
Research as Guesthood: The Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Resolving Indigenous–Settler Relations in British Columbia

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Abstract: What happens when the subject of anthropological study intervenes in the research process itself? This paper explores a 1910 letter—dubbed the Laurier Memorial, written by the Secwépemc, Syilx and Nlaka’pamux First Nations in interior BC—which puts forward a robust vision for just political relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers, based in Indigenous law, mutual obligation, reciprocal sovereignty and shared jurisdiction. However, it turns out that the Laurier Memorial has implications for anthropological practice as well. As the Laurier Memorial helps anthropology to “find a place to stand,” the resulting research relationship becomes an extension of the research content itself.

Keywords: Indigenous rights, First Nations, British Columbia, Laurier Memorial, settler colonialism, Canadian history, social anthropology

Résumé : Que se passe-t-il lorsque le sujet de l’étude anthropologique intervient dans le processus même de la recherche ? Cet article se penche sur une lettre de 1910 – surnommée le « Monument à Laurier », et rédigée par les Premières Nations Secwépemc, Syilx et Nlaka’pamux du centre de la Colombie-Britannique – qui met en avant une solide vision des relations politiques entre peuples autochtones et colons européens qui soient équitables et fondées sur le droit autochtone, l’obligation mutuelle, la souveraineté réciproque, et la juridiction partagée. Il s’avère cependant que le « Monument à Laurier » a aussi des répercussions sur la pratique anthropologique. Dans la mesure où cette lettre permet à l’anthropologie de « prendre position », la relation de recherche qui en découle devient le prolongement du contenu même de la recherche.

Mots-clés : droits autochtones, Premières Nations, Colombie-Britannique, Monument à Laurier, colonialisme de peuplement, histoire du Canada, anthropologie sociale

Introduction

Barrelling down the highway, traversing Syilx and Secwépemc territories in the cab of Arthur Manuel’s truck, I finally ventured to undertake our long-pending interview. Luckily, Manuel—a Secwépemc activist, spokesman for Indigenous Network on Economies and Trade, then co-chair of the North American Indigenous Peoples Caucus to the UN and former Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band—was willing to seize the two-hour window our trip would provide. We had already spent a few days at his home in British Columbia’s Okanagan Valley—me asking exploratory questions about Indigenous politics, him offering contemplative answers. But it was not until this car ride when the moment struck. I flipped on the audio recorder and turned to the topic at hand: *The Memorial Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada*, a letter addressed to then Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, written in 1910 by the Secwépemc, Syilx and Nlaka’pamux First Nations. Though more than a century old, this “memorial” is strikingly relevant to the current moment. As our conversation began to unfold and Manuel started to unpack the model of just relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers described within it, the memorial’s currency became increasingly clear.

By this point, I had done several in-car interviews, catching a ride to a meeting or ceremony on a neighbouring reserve and flipping on the recorder en route. It was one of those circumstantial research tactics you pick up, and I found the time and privacy that these commutes provided was conducive to such political and often personal conversations. Plus, looking out at the territory unfurling before me added a sort of sensory depth to these discussions on Indigenous title and rights.

Nonetheless, this one was a little different. To my disbelief, in the middle of a particularly heated soliloquy on the impacts of colonialism, Manuel paused, pulled to the side of the road and picked up a hitchhiker. No more than five words were exchanged determining the

destination of our new travel companion before Manuel informed him we were doing an interview, pointed to the recorder (which was still rolling) and started right back in where he had left off. We continued for nearly 45 minutes, with Manuel offering a shrewd and unremitting analysis of the ongoing unjust relations between Canada and Indigenous peoples, always tying it back to the Laurier Memorial. I had almost forgotten our quiet tag-along in the backseat when he suddenly piped up, pointing to his target ahead. As he hopped out of the car, he apologized for interrupting, adding, "I sure do hope they solve all that."

The Laurier Memorial: A Brief History

The Memorial Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of the Dominion of Canada (or simply, the Laurier Memorial) was composed by the Chiefs of the Secwépemc (Shuswap), Syilx (Okanagan) and Nlaka'pamux (Thompson or Couteau) Nations of the interior plateau of BC. It was presented to Laurier as he was passing through Kamloops on a "non-political campaign tour" on August 25, 1910. With the help of the chiefs' "secretary," a Scottish-born ethnologist named James Teit, who transcribed and translated it, the Laurier Memorial was written in first-person narrative. It charts the history of relations between the interior nations and newcomer populations, starting with the arrival of the French fur traders (who, by and large, respected Indigenous jurisdiction and self-determination) followed by American gold miners and British settlers (who did not). It then puts forward a different model of relations based in Indigenous law, reciprocity and shared jurisdiction. It graciously welcomes the newcomers to live together on their territory and, further, to share responsibility for it, pending that newcomers would respect Indigenous title and legal authority. With this, they proposed, "We will help each other to be great and good" (Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau Tribes of British Columbia 1910:3).

The Laurier Memorial emerged on the crest of a sophisticated Indigenous resistance movement that had been building throughout British Columbia since the late 19th century. Both separately and in tandem, coastal and interior First Nations mobilized rapidly to assert First Nations' relationship with the Crown and invoke colonial law to make an argument for Indigenous title and rights (Foster 1995). They launched numerous petitions, letters and delegations to Ottawa, London and even the Church. One such delegation left for England in 1904, including Syilx Chief Chilahitsa of Douglas Lake, and Secwépemc Chief Louis of Kamloops, accompanied by Oblate missionary, Father J. M.

LeJeune. Though they failed to gain audience with King Edward VII, undeterred, they went to Italy, where they were received by Pope Leo XIII (Galois 1992:6; Wickwire 1998:209–210). In 1906, another delegation to London included Squamish Chief Joe Capilano, Cowichan Chief Charley Isipaymilt and Secwépemc Chief Basil David. Though both times redirected to Ottawa with their complaints, these delegations were tactically successful in legitimizing Indian grievances and gaining leverage with white audiences, precipitating a growing "pattern of co-operation" (Galois 1992:7). At a meeting in the summer of 1909 in Spences Bridge (Nlaka'pamux territory), the interior nations officially coalesced under the umbrella The Interior Tribes of British Columbia, with ethnologist James Teit assuming the role of secretary-treasurer (Tennant 1990:87). With Teit's assistance,¹ the interior tribes came together again in Spences Bridge on July 16, 1910, to draft the Laurier Memorial, conveying a unique vision for what just relations with settlers should look like, founded on mutual recognition and jurisdiction.

Laurier was "sympathetic" to these movements and initiatives (Tennant 1990:88) and made several gestures to put the issue of Indian title on the national agenda once and for all, including proposed amendments to the *Indian Act* and an Order-in-Council to the federal court (Foster 2007; Galois 1992; Harris 2002). Unfortunately, before these proposals could reach fruition, Laurier lost the 1911 election to the Conservative Robert Borden, who quashed these initiatives. Borden instead aligned himself with BC's Conservative Premier, Richard McBride, ushering in a suite of oppressive colonial policies intended to silence the resistance movement and effectively throwing the Laurier Memorial into obscurity.

In hopes of clarifying the murky jurisdictional relationship between federal and provincial governments, Borden matched McBride with J.A.J. McKenna, an official with the Department of Indian Affairs, appointed to investigate all claims regarding Indian title (Galois 1992:5). However, the new McKenna-McBride Commission quickly struck the question of title from the agenda, limiting political focus to the geography of reserves (Foster 2007; Galois 1992; Tennant 1990). During this period, Indigenous resistance movements redoubled their efforts, forging new alliances in an effort to oppose the Commission and take land claims through the federal court system instead (Foster 2007; Tennant 1990). However, as legal scholar Hamar Foster (2007) reports, "once the two governments had agreed, more or less, on how the McKenna-McBride Commission's report would be implemented, Ottawa's commitment to resolving the matter of Aboriginal title on its own

quickly flagged” (68–69). Despite this, Indigenous movements in BC continued to mobilize throughout the 1920s in hopes of advancing the view that the Crown had never conquered, compensated or negotiated treaties for Indian land and that legal title had yet to be determined; “an argument that, in 1927, was more than fifty years old” (Foster 1995:28). In that year, the federal government passed Section 141 of the Indian Act, an amendment that banned First Nations from hiring lawyers and filing claims. Effectively outlawing all formal avenues of advancing Indian rights, the question of title would not make it into court until the *Calder* case was filed in 1967.

Though it was never formally recognized by government, the Laurier Memorial has continued to meander its way through our political history, finding new expression in contemporary economic, legal and artistic venues and intervening in our relations in nuanced ways. It was the subject of a 2004 play by Tomson Highway, called *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, in which four Indigenous women prepare for Laurier’s visit to Kamloops. In 2009, the memorial was invoked in a report by Arthur Manuel, lawyer Nicole Schabus et al., which was instrumental in putting a stop to the proposed *Recognition and Reconciliation Act*—a piece of legislation that would have tethered jurisdiction to the Province (Paper commissioned by Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, Splatsin, Secwepemc Nation 2009). In 2010, one hundred years after the memorial’s presentation, almost to the day, it was cited in a precedent-setting revenue sharing agreement for the New Afton gold mine, signed between the Tk’emlúps and Skeetchestn bands, New Gold Inc. and the province.

The Laurier Memorial lives on. Now, more than a century later, as social and political conditions for Indigenous peoples have continued to worsen since the time of its drafting, it remains as relevant as ever. Indeed, amid the current period of reconciliation Canada is purportedly engaged in, the memorial’s vision for how relations should operate takes on even more powerful meaning. Though perhaps lacking any such context for his comment, our hitchhiker hit it right on the nose: it is high time they solve all that.

Which “They”?

The first question our hitchhiker’s comment provokes is the identity of the mysterious “they.” Who exactly is responsible to resolve the unjust relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler Canada?

To task it to non-Indigenous “experts”—policy makers, lawyers and scholars—recreates the paternalistic wardship settler Canada has wielded over First Nations

since the establishment of the Indian Act. This colonial approach treads dangerously close to the so-called “Indian problem,” a framing which Indian Agents and anthropologists alike have long been accused of perpetuating (Deloria 1988:80). Certainly it is the self-determining right of Indigenous peoples to wield authority over their own fate, deciding their own path out of colonialization. In many ways, withdrawing from this undertaking seems the respectful—even honourable—thing for settlers to do. As anthropologist Michael Asch (2001) writes, “Any anthropologist who seeks to work in this arena is faced with a highly polarized situation. It is possible to avoid controversy by standing aside, remaining neutral” (204). This is tempting. Certain sects of non-Indigenous anthropology might embrace this approach, advocating, even, for a neutrality untethered to any responsibility apart from our scientific integrity. “But,” Asch continues, “at least for me, that is not a comfortable place to stand” (204). Yet, to defer the broader project of anti-colonialism to Indigenous peoples alone is no exercise of shared jurisdiction and responsibility, those principles the Laurier Memorial makes so clear. Rather, this effectively severs our relationship and diminishes non-Indigenous obligations in it. Instead, Asch (2001) calls on anthropologists to “find a place to stand,” to situate and plant ourselves firmly and honestly in political relations with Indigenous peoples.

The Laurier Memorial makes it clear that colonialism is a relationship in which *we all* partake, for which we are all responsible. While the memorial is a uniquely Indigenous document, putting forward a vision of relations based in Secwépemc, Syilx and Nlaka’pamux law, it is also a uniquely Canadian document, inviting us non-Indigenous newcomers to share in defining how our relations should look and imploring us to uphold certain obligations. These obligations include tackling our own colonization and conduct; or, as Paulette Regan (2010) puts it, “unsettling the settler within.” Slightly amending the hitchhiker’s comment, I propose it is *our* responsibility—both Indigenous and settler alike—to “solve all that” including, as I have hinted, a role for anthropology.

The question now becomes: how are we, all of us, to solve all that and find a place to stand in responsible, just relations? Well, to start, we might look to the Laurier Memorial itself. Here it is, intervening in our relations a hundred years after its drafting. How does it help us to find a place to stand? What possibility might there be in Canada *now* to bring about relationships that honour the principles put forward in the memorial more than a century ago?

Reciprocity, Obligation and a Rupture

The memorial reads:

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.” [1910:3]

I followed these words from Mi'kma'ki (Mi'kmaq territory, where I was in university), all the way out to Sécwepemculewc (Secwépemc territory). I arrived into Kamloops's arid July heat just as the 2010 annual Secwépemc Gathering was getting underway. The three-day event, hosted by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (formerly Kamloops Indian Band), was to include a special celebration of the hundred-year anniversary of the Laurier Memorial. A month earlier, Cooks Ferry Indian Band (of the Nlaka'pamux Nation) had hosted another powerful celebration of the anniversary in Spences Bridge, where the memorial was drafted. Energy around the memorial was beginning to reverberate throughout the region.

The Tk'emlúps pow wow arbour is itself a rather pulsating institution. Nestled at the bottom of a valley, the arbour is visible from most anywhere in Kamloops, sitting just below the solemn brick edifice of the former Kamloops Residential School. The vast cylindrical arbour concentrates the summer's sun into its centre as if to command respect from its encompassing audience members. Needless to say, as I perilously rode my rented bicycle toward the arbour, across the highway and over the bridge to the reserve side of the South Thompson River, I was impressed. And kind of nervous. I was nervous about entering Secwépemc territory—their “houses” and “ranches” as the memorial analogizes—and how I might be perceived as a non-Indigenous scholar sidling her way into the festivities. But, by the second day, with a belly full of bannock and several friendly and fruitful conversations under my belt, I was beginning to feel the arbour's embrace, my nerves mostly eclipsed by my keenness to learn about this document and this territory. Nevertheless, I still was not entirely sure what my next research step should be, or who would be willing to take it with me.

As the festivities began to peter out, I sat down with Ron Ignace from Skeetchestn Indian Band, a neighbouring Secwépemc community situated about 45 minutes west of Kamloops. Though Ignace was not the Chief of Skeetchestn at the time, he had been for more than 20 years and was later re-elected in 2012. He holds a PhD in anthropology, having written his dissertation on Secwépemc oral stories and historical consciousness. I had been hoping I would find Ignace at the gathering to set up an interview with him. However, not five minutes into our conversation, I was the one being interviewed. Starting with the basics, Ignace moved quickly through the factual knowledge I had about the drafting of the Laurier Memorial and the proposals contained within it, to what I thought it actually meant. What principle was its recipe for relations rooted in? This was not an abstract question he was asking me. It was obvious that there was, in fact, a right answer, a magic word that would unlock his willingness to keep talking with me. That word, I luckily figured out, was reciprocity.

When I did finally interview Ignace a month later, he explained:

The memorial goes on to talk about how these people wish to be guests in our household. “Let's be brothers to them. They want to utilize our land and improve it and they'll pay us for the improvement on our land, when they're finished with it.” The idea of reciprocity is in there: “what's ours will be yours and what's yours will be ours; we'll help each other to be great and good”... There's how the people put their political vision and philosophy together, on the one hand, on how they wanted to relate with Canada. [August 24, 2010]

As Ignace made clear, reciprocity is the basis of a robust political and legal proposal.

On the topic of reciprocity the pinnacle work to which I must refer is Marcel Mauss's 1923 opus, *The Gift*. Mauss's ethnographic examination of Indigenous peoples from around the globe (including North Western peoples) investigates the moral, economic, political and legal relationships that emerge alongside the practice of gift-exchange. To pare it down, gifting binds people—and peoples—in relation by precipitating ongoing, reciprocal obligation between them. He writes:

Material and moral life, as exemplified in gift-exchange, functions there in a manner at once interested and obligatory. Furthermore, the obligation is expressed in myth and imagery, symbolically and collectively; it takes the form of interest in the objects exchanged; the objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them; the communion and alliance they establish are well-nigh indissoluble. [Mauss 1967: 31]

By Mauss's description, practices of gift-exchange establish shared obligation that extends beyond the incident of exchange itself, and its economic and material significance, throwing the contributors and recipients together in perpetual, indissoluble reciprocal political relation.

The gift that was given to non-Indigenous fur traders by the interior nations was, and continues to be, guesthood. The Laurier Memorial makes it unequivocally clear: "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" (1910:3). In welcoming these guests into their territory, to share in, subsist and profit off their land, the interior nations also welcomed them into political relations, pending their mutual and ongoing respect for the obligations that accompany guesthood. For the interior nations, the political and spiritual concept of reciprocity extends beyond economic value and transaction but is, rather, an exchange of obligation.

The chiefs acknowledged the careful respect that the early French fur traders paid to their hosts—who they called the "real whites" or *seme7úw'i*—accepting this obligated gift of guesthood:

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. [1910:1–2]

Though the *seme7úw'i* were uninvited, they "made themselves" guests, taking on the obligation of guesthood by recognizing and respecting Indigenous sovereignty and law. As Marianne Ignace and Duane Thomson report, "the Salish nations offered the traders security for their persons and trade goods as long as their guests conformed to the economic, legal and social regimes of the respective host communities" (Thomson and Ignace 2005:4). Ron Ignace also substantiated this history, relaying stories in which the *seme7úw'i* would trade with their Secwépemc hosts for fish, knowing that to fish for

themselves would undermine Secwépemc jurisdiction over the territory and its resources, and that their traps and nets would be torn down. Ignace explained that "the relationship between the fur traders and the Shuswaps was of mutual interest and mutual benefit . . . There was respect for our laws, traditions, and customs . . . And also if people wanted to take up land, and use it, they had to pay 50 per cent of what they produced off the land back to the Shuswaps. And all of that was respected" (August 24, 2010). This respect won over their hosts. The interior nations continued to share their land, carrying on the reciprocal relationship they had established, but always "waiting" to see what their guests would do—how they too would sustain their perpetual obligation.

Harkening back to Mauss's comment on the indissolubility of the alliance established in reciprocal gift exchange, the chiefs' waiting is particularly significant. If, as anthropologist James Carrier affirms (1991:130), "gift transactors are related and mutually obligated" and if, as Asch describes (2005:427), this mutual obligation initiates political relations, then, an ongoing respect for and practice of reciprocity is necessary for just relations to continue. Carrier discusses the need for periodic maintenance of the political relationship, stressing the sustained importance of reciprocal exchange. "While a gift relationship entails inalienable identities and obligations, the transactions within it are not the unproblematic consequence of those identities and relationships. Instead, the transactions create and maintain them" (Carrier 1991:130). In this way, the mutual relation that is inaugurated through exchange is not passive or assumed; it must be carefully and perpetually nourished for "a just relationship" to continue (Asch 2005; Noble 2007; Tully 2000). And so the chiefs waited.

But, by the mid-19th century, as the composition and pursuits of non-Indigenous newcomers began to shift, a rupture in reciprocal relations came about. American gold miners and English settlers arrived to the interior—the "other whites" as the Laurier Memorial deems them—and were met with the same gift of hospitality that the *seme7úw'i* had received and reciprocated. But, these settlers were equipped with their own economies and bolstered changing colonial legislation, and were not receptive to that inaugural exchange of obligation the way the fur traders had been. They neglected to respect or even to grasp reciprocal law (Thomson and Ignace 2005). The "other whites" effectively revoked the recognition of Indigenous jurisdiction that had been so crucial in building just relations between the interior nations and the *seme7úw'i*. As the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council accounts, these settlers "denied not only our ownership of lands and resources but also our

ancient laws of trespass and jurisdiction. They thus defied the honour of being guests that we had bestowed upon them” (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council 2010:2). Then, the provincial government trampled it. If the settlers introduced this unjust and paternalistic relationship, their government made it law. The memorial reads:

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 ... 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. [1910:4]

As the memorial makes clear, the nations’ hospitality was not a purely economic gift; guest-host reciprocity was their immigration law.

I learned this during my time as a guest on Nlaka’pamux territory, where I visited Lower Nicola Indian Band, in the heart of the Nicola Valley near Merritt, BC. Here I spoke with former Chief, Qaldaskt (Arthur Dick), whose great-great-grandmother, Del’del’hadkt had been chief when the settlers came. We sat under a shady overhang in his yard, sharing in some home-made iced tea, as he recounted:

The arrangements were to be that they were here as visitors; they called them immigrants, eh? They came here and they wanted to be permanent here but they [were supposed to] lease land and that they were supposed to pay our people for that. And the way the government ended up dealing with us, is that because the population went down, they said, “we’ll collect on your behalf.” [August 13, 2010]

As immigrants, by acknowledging their gift of guesthood and taking on its accompanying obligation, the *seme7úw’i* were already recognizing, respecting and adhering to Indigenous law. And when their settler successors trampled the hospitable welcome they too received as guests, they effectively—and explicitly, as the memorial demonstrates above—undermined this law and the jurisdiction of their Indigenous hosts in the territory.

Political philosopher James Tully (2008) writes:

The Aboriginal Peoples had every right to recognize the Europeans as immigrants subject to their laws (perhaps granting them some sort of minority status), as nations did then and do now. The only valid way, therefore, that Canada and the United States could acquire sovereignty in North America was by gaining the consent of the sovereign nations that were already here, as would be the case anywhere else in the world. The Aboriginal Peoples agreed to recognize the settlers as coexisting, self-governing nations, equal in status to themselves, with the right to acquire land from them, over which the settler governments could then exercise jurisdiction and sovereignty, by means of nation-to-nation treaties based on mutual agreement. [234]

In this way, recognition, on which sovereignty rests, is itself a reciprocal concept (Coulthard 2007). While Tully here refers specifically to Indigenous territories where treaty making took place (unlike much of BC), his characterization of recognition as mutual, yet inaugurated through Indigenous consent, resonates with Interior Salish political narrative as represented by the Laurier Memorial. The interior nations recognized the newcomers as self-determining immigrants and, as such, granted them guesthood, which, I have posited, brings with it both hospitable welcome and political obligation. Recognition is turned back onto the interior nations, becoming shared when the newcomers honour that obligation, thereby honouring Indigenous law. It is this kind of reciprocal, nation-to-nation treaty relationship—distinctly not the relationship pursued under the misnomer “modern-day treaties”—to which Tully refers and the

memorial seeks when it says, “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” (1910:6).

As I have discussed, once the newcomer guests have been welcomed and “received hospitably” by their host First Nations, once initial recognition and obligation passes reciprocally between them, that political relationship must be carefully nourished and maintained so that they can continue to live together, in perpetual, flowing, shared recognition and jurisdiction. The seeking of treaty by the interior chiefs—their desire for an understanding with the government that transcends the fixed moment of welcome or exchange, instead informing all “questions of moment”—speaks to this ongoing relation. In recounting this history and invoking treaty, the chiefs challenged Laurier and all of us newcomers, to reverse the settlers’ rupture, take up our obligation and recover relations of guest-host reciprocity.

Untangling the Liberating from the Repressive

It seems that the rupture of the Laurier Memorial’s vision, settler Canada’s denial of a relationship with Indigenous nations rooted in reciprocal obligation and recognition, is what keeps it so disconcertingly valid. The question now is not how we nourish a reciprocal relationship but, as our hitchhiker expressed, how we *solve* it. How do we mend the rupture and reveal justice from within an increasingly disturbing colonial arrangement?

The Laurier Memorial shows us how political phenomena are shaped by and constituted through our relationships and the way we conduct ourselves in them. What it demonstrates so beautifully is that even our most basic political pillars of sovereignty, law, recognition, jurisdiction, are not discrete institutions but are themselves rooted in reciprocal relations. On this theme, Foucault writes:

the fact remains that you see here the first formulation of any law, whatever it may be, every form of sovereignty, whatever it may be, and any type of power, whatever it may be, has to be analysed not in terms of natural right and the establishment of sovereignty, but in terms of the unending movement—which has no historical end—of the shifting relations that make some dominant over others. [Foucault 1997:109]

Here, in this perpetually shifting, moving tangle of relations that comprises the political environment, sover-

eignty materializes. However, Foucault is preoccupied with the relations of domination that emerge from shifting relations, those moments of rupture, when one sovereignty subjugates another. Asch (2001; 2014), on the other hand, looks into that same tangle of relations in hopes of locating justice, resolution and alliance, where mutual, relational sovereignties are shared between peoples.

In this way, if political phenomena are a product of a shifting tangle of relations in which sharing in mutual sovereignty is available but is vulnerable to domination, then our task is to interrupt those relations inclined toward domination and redirect them toward justice. Or, as Justin Kenrick puts it, to “disentangle the liberating from the repressive” (Kenrick 2008:27). We must choose one set of relations, one manner of sovereignty, over another.

This is an ambitious and, admittedly, idealistic undertaking. Indigenous peoples have lived through more than a century of settler domination since the Memorial documented this rupture of reciprocal relations. How can we untangle the liberating from the repressive, if repressive is now the status quo? It’s hard to imagine that choosing relational sovereignty over colonial sovereignty is even an option. However, as Foucault reminds us, there is “no historical end” of shifting relations, and as long as they continue in unending movement, this possibility of revealing the liberating must remain.

Even in its most minute inventions, the Laurier Memorial demonstrates this in several ways. One such intervention happened in 2009, when BC was considering the aforementioned *Recognition and Reconciliation Act*. This piece of legislation was proposed by the First Nations Leadership Council under the umbrella of the “New Relationship,” a policy response to the Delgamuukw decision, which began in 2005 and aimed at ushering in a positive era of co-operation between First Nations and the Province. However, it skirted broader rights and title issues and focused on securing economic certainty through concepts like consultation and accommodation or benefit sharing (British Columbia 2009).

Concerned about the implications of a piece of legislation focused on provincial jurisdiction, Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, then chair of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, commissioned a report, co-authored by Arthur Manuel and lawyers Nicole Schabus, June McCue, Cynthia Callison, Darwin Hannah and Mavis Erickson. The report, titled “Towards Recognition of our Inherent Rights as Indigenous Peoples,” invokes the Laurier Memorial to demonstrate that BC’s Indigenous nations have historically and consistently sought a mutually

sovereign, nation-to-nation relationship with the Crown, and not the Province (Paper commissioned by Kukpi7 Wayne Christian et al. 2009). Using the Laurier Memorial, the report demonstrates how provincial jurisdiction—hung up on economic development and certainty—would subvert, cede and effectively extinguish inherent and federally recognized Aboriginal title and rights. It instead recommends constitutional amendments to sections 91 and 92, which carve out federal and provincial jurisdiction. It argues that relations might be reconciled *only* when Indigenous peoples are treated as partners, reading:

True reconciliation should be a fundamental goal of all peoples. Reconciliation will allow everyone to move forward in a beneficial relationship as equal partners where Indigenous Peoples' and Crown jurisdictions are constitutional ordered. Only then will Aboriginal and Canadian peoples live together and "help each other be great and good" as the Chiefs aspired to in the Laurier Memorial. [Paper commissioned by Kukpi7 Wayne Christian et al. 2009:27]

As the report circulated, this rearticulation of the memorial's vision garnered attention from First Nations throughout BC. By the time the All Chiefs Assembly was called to vote in August 2009, the proposed legislation was overturned. Instead, the All Chiefs' Assembly "unanimously endorsed an action strategy to be implemented by an Indigenous Title Action Group on a provincial, national, and international level" (All Chiefs Assembly 2009).

Here, the memorial helped to untangle the liberating from something potentially repressive, pointing us in the direction of justice. As Manuel shared with me, back in his truck:

It's like blankets. The bottom blanket is the Aboriginal title, because it's property rights that derive from our historical and pre-Colombian relationship to the land. And when the settlers came here they put another blanket on top of that, which is Crown, and we need to recognize it ... So it's really us manifesting some of the legal issues that the memorial says; trying to judicially manifest those concepts. [September 2, 2010]

This task of manifesting the vision of the Laurier Memorial and sharing in mutual recognition may be laborious but, as we have seen, it is in fact an available possibility.

Research as Guesthood

One group that may be uniquely equipped to attempt this laborious task is anthropologists. As Marilyn Strathern

has commented, anthropology's chief project is to "use relationships to uncover relationships" (Strathern 2005:vii). This preoccupation with "relationality" (2005) may provide us with the option of focusing on relations that are just, reciprocal, liberating. For me, like Manuel, it was a question of letting the Laurier Memorial lead me to them. As Asch (2014) comments, "it will help us greatly in understanding how our relationship with those who were here already might be resolved were we to be open to the possibility that Indigenous peoples have much to teach us about the building of relationships among political communities" (56). It is from Indigenous knowledge of relationships, shared with us through documents like the Laurier Memorial that we might begin to untangle the liberating from the repressive. Here's one place we might stand. However, using anthropology to simply uncover modes of just relations may not be enough. We might also enact them through whatever gestures, large and small, that anthropological practice offers. What if we were to think of the research relationship not as taking place between objects and subjects, but as between guests and hosts?

Throughout my time as a guest on Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux and Syilx lands, I was consistently expected to participate in relationships that espoused sharing and exchange. When Ron Ignace prompted me to name aloud reciprocity as the principle behind the Laurier Memorial's political propositions, this was the relationship into which I was also being invited. Moving forward, opportunities to assert the memorial's vision of guest-host reciprocity, apply Indigenous law and subvert colonialism continued to reveal themselves to me. The memorial, intervening in my own political practices in much the same way it has intervened in broader political processes throughout the last hundred years, offered me this place to stand. It offered to include me in the project of recovering just relations and "solving all that," as it does all of us. And as a result, my work became a teeny incarnation of the Laurier Memorial's principles, an exploratory excursion into guest-host reciprocity.

As a guest, when I stepped into the metaphorical and real "houses" and "ranches" the memorial describes—those territories over which Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc and Syilx maintain jurisdiction—I, too, was invited into that reciprocal obligation and recognition the memorial illustrates. I was called to recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and consent practices at the outset of building my research relations and developed a community-based protocol with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops Indian Band), which was later endorsed by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. In it, we stood the Laurier Memorial alongside the Canadian

constitution and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to guide our relations and assert Indigenous rights and jurisdiction over Indigenous knowledge. I signed this protocol, myself consenting to follow local law. I exchanged this protocol for the research ethics consent forms required by Dalhousie University. This echoed Jeremy Webber's volume, *Between Consenting Peoples* (2010), which explores how consent practices or a lack thereof, have ordered and shaped relations throughout the colonized world. Webber argues that by examining and reshaping our consent practices we might make moves toward reconciliation. In my case, this initial exchange of consent provided the infrastructure for a mutually obligated, reciprocal research and political relation that echoed the Laurier Memorial. In this way, it was the memorial's strong statement of Indigenous authority and principles of reciprocal relation that allowed—made possible, really—the pursuit of its own research.

This excursion took me into the scholarship of Donna Haraway, whose discussion of “situated knowledges” asserts that the knowledge we produce is already situated in our political location and operations and thus, “embodied” in the researcher (Haraway 2004). We are situated in colonialism and we are situated in a scholarship permeated with colonialism. Where Haraway asserts this situatedness, Asch's call asks us to take agency over it. In this way, I was provoked to turn Strathern's relationality onto myself, finding that the relationships I use to uncover relationships are, necessarily, my own. In other words, my work to uncover the political relations proposed and affected by the Laurier Memorial required that I acknowledge, step into, enact and take agency over analogous relations in which I am already engaged.

This is not how the research relationship is conventionally arranged. A great deal of critique coming out of diverse disciplines has publicized those scholarly traditions that deny and obscure just relations with Indigenous peoples, whether in content or in practice (see Deloria 1988; Martin Hill 2008; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Wilson 2009). Anthropology occupies a unique place in this legacy of academic injustice and often under a cloak of objectivity. As Asch (2001) writes:

Anthropology has a long history of appropriating voice. As we all know, there are some in our discipline who have treated Indigenous peoples as objects, speaking about them as though they were not there. Others have treated them as children, speaking for them. Our past is filled with ghosts. [204]

While haunted by these ghosts, anthropology's more colonial persuasions have yet to be sufficiently rerouted. Various so-called “reflexive turns” in anthropology have attempted to rectify these criticisms (Deloria 1988; La Salle 2010; Lassiter 2005) and emergent methods of collaborative, participatory, community-based research also claim to resolve them. While collaboration may be a sort of minimum standard in developing research relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous scholars, its ambiguous nature smacks of Canadian state style “consultation and accommodation” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2011; Christie 2006). While it contains the possibility of justice, collaboration does not inherently demand that we address more systemic and inadvertent violations of Indigenous jurisdiction, law or self-determination (Borrows 2002; La Salle 2010; Lassiter 2005). However, not all sects of the discipline are guilty of such colonial ambiguity. For example, action anthropology, whose founder, Sol Tax, spent his career advocating for an engaged and allied anthropological practice in which Indigenous peoples are self-determining partners (Smith 2010). Popular criticisms of “salvage” anthropology and cultural relativism tend to neglect, and even conceal these more nuanced commitments and expressions of solidarity in anthropology's past.

Another such example is the work of James Teit. This unabashed ally, “secretary” to the interior chiefs and memorial scribe, operated in distinctly solidarity-driven manner throughout his ethnographic research. A displaced Scottish Shetlander, Teit lived in Spences Bridge, BC, where he was married to an Nlaka'pamux woman, Susanna Lucy Antko, until her death in 1899. Though not a scholar by training, Teit was recruited by Franz Boas and Edward Sapir to do ethnographic research specifically due to his intimate relationship with the interior nations, their territories and their languages (Thompson 2007; Wickwire 2006, 1998). This close relationship became manifest in his ethnographic writing, as is made clear by Teit scholar Wendy Wickwire (2006), who writes, “Taking his lead from the Aboriginal leadership, he embarked on a new form of ethnographic text making aimed at mobilizing a united Aboriginal body against an aggressive assimilationist regime” (313–314).

Arthur Dick recounted when he first learned of Teit from his grandmother, saying:

My grandmother mentioned Teit—James. She called him Jimmy, Jimmy Teit in her broken English and she said, “this white man you speak to ... he listens to us ... tell him about the bad things that have been

happening to us and we're asking him to basically write things down for us so we can send it to this man that's finally listening, finally this white man is listening." So they got to Teit, they converted him. [August 13, 2010]

Teit was converted in this way, to help them communicate with Prime Minister Laurier—this man who was “finally listening.” The idea that one has to be converted from a scholar into an ally underscores this perception that the two are incompatible; that one cannot stand in both places simultaneously. Teit experienced this tension first hand, as his solidarity grew to interfere with his ethnographic output and he found himself justifying why his work was not in violation of his government funding (Wickwire 2006:307). His responsibilities as a government-commissioned ethnographer and as the interior nations’ principal settler advocate grew increasingly difficult to balance and Teit turned more and more of his attention to assisting the growing Indigenous rights movements. After his contract was terminated in 1919, he was pushed to question the value of government-based anthropological work (Wickwire 2006:310). Ultimately, Teit’s contributions to *both* Indigenous advocacy and anthropology, though only sometimes aligned, were quite spectacular.

I found a kind of kindred ethnologist in James Teit, and his experience helped me to navigate a similarly complex research landscape. His endeavour to occupy both spaces—political partner and researcher—helps to frame challenges that continue to play out in the academy and in anthropology in particular. In spite of these challenges, Teit’s approach sheds light how Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous researchers might respectfully share in advancing research and political relations, honouring Indigenous peoples’ jurisdiction over their knowledge, with neither appropriating the voice of the other. I continued to explore, with Teit’s help, how building relations and alliance with Indigenous peoples does not preclude ones research integrity and might even support, rather than weaken, ones place to stand.

Even despite Teit’s tumultuous relationship to his ethnographic work and even despite all of its “ghosts.” what continues to make anthropology so attractive to me—the reason I feel it is particularly equipped to tackle the task of resolving relations—is because of its propensity, as Teit’s work makes apparent, to oscillate between the interpersonal and interpolitical. Strathern (2005) writes that the “focus on the relational remains one of anthropology’s key strengths and it does so among other things because of anthropology’s willingness to move between conceptual and interpersonal rela-

tions in its descriptions of social life” (9). Even Canada’s famous philosopher of recognition, Charles Taylor, writes about the process of shared recognition playing out in both spheres:

the discourse of recognition has become familiar to us, on two levels. First, the intimate sphere, where we understand the formation of identity and the self as taking place in a continuing dialogue and struggle with significant others. And then in the public sphere, where a politics of *equal* recognition has come to play a bigger and bigger role. [Taylor 1994:37]

As Taylor here explores, there is something inherent and familiar to us about reciprocal recognition and self-determination on a personal level.

Though finicky, our sheer willingness to navigate the complex and knotty tangle of interpersonal and interpolitical relations that gives me hope that anthropology may be able to take the next step, might disentangle the liberating from the repressive, and find a place to stand squarely in the relations we study. If we are attuned to the notion that we actually bring into being and sustain political relations through even our more minute personal research practices, we might actually do something quite radical. We might even contribute to “solving all that.” Here and elsewhere, the Laurier Memorial continues to reverberate, a century after it was sent forth.

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Note

- 1 Shortly after preparing the Laurier Memorial, Teit was called to do ethnographic work with the Tahltan Nation in northern BC, where he helped to draft the “Declaration of the Tahltan Tribe” (Thompson 2007:42). In Teit’s stead, Father LeJeune interpreted the chiefs’ presentation to Laurier on August 25, 1910.

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