought international audiences as evidenced in multiple land rights delegations to Europe. Fundamentally their work was involved not only in political negotiation, but, in shifting the nature of Settler understandings of land. As defined in Yang and Eve Tuck's treatise against symbolic understandings of decolonization that lack action, *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, they say:

In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage. (5)

It is in the 're-making' of land into private property that the Memorial expertly deconstructs Settler conceptualizing of land and re-inscribes Indigenous concepts of our responsibility to land and to kinship and family as a system of governance that rejects the fences of colonization.

The people wish to be partners in our country. We must therefore be the same as brothers to them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything-half and half- water, timber, etc. What is ours will be theirs and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good. (Laurier Memorial 1910)

To emphasize, “[w]hat is ours will be theirs and what is theirs will be ours.” The sentiment of generosity here is quickly followed by a commitment of futurity against Settler accumulation of what is *ours*. I will revisit this idea of our rights to contemporary artistic works and composition that draw from the periods of dispossession in my conclusion but it is worth equating that this idea and this statement from the Memorial qualify my assertion in working with historical materials. That they are in fact, *ours*.

They have stolen our lands and everything on them and continue same for their own purposes. They treat us less than children...They say the Indians know nothing, and own nothing, yet their power and wealth has come from our belongings. The Queen's law which we believe guaranteed us our rights, the British Columbia government has trampled underfoot. (Laurier Memorial 1910)

In her discussion in Chapter 4 of *Mohawk Interruptus; Ethnographic Refusal, Anthropological Need*, Audra Simpson talks about the systemization of ethnography as supporting the subjectification of Indigenous people through knowledge production. She states,

In different moments, anthropology has imagined itself to be a voice..of the colonized. This modern interlocutory role had a serious material and ideational context; it accorded with the imperatives of Empire and in this, specific technologies of rule that sought to obtain space and resources, to define and know the difference that it constructed in those spaces, and to then govern those within. (95)

Therefore in offering words, that were formative within the plaster cast subjects lexicon of Indigenous land rights and values, through the Laurier Memorial, I am preferencing the decolonial, not the ethnographic, accounts. Contrasting anthropological studies that defined Indigenous people to an audience of externally globalized consumers of knowledge I have structured my research within a circle of kinship and reciprocity and use our words to emphasize Secwépemc agency: “This is how our guests have treated us – the brothers we received hospitably in our house” (Laurier Memorial 1910).

4.2 The Right to Our Land is the Right To Our Future

The legacies of 'salvage anthropology' have left a wound within Indigenous Nations, of what we now call, British Columbia. But they have also deposited material that Indigenous communities have rights to access as part of their heritage as defined by Special Rapporteur Dr. Erica-Irene Daes in the Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous People's (1995). Within the Battiste and Henderson reading, *The Concept of Indigenous Heritage Rights* (2000) they quote from Daes and this important UN document in constructing a definition of Indigenous Heritage Rights. I am attempting to locate my work with the casts within this definition of Indigenous heritage rights and the possibility of futurity of new art works etc. comprised of this heritage. *Re-inscribing* narratives of past present and future resurgent indigeneity is a method of the continual practice of our culture as symbiotic with our

land base. My work and research draws on Secwépemc place-based philosophy that through reiteration, transformation and translation constructs the potentiality of other worlds, methods, philosophies and ideas, both in the disarticulation of colonial values, and in pre-existing Indigenous values. Article 11 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's states,

“The heritage of Indigenous peoples is comprised of all objects, sites and knowledge the nature or us of which has been transmitted from generation to generation, and which is regarded as pertaining to a particular people and its territory. The heritage of an indigenous people also includes objects, knowledge, and literary or artistic works which may be created in the future based upon its heritage.

Further to this, Article 12 goes on to include: literary and artistic works such as music, dance, song, ceremonies, symbols and designs, narratives and poetry..and documentation of Indigenous peoples' heritage on film, photographs, videotape, or audiotape (Battiste and Henderson, 65-66). Though plaster-casts and anthropometric data are not mentioned here, I locate them within our rights to the documentation of Indigenous people's heritage and my own use of the documents of physical anthropology to the right of artistic works to be created in the future. Of course this is complicated by the museum's own practices of copyright. While the Indigenous rights to repatriate human remains and stolen cultural objects is well understood in terms of NAGPRA (1995) or similar policy, there are other items, like the plaster casts and anthropometric data, that are harder to integrate into policy.

Part of my experience as a Secwépemc woman born in the later 70s and of an in-between generation, who carries inter-generational residential school effects and the histories of social disruption, has meant that there is a gap in my understanding of Secwépemc language, governance and spirituality. So I find myself often looking to the sources of salvage anthropology as a way to understand the unfolding of the situation we find ourselves in as

Indigenous peoples within a colonial construct of nationhood, borders and cultures not our own. This searching is a way to find our reflection as contemporary Indigenous people. However, in the model and record of salvage anthropology our agency as Indigenous peoples is often coloured by paternalism and racism. Staging the intervention of artists in the archive reveals a potential to position narratives for Indigenous futurisms that are embraced within a continuum of ancestral knowledge(s). The artifacts, ethnographic images, documents, voices and lives of salvage anthropology are within this embrace, the long shadows hiding history; the years of residential schools, sixties scoop and plagues of associated substance abuse, lateral violence and overall loss and colonial trauma are being made visible.

The casting of light to fill shadow is a metaphor I have used throughout this paper and in my thesis exhibition to discuss the trauma of genocide as a shadow pierced by the light falling on the land, clearing shadows to become new growth to claim space for art, language and land – this through a vision of light piercing through shadow recorded by the land around us, as encoded in tree rings, growth patterns, traditional foods and Indigenous languages. This witnessing of light on land can be thought of us a photograph, a balance of light and shadow simulating and recording, but unlike a photograph, a moment of life on the land extends outward like a ripple in a pond embracing generations of interrelated life in an assertion of Indigenous futurity.

4.3 Radiant Indigenous Futures

We work and think in this contested and unresolved space, somewhere in between a disreputable past and a glittering future.

– P. Smith “ Afterword: End of the Line”

Just as the transformation of the casts into my own art can be considered a method of shifting discourse so can the awakening of sleeping ancestors be transfigured into an

unmasking of Canadian and BC colonial policies as relevant to our present situation. In looking at place and Indigenous concepts like Coulthard's ideas of 'grounded normativity' where he talks about the deeper reading of the importance of land to Indigenous peoples as,

[p]lace is a way of knowing, of experiencing and relating to the world and with others; and sometimes these relational practices and forms of knowledge guide forms of resistance against other rationalizations of the world that threaten to erase or destroy our sense of place.” (61)

He goes onto to describe how “[e]thically, this meant that humans held certain obligations to the land, animals, plants and lakes in much the same way that we hold obligations to other people” (61).

The deep resonance of Indigenous lands versus the colonial drive to measure, define and dispossess it represent two different philosophies with very real legal principles of land. These opposing views acquire form in the museum artifact of the busts. The European aesthetic development of the sculptural portrait bust and the lived and embodied experience of land that the sitters had are held within an object that in and of itself has no connectivity with our land. In her discussion of refusing the ethnographic frame and the land-rights legacy of Mohawk communities Audra Simpson writes, “[t]hese sovereign articulations do not match up with the anthropologies of timeless, procedural 'tradition' that form the bulk of knowledge on the Iroquois” (104). In this summation Simpson draws attention to the discord between lived and embodied Indigenous experience and the anthropological frame that preferences qualities of passivity and de-politicizes Indigenous people in accordance with State or empirical functions of ruling and settling. Or as Simpson says, “[s]o, I too think sovereignty matters, and such mattering also engenders other ethnographic forms; in this case, of refusal” (105). This 'mattering' places land as centred in the potential of new forms of ethnography and I attentively position my art making, that engages with this research, as the potential of new forms of production within both visiting ancestors in the archive and Indigenous resurgent creative production.

In this thesis I have stitched together a number of ideas from a decolonial positioning of the Secwépemc plaster casts and material culture in museum collections, a 'restorying' of the artifacts of the plaster portrait busts, an emphasis and discussion of Secwépemc rights and title as decolonial aesthetics and the proposition of centring land rights within contemporary art production. All of this has been framed with the intention of directly addressing colonial models and the ways they are predicated on the extinction and disappearance of Indigenous lands and bodies.

The goal of decolonial thinking and doing is to continue re-inscribing, embodying and dignifying those ways of living, thinking and sensing that were violently devalued or demonized by colonial, imperial and interventionist agendas as well as by postmodern and altermodern internal critiques. (Mingolo and Vázquez)| □

Acting within this frame of 'decolonial thinking' I have attempted to let non-Western methods lead my research, re-valuing methods from my own cultural experience, kweselktnéws, re-awakening ancestral voices and trusting intuitive methods to get me there. My research has been limited by resources and time but in bringing the research into active circulation in my community the work to reconnect these ancestors and our land rights continues in many forms.

In re-circulating knowledge, associative land rights histories and imperatives as embedded in cultural and contemporary art practice, I am continuing the work of my ancestors. To fight for our rights, to protect our children and to live our lives connected to the beauty of our lands in a reciprocal network of relations. Efforts to repatriate ancestral remains Harlan Smith removed are underway within the Secwépemc Nation. It has been my belief through this research journey that these plaster casts were implicated in the repatriation of these remains from the AMNH in New York. This work and research continues to have a life beyond myself and this project, circulating in the face of restriction.

4.4 Ending with the Beginning

As we continue to face resource extraction pressure with pipelines, like Trans Mountain's Kinder Morgan, bought by Canada and shoved through our territories, and our own rights continually diminish in the face of capitalist extraction, we see that this pattern is what our ancestors fought against. It is only in the re-valuing of our reciprocal relationships with each other and the natural world that we see the light in the shadow. We fight for light to lead our way, allowing ourselves our magic, our spirit our arts and ceremonies to lead the way.

It is only by privileging and grounding ourselves in these normative life ways and resurgent practices that we have a hope of surviving strategic engagements with the colonial state with any integrity as Indigenous Peoples (Coulthard 179).

This is what I have learned from visiting with my people in museums: in the *stseptékwle* of Secwépemc cosmology the 'second coming' of the mythic coyote trickster and the Old One are foretold. I suggest here that this second coming is in all of us. We are all imbued with the possibility of awakening, of intuiting, a better world and our imaginations and artists can help us to light this path. In solidarity with Indigenous rights and title everywhere and in a framework of decolonial aesthetics, I have shown, just one example, of the power inherent in centering Indigenous agency in collections of Indigenous belongings. Artistic interventions, that centre Indigenous bodies and lands, can refuse the ethnographic frame and instead become the medicines we need: for the water, the land, ourselves and all our relations human and non. In the hope, trust, defiance and utter strength of our imagination I offer these words in endless thanks for the lands, lives and loves our creator has given us.

“Decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity.” (Tuck, Yang 19)

The Future is being written by our great grandchildren in the light.

Xwexwéyt re Kwesélkten – All My Relations

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Figures 2-7: North Pacific Jesup Expedition Secwépemc Plaster Casts

Figure 2 Clexlexqén, Chief Louis

American Museum of Natural History, AMNH Anthropology catalog: #995-565



Figure 3 **Edward Hyacinthe**

American Museum of Natural History: AMNH Anthropology catalog: #995-567



Figure 4 **Gabriel Chapman**

American Museum of Natural History: AMNH Anthropology catalog: 995-568



Figure 5 **Louis Fallerdeau**

American Museum of Natural History: AMNH Anthropology catalog: #995-566



Figure 6 **Alek(x?) S(L?)arent**

American Museum of Natural History: AMNH Anthropology catalog: #995-569



Figure 7 **Thomas Benjamin**

American Museum of Natural History: AMNH Anthropology catalog: #995-570



Figure 8-15 1916 Indian Rights Association Delegation

Seated (from left to right): Chief James Raitasket (Lillooet tribe, Upper Lillooet) Chief John Chelahitsa (Douglas Lake, tribe, Okanagan, Spences Bridge), Chief Paul David (Tobacco Plains tribe, Upper Kutenai, [Koosville]), Chief Basil David, (Bonaparte tribe, Shuswap). Standing (from left to right): Chief Elie Larue (Kamloops tribe, Shuswap), Chief John Tetlenitsa (Thompson), James Alexander Teit (Spences Bridge), Chief Thomas Adolph (LaFontaine tribe, Upper Lillooet), Chief William Pascal (Pemberton tribe, Lower Lillooet)



Figure 9 Chief Eli Larue (T'kemplúps Secwépemc)

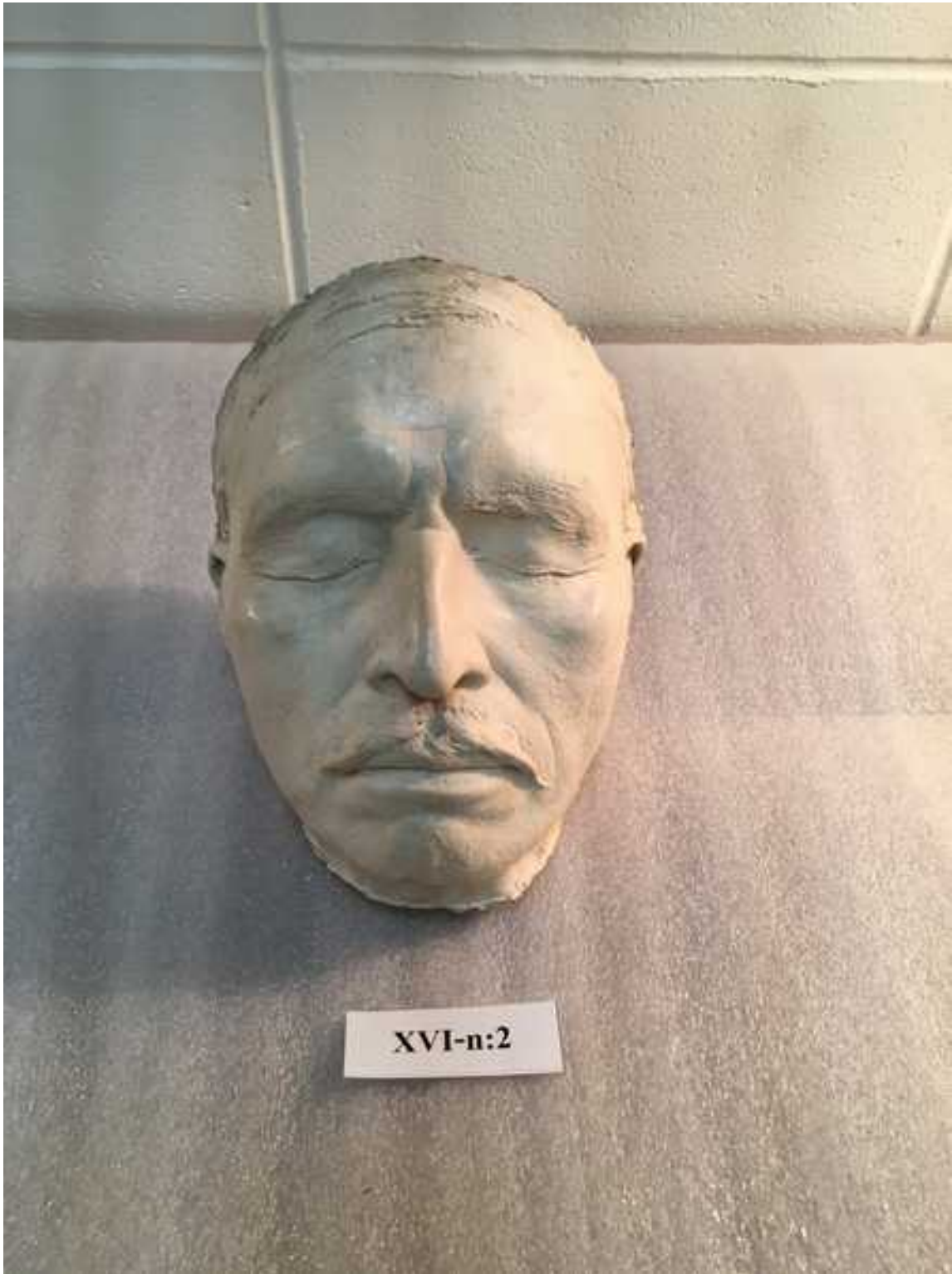


Figure 10 Chief James Raitasket

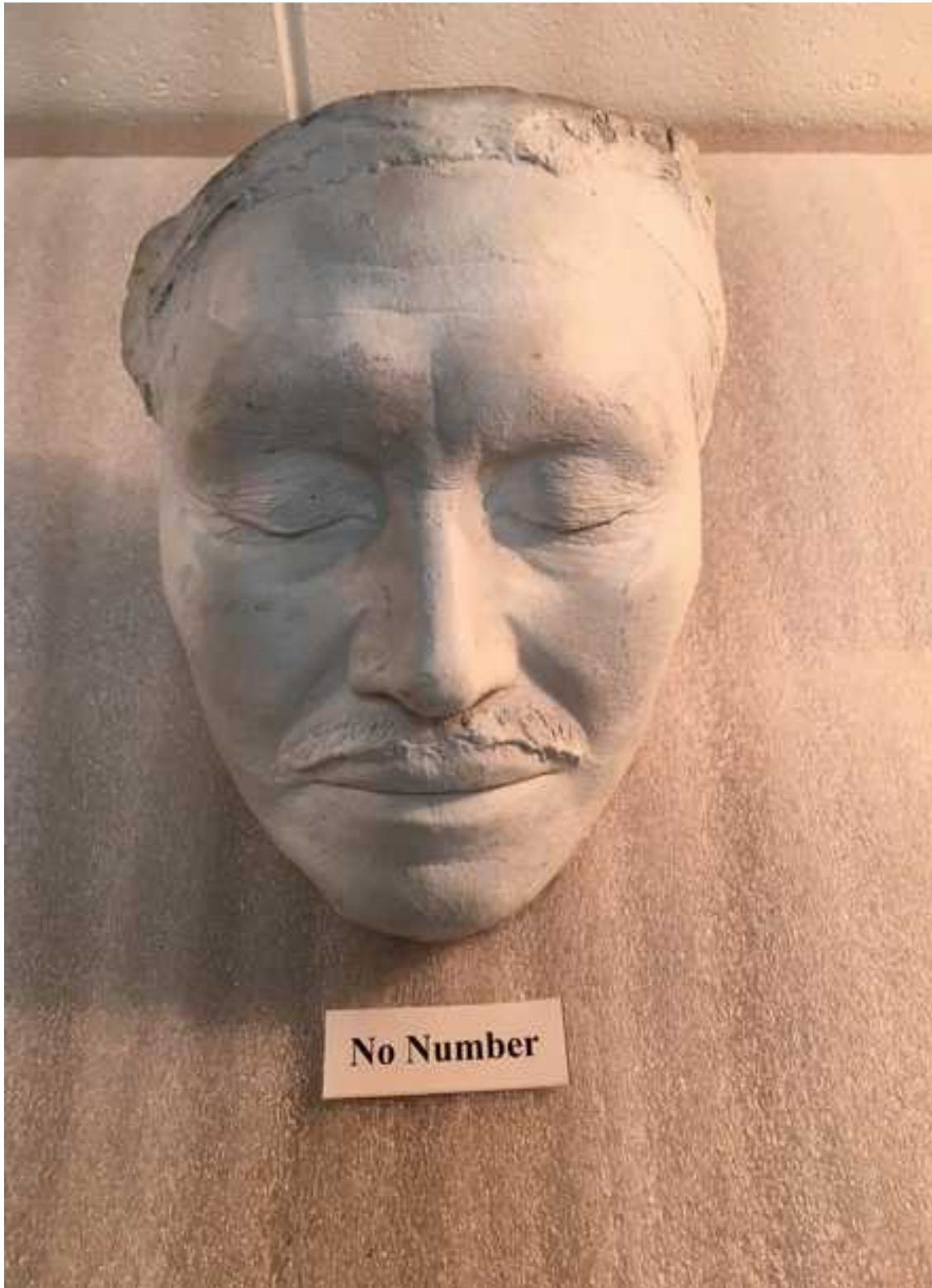


Figure 11 Chief John Tetlenitsa



Figure 12 Chief Thomas Adolph

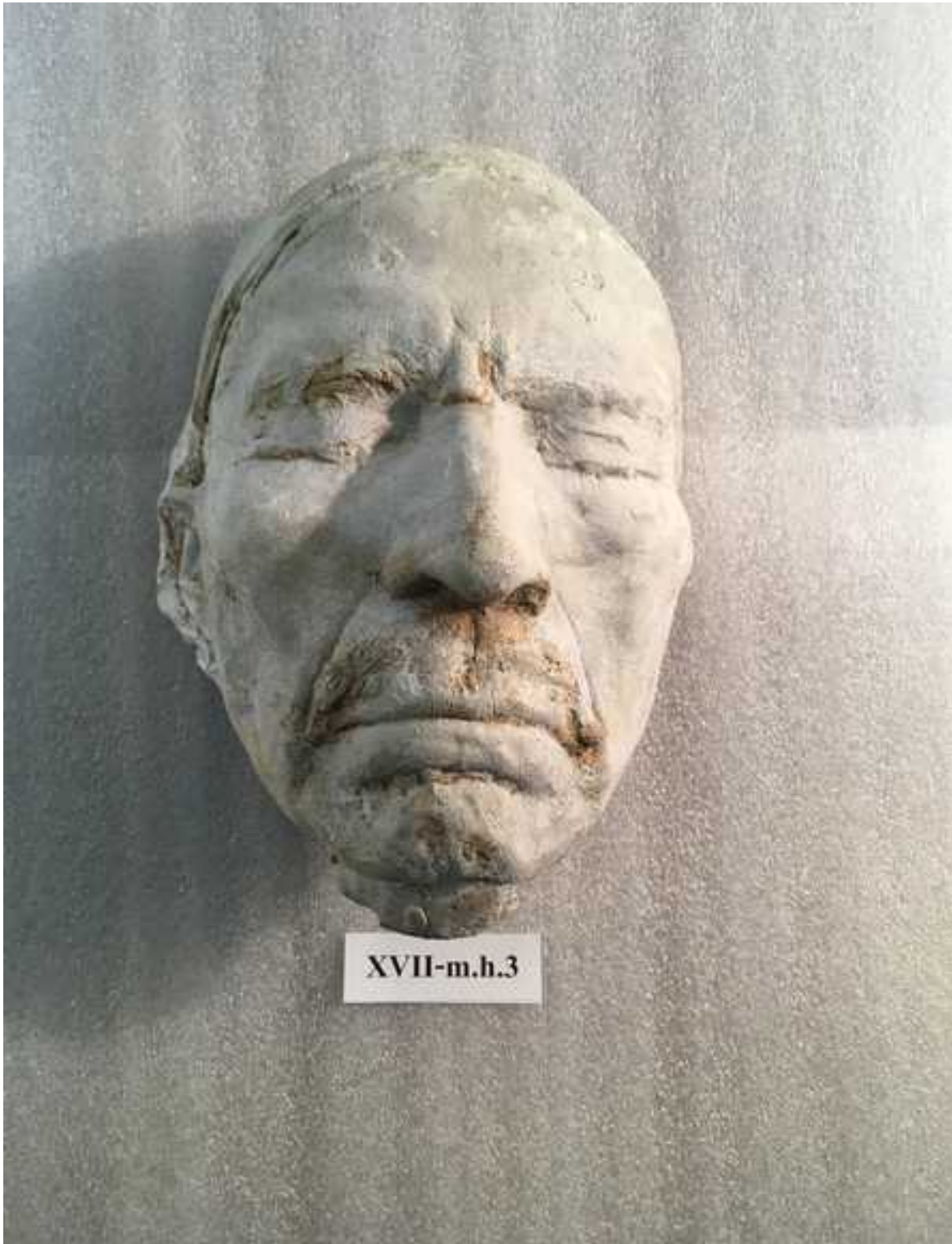


Figure 13 Basil David (Dick)



Figure 14 Chief Paul David



Figure 15 Chief William Pascal



Figure 16 Canadian Museum of History AMNH Casts

Casts gifted to Canadian Museum of History in 1911 by the American Museum of Natural History. Collected of individuals from: Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Kwakiutl, Nootka, Coast Salish, Interior Salish. Labelled as: *XVII. Physical Anthropology of North Pacific Coast of America.*



Appendix A

MEMORIAL TO SIR WILFRID LAURIER, PREMIER OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA FROM THE CHIEFS OF THE SHUSWAP, OKANAGAN AND COUTEAU TRIBES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. PRESENTED AT KAMLOOPS, B.C. AUGUST 25, 1910

"Dear Sir and Father,

We take this opportunity of your visiting Kamloops to speak a few words to you. We welcome you here, and we are glad we have met you in our country. We want you to be interested in us, and to understand more fully the conditions under which we live. We expect much of you as the head of this great Canadian Nation, and feel confident that you will see that we receive fair and honorable treatment. Our confidence in you has increased since we have noted of late the attitude of your government towards the Indian rights movement of this country and we hope that with your help our wrongs may at last be righted. We speak to you the more freely because you are a member of the white race with whom we first became acquainted, and which we call in our tongue "real whites."

One hundred years next year they came amongst us here at Kamloops and erected a trading post. After the other whites came to this country in 1858 we differentiated them from the first whites as their manners were so much different, and we applied the term "real whites" to the latter (viz., the fur-traders of the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies. As the great majority of the companies' employees were French speaking, the term latterly became applied by us as a designation for the whole French race.) The "real whites" we found were good people. We could depend on their word, and we trusted and respected them. They did not interfere with us nor attempt to break up our tribal organizations, laws, customs. They did not try to force their conceptions of things on us to our harm. Nor did they stop us from catching fish, hunting, etc. They never tried to steal or appropriate our country, nor take our food and life from

us. They acknowledged our ownership of the country, and treated our chiefs as men. They were the first to find us in this country. We never asked them to come here, but nevertheless we treated them kindly and hospitably and helped them all we could. They had made themselves (as it were) our guests.

We treated them as such, and then waited to see what they would do. As we found they did us no harm our friendship with them became lasting. Because of this we have a 'warm heart to the French at the present day.' We expect good from Canada. When they first came among us there were only Indians here. They found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or ranch (belonging to all the people of the tribe) from which they gathered their food and clothing, etc., fish which they got in plenty for food, grass and vegetation on which their horses grazed and the game lived, and much of which furnished materials for manufactures, etc., stone which furnished pipes, utensils, and tools, etc., trees which furnished firewood, materials for houses and utensils, plants, roots, seeds, nuts and berries which grew abundantly and were gathered in their season just the same as the crops on a ranch, and used for food; minerals, shells, etc., which were used for ornament and for plants, etc., water which was free to all. Thus, fire, water, food, clothing and all the necessities of life were obtained in abundance from the lands of each tribe, and all the people had equal rights of access to everything they required. You will see the ranch of each tribe was the same as its life, and without it the people could not have lived.

Just 52 years ago the other whites came to this country. They found us just the same as the first or "real whites" had found us, only we had larger bands of horses, had some cattle, and in many places we cultivated the land. They found us happy, healthy, strong and numerous. Each tribe was still living in its own "house" or in other words on its own "ranch." No one interfered with our rights or disputed our possession of our own "houses" and "ranches," viz., our homes and lives. We were friendly and helped these whites also, for had we not learned the

first whites had done us no harm? Only when some of them killed us we revenged on them. Then we thought there are some bad ones among them, but surely on the whole they must be good. Besides they are the queen's people. And we had already heard great things about the queen from the "real whites." We expected her subjects would do us no harm, but rather improve us by giving us knowledge, and enabling us to do some of the wonderful things they could do. At first they looked only for gold. We know the latter was our property, but as we did not use it much nor need it to live by we did not object to their searching for it. They told us, "Your country is rich and you will be made wealthy by our coming. We wish just to pass over your lands in quest of gold."

Soon they saw the country was good, and some of them made up their minds, to settle it. They commenced to take up pieces of land here and there. They told us they wanted only the use of these pieces of land for a few years, and then would hand them back to us in an improved condition; meanwhile they would give us some of the products they raised for the loan of our land. Thus they commenced to enter our "houses," or live on our "ranches." With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives. Some of our Chiefs said, "These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers to them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything—half and half—in land, water and timber, etc. What is ours will be theirs, and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good."

The whites made a government in Victoria—perhaps the queen made it. We have heard it stated both ways. Their chiefs dwelt there. At this time they did not deny the Indian tribes owned the whole country and everything in it. They told us we did. We Indians were hopeful. We trusted the whites and waited patiently for their chiefs to declare their intentions toward us and our lands. We knew what had been done in the neighboring states, and we remembered what we had heard about the queen being so good to the Indians and that her laws carried out by her

chiefs were always just and better than the American laws. Presently chiefs (government officials, etc.) commenced to visit us, and had talks with some of our chiefs. They told us to have no fear, the queen's laws would prevail in this country, and everything would be well for the Indians here. They said a very large reservation would be staked off for us (southern interior tribes) and the tribal lands outside of this reservation the government would buy from us for white settlement. They let us think this would be done soon, and meanwhile until this reserve was set apart, and our lands settled for, they assured us we would have perfect freedom of traveling and camping and the same liberties as from time immemorial to hunt, fish, graze and gather our food supplies where we desired; also that all trails, land, water, timber, etc., would be as free of access to us as formerly. Our chiefs were agreeable to these propositions, so we waited for these treaties to be made, and everything settled. We had never known white chiefs to break their word so we trusted. In the meanwhile white settlement progressed. Our chiefs held us in check. They said, "Do nothing against the whites. Something we did not understand retards them from keeping their promise. They will do the square thing by us in the end."

What have we received for our good faith, friendliness and patience? Gradually as the whites of this country became more and more powerful, and we less and less powerful, they little by little changed their policy towards us, and commenced to put restrictions on us. Their government or chiefs have taken every advantage of our friendliness, weakness and ignorance to impose on us in every way. They treat us as subjects without any agreement to that effect, and force their laws on us without our consent and irrespective of whether they are good for us or not. They say they have authority over us. They have broken down our old laws and customs (no matter how good) by which we regulated ourselves. They laugh at our chiefs and brush them aside. Minor affairs amongst ourselves, which do not affect them in the least, and which we can easily settle better than they can, they drag into their courts. They enforce their own laws one way for the rich white man, one way for the poor white, and yet another for the Indian. They have knocked down (the same as) the posts of all the Indian tribes. They say there are no

lines, except what they make. They have taken possession of all the Indian country and claim it as their own. Just the same as taking the "house" or "ranch" and, therefore, the life of every Indian tribe into their possession. They have never consulted us in any of these matters, nor made any agreement, "nor" signed "any" papers with us. They 'have stolen our lands and everything on them' and continue to use 'same' for their 'own' purposes. They treat us as less than children and allow us 'no say' in anything. They say the Indians know nothing, and own nothing, yet their power and wealth has come from our belongings. The queen's law which we believe guaranteed us our rights, the B.C. government has trampled underfoot. This is how our guests have treated us—the brothers we received hospitably in our house.

After a time when they saw that our patience might get exhausted and that we might cause trouble if we thought all the land was to be occupied by whites they set aside many small reservations for us here and there over the country. This was their proposal not ours, and we never accepted these reservations as settlement for anything, nor did we sign any papers or make any treaties about same. They thought we would be satisfied with this, but we never have been satisfied and never will be until we get our rights. We thought the setting apart of these reservations was the commencement of some scheme they had evolved for our benefit, and that they would now continue until they had more than fulfilled their promises but although we have waited long we have been disappointed. We have always felt the injustice done us, but we did not know how to obtain redress. We knew it was useless to go to war. What could we do? Even your government at Ottawa, into whose charge we have been handed by the B.C. government, gave us no enlightenment. We had no powerful friends. The Indian agents and Indian office at Victoria appeared to neglect us. Some offers of help in the way of agricultural implements, schools, medical attendance, aid to the aged, etc., from the Indian department were at first refused by many of our chiefs or were never petitioned for, because for a time we thought the Ottawa and Victoria governments were the same as one, and these things would be charged against us and rated as payment for our land, etc. Thus we got along the best way we

could and asked for nothing. For a time we did not feel the stealing of our lands, etc., very heavily. As the country was sparsely settled we still had considerable liberty in the way of hunting, fishing, grazing, etc., over by far the most of it. However, owing to increased settlement, etc., in late years this has become changed, and we are being more and more restricted to our reservations which in most places are unfit or inadequate to maintain us. Except we can get fair play we can see we will go to the wall, and most of us be reduced to beggary or to continuous wage slavery. We have also learned lately that the British Columbia government claims absolute ownership of our reservations, which means that we are practically landless. We only have loan of those reserves in life rent, or at the option of the B.C. government. Thus we find ourselves without any real home in this our own country.

In a petition signed by fourteen of our chiefs and sent to your Indian department, July, 1908, we pointed out the disabilities under which we labor owing to the inadequacy of most of our reservations, some having hardly any good land, others no irrigation water, etc., our limitations re pasture lands for stock owing to fencing of so-called government lands by whites; the severe restrictions put on us lately by the government re hunting and fishing; the depletion of salmon by over-fishing of the whites, and other matters affecting us. In many places we are debarred from camping, traveling, gathering roots and obtaining wood and water as heretofore. Our people are fined and imprisoned for breaking the game and fish laws and using the same game and fish which we were told would always be ours for food. Gradually we are becoming regarded as trespassers over a large portion of this our country. Our old people say, "How are we to live? If the government takes our food from us they must give us other food in its place." Conditions of living have been thrust on us which we did not expect, and which we consider in great measure unnecessary and injurious. We have no grudge against the white race as a whole nor against the settlers, but we want to have an equal chance with them of making a living. We welcome them to this country. It is not in most cases their fault. They have taken up and improved and paid for their lands in good faith. It is their government which is to blame by

heaping up injustice on us. But it is also their duty to see their government does right by us, and gives us a square deal. We condemn the whole policy of the B.C. government towards the Indian tribes of this country as utterly unjust, shameful and blundering in every way. We denounce same as being the main cause of the unsatisfactory condition of Indian affairs in this country and of animosity and friction with the whites. So long as what we consider justice is withheld from us, so long will dissatisfaction and unrest exist among us, and we will continue to struggle to better ourselves. For the accomplishment of this end we and other Indian tribes of this country are now uniting and we ask the help of yourself and government in this fight for our rights. We believe it is not the desire nor policy of your government that these conditions should exist.

We demand that our land question be settled, and ask that treaties be made between the government and each of our tribes, in the same manner as accomplished with the Indian tribes of the other provinces of Canada, and in the neighboring parts of the United States. We desire that every matter of importance to each tribe be a subject of treaty, so we may have a definite understanding with the government on all questions of moment between us and them. In a declaration made last month, and signed by twenty-four of our chiefs (a copy of which has been sent to your Indian department) we have stated our position on these matters. Now we sincerely hope you will carefully consider everything we have herewith brought before you and that you will recognize the disadvantages we labor under, and the darkness of the outlook for us if these questions are not speedily settled. Hoping you have had a pleasant sojourn in this country, and wishing you a good journey home, we remain Yours very sincerely,

The Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau or Thompson tribes –

Per their secretary, J.A. Teit