

Embodying *Yahguudang*: Respectful Relations between Indigenous and Settler People(s)

on Haida Gwaii

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

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JANUARY, 2021



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Abstract

Indigenous–non-Indigenous relations have been fraught with ignorance, misunderstandings, and racism since the imposition of Settler colonialism on Turtle Island. Our current era is characterized by change, and as tensions continue to rise over title to the lands and waters of this continent, there is a growing need and desire to work towards more just and respectful relations between Indigenous and Settler People(s). I use a phenomenological approach to explore Settler experiences of respectful relations with Haida People, drawing on in-depth, one-on-one interviews with long-term Settlers to Haida Gwaii. Interview transcripts were analyzed drawing on theoretical concepts including the “ethical space of engagement” (Ermine, 2007), Barker and Lowman’s (2015) “space of dangerous freedom”, and Regan’s (2010) notion of “unsettling the settler within” revealing that respectful relations are understood to be embodying *yahguudang*, the Haida principle of respect. The findings reveal that Settlers strive towards this in an ongoing process of becoming, following four crucial pathways: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and a sense of embodied reciprocity. The current Haida Gwaii context offers unique opportunities for Settlers to learn and practice embodying these ways of being and also of becoming, which create potential for building genuine and lasting respectful relations with Haida People. Participant experiences, along with the socio-political circumstances that surround their experiences, may offer insight for other Settlers wishing to live in respectful relations with Indigenous People(s) across Turtle Island.

Keywords: Indigenous–Settler relations, *yahguudang*, embodied respect, Ethical Space of Engagement, Haida Gwaii, phenomenology, settler colonialism, decolonization, reconciliation

Acknowledgements

The process of producing this thesis has been one of the most memorable and enriching experiences in my life. First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to Haida Gwaii, the people, the land, and the sea. Haida Gwaii, the “islands of the people” has taught me so much in the years that I have had the privilege to live here. I acknowledge that I am a guest on Haida Territory, and I wish to recognize the graciousness of my hosts, the Haida People, for making me feel so welcome here. I offer my heartfelt thanks to the many generous people who contributed to this thesis through their support, their participation, and their sharing of knowledge and ideas that enabled the rich learning that came about. You are too many to name.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the wise counsel of my amazing circle of friends and mentors who shared their unique wisdom and perspectives with me regarding their communities of origin, cultural identities, and roles within the various communities on Haida Gwaii, as well as how they navigate cultural differences and engage in the political dimensions of cultural difference. Collectively, you offered such insight into the complexity and nuances of respect, and of relationship—what it means to be Indigenous, what it means to be Settler—and how it feels to straddle cultural identities. Your reflections provoked my own process of reflection. Specifically, I would like to say a big haawa to: *Gaagwiis* Jason Alsop, *K'áayhlt'aa Háanas* Valine Brown, *GidadGuudslíiyas* Kim Goetzinger, Simon Davies, Brady Yu, Carlos Ormond, *Jaadguusandlans* Natalie Fournier, Jaalen Edenshaw, *Sandlaneé Gid*, Shaun Peacock, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, Marcie Watkins, Graham “Jaahljuu” Richard, and Jenn Dysart. Our thought-provoking discussions early on in my learning journey helped shape and guide the direction of this thesis. I give my thanks to Lynne Davis for your inspiring body of work and for your kind encouragement. What an honour it was to have you as my external examiner.

My deep gratitude to the following Elders and leaders for their generosity with both their time and wisdom: *GwaaGanad* Diane Brown, *Kii'iljuus* Barb Wilson, *Guujaaw*, and *Nang Kaa Klaagangs* Ernie Gladstone. Haawa for taking the time to share your perspectives and insights with me. Thank you too, for recommending potential participants to me, from among Haida Gwaii's Settler community. The highlight of my thesis journey was undoubtedly the experience of listening to and learning from the rich life experiences and deep reflections of my interview participants. Haawa to John Broadhead, Dale Lore, Ruth Wheadon, and Brady Yu. Words cannot express how blessed I feel to have had the opportunity to sit with you and learn from you. You have enriched my learning journey in so many ways, and I have no doubt that I will continue to learn from our conversations for a long time to come.

A heartfelt thank you to my thesis supervisor Holly Baines, for understanding where I was coming from, and for the unending critical, respectful, and constructive feedback and guidance throughout this journey. Virginia McKendry, my extraordinary committee member, thank you for pushing me to go deeper in the final stretch and for inspiring me with more communications theory than I ever thought possible. My MAPC family, thank you for the inspiring conversations, intense workshopping of ideas, and encouragement. Last but never least, thank you to my wonderful family for your love, support, and faith in me. Jonathan, Maurice, and Élise, you gifted me with time and space when I needed it most. My life is infinitely richer because of you and the love you bring into my life. I love you more than words can express. Thank you to Mom and Nicki, your unconditional support makes me strong, and Dad, thank you for being such an amazing role model and always challenging me to reach higher – I know you would be proud of me. All errors and oversights are mine alone. I offer my sincerest apologies in advance, should this thesis cause any offense due to my misinterpretation or ignorance.

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1.0 Introduction

We are witnessing a growing need and desire to work towards more just and respectful relations between people(s) (Barker, 2015; Asch, Borrows & Tully, 2018; Denis & McGuire, 2019; Hiller, 2017). My thesis is born of this desire. I explore Settler experiences of respectful relations on Haida Gwaii in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of what constitutes relations of respect, and how they are enacted in daily life. I have always been fascinated with the notion of cultural identity and how it intersects with a sense of belonging and connection to place. I am of Chinese ancestry. My parents were born and raised in Hong Kong during the era of British rule, and later immigrated to Turtle Island (the original English translation of the name Indigenous Peoples give to the territory known as Canada and the United States of America) as teenagers. My sister and I were born in the West, growing up on the British island colony of Bermuda, and later moving to the Pacific coast, onto the territories of the Squamish, the Stó:lō, the Tsleil-Waututh, and the Musqueam Peoples. While I feel grounded in my family upbringing and culturally connected to Chinese language, values, and customs, I have never felt a strong connection to Hong Kong or Mainland China, always feeling more at home here, on the Pacific Northwest coast.

When I landed on the shores of Haida Gwaii 12 years ago, I intuitively felt that this place was very special, and although I was unable to articulate at the time why or how, I knew it was the right place for me to be. Haida Gwaii is unique. Its geographical remoteness, physical splendour, and cultural uniqueness contribute to its mystical reputation. Yet despite its remoteness, Haida Gwaii has a long history of intercultural and cross-cultural interaction with many peoples—Indigenous, and more recently, non-Indigenous. It is a place where many of

the mainstream norms of contemporary Canadian society are not necessarily assumed to be the norm. Here, Haida culture and self-governance are real and tangible every day, not only for Haida People, but also for the non-Indigenous People(s) who live here. It is also a place where recent history has produced strong models of collaboration between Haida and Settler People(s) and where interconnections between cultural communities are many and varied. I am constantly aware that I am a guest here. I question my right to be here. I grapple with my identity as a Settler on Indigenous Lands. At the same time, I feel very grateful to Haida Gwaii and to Haida People, who teach me what respect between people(s) can look like, and the many forms it can take.

It has been 18 years since the launch of the Haida Title Case (Council of the Haida Nation, 2002) in the B.C. Supreme Court. This case for Title is still ongoing, embodying a process of decolonization in terms of Indigenous resurgence and the return of Indigenous Lands (Council of the Haida Nation, 2013; Jones, 2010; Jones et al. 2017). In my experience living here, and through my research process, I have learned that there are Settler residents on Haida Gwaii who support the Haida claim to Title in principle and seek ways to contribute in meaningful ways to this struggle, a contrast to Settler “moves to innocence” (Malwhinney, 1998, as cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). In part, this research arose from the current lack of insight into the experiences of this subset of the Settler population on Haida Gwaii. This inquiry takes place within a broader context of Settler–Indigenous relations, where in 2008, Canada officially apologized for its role in the Indian Residential School System, and in 2015 Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T.R.C.)¹ issued its final report which presented 94 calls to action

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established in 2008 to contribute to truth telling, healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People(s), as part of a comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy. In 2015, it released an Executive Summary of its findings with 94 calls to action.

“to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 319). Reconciliation is “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships,” (T.R.C., 2015, p. 16) which includes but is not limited to, the revitalization of Indigenous cultures, languages, laws, and governance systems while simultaneously dismantling a “centuries-old political and bureaucratic culture...based on failed notions of assimilation” (p. 21). It is also about teaching history that is honest and inclusive, and in ways that foster mutual respect (p. 21). While some positive changes have taken place during this time, in my opinion, the change has been too little, too slow, and in many instances, too superficial. We continue to witness conflict, mistrust, and misunderstandings between Indigenous and Settler People(s) which are exacerbated by biased and ill-informed portrayals of Indigenous People(s) in the media and elsewhere (Barker, 2015; Clark, 2014; Walker et al. 2019; Wallace, 2019). As information and misinformation travel at increasing speeds across cultural, demographic and technological divides, the need to create more just and respectful relations between people(s) only becomes more urgent. My thesis aims to contribute to this collective project of humanity.

The question guiding this research was, “how can the lived experiences of Settlers to Haida Gwaii inform individual Settler efforts to build relations of respect with Indigenous Peoples(s) across Turtle Island?” Through phenomenological interviews with long-term Settlers to Haida Gwaii, I delve into participants’ experiences and understandings of respectful relations with Haida People. Following community consultations with Haida Advisors who recommended potential participants for this study and guided by Indigenous methodologies as put forth by Chilisa (2012), Kovach (2009), and Wilson (2009), as well as Carlson’s (2016) anti-colonial methodology, I conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with four individuals. I manually

transcribed the interviews and then analyzed the data following the transcendental phenomenological procedure as articulated by Moustakas (1994).

As part of my responsibility as a Settler researcher and to maintain relational accountability to the Haida Gwaii community, I wish to acknowledge that this research centres Settler voices and experiences at the risk of silencing Indigenous voices. However, this research was conducted in response to input from the Haida community with regards to Settlers taking responsibility for themselves and their learning, and the suggestion for me, as a Settler researcher to focus on my own (Settler) community rather than research the Indigenous “Other,” as so many have done before me. For this reason, direct quotes throughout this thesis are Settler voices and reflect the view of the participants, unless they are cited as personal communications. The invaluable feedback that was gifted to me by my Haida Advisors and members of the Haida Gwaii community (both Indigenous and Settler), appear in the shape and intention of the thesis.

Through this process, I gained insight into what constitutes relations of respect, and how they come to be enacted in everyday life. This thesis is also a documentation of my personal learning journey—an exploration in to how to be a respectful guest and friend on Indigenous Lands. My research findings revealed that respectful relations are understood in terms of embodying the Haida principle of respect. There are crucial pathways by which Settlers strive towards this ideal: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and embodied reciprocity. All of these pathways are ongoing processes of learning and becoming and are understood within a relational worldview. By sharing this learning journey, I hope that other Settlers wishing to build relations of respect with Indigenous People(s) across Turtle Island may draw insights or inspiration that can serve them along their own paths of learning and unlearning, ultimately contributing to more just and respectful relations between people(s).

2.0 Literature Review

This study is located at the intersection of phenomenological explorations of the Settler and Settler–Indigenous relations, and is informed by theories ranging from Willy Ermine’s (2007) “ethical space of engagement” framework, Paulette Regan’s (2010) concept of “unsettling the settler within”, and Barker & Lowman’s (2015) adaptation of Alfred’s (2005) notion of the “space of dangerous freedom”. Settler–Indigenous relations are framed by complex terms with nuanced meanings such as “Settler”, “decolonization”, and “reconciliation”, and an exploration of the scholarship around these concepts is offered here to deepen our understanding of the possibilities and challenges for living in respectful relation to one another. I consider the concept of relationality within an Indigenous worldview as a starting point for seeking insights into the intangible but significant notion of embodied respect, and how this can contribute to respectful relations. My research was inspired by these concepts and I engage them in the specific context of Haida Gwaii in my search for an answer to my research question.

2.1. Theories of Embodied Respect

2.1.1. Ethical space of engagement.

Embodied respect is a complex, largely intangible notion that is difficult to define concisely with words but is expressed through our manifold forms of communication. Various scholars explore the concept of embodied respect, including Willy Ermine (2007), a Cree ethicist concerned with transforming the legal relationships between Canada and the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island. Ermine (2007) offers a theory of ethical space to explore the meeting place that is formed when two societies with distinct worldviews are “poised to engage” (p. 193) with one another. The idea of an ethical space originates in the philosophical writings of Roger Poole (1972, as cited in Ermine, p. 194), which Ermine develops further to consider the meeting of

Indigenous and Western thought worlds. Ermine theorizes ethical space to be an initial neutral zone of relationality where disparate perspectives can co-exist. By embracing a diversity of worldviews, ethical space allows for the possibility of authentic engagement and “offers a venue to step out of our allegiances, to detach from the cages of our mental worlds and assume a position where human to human dialogue can occur” (p. 202). In turn, dialogue makes it possible for individuals to explore how cultural differences and hidden values can control behaviour, even without our being aware that it is happening (p. 203).

In this theory Ermine (2007) unpacks the metaphor of an “undercurrent” to illustrate unseen values, interests, attitudes, and assumptions that influence encounters between Indigenous and Western thought worlds. Specifically, Ermine points to the “deeply embedded belief and practice of Western universality” as being a fundamental obstacle to ethical relations between Indigenous Peoples and the Western world (p. 198). This “singular world consciousness” asserts “one model of humanity and one model of society” (Ermine, 2007, p. 198), leaving little room for the realities and experiences of other cultures. This universality has ingrained itself in the subconscious of the West, giving rise to the political, intellectual, economic, cultural, and social systems and institutions of contemporary Canada (Ermine, 2007, p. 198).

Another important concept that Ermine (2007) theorizes in his thinking about ethical spaces of engagement is the “Indigenous Gaze,” a metaphor for the mirroring effect that Indigenous humanity provides to the Western world; a reminder of history and of present-day circumstances, both rife with oppression and struggle. Ermine describes how this mirror reflects back onto Settlers a glimpse of ourselves and our colonizing ways of being in the world:

Indeed, what a mirror can teach is that it is not really about the situation of Indigenous Peoples in this country, but it is about the character and honor of a nation to have created such conditions of inequity. It is about the mindset of a human community of people refusing to honor the rights of other human communities. (Ermine, 2007, p. 200)

The Indigenous Gaze is also “a gaze that remembers a time before colonialism and one that reflects a belief in itself as a human community” (p. 200), a very real reminder of the existence of truly distinctive worldviews that neither require nor depend on the Western ontologies and epistemologies for their existence. This notion of the Indigenous Gaze is particularly salient to this study which is situated on Haida Gwaii, where the Council of the Haida Nation (the governing body of Haida citizens) does not refer to the colonial nation-state of Canada as a sanctioning agent in striving for the full independence and sovereignty of the Haida Nation (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018). It is in this context that participants in my study (Settlers) became (and continue to become) engaged in respectful relations with Indigenous People(s), perhaps having seen themselves mirrored in the Indigenous Gaze.

The far-reaching relevance and influence of Ermine’s framework is evident, especially in the realms of health care and education. Greenwood, Lindsay, King, and Loewen (2017) highlight how ethical space is intentionally being created in support of Indigenous cultural safety in health care in Northern British Columbia. For example, Northern Health, the regional health authority created the Indigenous Health Team (IHT) which partners with Indigenous communities to provide spaces in which to gather, document, and share Indigenous knowledge of health and wellness. Engaging Indigenous knowledge that is specific, local, and relevant to the communities being served supports the delivery of services that take Indigenous experiences, values, and needs into account. In this way, an ethical space emerges that enables expressions of

Indigeneity within the context of a healthcare system otherwise dominated by the values, procedures, and processes that constitute the undercurrents of modernity. In the field of education, Osmond-Johnson and Turner (2020) explore how non-Indigenous leaders in Saskatchewan schools are navigating the ethical space between worldviews, in their attempts to implement the TRC's Calls to Action for education. They discuss some of the challenges that educational leaders face while working within a racialized social context where public sentiment reflects values constituting an undercurrent of coloniality (Osmond-Johnson & Turner, 2020, p. 59). This undercurrent was evident in the racist sentiments that were openly shared across social media outlets in Saskatchewan in response to the Colten Boushie trial (CBC, 2018), and then again when attempts to rename a school in Regina (which was originally named after Nicholas Flood Davin, author of the infamous *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* that played a role in the creation of residential schools), was met with resistance within the school community, by people who wanted to keep the original name (CBC, 2018). Ethical space is being created by school principals seeking to engage and work alongside Indigenous communities in ways that cultivates genuine relationships and reciprocity of ideas, allowing the flourishing of ethical space principles: diversity in perspectives, the dispersal of hierarchies, and subjective reflection.

While these studies shed light on experiences of ethical space within institutions and organizations, other scholars focus on ethical space as experienced at the personal level of the individual. Hiller (2017) applies the lens of ethical space to explore the processes of learning and unsettlement of individual Euro-Canadian solidarity activists to better understand the contexts and conditions surrounding non-colonizing interactions between Indigenous and Settler People(s) and knowledge systems (p. 420). Heaslip (2017) also explores ethical space in the

context of Settler unsettlement, but from a personal narrative perspective of learning to live in ethical being in Stó:lō Téméxw (Stó:lō Lands/World, a Territory that occupies the region also known as the lower Fraser River watershed in British Columbia). Both of these studies seek to expose the complex contradictions and tensions that arise from the competing undercurrents of modernity, coloniality, and indigeneity. Despite the invaluable insights that these studies offer, I note the absence of scholarship addressing Settler strivings towards ethical space in Indigenous–Settler relations in the Haida Gwaii context. With the hope of contributing to the rich and growing conversation about the creation of ethical space in Indigenous–Settler relations, coupled with my desire to engage in subjective reflection on my experiences as a Settler to Haida Gwaii, I thus apply the lens of ethical space in this phenomenological exploration into respectful Settler–Indigenous relations, in the Haida Gwaii context.

The ethical space of engagement (Ermine 2007) offers a frame with which to consider respectful relations between Indigenous and Settler People(s). In this theoretical space, there is room for a diversity of worldviews, allowing different parties to engage from positions of mutual respect. There is also a dispersal of hierarchies, where differences are acknowledged, but not accompanied by superiority. This space facilitates the practices of deep listening and humility which was revealed by this study to be crucial elements for respectful engagement. Ethical space also provides opportunity for subjective reflection and the sharing of personal stories that reveal the “undercurrent” of hidden values, assumptions and intentions. In my analysis, I use the lens of Ermine’s (2007) theory to consider whether and how participant experiences of respectful relations with Haida People reflect an ethical space of engagement and/or an awareness of “undercurrents” at work, and further attempt to draw learnings from these experiences.

2.1.2. Unsettling the Settler within.

As a non-Indigenous Canadian, Paulette Regan (2010) theorizes a “pedagogy of unsettlement” for transforming Settler consciousness. It is an offer to other Settlers striving for more ethical relations with Indigenous People(s) and who want to build a non-colonial future based on human dignity and freedom. Her approach is part reflective, part teaching/learning, and part communicational, integrating theory with reflections into her own decolonizing journey, offering her lived experiences as part of teaching other Settlers about Canadian history in an attempt to unsettle them. Regan (2010) posits that to transform the Settler, we must transform “the colonizer who lurks within” (p. 11), through critically interrogating the underlying values, beliefs, and attitudes that are the basis for our words and actions. This perspective echoes Ermine’s (2007) notion of the “undercurrent”. Regan (2010) claims that decolonization is necessary for authentic reconciliation, yet in our rush towards reconciliation, there are insufficient opportunities for people to engage in honest, reflective dialogue about our conflicted stories, which are our histories (p. 20). Regan urges us to re-story history by making space for collective critical dialogue and public remembering that is embedded in ethical testimonial, ceremonial, and commemorative practices (p. 12), which also echoes Ermine’s notion of the Indigenous Gaze in its refusal to ignore Indigenous truths. However, as part of this process, Settlers must be willing to interrogate and “deconstruct the foundational myth of the benevolent peacemaker [which is] the bedrock of Settler identity” (Regan, 2010, p. 11). Regan (2010) argues that there is transformative potential in this practice, for it questions deep-seated notions of Settler identity, legitimacy upon the land, and historical truth. These are notions that must be grappled with, for they form both the basis of Settlers’ understandings of Canada, and of themselves as Canadians. By embracing the transformative potential of unsettling ourselves,

Regan (2010) encourages us to confront the colonizer-perpetrator in ourselves and reinvent ourselves into Settler-allies, and in so doing, offers us hope for a future where we can truly transform and reconcile our relationship with Indigenous People(s) (p. 237).

2.1.3. The Space of Dangerous Freedom.

In seeking to deepen our understanding about respectful relations and the nature of embodied respect, it is helpful to consider the contributions of Settler scholars Adam Barker and Emma Battell Lowman (2015) to the literature on Settler–Indigenous relations. Barker and Lowman (2015) theorize Settler identity, the logic of Settler colonialism, and Settler discomfort, building on Regan’s (2010) pedagogy of unsettlement. They also provide invaluable conceptual frameworks for grasping at an as yet unknown but desirable future where an ongoing process of decolonization enables Settlers to learn to be “something other than colonial” (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 111). Barker and Lowman (2015) expand and theorize on two related concepts developed by Kanien’keha:ka scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2005): “the clearing” and the “space of dangerous freedom”. They claim that the relationship between the two concepts offers a powerful metaphor for working through the complexities and challenges of transforming relationships between Indigenous and Settler People, and between Indigenous and Settler Peoples (p. 197). In the traditional Haudenosaunee conceptualization, the village is conceived to be a decolonizing space of “authentic” indigeneity (Barker & Lowman, 2016, p. 202) from which Indigenous resurgence emanates outwards as Indigenous communities reassert and rebuild connections to the land while creatively struggling against the Settler state and capitalist exploitation (Barker & Lowman, 2016, p. 202). Indigenous People pass through the “clearing” on their way outwards, into the space of dangerous freedom that is the world in need of transformation (p. 202).

The concepts of the “clearing” and the “space of dangerous freedom” provide metaphors that help us imagine new and ethical terrains for relationship and pathways for navigating our way to and through those terrains. In their adaptation of Alfred’s (2005) concepts, Barker and Lowman (2016) explore the “clearing” as a space where Settlers enter into, as they strive to transform themselves and their own society. The “space of dangerous freedom” is where Settlers can become something other than a Settler colonizer by way of their attempts to support Indigenous resurgence through the disruption of Settler colonialism (Barker & Lowman, 2016). Together these concepts disrupt the normalization and dominance of a Settler colonial worldview by forcing Settler People(s) to think about space and place differently. By framing the Indigenous–Settler encounter within an Indigenised space (the “clearing”), they reverse the roles of Settler-as-subject, and Indigenous-as-object, which allows Settlers to experience being “othered” in place of the more familiar act of “othering.” This echoes Ermine’s (2007) metaphor of the “undercurrent” (p. 198), whereby Western universality is assumed and imposed upon everyone, preventing the possibility for respectful encounters between peoples and cultures. The obligation to re-negotiate relationships that were previously taken for granted creates opportunities for acknowledgment (of other worldviews, of colonialism), and humility (non-entitlement, non-imposition), both of which contribute to respectful relations, as this research discovered.

The “clearing” and “space of dangerous freedom” (Barker & Lowman, 2016), provide useful concepts for exploring the notion of embodied respect within the context of Settler–Indigenous relations on Haida Gwaii. Elements of these constructs already exist in the contemporary context of Haida Gwaii. Potlatches and pole raisings are spaces where Haida culture and power is dominant, and Settlers are obliged to re-orient their relations with the people

and the land. Here, Settlers can strive outwards from the “clearing” toward a “space of dangerous freedom”, where there exists the possibility for transforming relations. Through embodied understandings and expressions of respect, we can experiment with new ways of relating with each other in the hopes of creating something beyond a Settler colonial relationship.

2.2. Framing Indigenous–Settler Relations

Settler–Indigenous relations are framed by complex and nuanced terms such as “Settler”, “decolonization”, and “reconciliation”, and an exploration of the scholarship regarding these may deepen our understanding of the possibilities and challenges for living in respectful relation to one another. With regards to Haida Gwaii, written accounts of Settler experiences tend to focus on social and environmental contexts, rather than the political, reflecting a range of genres that include agricultural pioneer histories (Kinegal & Simpson, 1986), female adventure narratives (Allison, 2014), and explorations into non-Indigenous residents’ relationships with the environment (Hinzman, 2018). These accounts frame Settlers in ways that do not interrogate Settler as a phenomenon, nor do they problematize the Settler identity within a larger context of Settler colonialism. In contrast, written accounts chronicling key political events involving the Haida Nation in recent history (Collison, 2018; Gill, 2009) offer insight into the complex relations between Settler and Haida People, including their conflicting claims and varying relationships to the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii. This apparent lack of critical interrogation into the political and ethical context of Settler experiences, especially with regards to Indigenous–Settler relations on Haida Gwaii, hints at a gap in the scholarship that my research attempts to fill. Through this thesis, I explore the lived experiences of Settlers and how they understand respectful relations between themselves and Haida People, with the broader goal of

gaining insights that may inform individual Settler efforts to build relations of respect with Indigenous People(s) across Turtle Island.

2.2.1. Settler: Settler identity, Settler colonialism.

The term Settler is conceptualized in a myriad of ways, influenced by our life experiences and social contexts, and includes our exposure to cultural narratives. How we understand “Settler” shapes our perspective on reality, including how we relate to other people and to the land, which in turn influences our behaviours and our actions. All of these have implications for the kinds of social, economic, political, intellectual, and spiritual systems and structures that we create. Current scholarship distinguishes between the concepts of Settler identity and Settler colonialism, which together contribute to an understanding of Settler as a phenomenon. A consideration of Settler as phenomenon can lead into a more focused exploration into respectful relations between Settler and Indigenous People(s).

There are diverse definitions in use for the term Settler. Barker & Lowman (2015) emphasize elements of responsibility and acknowledgement, describing Settlers to be “colonizers, people with deep moral and ethical responsibilities to change our relationships to the lands that we call home” (p. 15). For them, to identify as Settler is a political act whereby one declares “I am aware that I am illegitimate on the land, and I know that I am complicit with and benefit from settler colonialism” (p. 109). Rita Dhamoon (2014) reflects on what it means to take up abode in a foreign country, as she has done, and concludes that “to settle” is:

An attitude, a way of being that gets fixed in one’s heart and mind, such that I don’t have to think about the violence against Indigenous peoples if I choose not to; it is to presume permanency, a temporality without an end. (p. 7)

The critical perspectives reflected in these definitions challenge the dominant Canadian narrative, which presents Settlers to be well-intentioned, pioneering, nation-building individuals, who are also defenders of peace and justice. Regan (2010) claims that the peacemaker myth goes to the heart of Settler Canadian identity, and that most Canadians willingly take on the role of benevolent peacemakers (p. 84). However, this narrative maintains a neutrality that erases the possibility of prior existence or claim to the land and assumes a context of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no-one), where land was free for the taking (Barker & Lowman, 2015, pg. 60, Wilson, 2008, p. 45, Younging, 2018, p. 131). Adopting such a stance makes it possible to evade acknowledgement of Indigenous Title to the land, and also responsibility for colonialism. Tsalagi (Cherokee) scholar Jeff Corntassel (2006) shares three Indigenous terms for White Settlers, all of which have negative connotations and reflect Indigenous experiences of Settler colonialism. The Tsalagi term *Yonega* means “foam of the water; moved by wind and without its own direction; clings to everything that’s solid” (p. 35). The Cree term *Moniyawak* means “worship of money” (p. 35); and *Wasicu*, is a Dakota term for “taker of fat” (p. 36). The Stólō People use *xwelitem*, a Halq’eméylem term meaning “the hungry, starving ones” (Heaslip, 2017, p. xii) to describe White, Settler colonial ways of being. These varying conceptions of the term Settler reflect very different understandings of, and experiences of, Settler colonialism among Indigenous and Settler People(s). The Indigenous terms above speak to a relationship where Settlers are dependent on the Indigenous People of a territory, taking more than they give back, which runs counter to the notion of reciprocity and a relational way of being.

Despite the multiplicity of ways in which the term Settler is conceptualized, it remains one which homogenizes. It has been problematized for its ability to erase diversity among people(s) and ignore the multitude of factors that led them to become Settlers in the first place

(Barker & Lowman, 2015, pp. 14-15). Some Settlers arrive as refugees fleeing colonialism or war in their homelands while others arrive as economic immigrants, or to join family members. Differing circumstances create differently situated Settlers, and as such the term should be used with caution to acknowledge the potential for diversity *embedded* within it. However, despite being differently positioned in Canadian society, all Settlers occupy Indigenous Lands. Settler as an identity is made possible through a relationship to Indigenous Peoples and to the lands to which Indigenous Peoples have prior and continuing claims, and this relationship is governed through the system of Settler colonialism (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 16). In this way, Settler as an identity relies on the continued existence of a Settler colonial relationship, along with its concomitant consequences of dispossession and disempowerment. Similarly, Indigenous Peoples is a term that describes a great diversity of peoples and should be interpreted with care.

Settler colonialism is related to, but distinct from colonialism. Wolfe (2006) posits that the elimination of Indigenous Peoples, polities, and relationships from and with the land is what makes Settler colonialism conceptually distinct from other kinds of colonialism. He emphasizes that Settler colonialism “destroys to replace” (p. 388) through its erection of a new colonial society on the land base expropriated from Indigenous Peoples. He famously claimed that “invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe, 1999, p. 2), describing how the social, political, and economic structures built by the invading people endure, even after the departure of the occupying force. His discussion can help us deepen our understanding of relationships to the land, as central to some explorations of Settler identity, as distinct from, and in relation to Indigenous identity. Veracini (2012) also clearly distinguishes between colonialism and Settler colonialism, positing that they must be understood in terms of each other. He states that while colonialism involves the “*permanent* subordination of the colonized” (p. 2), Settler colonialism is

shaped by “a recurring need to disavow the presence of Indigenous “others”” (p. 2). Thus, the colonial system requires the ongoing presence of colonized subjects in order to exist, whereas the Settler colonial system succeeds by virtue of its absorption of Indigenous Others into itself, thereby eliminating the existence of an Indigenous Other altogether. Barker and Lowman (2015) share this view, reminding us that the goal of Settler colonialism is the “elimination of Indigenous identity” (p. 79) and the erasure of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and competing claims to the land. The logic of Settler colonialism was demonstrated in 1920 by Duncan Campbell Scott, when he publicly stated that:

Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department.
(as cited in Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 3)

The intention here is explicit—that Indigenous identity and nationhood was to be erased in the process of assimilation into a larger Canadian national identity. Yet, lest we distance ourselves from the wrongdoings of a larger system, Dhamoon (2014) reminds us that regardless of how well-intentioned or differentially located we may be as individual Settlers, Settler colonialism as a structure is a way of “governing through a naturalized nation-state that erases Indigenous peoples and implicates us all” (p. 7). As Settlers, we are all living on Indigenous Lands, and we are all beneficiaries of the Settler colonial system.

The meaning of the term Settler has significant implications for Settler–Indigenous relations, but varies widely, ranging from status quo conceptualizations reflecting the Canadian peacemaker myth, to complex political identities involving moral and ethical responsibilities to people and to the land. While individual Settlers may be differently located, their participation in Canadian society implicates them in the structure and function of Settler colonialism, which is a

system that inherently erases Indigenous identity and nationhood. This study enables me to pause to acknowledge the destructive nature of such a system, to interrogate our identity and responsibilities as Settlers, and to reflect on theories of embodied respect.

2.2.2. Decolonization.

A review of the current literature on Settler–Indigenous relations and Settler colonialism necessitates consideration of the concept of decolonization. While there does not appear to be consensus on the definition of decolonization, the contradictions and tensions within the discourse offer insights for those attempting to build respectful relationships between Indigenous and Settler People(s). Importantly for my study, Veracini (2012) reminds us that Settler decolonization is distinct from decolonization in the way that Settler colonialism is unique within colonialism. Since Settler colonialism works along the “logic of elimination” (p. 7), continuing until it extinguishes the Settler colonial relation, the struggle against Settler colonialism must therefore aim to maintain the Settler–Indigenous relationship. In other words, whereas colonialism ends with the departure of the coloniser, “settler colonialism ends with an indigenous ultimate permanence” (p. 7). For Settlers wishing to interrogate and ultimately dismantle Settler colonialism as a system and worldview, it is thus imperative to prevent the absorption of the Indigenous Other into a self-image of the Settler. Rather, they must support Indigenous assertions of identity and nationhood. On Haida Gwaii, the ending of Settler colonialism as part of a process of decolonization would include the assertion of a sovereign Haida Nation, and the flourishing of Haida culture in ways that do not require Settler Canadian society as a sanctioning agent. This logic hints at the relevance of this study, which seeks to understand how we might become more respectful in our relations with one another in this process of striving towards ending Settler colonialism. Such a journey assumes the continued and ultimate presence

of Indigenous Peoples and their cultural frameworks. While not assuming the same continued and ultimate presence for Settler Peoples and their (colonizing) cultural frameworks, it is open and hopeful to imagining new ways that non-Indigenous People(s) can learn to be in relation to Indigenous People(s) and their Lands—ways that are just, ethical, and inherently respectful.

For most Indigenous scholars, decolonization centres around repatriation of land and Indigenous cultural resurgence. For Aleut scholar Eve Tuck and Settler scholar K. Wayne Yang (2012), decolonization in the Settler colonial context specifically requires the “repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (p. 21). For Kanien’keha:ka scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2005), decolonization is only possible through Indigenous resurgence, and “a true decolonization movement can emerge only when we shift our politics from articulating grievances to pursuing an organized and political battle for the cause of our freedom” (p. 22). In this way, decolonization focuses on, and finds its source in the rebuilding and reassertion of relationships between Indigenous People(s) and the land and the cultural practices that arise from these connections, and does so within explicitly Indigenous frameworks, not the confines of Settler legal systems and discourse worlds. Cree scholar Michael Hart (2016, as cited in Carlson, 2016a) chooses the term anti-colonialism over decolonization, arguing that it offers a more accurate portrayal of the current reality of Settler colonialism. Hart argues that terms like decolonization and postcolonialism can “facilitate the ability of academics to position colonialism as being something of the past, as in, ‘colonialism is over and now we can decolonize’” (p. 500), which for him, is highly problematic. Hart conceptualizes Indigenous resurgence as being at the centre of anti-colonialism, pushing outwards and re-claiming space that has been occupied by Settler colonialism. Dakotan scholar Waziyatawin (2009) argues that “complete decolonization is a necessary and end goal for a peaceful and just society” and that

justice necessarily includes the return of Indigenous Lands. She calls for an overturning of all the institutions, systems, and ideologies of colonialism to enable the creation of a new social order, founded upon the values of mutual respect and sustainability (p. 178). While there is a growing body of scholarship about decolonization, there remains relatively little scholarship specifically addressing relationship and respectful communication between Settler and Indigenous People(s) and the process of attaining respectful co-existence of distinct worldviews, although Christian and Freeman (2010) offer insights into a deep friendship between people “on opposite sides of the colonizer/colonized binary” (p. 387 – see below for further discussion on this point). Settler scholars Barker & Lowman (2015) also conceptualize decolonization in a way that foregrounds the centrality of land and Indigenous nationhood, saying decolonization is:

An intensely political and transformative process with the goal of regenerating Indigenous nationhood and place relationships while dismantling structures of Settler colonialism that oppose or seek to eliminate Indigenous peoples from the land (p. 111).

The above perspectives affirm that addressing land and Indigenous People(s)’ relationships to the land is a necessary first step that can then allow other processes of decolonization to take place. Since Indigenous worldviews are grounded in relationship with the lands, waters, and sky, ensuring that land and Indigenous People(s) relationships to the land remain at the centre of decolonization discourse allows space for Indigenous worldviews to be expressed in meaningful ways. A better understanding of Indigenous worldviews can offer insight into some of the nuances at play in Settler–Indigenous relations.

Other scholars theorize decolonization more broadly, conceptualizing decolonization in terms of decolonizing our minds and ourselves. Attempts to decolonize the mind recognize that our thoughts and sense of reality are effects of discourses and social values which are socially

constructed. Since they are socially constructed, these values and discourses can potentially be deconstructed when subject to facilitating circumstances such as: exposure to new perspectives, openness and willingness to change, and critical reflection. Changing the narrative from one in which Settler colonialism is the ultimate path to progress, to a narrative that recognizes Indigeneity and Indigenous sovereignties, offers an example of a cognitive decolonization process. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) ground-breaking work on the need to decolonize research methodologies brought into focus the power implicated in the ways in which we think about and seek out knowledge. Relatedly, Stó:lō–St'at'imc scholar *Q'um Q'um Xi'em* Jo-Ann Archibald demonstrates how stories have the power to educate and heal the heart, mind, body and spirit, and that Indigenous story-based or story work methodologies are a way of decolonizing research (2008, 2019). Several scholars explore the personal dimensions of decolonization (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Carlson, 2016; Christian, 2011; Davis et al., 2017; Heaslip, 2017; Hiller, 2017; Regan, 2010). Regan's trail-blazing research in this regard (2010) maintains that non-Indigenous Canadians need to undergo their own personal processes of decolonization, which she calls "unsettling the settler within" (p. 17), in order to participate in the transformative possibilities of reconciliation and to avoid perpetuating a colonial relationship between Indigenous and Settler Peoples. She describes a process whereby Settlers interrogate the values, beliefs, and attitudes that underlie our words and actions, and grapple with our identity as illegitimate Settlers on Indigenous Lands. In doing so, we must deconstruct myths and assumptions that we may previously have held to be true, such as the need to solve "the Indian problem" (p.11), or the "foundational myth of the benevolent peacemaker" (p. 11). Hiller (2017) explores how differently positioned Settlers enter pathways of personal decolonization and describes this to be an inward-oriented learning process. Through this process, Settlers

continually “clear out the undercurrent of racist and colonizing assumptions” (p. 425), in order to step out of the confining “cages of our mental worlds” (Ermine, 2007, p. 202) and enter into an ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007). Hiller (2017) describes Settler encounters with their own paternalistic conceptions of Treaty relationships, and their realization that their idealized notion of empty “wilderness” are in fact, deeply known and well-used landscapes within Indigenous People(s) Territories (p. 425). For Barker & Lowman (2015), decolonization involves “rooting colonialism out of worldviews,” so that it is both the ending of colonialism, and also “an act of becoming something other than colonial” (p. 111). For them, colonial attitudes are tied to narratives of civilization and progress, where the resultant national myths do not reflect the racism and violence that created the colonial spaces of opportunity: disease, warfare, forced relocation, and assimilation (p. 35). Breaking out of the Settler colonial mentality in order to become something other than colonial requires us to refuse to embody “willful ignorance” which allows for the “intentional forgetting of histories,” and “intentional blindness to facts”. (p. 46)

Secwepemc–Syilx scholar Dorothy Christian describes decolonizing her relationship with Settler scholar Victoria Freeman to be a process of deconstructing and resolving deeply embedded racist notions that they held about each other (p. 73). She reflects on how she “tarred Victoria with the brush of being yet another “do-gooder white woman” who wanted to “fix things” for me” (Christian & Freeman, 2010, p. 378), recognizing later that what angered her most in the actions and words of “do-gooder white people” was the implicit assumption that she was not capable of taking care of herself. These racist assumptions grew out of her encounters with colonial relationships in the various churches she was forced to attend while living in foster homes as an adolescent. These conceptualizations of decolonization reveal it to be a process situated in the mental, emotional, and spiritual functions of the individual. They further highlight its processual

nature, such that it is “a *practice* rather than a goal” (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 114), and something that is ongoing with no end.

Decolonization as practice and process is also understood in terms of its communicative dimensions. Through rhetorical action, or an elongated speech act, it has the potential to reconstitute relationships, to be a re-storying of history. Alfred (2005) argues that part of the process of decolonizing includes Indigenous People(s) “redefining the terminology of our existence” (p. 25). He points to the danger of allowing colonization to be the only story of Indigenous lives because colonialism as a narrative, “privileges the colonizer’s power and inherently limits [Indigenous] freedom, logically and mentally imposing a perpetual colonized victim way of life and view on the world” (Alfred, 2005, p. 25). Personal transformation and freedom from imperial ideas and powers require reframing and redefining the world according to Indigenous ways of thinking and ways of being, not colonial ones. Regan (2010) echoes a call for re-storying history, understanding it to be part of a larger decolonizing process, and proposes re-storying Canadian history through ethical testimonial encounters, public history dialogues and commemoration of Indian residential school history and legacy (pp. 13-14). She poignantly shares her personal experiences of bearing ethical witness to the testimonies of residential school survivors and how this “put a human face on the stark violence of colonialism” (p. 13) for her in a way that abstract theories and archival documents never did. She reflects how these encounters helped her to see the world through new eyes, marked by “a history that was once invisible to me” (p. 3), opened her to the “rich counter-narrative that exists across Turtle Island” (p. 3), and guided her in creating a pedagogy to transform and reconcile relationships between Settler and Indigenous People(s). Barker & Lowman (2012) also draw on the notion of decolonization as story, calling on Settler Canadians to interrogate what the Settler colonial story is, and to imagine

what it could become. In so doing, Barker & Lowman (2015) and Regan (2010) challenge us to acknowledge our complicity in colonization, and our responsibilities to the Indigenous People(s) whose lands we live upon (p. 120). This study delves into Settler experiences arising out of the Haida Gwaii context in an attempt to add to this new narrative, where critical subjective reflection by Settler People(s) can contribute to the process of making sense of our collective (hi)stories. Through taking a phenomenological approach, I am able to explore participant experiences through story to gain insight into the nature of respectful relations between Settlers and Indigenous People(s).

However, some scholars caution against the dangers of turning decolonization into a metaphor. Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous Land and life, and that too often it is reduced to efforts to decolonize the mind. They argue that decolonization is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies, and by turning it into a metaphor, we allow a set of evasions that attempt to reconcile Settler guilt and complicity, or Settler “moves to innocence” (Malwhinney, 1998, as cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Such a metaphorization “kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness...it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future” (p. 3). They argue that decolonization “is not accountable to settlers or settler futurity” (p. 35), where Settler futurity assumes or implies the continued existence of a Settler state, with its accompanying worldviews, institutions, and hierarchies of power. Settler futurity allows Settlers to forego the unsettling work that is required by decolonization and skip ahead to addressing their anxieties about the/their future: What will decolonization look like? What are the consequences of decolonization for the Settler? (p. 35). In other words, Settler futurity works to answer the question: What does the future hold for the Settler? By ensuring that the focus remains on the

Settler, a notion of Settler futurity denies the possibility of decolonization. Decolonization requires the unsettling work of challenging current (Settler) hegemonic discourses defining such things as: the relationships between humans and the rest of the natural world, especially as they intersect with concepts of ownership and legitimacy upon the land; laws and legal traditions; how the self is understood in relation to o(O)thers along with the moral ties within these relationships; the abstract concept of the nation state. Without genuinely addressing the discrepancies between worldviews (as manifest through the imbalance of power in discourses), and underlying dynamics of power relations between people(s), the triad structure of Settler-Native-Slave that Settler colonialism is built upon will only continue in newer forms of reoccupation and domination (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1). For Tuck and Yang (2012), decolonization is only accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity (p. 35), where the goal is the repatriation of Indigenous Land and life (p. 1). Decolonization is about Indigenous futures without a Settler state (p. 13), allowing for the possibility of shifting these colonial power relations. How Settlers might fit into a decolonial future, if at all, and the context of an emergent Indigenous–Settler relationship, can only be determined at decolonization, and not before (p. 17). In this way, Tuck and Yang challenge Settlers to think through to the true motives underlying their use of the term decolonization and how it comes to bear upon their relational accountability to Indigenous Peoples and their struggles, as defined by Indigenous Peoples themselves. De Leeuw, Greenwood and Lindsay (2013) further remind us that Settler colonialism cannot be decolonized by good intentions alone, highlighting the necessity for corresponding “fundamental shifts in power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People(s) or the systems within which we operate” (p. 386). Without making lasting changes to the structural imbalances of power that currently define Settler–Indigenous relations, we guarantee that discourse

continues to be firmly situated in Western conceptual frameworks of power, while decolonization remains a hypothetical construct.

The lack of consensus over the definition of decolonization, as centring on the land and Indigenous resurgence, as personal or re-storying process, or as metaphor, provides this study with a rich theoretical background against which to consider Indigenous–Settler relations. This study takes place on Haida Gwaii within the context of the Haida Title Case, which embodies a process of decolonization in terms of Indigenous resurgence and the return of land (Council of the Haida Nation, 2013; Jones, 2010; Jones et al. 2017). Tensions between perspectives on decolonization raise questions about Settler People(s)’ responsibilities to Indigenous People(s) and to the land. They also call into question the notion of Settler futurity—its certainty or uncertainty, the conditions by which it might come about, and the notion of Settler entitlement. How we make sense of these concepts will come to bear on how we all navigate Settler–Indigenous relations. I will now turn to the question of reconciliation, which has garnered much public attention in recent years and continues to be intensely debated as conflicting worldviews and competing claims to legitimacy upon the land continue to characterize Indigenous–Settler relations.

2.2.3. Reconciliation.

Reconciliation, like decolonization, is an oft-used term in discussions about Settler–Indigenous relations. It is complex and nuanced, and like decolonization, there is no clear consensus regarding its definition, pre-requisites, or implementation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (T.R.C.) final report refers to establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal People in this country and “coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes

a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward” (p. 6). The T.R.C. report was largely endorsed by mainstream Indigenous organizations and leaders (Denis & Bailey, 2016, p. 140) and despite differences in emphasis, a relative consensus emerged among them that reconciliation should be pursued through: healing from historical trauma, closing socioeconomic and health gaps, improving public education, implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and building mutual understanding and respectful relationships (Denis & Bailey, 2016, p. 140).

With regards to building mutual understanding and respectful relationships, scholars describe various ways that reconciliation can contribute to improving relations between Indigenous and Settler People(s). According to Anishinaabe journalist, politician, and musician, Wab Kinew (2015), “reconciliation is realized when two people come together and understand that what they share unites them and that what is different between them needs to be respected” (p. 211). Lenapé–Potawatami researcher-educator Susan Dion (2016) understands reconciliation to be “settling differences” in addition to restoring mutual respect, putting to rights, and making peace between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (p. 472). Dion (2016) emphasizes that educators bear responsibility for helping Canadians gain the necessary contextual knowledge in order to be prepared to talk about reconciliation. Reflecting on her own healing journey towards reconciliation with Settler Peoples, Secwepemc–Syilx scholar Dorothy Christian (2011) shares that:

part of reconciliation is taking the time to build respectful relationships and to create opportunities where we develop a new model of interrelating, a model that takes us beyond the usual multicultural sharing of food and dance and walks towards an authentic reconciliation. (p. 78)

These articulations of reconciliation reflect a desire and commitment to invest time and energy into building mutually respectful relationships that go beyond a superficial recognition of differences and the sharing of cultures. However, while non-Indigenous people may express support and even engage with reconciliation initiatives such as the T.R.C. process and promote “walking together” for a “better stronger Canada” (Denis & Bailey, 2016, p. 144), this does not necessarily translate into critical interrogation of the Settler colonial system. As Denis and Bailey (2016) note in their study of non-Indigenous people who participated directly in the T.R.C. process, few made explicit connections between reconciliation and decolonization. Some scholars maintain that conceptualizations of reconciliation that emphasize moving forward together are insufficient for bringing about meaningful change and detract away from larger, more pressing issues.

Reconciliation has been widely critiqued by Indigenous and Settler scholars alike, as well as community leaders and activists, many of whom dismiss the term as a romantic attempt to smooth over Settler–Indigenous relationships while leaving the status quo of Settler colonialism untouched (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Corntassel et al. 2009; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Waziyatawin, 2009). For many Indigenous scholars and activists, reconciliation is closely connected to wider movements of decolonisation, Indigenous self-determination, and land struggles, and making these links requires an acceptance of Indigenous Title and an honest appraisal of Canada’s embodiment of Settler colonialism. Yet these critical elements have been notably absent in many would-be Settler allies’ visions of reconciliation (Denis & Bailey, 2016, p. 138). Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson (2011) maintains that the idea of reconciliation is not new, reminding us that Indigenous Peoples have repeatedly attempted to reconcile their differences with Settler Peoples through treaty

negotiations, “which categorically have not produced the kinds of relationships Indigenous Peoples intended” (p. 21). Simpson (2011) questions the intentions behind state engagement in reconciliation processes, noting that these processes can be co-opted to “neutralize Indigenous resistance, so as to not impinge upon the convenience of the settler-Canadians” (p. 22). She argues that for reconciliation to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples, it must be grounded in cultural generation and political resurgence (p. 22). Alfred (2005) posits that reconciliation is insufficient to right wrongs and only serves to perpetuate the colonial system, arguing that restitution is the path to justice:

The logic of reconciliation as justice is clear; without massive restitution, including land, financial transfers and other forms of assistance to compensate for past harms and continuing injustices committed against our peoples, reconciliation would permanently enshrine colonial injustices and is itself a further injustice. (p. 152)

He further argues that the problem needs to be reframed away from trying to “reconcile with colonialism” (p. 165), to figuring out how to implement restitution as a first step towards creating a more just and moral society (p. 165). These views contrast with the mandate for the T.R.C. that state:

There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future[...]. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, n.d.)

Corntassel, Chaw-win-is, and T’lakwadzi (2009) argue that statements such as “to put the events of the past behind us” conveniently frame the issue in ways that allow political leaders and Settler Peoples to deal with residual guilt on their own terms, while brushing aside possibilities

for deeper discussion about restitution and justice. Framing reconciliation this way also means side-stepping opportunities to acknowledge current realities related to colonialism and Indigenous Title, and declining responsibility for learning and reflecting on a deeper level. In this way, reconciliation becomes a way for the dominant culture to re-inscribe the status quo.

Despite the many and varied critiques against both the language and intent of reconciliation, some scholars believe there is or can be a place for reconciliation, describing it as being concurrent with, or as taking place within a broader process of decolonization (Christian & Freeman, 2010; Freeman, 2014; Regan, 2010). Settler scholar Victoria Freeman (2014) understands reconciliation to be “an ongoing process of building the relationships, alliances, and social understandings that are necessary to support the systemic changes that are true decolonization” (p. 216), and relationship-building is seen as a critical part of the decolonization process (Freeman, 2010, p. 149). Freeman (2014) posits reconciliation to be a complementary and concurrent process to decolonization that speaks to some aspects of decolonizing that are not easily addressed by other means, such as the emotional and psychological aspects of decolonization. In this way reconciliation can still contribute to “the development of just and equitable relations” (p. 214) between Indigenous and Settler People(s). Secwepemc-Syilx scholar Dorothy Christian (2010) describes her personal struggles to overcome the metaphor of an abusive relationship when referring to her relationship with the colonizers of her land (Christian & Freeman, 2010, p. 381). Sutherland (2005, as cited in Christian & Freeman, 2010) describes “genuine reconciliation” (p. 382) as involving “a transition from systems of domination to relationships of mutuality” (p. 382), which “also requires a parallel process of personal and political transformation” (p. 382). Christian (2010) describes her own transformation in the direction of reconciliation as a process of transcending the cycle of victim-offender and choosing

to be “a sovereign, autonomous, and dignified Indigenous woman standing firmly on the land” (p. 382), without needing to affirm her identity or place on the land in relation to the colonizers. Regan (2010) maintains a similarly hopeful stance, reframing reconciliation as a “decolonizing place of encounter between Settlers and Indigenous people...[that makes] space for collective critical dialogue—a public remembering embedded in ethical testimonial, ceremonial, and commemorative practices” (p. 12). This perspective of reconciliation calls on Settlers to enact relational accountability by reflecting on their responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples and acknowledging colonialism and Indigenous Title in an embodied way. Simpson (2016) maintains a critical stance, questioning how we can possibly talk about reconciliation without simultaneously talking about the land. However, she does not wholly reject reconciliation as a possibility, stating:

If reconciliation is to be meaningful, we need to be willing to dismantle settler colonialism as a system...It means giving back land, so we can rebuild and recover from the losses of the last four centuries and truly enter into a new relationship with Canada and Canadians. (Simpson, n.d.)

The diverse ways in which the term reconciliation is understood reflect the deep complexity of the issues at stake and for which there is no simple solution. However, there remains an openness to experimentation as to how we might create and sustain respectful relations into the future, while reconciling cultural differences and seeking restitution for past wrongs.

This review highlights how perspectives on reconciliation vary widely, from notions of “moving forward together,” to critiques that call instead for Indigenous resurgence and restitution, to the belief that reconciliation and decolonization can be concurrent processes. Through this study, I seek insights into respectful relations and whether and how they might

contribute positively to a wider process of addressing the deeper roots of discord that have been revealed through this literature review—land, sovereignty, restitution, and justice. An awareness of the nuances associated with key terminology such as Settler, decolonization, and reconciliation can contribute depth to such an exploration into Indigenous–Settler relations. However in recognizing that concepts such as decolonization and reconciliation have the potential to stifle the possibility for centring Indigenous worldviews, I also wish to review recent scholarship regarding relationality, a concept deriving from Indigenous cultures that also resonates with the notion of embodied respect, a central element of my findings in this research.

2.3. Relationality in Indigenous Thought as Embodied Respect

A review of the concept of relationality within an Indigenous worldview, while acknowledging that this is not a homogeneous construct, can also inform an understanding of respectful relations. This is because relationality as a worldview and orientation to the world is intertwined with the essential principles and values of humility, acknowledgement, responsibility, and reciprocity, all of which contribute to embodied respect. The concept of relationality also helps to shift the focus onto Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies on account of it being so profoundly constitutive of Indigenous worldviews. As this thesis discovered, embodied respect is crucial to creating relations of respect between Settler and Indigenous People(s).

Indigenous scholars highlight that relationships are central to Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of making ethical decisions (Kovach, 2009; Moreton-Robinson; Little Bear, 2000; Wilson, 2008). Many Indigenous worldviews are based upon an animistic philosophy that asserts that humans are one clan group within a broader relational family (Kovach, 2009, p. 34), and many Indigenous Peoples identify a relational way of being as

the heart of what it means to be Indigenous (Wilson, 2008, p. 80). Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr., (1999) explains how a relational worldview from a tribal perspective assumes relationships between all life forms:

“We are all relatives” when taken as a methodological tool for obtaining knowledge means that we observe the natural world by looking for relationships between various things in it. That is to say, everything in the natural world has relationships with every other thing and the total set of relationships makes up the natural world as we experience it. This concept is simply the relativity concept as applied to a universe that people experience as alive and not as dead or inert. (p. 34)

On Haida Gwaii, there is a Haida law that states that all things are interconnected: *Gina 'waadluuxan gud ad kwagid* (everything depends upon everything else) (Hartney & Gladstone, 2018, p. 4). Inherent in this relational worldview is an embodied sense of humility, a deep knowledge that all of Creation is related. Further, kinship and clan within Haida culture is based on the idea that each individual contributes to the wellbeing of the whole and that giving to others ensures that every person receives what is necessary to survive and prosper (Hartney & Gladstone, 2018, p. 7). In this way, reciprocity is also embedded in a relational worldview.

Stan Wilson (2001a) describes the importance of acknowledgement of the deep layers of context surrounding one's existence, by explaining how Indigenous identity is grounded in relationships with the land, as well as with the ancestors who have returned to the land, and with future generations who will come into being with the land (p. 91). This is echoed by Settler scholars who challenge Settler Canadians to interrogate their relationships and obligations to Indigenous People(s) and to the land upon which they live (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Davis et al. 2017, p. 402; Regan, 2010). Carlson (2016) addresses Settlers' relational accountability to

Indigenous Peoples in her articulation of an anti-colonial research methodology, defining it as being where “standpoints, epistemes, perspectives and experiences of Indigenous peoples are honoured, foregrounded, and valued” (p. 502). She maintains that Settler People(s) have a responsibility to always act “in relation” (p. 503) with Indigenous People(s) within the context of Indigenous sovereignty and re-affirms that relational accountability includes accountability to the land itself. Relational accountability also means being responsible for learning about historic and contemporary realities including how Settlers benefit daily from colonization, in order to avoid replicating unequal power relationships and perpetuating oppression (Davis & Shpuniarsky, 2010).

This thesis research explores how Settlers to Haida Gwaii strive in their own unique and varied ways, to embody relational states of being within the current socio-political context. As a Settler researcher seeking to learn from a relational worldview, I attempt to identify and describe “humility,” “responsibility” and other elements of respect not as objective notions grounded in individual knowledge, but rather, to explore these concepts in terms of participants’ relationships to them.

2.4. Summary

This review of the literature considers three theories of embodied respect that can inform explorations into the nature of respectful relations between Settler and Indigenous People(s). Ermine (2007) offers the Ethical Space of Engagement where different worldviews meet in mutual respect. Regan (2010) discusses Settler transformation through a pedagogy of unsettling the Settler within, and Barker and Lowman (2015) envision a “space of dangerous freedom” where Settlers begin to imagine how to be something other than Settler colonial. Indigenous–Settler relations are considered through the frames of Settler (and Settler colonialism),

decolonization, and reconciliation. While these terms are in common use, they remain complex and nuanced, and are far from straightforward. Seeing how they are discussed in the literature may help deepen our understanding of some of the possibilities and challenges for living in respectful relations with one another. Finally, the concept of relationality within an Indigenous worldview offers a window into the intangible but important concept of embodied respect and how it can contribute to respectful relations. Building on the concepts above, I delve into participant experiences of respectful relations and the meanings that participants make of these experiences within the context of their personal, professional, and community lives on Haida Gwaii. In other words, my thesis explores the questions: What are respectful relations, and how do participants come to experience them?

3.0 Methods

This chapter begins with a brief overview of my field of study: the social, political, and geographic context of Haida Gwaii. I then outline the theoretical framework guiding my research, describing the influences from Indigenous methodologies and transcendental phenomenology. I provide the rationale behind my methodological decisions regarding my relationship to the research data: community consultations, sampling, interviews, and data interpretation. Finally, I present an overview of the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research process.

3.1. Field of Study

Haida Gwaii is an island archipelago, 100 kilometres off the Pacific Northwest coast of Turtle Island. The islands' population is slightly under 5,000 people, approximately half of whom are of Haida ancestry (Council of the Haida Nation, n.d., para 1). Haida People have occupied Haida Gwaii since time immemorial, residing in villages throughout the islands, and

population estimates before the time of European contact are in the tens of thousands (Council of the Haida Nation & Parks Canada, 2018). The first recorded European contact on Haida Gwaii occurred in 1774 and was followed by a period of rapid social and economic change due in large part to the sea otter fur trade (Council of the Haida Nation & Parks Canada, 2018). Introduced diseases including smallpox and influenza had a devastating impact on the Haida, reducing their population to fewer than six hundred people by the late 1800s (Council of the Haida Nation & Parks Canada, 2018). Survivors congregated on Graham Island in northern Haida Gwaii, and today their descendants are concentrated locally in the villages of *HlGaagilda* Skidegate and *Gaw Tlagee* Old Massett. Approximately 2,000 Haida reside away from Haida Gwaii, in *Kxeen* Prince Rupert, Vancouver, and throughout the world (Council of the Haida Nation, n.d., para 2).

The formation of Canada in 1867 and the creation of the Province of British Columbia in 1871 marked the era of industrial extraction on Haida Gwaii, which included whaling, mining, logging, and fishing (Council of the Haida Nation & Parks Canada, 2018). The early 1900s also saw the promotion of Haida Gwaii as a place with great agricultural potential (Kinegal & Simpson, 1986) which led to an influx of Settlers. All of these took place against a backdrop of attempted assimilation of Indigenous Peoples to Euro-Canadian norms. The communities of Settlers that grew up around these industries expanded and contracted over time, and present-day settlements include the municipalities of Masset, Port Clements, Sandspit and Queen Charlotte.

Haida Gwaii is not subject to a treaty with the Crown and the Haida Nation has never ceded, surrendered or modified any rights or title. (Kil Tlaats'gaa, as cited in Factum of the Council of the Haida Nation, Court of Appeal File No. CA 45253, 2019, p. 3). The Haida Nation collectively holds Hereditary and Aboriginal Title and Rights to Haida Territories (Council of

the Haida Nation, n.d., para 3). In 2002 the Council of the Haida Nation filed an action in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, launching the Haida Title Case with the Crown and British Columbia (Jones, 2010).

Over the last century, competing claims over the lands and waters of the archipelago have led to significant conflicts that involved logging (Guujaaw, 2018), fishing (Jones et al., 2017) and the proposal to transport fuel (“A Resounding Voice,” 2013). The battle to save South Moresby (Island) from logging in 1985 included a prolonged act of civil disobedience at *Athlii Gwaii* Lyell Island which resulted in the arrests of dozens of Haida and also the cessation of logging in the Windy Bay watershed (Richardson, 2018). It also contributed significantly to the protection of Gwaii Haanas (now designated as a National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Reserve and Haida Heritage Site) under a unique co-operative management agreement between the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada that continues into the present (Council of the Haida Nation & Parks Canada, 2018; see also Boyko, 2018; Gladstone, 2018). Following many conflicts over the use of land, the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia entered into the *Kunst’aa Guu–Kunst’aayah* Protocol in 2009 for joint decision-making at both the operational and strategic level. These and other events have directly and indirectly, individually and cumulatively, contributed to respectful relationships among people(s)—through building mutual trust, supporting in solidarity, as well as collaborating in decision-making about land stewardship. However, it is clear that there is an ongoing and pressing need for clarity over title to the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

My research is influenced by Indigenous methodologies and their foregrounding of relationships and relational accountability in all research practices (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009;

Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2008). In particular, Cree scholar Shawn Wilson's (2001) work on Indigenous research paradigms, resonates with my personal orientation to research. Wilson (2001) describes Indigenous research paradigms as being founded upon the belief that knowledge is relational (p. 176). He further describes ontology and epistemology to be based upon a process of relationships that form a mutual reality, and axiology and methodology are based upon maintaining accountability to these relationships (Wilson, 2008, p.70). Following Denzin and Lincoln (2008), I assume that there are multiple realities and that reality is socially constructed through the interactions between individuals. I believe that research is interpretive and guided by a researcher's beliefs about the world, including how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 31). I further believe that it is impossible to offer a "pure" description of any phenomenon, since the very act of constructing data out of experience requires one to take note of some things to the exclusion of others (Wolcott, 1994).

I embraced a phenomenological approach to explore the phenomenon of respectful relations: what it looks like, feels like, sounds like, and most importantly, what it means to Settlers who have experienced it within the context of their interactions with Haida People on Haida Gwaii. A phenomenology studies the lived experiences of people and seeks to come to a deep understanding of a phenomenon that has been experienced by several individuals (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 80). While the origins of phenomenology can be traced back to Kant and Hegel, Husserl is considered to be the "fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century" (Vandenberg, 1997, as cited in Groenewald, 2004, p. 11). Husserl put forth the notion of intentionality whereby consciousness is always directed toward an object, linking the reality of an object to one's consciousness of it. In other words, the reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 76). I

followed a transcendental phenomenological approach, which is based on principles identified by Husserl (1931, as cited in Moerer-Urdahl & Cresswell, 2004) and translated into a qualitative method by Moustakas (1994). Transcendental phenomenology focuses on the descriptions of experiences of participants in contrast to hermeneutic phenomenology, which requires reflective interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences (Cresswell & Poth, p. 78). Transcendental phenomenology also offers a more systematic and structured approach to data collection and analysis (Moerer-Urdahl & Cresswell, 2004). For my study, I collected data in the form of stories, feelings, reflections, memories and thoughts through in-depth, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with four individuals in order to arrive at a description of the meanings and essences of participant experiences of respectful relations with Haida People.

Given my commitment to doing research that is relationally accountable, as is articulated within Indigenous methodologies, I situate myself and my research purpose (Kovach, 2009, p. 109) and attempt to give back to my community by ensuring that my research is grounded in the needs of the community (Kovach, 2009, p. 149). I recognize that I am ethically accountable for all aspects of my research, including consequences of my research actions. My research design is guided by Carlson's (2016a) anti-colonial methodology, which applies to White Settler researchers engaging with White Settler research participants, on Indigenous territories, and in spaces of Indigenous sovereignty (p. 501). Inspired by Carlson's (2016b) application of this methodology, I created a plan for how I might decolonize my thesis at the start of my research journey, as presented in Appendix A. This led to community consultations, the involvement of Haida Advisors, and reflexive journaling throughout the research process.

3.3. Data

3.3.1. Community consultations.

In following with the principles of relational accountability in Indigenous methodology (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Kovach, 2015; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008) and reciprocity associated with an anti-colonial research methodology (Carlson, 2016a), I invited Haida perspectives into my research planning and design process through informal, individual meetings with well-respected Haida individuals in the Haida Gwaii community.² I also invited input from Settler individuals within the Haida Gwaii community who have demonstrated engagement with Indigenous–Settler relations on Haida Gwaii. I also specifically consulted with four Haida Advisors to: i) invite their feedback on my research topic and approach, ii) provide recommendations for potential research participants, and iii) offer their perspectives on culturally relevant ways to share the research findings. *GwaaGanad* Diane Brown, and *Kii'iljuus* Barb Wilson are esteemed K'uuljaad³ (boss ladies), *Guujaaw*, is an esteemed Kilslaay⁴ (chief), and *Nang Kaa Klaagang*s Ernie Gladstone is a very well-respected community and organizational leader whose career has contributed significantly to formalizing collaboration between Haida and Settler People(s) on Haida Gwaii. I came to these meetings with a few short questions that could be answered in short or long form, and all but one of the meetings were completed in under one hour. I had prior relationships with all of my advisors, and the meetings were informal, taking place in coffee shops, personal offices, at home, and over the phone. Thank you cards and homemade gifts were offered as tokens of appreciation.

² These individuals include recognized leaders within the Haida community, elected representatives, and individuals in leadership roles in key local organizations.

³ *K'uuljaad* translates to “boss lady (esteemed ladies)” (Skidegate Haida Immersion Program, 2016, p. 119)

⁴ *Kilslaay* translates to chief and can also “refer to a man that you have great respect for” (Ernie Wilson as cited in Skidegate Haida Immersion Program, p. 168).

3.3.2. Sampling.

I used purposive criterion sampling since my aim was to achieve sample specificity and not a representative sample (Goodman, 2011), and because my choice to conduct a phenomenology required all participants to have experience of a common phenomenon (Cresswell & Poth, 2018), that of respectful relations with Haida People. To meet selection criteria, participants needed to be: i) recommended by one or more Haida Advisors for having demonstrated respectful relations with Haida People, ii) a long-term resident of Haida Gwaii (>6 years), iii) non-Indigenous, and iv) willing to share experiences with the researcher, knowing that the findings would be made public (see below on page 49 where I discuss the option for participants to maintain complete anonymity). Invitations to participate were made through an initial email or phone call, followed by a formal letter of invitation accompanied by a consent form (Gibson & Brown, 2011). The consent form outlined the purpose and scope of the study, potential risks and benefits of participating, confidentiality and data storage, and the dissemination of findings (Carlson, 2016a). Included in the communications was a clear option to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences (Carlson, 2016a). Phenomenologies have included a range of participants, from 1 (Padilla, 2003, as cited in Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159) to 325 (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited in Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159) However, Dukes (1984, as cited in Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159) recommends studying 3-10 participants. Given the scope of this project, I chose to work with four individuals.

3.3.3. Interviews.

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. In-depth interviews aligned with my interest in “understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning

they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2013, p. 9). They also allow a researcher to shift authority away from herself to the informant and assume the informant to be the expert (Goodman, 2011). I adapted Seidman’s (2013) phenomenological three-tiered interview method to fit within the time constraints of the thesis program by interviewing each participant two times. The first interview focused on the participant’s life history and the details of experience, while the second interview focused on the participant’s reflection on meaning (Seidman, 2013, pp. 21-22). In striving for relational accountability, my interview guide integrated ideas from my community consultations (Carlson, 2016a; Chilisa, 2012). Initial interviews were designed to be 90 minutes and follow-up interviews were designed to be 45 minutes. While two of the participants followed this time structure, two participants had first interviews lasting up to 150 minutes. In the latter instances, the participants were enthusiastic in sharing contextual information in the form of stories to an eager listener, demonstrating Kovach’s (2009) assertion that story as method can elevate research from an extractive exercise to a holistic endeavour that situates research firmly within the nest of relationship (p. 99).

I offered participants the option to choose their interview venue, following Seidman’s (2013, p. 53) emphasis on the principle of equity, participant comfort, and security. Three of the participants chose their home or private office and one chose a public space that was available for private bookings during off-peak hours. One interview was also partially conducted on a walking tour of the forest, where the participant wished to provide me with a multi-sensory experience that supplemented the interview data. Interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and stored on a portable USB in a locked filing cabinet. Files were backed up to an

external hard drive which was securely stored in a different location. Interviews were manually transcribed using aliases. I chose to gift each individual with locally crafted items and a small gift certificate for lunch at a local restaurant as a token of my appreciation. The gifts included handmade soaps, home-grown vegetables, jams, specialty sea salts, and fresh baking, all of which are common ways to express gratitude for somebody sharing their time on Haida Gwaii.

3.3.4. Data.

I follow the transcendental phenomenological approach articulated by Moustakas (1994) based on the Colaizzi-Keen Method (p. 121) with some adaptations. In lieu of performing a phenomenological reduction of my own experiences (*epoché*), I engaged in self-reflective journaling in order to set aside pre-conceptions and prior experiences of the phenomenon under study. I conducted semi-structured interviews and transcribed them verbatim, highlighting all non-repetitive "significant statements" (*meaning units*). I included an additional step of validating the highlighted statements with participants, providing them with complete copies of their transcripts to increase the participatory character and relational accountability of the study (Carlson, 2016a). From the composite list of significant statements, I formulated meanings and clustered them into themes. Themes were generated from all of the participant statements versus individual data sets since I was interested in understanding the overall phenomenon of respectful relations as experienced by Settlers to Haida Gwaii, not the experiences of specific individuals. Statements and themes were synthesized into a description of the textures of the experience (*textural description*) to capture what the participants experienced. This was followed by a description of the context of the experience (*structural description/imaginative variation*), to

convey how participants experienced the phenomenon. In following with Moustakas' (1994) approach, this ultimately led to the construction of an overall textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of their experiences (the *essential invariant structure or essence*). These are all reported in my findings, with the exception of the individual textural and structural descriptions, which served as building blocks that led to the creation of the final essential invariant structure (see below on page 72).

3.4. Ethical Considerations

I took a decolonizing approach to the entire research process, as articulated in Appendix A. As part of my responsibility as a Settler researcher and to maintain relational accountability to the Haida Gwaii community, I openly acknowledged and communicated with my advisors and project participants that this research centres Settler voices and experiences at the risk of silencing Indigenous voices. However, this research was conducted in response to input from the Haida community with regards to Settlers taking responsibility for themselves and their learning, and the suggestion for me, as a Settler researcher to focus on my own (Settler) community rather than research the Indigenous "Other," as so many have done before me. For this reason, direct quotes throughout this thesis are Settler voices and reflect the view of the participants, unless they are cited as personal communications. I invited input and participation from the Haida community through all stages of the research process: planning, design, implementation, and review, as well as discussion about possible options for the dissemination of results (Carlson, 2016a; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Kovach, 2015). Despite not being presented as direct quotes (with the exception of one personal communication), the advice gifted to me from the Haida community was invaluable to the entire research process and appears in the shape and

intention of this thesis. Upon completion of the thesis, I plan to share my final results publicly back to the Haida Gwaii community in a way that respects the principles of reciprocity and relational accountability, and furthers respectful relations (Carlson, 2016a; Chilisa 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). The exact means for sharing the results will be determined upon further consultation with my Haida Advisors.

As part of taking a decolonizing approach to research, I considered the ethical implications of participant anonymity and confidentiality in terms of the notion of relational accountability that is of paramount importance in Indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2009). Participants gave their voluntary and informed consent to take part in this study and have shared ownership and access to their data. However, in contrast to conventional research ethics protocol, they had the option to participate anonymously, or to be recognized by name in the final publication and public sharing of the research findings. All of the participants chose the latter option. This was not surprising, given that all of these individuals have lived and worked closely with Haida friends and colleagues for many years, and in following with Haida cultural protocol, it is considered respectful to acknowledge the words and teachings of others, and be accountable for your own words and actions. This echoes Kovach's (2009, p. 148) argument that institutional ethics board requirements for anonymity can clash with an Indigenous need to honour the cultural tradition of standing behind one's words. Each participant was given digital copies of their interview transcripts and summaries of the significant statements that were drawn from them. Participants were also invited at that point to validate and extend any reflections to ensure accuracy of the transcriptions (Carlson, 2016a; Seidman, 2013; Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Chapter 4.0. Findings

Following a phenomenological approach, eight verbatim transcripts from four participants were analyzed, resulting in the extraction of significant statements, the *invariant horizons* of an experience (Moustakas, 1994). The study participants were: John Broadhead, Dale Lore, Ruth Wheadon, and Brady Yu, all of whom are long-term residents of Haida Gwaii identified by my Haida Advisors as individuals who demonstrate respectful relations with Haida People. The clustering of meaning from the significant statements drawn from their interviews resulted in the generation of themes which were explored further to reveal sub-themes. One overarching meta-theme and four themes emerged, illuminating participants' experiences of respectful relations with Haida People. The meta-theme was respect, which is commonly understood on Haida Gwaii in terms of the Haida principle of *yahguudang*. This principle guides and informs all aspects of Haida culture, encompassing all relations including those between humans, between humans and the rest of the natural world and between humans and the supernatural world (Council of the Haida Nation, 2005). The four themes that emerged from the analysis reflect the different ways in which participants strive to embody *yahguudang*: through embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and embodied reciprocity. Following a phenomenological approach, the statements and themes were synthesized into two descriptions: a composite textural description (what the participants experienced), and a structural description (how the participants experienced the phenomenon). These two descriptions are not presented in this document, as they were precursors that led to the construction of a final summary of the meanings and essences of the experience (*essential*

invariant structure or essence) (Moustakas, 1994). This summary description (*essence*) is presented in section 4.3.

In this chapter I begin with a visual overview of the research findings. I then describe *yahguudang*—what it means, and its significance within the Haida Gwaii context. Using data from participant interviews, I present the four themes which emerged as the pathways by which participants strive to embody *yahguudang*. Since the ultimate goal of a phenomenology is to understand the meaning of an experience, the chapter concludes with a summary description of the “*essence*” of the experience of respectful relations, as shared with me by the participants. In the following presentation of findings, participant statements appear in quotation marks or as block quotes.

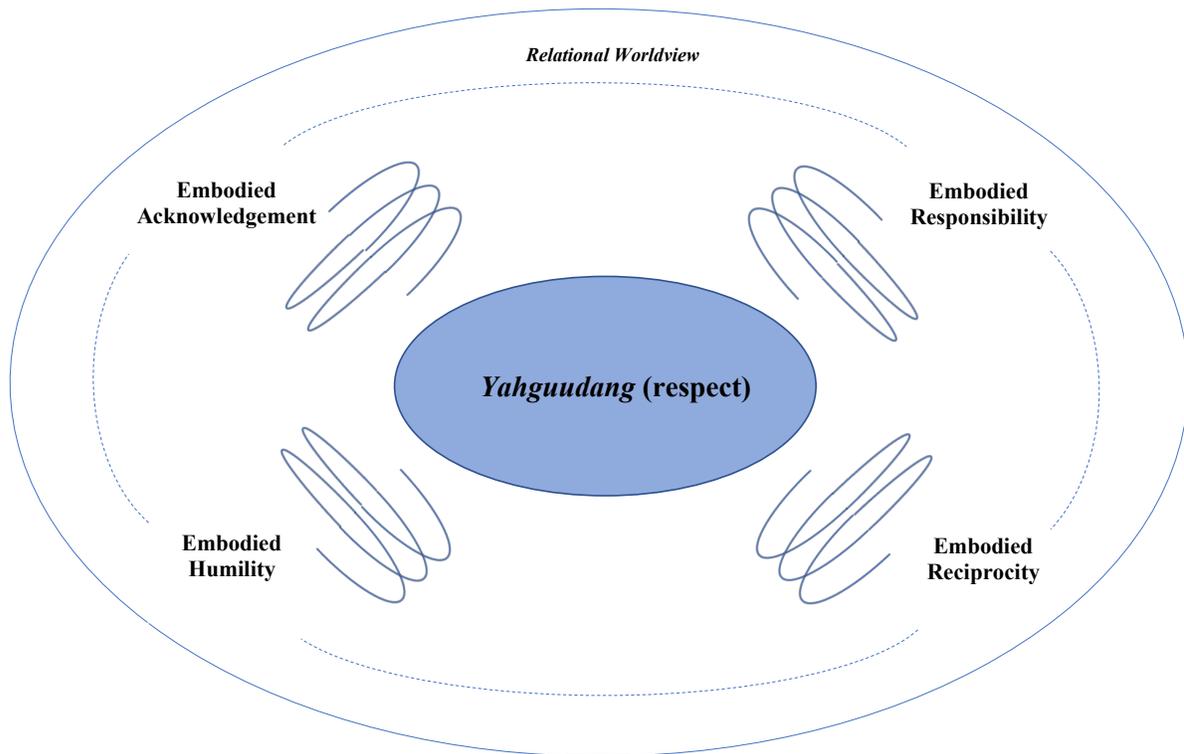


Figure 1. Participant pathways towards embodying *yahguudang* (respect)

4.1. *Yahguudang*–Respect

On Haida Gwaii, respect is widely understood in terms of *yahguudang*, a word in *Xaayda Kil*, the Skidegate dialect of the Haida language meaning respect (Skidegate Haida Immersion Program, 2016). *Yahguudang* is one of the fundamental guiding principles comprising a Haida worldview and informs all aspects of Haida culture. *Yahguudang* is referred to in several key

written documents most notably the 2005 Haida Land Use Vision: Haida Gwaii Yah'guudang⁵ [respecting Haida Gwaii] (Council of the Haida Nation, 2005), which defines *yahguudang* in the following way:

Yah'guudang—our respect for all living things—celebrates the ways our lives and spirits are intertwined and honors the responsibility we hold to future generation Yah'guudang is about respect and responsibility, about knowing our place in the web of life, and how the fate of our culture runs parallel with the fate of the ocean, sky and forest people. (p. 4)

All of the participants understood their relationships with Haida People to be complex and nuanced, and in varying ways, intimately connected to an embodied understanding of *yahguudang*. One participant reflected that *yahguudang* is “the most important single thing on Haida Gwaii” for respectful relations between Settler and Indigenous People(s). Another highlighted the importance of respecting each person’s contribution despite differences in teachings or life experience. There were multiple statements reflecting a sense of sincerity embedded in respect, including, “it’s more a way of...communicating, rather than what you communicate.” Taken together, the statements conveyed the importance of *being in* respect over a notion of *showing* respect. *Yahguudang* is lived within a relational worldview. A relational worldview gives rise to beings that are inherently respectful on account of the inter-connectedness between all of Creation. One participant emphasized the relational aspect of *yahguudang* when they talked about “respect for this place...respect for these people...and

⁵ Written documents may show varied spellings for words in the Haida language, depending on their date of publication. This reflects the oral history of the language. The Haida Language Glossary published by the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (2016) demonstrates ongoing efforts to preserve and revitalize the language, including efforts to establish consistent spelling.

respect for the other life forms.” Another articulated the connection between respect and relationality by describing a key collaboration involving Haida and Settler People(s) that resulted in the protection of the southern third of the Haida Gwaii archipelago, now known as Gwaii Haanas. They described the collaboration to be:

a dream amongst a bunch of people, that seemed to originate from the rocks, trees, and waters of the place itself. The dream was a good one. It was of a better world, of respectful relations and mutual benefits among two-leggeds, four-leggeds, no-leggeds, beaks, no-beaks, the works.

Participants’ discussions about *yahguudang* offer insight into their values and worldviews. Their descriptions about how they strive to embody *yahguudang* demonstrate their ongoing processes of learning and of becoming. Through their elucidations, they also show that there are many and varied paths towards respectful relations with Indigenous People(s). In what follows, I trace what all the participants told me about their complex and nuanced expressions of *yahguudang* and present their observations according to the four themes of: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and embodied reciprocity.

4.2. Embodiments of Respect

4.2.1. Humility.

Participants referred to an embodied notion of humility throughout the interviews, highlighting its importance in their relationships with Indigenous People(s), and demonstrating its connection to respect. Humility was described as various manifestations that included deep listening as well as a way of being that permeates one’s interactions all of the time. It is understood to be an attitude of openness towards learning, accepting one’s weaknesses, and

leaving one's pride at the door. It also means embracing difference without assuming superiority over others by imposing one's ideas on to them. Lastly, it means consciously unpacking and discarding any sense of entitlement that one may carry with them. I will now present each of these facets of humility.

4.2.1.1. Deep listening.

Deep listening is one expression of embodied humility and contributes to respectful communication and *yahguudang* in relationships between Settler and Indigenous Peoples. It rests upon a foundation of right-intention, patience, and trust, as well as desire to understand another person in a deeper way. Participants expressed both the desire and patience needed to nurture genuine understanding, saying "It takes time to understand each other and to be able to read each other," and "I needed more time to understand that in a more nuanced way." Another suggested, "When you're in a conversation, don't listen while trying to formulate your response. Just listen, and then pause while you absorb. And formulate your response. And then respond." The same participant explained, "it's about listening, it's about not speaking over." The notion of embodied *yahguudang* through deep listening was expressed by another participant in the following way:

There's communication and messaging going on, on so many different levels all at once (chuckles), and you might be hearing one thing...but then there might be something that's totally different and just as important, but it's not being said...But it's still there, part of the same conversation (laughs). So, it takes a while to...understand that. It takes a while to be able to...read it, and to respect it. Because that's the basis for meaningful communication.

Patience and a desire to understand another person may motivate deep listening, but right intention ensures that one can follow through in a respectful and appropriate way. One participant expressed this by saying, “you need to listen to what they are saying and adjust,” offering the example of “receiving feedback in an open way, and then trying to incorporate that into how you communicate...if this person...finds you a challenging communicator...you need to ensure you have a safe space for that conversation to happen...you need to adjust.” Deep listening draws on multiple senses and being aware of body language can expand one’s capacity to “listen for” meanings beyond what is explicitly being said and to be attuned to communicative nuances. Realizing this was a turning point in terms of deepening relationships with their Indigenous friends, one participant confided that, “that’s when I started to understand...watch the body language and the eyes. They mean way more than the words.” Another participant universalized deep listening as an integral component of respectful communication and *yahguudang* in relationships, saying, “all [anybody] really, really want[s], is “I hear you.”” This resonates back to Ermine’s (2007) metaphor of the “Indigenous Gaze,” and its reminder to the Western world to look deep into its own conscience and character. Here, the act of deep listening can be a response to this call, offering to be fully present and committed in the act of witnessing what is being shared.

4.2.1.2. Way of being.

Embodied humility was also described by participants to be a way of being that permeates all of one’s interactions all of the time. One participant described valuing each person’s contribution:

Building connections is recognizing that every single person has value. Every single person carries their stories, and their teachings, and their knowledge, and you have to honor what's in that person.

This means appreciating that “everybody has different talents,” as one participant shared, and also “recognizing that the communities you live in, have different values,” while actively honoring those differences. Another participant discussed humility in terms of always being open to learning, “recognizing that there's beliefs beyond what you know, there's teachings beyond what you could ever imagine, and you're never done learning.” The same participant described remaining open to the possibility of one's own ignorance:

Even though you think you might know so much about something, you actually mostly know jack sh--...if you accept that and if you work on not being defensive...if you work on being open, then you can make those connections.

One talked about learning “all that people may be willing to teach us,” emphasizing that “we need to respect those situations, be thankful for every opportunity, and hold that knowledge in a way that respects the gifter and carry those lessons with us, to become a better person as we move forward.” Embodying humility as a way of being means being honest in recognizing our own shortcomings that may impede relationship building, as one participant noted: “it isn't all roses...like, there's sh-- hitting the fan, and it's big work. And, there's challenges with communication, there's challenges with being a Settler in that setting...(sigh) I don't always get stuff (sigh).” However, by embracing humility, one can turn mistakes into learning opportunities, as one participant noted, “no-one's perfect, we all make mistakes. Sometimes...you can end up being disrespectful...And I think that it's important to recognize that that happens, and you have

to own it. And work through that.” By acknowledging and learning from our mistakes, we turn them into potential catalysts for growth and transformation as we strive to embody *yahguudang* and build relationships.

Finally, participants described a way of being that involves letting go of one’s sense of pride in order to truly meet people in a space of mutual respect. Reflecting on their decades of experience working closely with Haida colleagues, one shared:

That’s another key thing about...the collaboration that I’ve done, is that I don’t have any pride. Where pride is not an issue...We were all just good friends. But good friends who’d been hanging out long enough that we understood each other.

Taken another way, another participant confided, “it’s...having Haida folks not feeling like they need to come from a place of *defending* what is rightfully theirs all the time.” These statements reflect ways of being that embrace an embodied understanding of humility through: openness to learning while appreciating difference, gratitude for the gifts of teachings, and being open to the possibility of one’s own ignorance. They also show that letting go of pride can contribute to *yahguudang* while helping to bridge human connection across cultural differences.

4.2.1.3. Embracing difference.

Embodying humility is the valuing of difference and learning to be comfortable in difference. One participant reflected on a long-term cross-cultural political collaboration that strategically capitalized on difference, saying, “it was the differences that made us more effective than the similarities.” They also acknowledged the possibility for multiple truths to exist at the same time, saying:

while I'm saying my truth, they're saying their truth. The overall gist of it will be true, but there'll be certain things that each of us will go, "No, they're completely out to lunch on that one." It's because we were looking at this from a different perspective.

One recalled how someone "promised to tell her truth, and nothing but the truth, but it may not be your truth." Valuing difference through the acceptance of multiple truths aligns with the scholarship that distinguishes between Indigenous and Western scientific worldviews (Chilisa, 2013; Kovach, 2009; Little Bear, 2000, Wilson, 2001). Little Bear (2000) also reminds us that no matter how dominant a worldview is, there are always other ways of interpreting the world (p. 77). The co-existence of different ways of knowing and of being offer potential for conflict, as one participant shared, "we all have different approaches, and culturally, personality-wise, it is a different approach. That doesn't always sit well." Yet conflict need not be perceived as solely negative. Another participant shared, "now I'm completely comfortable in different types of conflict, and I realize confrontation can be very healthy." By embracing conflict to be a constructive force, this participant demonstrates that one can embody *yahguudang* despite not sharing the same ways of thinking, knowing, or being. In fact, the act of *not* reducing difference to sameness can in itself be an act of respect. While members of dominant groups may seek to learn and share from members of marginalized groups in efforts to *reduce* difference, those from whom they seek to learn may perceive difference as something to be desired, or as being significant to their identity (Jones and Jenkins, 2008, p. 12). Acknowledging difference respects the distinctness of the "Other" as well as the right of the Other to maintain their distinctness—a notion that has far-reaching implications within a context of colonialism. Understanding nuances

in varying conceptions of entitlement to difference can shed light onto how Settlers might navigate the boundaries of difference in respectful and culturally appropriate ways.

Embodying humility as *yahguudang* is also about not assuming superiority in relationships of difference by not imposing oneself or one's ideas on to others. One participant reflected that "I didn't want to just come and impose my ideas as this new person" and emphasized the importance of "being willing to accept that your opinion is not as important as what the communities that you're trying to be informed about, are telling you." Another acknowledged the wider socio-historical context, saying that "the ones who have lived here for thousands of years, they aren't who you tell what to do." This echoes Simpson's (2011) reflections about her Nishnaabeg Elders and how their ways of being reflect a set of values and ethics that does not employ exclusionary practices, authoritarian power, or hierarchy, but rather, places importance on the suspension of judgment and an embodied respect for diversity (p. 18). These comments suggest the potential for moving towards Ermine's (2007) theoretical Ethical Space of Engagement, whereby differences are acknowledged, but without judgments and claims to superiority. Participants repeatedly expressed their acknowledgement that Haida Gwaii is Haida Territory and demonstrated awareness of their potential imposition upon Haida People. One recalled their deliberations over whether or not to move here, sharing, "if we felt like it was inappropriate for us to come and settle here, then we absolutely would have come as visitors and been respectful of that, and then left." Similarly, when asked what might cause them to ever leave Haida Gwaii, another confided that "maybe if something happened and I was asked to leave, I would leave, but otherwise I'm very grateful for getting to live here." The clarity with which these participants articulated their attitudes of non-imposition on Haida People reveals a

depth of humility reflecting an embodied form of respect for Haida People and Haida authority over Haida Gwaii.

4.2.1.4. Non-entitlement.

Embodying humility in *yahguudang* means living in a state of non-entitlement. One participant highlighted the importance of recognizing one's sense of entitlement, and also the need to unpack it:

It's very important to come here without a sense of entitlement and to have respect, but that doesn't build a meaningful relationship...I have to be able to disagree with people when I need to, but knowing where my biases are, or where my privileges lie, recognizing those.

This statement echoes the theme of responsibility for self-awareness and reflection and suggests how an authentic sense of humility can be a form of embodied respect. The same participant critically reflected on how exhibiting a superficial expression of humility can be misleading and ultimately harm the people that one engages with. By not acknowledging the power and voice that one holds, a person hides their privilege and perpetuates an imbalance of power. This critique is congruent with the scholarship which outlines various Settler "moves to innocence," whereby Settlers seek to distance themselves from the negative aspects of colonialism to evade the guilt associated with being a Settler (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 99; Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9).

Embodying humility in daily life also means accepting one's place within a larger context and not feeling like one has the right to know everything all of the time. Reflecting on how this plays out with issues internal to the Haida community, one participant shared, "meanwhile

there's all this other stuff that's happening...it's none of our business, and it shouldn't be written about and published about...and people who come here, you have to...respect that that happens.” Commenting on the same topic, another participant shared, “there's stuff that's your business and there's a lot of stuff that isn't...and that's fine. That's the way it should be.” Both of these individuals demonstrated a high level of acceptance of this “unspoken rule” of non-entitlement as part of being a respectful Settler on Haida Gwaii. They understood that they were not entitled to having everything be their business. This resonates with the literature that addresses Settler attempts to support Indigenous Peoples through respecting their leadership, recognizing the priority of their needs, and being careful not to drain precious time and resources (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Gehl, n.d.; Smith, Puckett, & Simon, 2015). These comments also echo scholarship about the Self and Other, which shows how members of dominant groups feel entitled to and want to learn *about* the Other, in contrast to the notion of learning *from* the Other, insisting that members of marginalized groups “teach” or “share” aspects of themselves and their culture as part of building relationship (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, p. 8). Finally, these postures hint at the possibility of entering the “clearing,” (Barker & Lowman, 2015) where Settlers learn to re-orient themselves in Indigenous spaces where the notion of Settler-as-Subject no longer applies. By embracing non-entitlement as a way of being and accepting their identity as Settler within Indigenous contexts, participants demonstrate an embodied understanding of humility.

The contemporary Haida Gwaii context challenges Settlers to embody *yahguudang* by providing ample opportunities to embrace humility in its myriad manifestations. Many cultural activities are open to Haida Gwaii residents regardless of ancestry, and these encourage learning *from* difference, rather than *about* difference. Elders and Knowledge Keepers share teachings,

and these rich experiences can remind us the importance of recognising our own ignorance, so that we might learn and grow. A high level of social integration between cultural groups and communities on Haida Gwaii also provides safe spaces for individuals to practice embracing difference, which can support them in becoming more comfortable in difference, and potentially move us towards Ermine's (2007) theoretical Ethical space of engagement, a point I return to below, in the Discussion section that follows.

4.2.2. Acknowledgment.

Acknowledgement emerged as a key theme which reflected participants' deep understanding about how to live in *yahguudang*. The ways in which they discussed acknowledgment suggest a profound personal engagement with the concept, and ongoing learning and reflection about it. Two sub-themes surfaced through the analysis: acknowledging colonialism and acknowledging Haida Title. These sub-themes will be elaborated upon in the following pages.

4.2.2.1. Colonialism.

In striving for more respectful relations with Indigenous Peoples, we need to acknowledge colonialism in a way that includes critical reflection about how we are personally implicated with it. One participant commented on the need for Settlers to do the "homework" of unpacking the colonial legacy that we inherit as a necessary precursor to building respectful relations. They articulated this in terms of having a basic level of critical awareness around the histories of a place, including whose land it is and what protocols need to be followed. They stressed how important it is to understand what the issues may be from an Indigenous person's point of view, while recognizing that "that is not a homogenous point of view," echoing concerns

voiced by Indigenous scholars about the homogenization of Indigenous thought (Vowel, 2016; pg. 97; Younging, 2018, p. 13). The same participant highlighted the extent of colonialism's pervasiveness to the point of invisibility by commenting that "what's been missing from the conversation in anti-oppression work for a very long time is that all of this is happening in a context of colonization." This concern aligns with the literature documenting the destructive impacts of the invisible hand of colonialism (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Waziyatawin, 2009). Bringing colonialism and its destructive forces into focus in order that we personally engage with them in a critical and embodied way is part of the path towards more respectful relations.

In discussing the importance of critically unpacking history, participants did not relegate colonialism to be a thing of the past. Rather, they referred to it as an ongoing phenomenon that continues to have significant impacts on contemporary daily life on Haida Gwaii. In describing how the effects of colonialism shape present social and political life on Haida Gwaii, one participant explains the connection this way:

The residential schools and the sixties scoop took people out of the community. Out of their homes. Out of families. Out of all their relationships, where you learn things. And that's bound to affect politics, and peoples' sense of what's possible.

Another participant spoke about how:

There's lots of things that sometimes make life here hard. And understanding the roots of why that's hard...systemic experiences like intergenerational traumas as a result of residential schools and colonization...some of the things play out in day to day life, and it's important to be mindful of that.

These statements illustrate the importance to participants of acknowledging the ongoing effects of colonialism for understanding the dynamics of daily life on Haida Gwaii. They also demonstrate a personal commitment by participants to critically reflect on and be mindful of other people's past embodied experiences, and how they might influence present-day attitudes, behaviours, and interactions. This willingness to engage with the complexities of the impacts of colonialism on a personal level may be part of a process of "unsettling the Settler within" (Regan, 2010), which can lead to a process of personal embodied transformation, as further described by Davis et al., (2017), Heaslip (2017), and Hiller (2017).

4.2.2.2. Title.

All of the participants stated that acknowledging Haida Title is essential to building respectful relations between Indigenous and Settler People(s) on Haida Gwaii, ranging from big-picture (macro) perspectives to personal (micro-level) considerations. One participant illustrated this by offering the following summary of declarations within the Protocol Agreement between the Council of the Nation and the Gowgaia Institute in 2002 that guided the two parties to work cooperatively for many years in pursuit of the health and well-being of Haida Gwaii:

Haida Nation has occupied this Territory for thousands of years; holds hereditary Title; Haida culture is derived of the relationship of people and place; the government of British Columbia and Canada have wrongfully granted rights to outside interests to exploit the lands and water of Haida Territory.

The declarations, which include the inherent acknowledgment of Haida Title, formed the basis for mutually respectful relations between Settler and Haida People(s) for many years.

Acknowledging Haida Title also seemed to resonate on a deep personal level for all of the

participants, as every one of them included themselves in statements referring to the need to acknowledge Haida Title, saying “I’m a guest here (pause), I’m living on unceded Territory,” and “We respect the Aboriginal sovereign authority.” Other statements included: “By next fall, we could be making this Haida Land, not just “we say it is,” but legally, in fact. To me, that’s what has to happen,” and “We respect and understand your Title to this land. And we understand and respect the hereditary responsibility to look after it. And we will help.” Such personal statements reflect not just a nominal, but an embodied acceptance of Haida Title.

Recognizing and respecting hereditary responsibility to care for the land is well documented in the literature by Indigenous scholars (Alfred, 2005; Little Bear, 2000; Simpson, 2004). What this looks like for Haida Gwaii is further articulated by Haida leaders and scholars (Collison, 2018; Council of the Haida Nation, n.d.; Gill, 2009; Richardson, 2018; Williams-Davidson, 2012). The personal ways in which participants spoke about acknowledging Haida Title reflect deeply embodied understandings of what it means to live in relations of respect. They also demonstrate participants’ critical examination of their roles as Settlers on Indigenous Lands, as well as the deeply held belief systems that undergird Settler Canadian society. This hints at a personal process of “unsettling the Settler within” (Regan, 2010), and a willingness to interrogate terms such as reconciliation, decolonization, and restitution as put forth by Alfred (2009), Corntassel et al. (2009), Simpson (2011), and Waziyatawin (2009).

The contemporary Haida Gwaii context provides unique opportunities for Settlers to critically reflect on the complex conceptual and pragmatic concerns related to Indigenous Title in the context of Canadian Settler colonialism. As the Title case between the Haida Nation and Canada approaches its twenty year mark, contrasting perspectives on issues such as the

harvesting of marine and forest life, legal names for places, and second language instruction in schools reveal a wide range of underlying beliefs as to whose land this is, and whose authority counts. These underlying values and beliefs form the undercurrents (Ermine, 2007) of relationships, and are respectively informed by coloniality and/or modernity, and indigeneity. Community conversations that arise in response to controversial issues provide Islanders with rich opportunities to engage with and learn from one another, reflecting examples of ethical space (Ermine, 2007) in action in several ways. The first principle of ethical space, diversity of worldviews, is enabled by collective public spaces that facilitate the sharing of perspectives. These spaces take the form of open houses, community consultations, townhall meetings, and community events. These forums also make space for the second principle of ethical space, subjective reflection, where individuals can share stories about their life experiences that illuminate how policies and actions in the political, economic, or social realm affect them on a personal level. By de-formalizing the context for community conversations, these spaces also reflect a dispersal of hierarchy, the third principle of ethical space. This collective striving for *yahguudang* against the backdrop of Haida Title, Settler colonialism, and deep-seated cultural differences, may offer insights into how individual Settlers might create relations of respect with Indigenous People(s) elsewhere on Turtle Island.

4.2.3. Responsibility.

A strong theme of personal responsibility emerged from the data as a way in which participants live according to the principle of *yahguudang*. Responsibility was discussed in terms of ongoing self-reflection, awareness and education. Underlying a sense of responsibility was the recognition that significant wrongs had occurred in the past, continue into the present day, and

have major implications for the future. A deeper understanding of how Settlers understand and embody responsibility on a personal level can shed light on how we might navigate relations of respect with Indigenous People(s), both in the present and moving into the future. In the following pages, I address each of these sub-themes of responsibility in turn.

4.2.3.1. Self-reflection and awareness.

As part of their reflections about responsibility, participants valued the need for self-reflection, where one described how “there’s a lot of work to be done on a personal level, to understand...be comfortable in conflict, and confrontation.” Another recounted a pivotal moment in their journey towards greater awareness of Indigenous–Settler relations, sharing that “this was the first time I realized my culture is not my culture. My peers weren’t my peers and I was going to have to chart a new path.” This epiphany had been catalyzed by a clash of values, and the participant wondered how they could have been ignorant of the facts for so long. They concluded that what had been missing was a process of self-reflection, confessing that “I never went back and checked to see if something I knew was still true.” The realization that their understanding of the world was flawed was cataclysmic on a personal level and led to further self-reflection, “I might as well rip up my whole understanding and start over because it was that bad.” The responsibility to self-reflect was also understood to be a personal and moral necessity, with one participant sharing:

I’m working for organizations full of people, for people that have been through colonialism, that the government wanted wiped off the face of this earth. And church. And state. And (slight pause) if I’m not going to be resilient through my little White privilege challenges, what the f--- is my excuse?

Participants felt responsible for being aware of themselves within a larger social context, and within relationships with Indigenous People(s), where:

Part of that relationship is acknowledging the systemic forces that...influence our place, and our society and our context, and what things might make that relationship unbalanced.

One spoke about being mindful of context on a more personal level, such as asking oneself, “are you having a conversation with someone that’s going to move them backwards?...that’s going to retraumatize them, or are you having a conversation that’s going to move the relationship forward?” They reflected on how “the way I communicate is a lot different and can cause chaos to the way others communicate” noting, “do we see ourselves as a trigger? Not as often as we should.” Taking personal responsibility for deepening our awareness and practice of self-reflection is an expression of respect and can help us to navigate relationships with greater care, especially in cross-cultural contexts where we may be less attuned to nuances in communicative behaviour.

4.2.3.2. Education.

Responsibility to educate oneself was another theme that demonstrated participants’ embodied understanding of *yahguudang*. Participants emphasized that the responsibility to become better educated lay with themselves. One stated that “Everywhere you go is someone’s home, and if you don’t understand what that story is like...before you go, then how can you do it respectfully?” Another similarly said, “it’s really important that you learn about the culture you’re sharing, or that’s being shared with you. And *you* do the work.” This includes taking initiative when communicating with others, as one participant reminded: “check in. Test

assumptions. Talk things over. Don't be afraid to be wrong. Don't be afraid to be called an idiot...Because in that context, there's something that you need to learn." This can mean putting in the effort before even entering into relationship, as one participant shared, "it was really important that I had done my homework and the analysis to set the groundwork, that they trusted me to be willing to open themselves up for one-to-one engagement." These perspectives echo the scholarship as well as calls by Indigenous leaders for non-Indigenous Peoples to confront the ignorance and racism that arise out of the economic, social, narrative, and political structures of Canadian Settler colonial society (Alfred, 2005; Davis et al., 2017, p. 400; Davis and Shpuniarsky, 2010; Gehl, n.d.; Regan, 2010). These comments also highlight the difference between the notions of "embodied responsibility" and "delegated responsibility," terms which de Costa and Clark (2016) use to describe Settler Peoples' varied degrees of willingness to take initiatives to advance reconciliation.

Taking responsibility for one's own learning as a Settler means not expecting Indigenous People(s) to hold one's hand through the process of learning about one's complicity in Settler colonialism which takes time and energy away from Indigenous resurgence initiatives (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 115). However, neither does it mean Settler People(s) teaching themselves colonial history. While it can be helpful for Settler People(s) to share the burden of education so as to reduce the demand on Indigenous People(s) who are working hard to build up their communities and nations, a balance is needed to ensure adequate and meaningful Indigenous oversight and input (*K'áayhlt'aa Háanas* V. Brown, personal communication, September 5, 2019). In daily life, this might mean Settlers taking on supporting roles within Indigenous-led initiatives that help to amplify Indigenous voices as a way to lessen the administrative or

logistical burden on Indigenous People(s). Efforts to facilitate the amplification of Indigenous voices or to support effective dissemination of information may also lessen the burden on individuals within the Haida community who are constantly being requested to share aspects of their culture. Settlers might also engage fellow Settlers in educational activities that include a component of critical reflection (i.e. a book club that focuses on Indigenous literatures, or Indigenous perspectives on decolonization). While Indigenous mentors should not be called upon to join such initiatives as participants, they might be invited to offer input into the goals and design of the process (i.e. recommending topics, suggesting authors). However, in exercising awareness, Settlers should heed Barker's (2010) caution about privileging Settler personal responsibility in the context of a dominant Settler colonial system, and how this runs the risk of Settlers "developing newly oppressive hierarchical structures" (p. 317). Individuals need to take extra care to ensure that relationships are being transformed in the direction of becoming more ethical, more just, and more respectful. The framework of ethical space (Ermine, 2007) can support Settler People(s)' efforts to embody responsibility by foregrounding the importance of including diverse worldviews and dispersing hierarchies to ensure a balance of power within relationships.

It is worth noting that educating oneself can be sabotaged by an unwillingness to learn the whole truth, or to shy away from negative details that disrupt the status quo. One participant reflected on how "my friends were going to those [residential] schools....How did we not know?...There was evidence everywhere! But I guess the truly blind man, is he who won't look." These reflections align with the literature regarding the paralyzing guilt or denial that can occur when Settlers first confront the prospect of their own complicity with colonial violence and

connect their own comfort and privilege to the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples (Davis et al., 2017; McGuire & Denis, 2019). These comments also affirm the value of Boler and Zembylas' (2002) "Pedagogy of Discomfort" (p. 108), which calls on us all to critically interrogate the dominant values and assumptions in our daily lives. Through ongoing and critical self-reflection combined with mindful awareness of their social and historical contexts, participants show how one can exercise responsibility in embodied ways that express genuine respect. Their examples of self-reflection reveal a willingness to be profoundly uncomfortable, to question their own "truths," and to adjust their ways of interacting with others in light of the inter-generational traumas that inform their community contexts. The initiatives that participants take to educate themselves about Haida culture, the colonial past and present, and respectful communication, all reflect a preference to embrace the aforementioned notion of "embodied responsibility" as opposed to "delegated responsibility" (de Costa & Clark, 2016), on their journey towards more respectful relations with Haida People. The sense of responsibility that is essential to respectful relations is also intertwined with the principle of reciprocity.

4.2.4. Reciprocity.

Participants discussed reciprocity in various and nuanced ways, without ever directly using the term reciprocity. They discussed the importance of being graceful when receiving gifts (such as teachings), as well as a strong desire to give back and contribute to the larger causes of Haida sovereignty and cultural resurgence. Expressions of reciprocity seem to be borne of respect while simultaneously being expressions of respect. The need to contribute to a bigger, shared objective is felt on very personal terms, and understood in terms of a relational orientation to the world. One participant reflected, "I feel I've been taught so much living here. (intake of

breath) That if I don't, if I don't (pause) reflect the values of the land where I live, then I shouldn't be living here." Further, they confided that "if they can go through what they've gone through and come out the other end, I either need to step up or f--- off." These comments reflect a relational understanding of oneself within the social context of Haida Gwaii, along with an embodied notion of reciprocity. One's personal contributions are understood to be feeding into a bigger picture, with one participant sharing, "it's been incredibly rewarding to be...a behind-the-scenes contributor... to be able to contribute a tiny bit to the Haida Title Case." In this way, giving and receiving merge together, so that giving is receiving. Through the contribution of one's time and energy, one receives the gifts of purpose, and of satisfaction, derived from being able to contribute to a larger, shared goal. Another participant suggested that newcomers to Haida Gwaii might contribute to the well-being of the islands' community by "figure[ing] out how [to] be part of the solution. If you don't, you're liable to accidentally end up part of the problem." This idea connects back to the need for self-awareness and critical reflection, and also aligns with scholarship about the need for well-intentioned actions to be compatible with socio-political and historical contexts in order to be effective (Gehl, n.d.). Emerging from these discussions is a notion of intertwined-ness, and the acknowledgement that one is continually shaped by place, and the cultural values of a place. Reciprocal connections bind us to place and speak to the interconnectedness of all things, while reflecting a relational understanding of the world. Through their statements expressing the inherent interconnectedness of life on Haida Gwaii, participants reflect their embodied understandings of the Haida principle *gina 'waadluxan gud ad kwagid* (everything depends on everything else). Their understandings of their personal responsibilities as well as their expressions of reciprocity are all understood within a broader

frame of relationality, where they are always in relation with other beings and things. This inter-relatedness was articulated by a participant reflecting on their contributions to Haida-led initiatives that had no direct personal benefit to themselves. They stated very simply that “it’s all part of the same thing. It’s all part of being there on the wave.” In other words, we are all in this together.

4.3. Summary Description: The Experience of Respectful Relations (*Essential Invariant Structure or Essence*)

In summary, this analysis revealed that living in respectful relation with Haida People on Haida Gwaii is an ongoing process of learning, unlearning, self-reflection, and ultimately, of becoming. Respectful relations are experienced as the embodying of *yahguudang*—respect. Embodying *yahguudang* is holding respect in one’s heart in all that one does. It is feeling respect genuinely and deeply. It is *being in* respect, more than it is about showing respect. “It’s about how you carry yourself, how you treat everyone you interact with.” While there may be different pathways towards embodying⁶ *yahguudang*, participant experiences elucidated four crucial pathways: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and embodied reciprocity, all of which are experienced within a relational worldview. One embraces humility as a way of being that allows one to be receptive to teachings of the heart, of the mind, and of the spirit. Embodying humility gives rise to deep listening from a place of right intention, patience, and trust, where one listens with one’s whole being. There is acknowledgement that communication takes place on “many different levels all at once” and that “every single person carries their stories,” so it is important to “honor what’s in that person.” A deep desire for

⁶ The present progressive form of the verb “to embody” is used to denote a process that is ongoing.

learning to live in *yahguudang* allows one to be vulnerable, wrong, and uncomfortable. Personal losses are understood within a bigger picture. The person engages deeply with personal work—internal struggles to come to terms with one’s own complicity in the Settler colonial system and the systemic violence and injustice that has resulted in very real privileges. There is a deep acknowledgement of Haida Title, and of ongoing colonialism, as well as critical reflection about how colonialism continues to inform our interactions with, and understandings of one another. Personal responsibility is deeply felt and takes various forms: critical self-reflection, ongoing initiatives to self-educate, and a commitment to interrogate status quo assumptions. One is constantly aware of one’s role within a larger socio-political and historical context. Long-held truths are re-examined, and attitudes and actions are questioned: “do we see ourselves as a trigger? Not as often as we should...” Moments of uncertainty and setbacks may cause one to question one’s identity and role on Haida Gwaii. However, there is an enduring trust that one will be guided, that the culture of the place will teach what needs to be learned if one listens deeply enough, and when one’s heart, mind, and spirit, are open to learning. One feels a deep need to contribute back to the place and people of Haida Gwaii: “I feel I’ve been taught so much living here...” One holds a constant sense of gratitude for the opportunity to live on Haida Gwaii as a contributing member of the community.

5.0. Discussion and Recommendations

The question guiding this research was: “how can the lived experiences of Settlers to Haida Gwaii inform individual Settler efforts to build relations of respect with Indigenous Peoples(s) across Turtle Island?” Through a phenomenological exploration into Settler experiences, I found that respectful relations are understood to be embodying the Haida principle

of respect—*yahguudang*. While there may be many pathways towards living in *yahguudang*, participants described four crucial pathways by which they strived towards this ideal: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgement, embodied responsibility, and a sense of embodied reciprocity. All of these pathways are processes of learning and of becoming and are understood within a relational worldview. The following discussion considers these four pathways in light of some of the theories, concepts, and debates raised by literature. It further suggests how this study's findings might contribute to the scholarship.

The four pathways that emerged from the research findings reflect examples of ethical space (Ermine, 2007) in action on Haida Gwaii. The current Haida Gwaii context offers Settler People(s) ample opportunities to explore ethical space, where the islands' highly connected cultural communities enable Settlers to learn through embodied experience, such as engaging with cultural teachings in context and learning cultural protocols through practice. Opportunities such as these facilitate learning *from* difference, from a place of embodied humility and respect, as opposed to learning *about* difference from a privileged and/or entitled social location. The findings demonstrate that participants are actively making ethical spaces through inviting and respecting diverse worldviews, the first principle of Ermine's (2007) ethical space. They do this by listening deeply and embracing difference without imposing their values on to others, expressing an embodied sense of humility. They celebrate opportunities for learning from difference (people's stories and their teachings), are comfortable with the simultaneous existence of multiple truths, and are willing to live with ambiguity. Participants also create ethical space through the dispersal of hierarchy, another of Ermine's (2007) principles of ethical space. It is evidenced through their affirmations of Haida sovereignty and Haida Title to Haida Gwaii, as

well as through their acknowledgment of their identities as guests and Settlers on Haida Territory. The third principle of ethical space (Ermine, 2007), subjective reflection, is attended to through participant expressions of embodied responsibility. Participants spoke about ongoing self-reflection about their identity as non-Indigenous People living on Haida Gwaii and the importance of being aware of the effects of intergenerational trauma associated with colonialism and the Indian Residential School System (I.R.S.S.). They emphasized the need to be sensitive to people in light of these traumas and discussed ways that they continually educate themselves about the history of colonialism, Haida culture (including language and protocols), and also how to communicate in ways that do not perpetuate racist or colonial ways of being. These practices expose undercurrents of hidden values and assumptions at work (Ermine, 2007). Participants in my research sought out these learnings through engaging in community events, listening deeply to teachings when they are offered, and seeking out new and appropriate resources when necessary. Through these varied pathways that participants take towards living in respectful relations (living in *yahguudang*), participants offer examples of ethical space in action on Haida Gwaii. Such examples may provide insight for other Settlers striving towards more respectful relations with Indigenous People(s).

In striving to embody *yahguudang* via the four pathways identified through the findings, participants also demonstrate ongoing engagement with the notions of “Settler” and Settler colonialism, which reflect processes of “unsettling the settler within” (Regan, 2010) and hint at the “space of dangerous freedom” (Barker & Lowman, 2015). While participants did not unanimously self-identify as “Settlers,” all of them demonstrated that they grapple with the notion of “Settler” and their complicity in Settler colonialism through reflections on their

personal journeys of learning and becoming while living on Haida Gwaii. One reflected on a personal “aha” moment, which revealed a misalignment between their values and those of the dominant Euro-Canadian society that is premised on Settler colonialism. Another commented on their attempts to surface their own biases and the privileges that come with being a Settler in a Settler colonial system, as part of learning to live in ethical relation with Haida People.

Participants spoke at length about the need for sensitivity and awareness around the effects of intergenerational trauma in the larger community. They reflected on their efforts to self-educate so as not to reproduce colonial ways of being through their communications and actions. Their observations reflect deep processes of personal reflection, hinting at Paulette Regan’s (2010) notion of “unsettling the settler within” and the transformation of Settler consciousness.

Furthermore, participants spoke about their various refusals to condone a system that inherently privileges non-Indigenous interests in ways that are unethical to Indigenous People(s). Examples of this included political manoeuvres to obstruct (Crown-approved) logging practices on Haida Gwaii, as well as declining offers of economic or professional gain on account of these perceived injustices. These acts of disavowal reflect personal processes of decolonization (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Regan, 2010), and echo Barker and Lowman’s (2016) proposition of a “space of dangerous freedom” where we begin to imagine new ways of relating with Indigenous People(s) and practice “failing” to conform to Settler colonial norms with the intention of undermining the Settler colonial system (Barker & Lowman, 2016, p. 199). Through their expressions of embodied humility, responsibility, acknowledgment, and reciprocity, participants demonstrate their ongoing interrogations of their identities as Settlers and their enmeshment with the Settler colonial system that is the foundation of mainstream Canadian society. I draw on various

theories of embodied respect in my attempt to understand and make meaning out of participant experiences. These theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding processes of unsettling, and of learning and becoming (Regan, 2010; Barker & Lowman, 2015). They also offer useful metaphors for conceptualizing inter-cultural communication and relationship (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Ermine, 2007). These combined processes of learning and becoming, of both participants and researcher, may offer insights for other individuals grappling with their identity as Settler People within a broader context of decolonization and reconciliation discourses.

Participant pathways towards embodying *yahguudang* intersect with ongoing debates about the definition and nature of decolonization and reconciliation. For most Indigenous scholars, decolonization centres around repatriation of Indigenous Land and Indigenous cultural resurgence (Alfred, 2005; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Waziyatawin, 2009). Participant statements demonstrate alignment with this stance. All of the participants openly expressed acknowledgement of Haida sovereignty and Haida Title to Haida Gwaii, and some further accepted their status as guests and Settlers on Haida Territory while expressing a willingness to leave should they be asked to. As Barker and Lowman (2015) and Macoun and Strakosch (2013) insist, Settler uncertainty is a necessary part of a process of decolonizing and dismantling Settler colonialism. That uncertainty is premised upon a disavowal of Settler futurity. Assumptions of Settler futurity on Haida Gwaii are continually interrogated through both symbolic and practical means, and all of the participants expressed comfort with these localized manifestations. The strong leadership and authority demonstrated by the Council of the Haida Nation in addition to the ongoing Haida Title Case create a unique context that challenges Settlers to embrace uncertainty as part of their day-to-day reality. In more symbolic ways, Haida

poles stand proudly in key locations in several communities, Haida place names are increasingly being used on maps and signage, and Haida language is taught in the schools. Not only did participants demonstrate support of these expressions, some of them have been or are actively involved in facilitating the creation or dissemination of such initiatives in ways that contribute back to the Haida community, enacting the principle of reciprocity.

Reciprocity is understood by participants in terms of their desires to give back to a community that has given them so much. They demonstrate a relational understanding of themselves within the wider social context of Haida Gwaii through their contributions to the larger goal of Haida sovereignty and cultural resurgence. Despite the fact that the legal authority of the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) is not yet universally accepted across Haida Gwaii, participant statements reflect the fact that the CHN nonetheless asserts moral authority which is adhered to by both Haida People, but also by Settler People. All of the participants have engaged in, and directly supported initiatives where Settler People on Haida Gwaii have joined with the CHN/Haida in opposing policies and actions of both the government of British Columbia and the government of Canada (Collison, 2018; Council of the Haida Nation, 2013; Council of the Haida Nation, 2020). Through their support of the Haida Title claim and Haida cultural initiatives, participants demonstrate their commitment to decolonization as understood by Indigenous scholars in terms of the repatriation of land and cultural resurgence. Through their embodied expressions of humility, acknowledgment, and reciprocity, participants also exhibit a degree of acceptance and comfort with the notion of Settler uncertainty, or a lack of entitlement to Settler futurity, concepts identified by Settler scholars as contributing to decolonization.

Participant reflections also connect to current discourses about the personal dimensions of decolonization, as raised by Settler scholars (Regan, 2010; Barker and Lowman, 2015; Heaslip, 2017, and Hiller, 2017) which illuminate how deep personal reflection and transformation of Settler consciousness constitute processes of becoming. Through their understanding of embodied responsibility as self-reflection and their expressions of embodied humility as a way of being, participants reveal processes of becoming. One participant reflected extensively on their own process of becoming, noting key incidents in their life that exposed the contradictions between their values (in process of becoming) and the values of dominant Settler colonial Canadian society. Their statements hearken back to Veracini's (2012) definition of Settler colonialism as being a system that absorbs the Indigenous Other into itself, and in so doing, eliminates the existence of the Indigenous Other altogether (p. 2). Here on Haida Gwaii, this participant demonstrates an example of an opposite process, whereby through critical deep reflection, Settler society becomes strange to the individual, and they realize that their values may align more closely with those of the Indigenous culture of this place. In this process, perhaps it is the Settler-as-Subject who becomes "absorbed" into Haida culture, instead of vice versa, resulting in the Indigenous Other ceasing to be the Other. Through this transformation of self, this process of becoming, the Settler finds themselves on the brink of "the space of dangerous freedom" (Barker & Lowman, 2015), where they might imagine and create new ways of relating with Indigenous People(s) in an ethical space (Ermine, 2007) that is mutually respectful, and informed by a relational worldview.

These processes of becoming speak to the notion of reconciliation as it is understood to be the building of deeper relationships (Christian, 2011; Freeman, 2014). Through deep personal

reflection, participants continually re-calibrate their orientation to the people around them. They interrogate their own expressions of humility to ensure that they are genuine ways of being as opposed to superficial expressions of humility. Participants also demonstrate how reconciliation can be a decolonizing place of encounter where ethical relationships can be created (Regan, 2010). They acknowledge the co-existence of multiple truths to be a reflection of diverse worldviews, and actively create space for the values of Indigeneity to be expressed while being open to replacing colonial values. Participants' active support of Haida cultural revitalization initiatives also speak to the concept of reconciliation as put forth by the T.R.C., whereby reconciliation is "an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships," including "the revitalization of Indigenous languages, laws, and governance systems" (p. 16). Participant expressions of embodied acknowledgement of colonialism, along with their efforts to critically interrogate and undermine the undercurrents of Settler colonial thought in themselves and in the institutions around them, go even further than the T.R.C.'s call to dismantle "centuries-old political and bureaucratic culture...based on failed notions of assimilation" (T.R.C., 2015, p. 21). While the T.R.C.'s final report focused on the Indian Residential School System (I.R.S.S.) and the need to redress wrongdoings that took place in the past, participants demonstrate their concerns about, and commitment to the present and the future. They willingly interrogate the values and assumptions of Settler colonialism as a system and worldview, acknowledging the ways in which they continue to shape the social, political, economic, and environmental circumstances of mainstream Canadian society. In so doing, they demonstrate a striving towards ethical space (Ermine, 2007), where undercurrents of hidden values and assumptions associated with distinct worldviews are revealed, interrogated, and

ultimately replaced by new and mutually respectful currents of thought. There is a pressing need to reject the logics of Settler colonialism as the operating framework of Canadian society if we are committed to re-imagining and re-defining our relationships with each other. However, while transforming Settler colonial consciousness is an essential step towards re-defining relationships between Settler and Indigenous People(s), it does nothing to return Indigenous Lands that are currently occupied by the Settler colonial state. To enter into a “dangerous space of freedom” (Barker & Lowman, 2016) requires Settlers to also actively “fail” to conform to Settler colonial norms that define mainstream Canadian society (Barker & Lowman, 2016, p. 199).

It is important to note that amidst the political and academic debates about decolonization and reconciliation, participants generally did not use these terms in their interviews with me. Instead, they consistently drew upon principles emerging out of the cultural context of Haida Gwaii, such as *yahguudang*, the Haida principle of respect, and the Haida principle that everything depends upon everything else (*gina 'waadluuxan gud ad kwagid*), which embodies the concept of relationality. Such a relational worldview was expressed by a participant who reflected on their motivations for their long-term active involvement in supporting Haida initiatives by saying, “it’s all (pause) part of the same thing. It’s all part of being there on the wave.” This pattern of not referring directly to terms such as reconciliation and decolonization was consistent with the feedback that I received from Haida community members (and to a lesser degree, Settler ones) during my community consultations. They suggested that these terms are not appropriate for use at the community level and could do more harm than good on account of the varied ways in which they can be interpreted. Both terms were regarded with skepticism—

the term reconciliation was perceived as having been diminished to a rhetorical device, commoditized, and over-used to the point of having been stripped of meaning, while the term decolonization was critiqued for implying a final, decolonized state where colonialism and all its associated consequences will have been resolved. Thus, despite not employing the terminology that is common in popular and academic discourses about Settler–Indigenous relations, participants’ pathways towards embodying *yahguudang* and respectful relations reflect their abiding concerns with the principles, contradictions, and tensions associated with these terms. Instead, they choose to use language that more accurately reflects the culture of the place that they have chosen to live, to communicate their genuine desires with regards to “ethical spaces of engagement” (Ermine, 2007), processes of “unsettling the settler within” (Regan, 2010), and experimenting with the possibilities offered by “the space of dangerous freedom” (Barker & Lowman, 2016). Such a localized approach to communication that is adapted in response to the Indigenous culture of a place can offer insights for individual Settlers across Turtle Island striving to be in more embodied, respectful relations with Indigenous People(s).

Finally, I must make the optimistic observation that currently on Haida Gwaii, there exist many opportunities for engaging with, and collaborating alongside Haida People. Settler People(s) are able to explore in practice, several aspects of being in respectful relations with Haida People: living in a state of non-entitlement and non-superiority, as a form of embodied humility; deeply acknowledging Haida Title; enacting personal responsibility through constant critical awareness of self-in-relation; and reciprocity that is genuinely offered to both people and place. While I do not negate Tuck and Yang’s sentiments regarding the need to maintain focus on Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous futurity lest we fall back on colonial habits of

privileging the interests of the Settler state, I believe that a consideration of respectful intercultural relations within a context of a potential shared future is still a worthwhile endeavour. As the case of Haida Gwaii has shown us, Settler and Indigenous People(s) are always and already in relation (Barker & Lowman, 2015, p. 117). Regardless of the outcome of the Haida Title Case, and despite the uncertainty of Settler futurity, it is likely that we will continue to be interconnected for some time. This study has illuminated various pathways along which Settler People(s) can strive for embodied respect in their relations with Indigenous People(s). Guided by the Haida principles of *yahguudang* and *gina 'waadluuxan gud ad kwagid* (everything depends upon everything else), participants demonstrated that discourses about Settler–Indigenous relations need not remain within the confines of Western conceptual frameworks of power, or of being-in-relation. The opportunity exists here and now for us to deepen our learning about how to live in respectful relations with one another. Such efforts should complement, and not undermine decolonization efforts as envisioned by Tuck and Yang (2012). This involves Settler People(s) being willing “to learn all that we can become, all that people may be willing to teach us,” while learning to be “comfortable operating in ambiguity.” To recognize this unique and precious set of circumstances, and to explore it to its fullest potential, can only benefit us all.

5.1. Recommendations

At the beginning of this research, it was not my intention to offer any recommendations. However, at the conclusion of this chapter of my journey I wish to highlight some of the key learnings that emerged in the hope that they may be considered in other relationship building processes:

- That newcomers to Indigenous Territories take initiative to learn about the culture of the peoples whose land they have come to be on, including cultural norms and local protocols for asking permission, showing respect, honouring the land, and using names for places in the Indigenous language(s) of that place
- That Settlers wishing to contribute to respectful relations in their communities work first to “unsettle the Settler within” through engaging in deep, critical self-reflection to reveal and interrogate their own assumptions, values, and belief-systems. Only then can we begin to re-imagine new ways of being-in-relation, new systems, and new institutions that are founded upon respectful relationships with Indigenous People(s) and the land
- That we experiment with creative approaches to spaces and resources that can support Settler learning for transformation, including, but not limited to: introduction to key concepts such as ethical space (Ermine, 2007) and differing worldviews and their implications for ways of knowing and ways of being; relationality and relational accountability; the Indian Act, the Indian Residential School System, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission & Calls to Action. Further, that we develop tailored versions of these resources for use in schools, community centres, newcomer education programs, teacher training, law enforcement training, and health care training, and other relevant contexts (see T.R.C. Calls to Action, T.R.C., 2015)

6.0 Conclusion

Using a phenomenological approach to explore Settler experiences of respectful relations on Haida Gwaii, this study revealed that respectful relations are understood to be embodying *yahguudang* (respect). To *live in yahguudang* is something that participants strive towards in an

ongoing *process of becoming*. While there may be many pathways towards embodying *yahguudang*, participants described four crucial pathways by which they strive towards living in *yahguudang*: embodied humility, embodied acknowledgment, embodied responsibility, and a sense of embodied reciprocity. All of these pathways—these processes of learning and becoming, take place within a relational worldview.

These revelations offer hope to those of us still daring to dream of a better world with more respectful and just relations between people(s). The current era has proved to be turbulent, even chaotic at times, with information and misinformation travelling at colossal speeds across demographic and cultural divides, and across continents in a blink of an eye. New technologies and social media platforms are changing the way in which we learn and communicate with one another, as well as how we perceive our own and each other's identities. In rising to meet these challenges with integrity and sincerity, and in ways that do not entail a colonial relationship in its modes and forms of communication, we need to anchor ourselves in principles that reflect our values. These values define who we are and guide us towards what we wish to become. *Yahguudang*—respect, is one such principle. In striving to embody *yahguudang*, we can reach for Ermine's (2007) "ethical space of engagement", where peoples with different worldviews might meet and engage with each other with mutual respect. In striving to embody *yahguudang*, we can attempt to "unsettle the settler within" (Regan, 2010), embracing the opportunity to transform ourselves, as a crucial first step towards transforming our (Settler colonial) society. Through this process, we prepare ourselves for exploring Barker and Lowman's (2012) conceptual "space of dangerous freedom," where we can begin to re-imagine new possibilities for relationship with Indigenous People(s), founded upon ideas of resurgence, instead of

elimination, of Indigenous People(s) from the lands and waters that we all (legitimately or not) call home. In order to achieve real and lasting change, these actions and intentions need to be solidly rooted within a broader political context which requires the return of Indigenous Lands currently occupied by the Settler colonial state. Without addressing the repatriation of land, Settlers risk falling into the trap of Settler “moves to innocence” which allow us to avoid undermining and ultimately destroying the foundation of our comforts (Tuck & Yang, 2012). To genuinely live in *yahguudang* means striving to embody *yahguudang* in all our relations, while simultaneously refusing the logics of the Settler colonialism as the operating framework of our lives. I recognize that Haida Gwaii has its unique local context and protocols for expressing and living in *yahguudang*, and this study does not propose that Settler People(s) in other places across Turtle Island should understand their own experiences in terms of the ones presented here. However, by presenting some of the learnings that emerged out of this study, I hope to share my continued inspiration for, and insights about respectful relations, so that others may draw upon them as they journey along their own paths of learning and unlearning.

Upon completion of the thesis, I plan to share my final results publicly back to the Haida Gwaii community. The exact means for sharing the results will be determined in further consultation with my Haida Advisors to ensure that it is done in a way that respects the principles of reciprocity and relational accountability and furthers respectful relations (Carlson, 2016a; Chilisa 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Some preliminary ideas suggested to me during community consultations included using non-text visual communication tools that allow people to dialogue about issues without getting caught up in the English language, which was identified as having the potential for undermining trust that has already been developed in cross-

cultural relationships. This echoes Kovach's (2015) reflections on how language shapes the way that we think. It also speaks to her concerns about how the language of research can be powerful and pervasive, and used "as a tool by which a metanarrative of "truth" and "normalcy" is perpetually reproduced" (Kovach, 2015, p. 51). Other ideas for sharing the research findings included hosting a community dinner and initiating an event on Haida Gwaii Radio in order to reach a diverse audience of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Islanders. It was further recommended that I be cautious in my use of language and how I frame issues, as there is much grey area, where binaries such as "Indigenous" and "colonial" may not capture the experiences of Haida and Settler People(s) who may feel simultaneously connected or enmeshed in different cultural communities.

6.1. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

Haida oversight in this project was less than I had originally hoped for. In addition to the input received from various members of the Haida community, I would have liked to have had a single, designated Haida advisor who could have offered feedback and guidance in all of the project stages, from design through to presentation. This was not possible due to time constraints, as two of my potential advisors transitioned into new political leadership roles within the Haida community when this thesis began. In terms of further research, there may be opportunity to explore what kinds of processes and spaces could be locally perceived as being safe and relevant for Settlers to engage with the issue of respectful relations—spaces to learn more, but also to critically reflect on their identities and roles as Settlers on Haida Territory. There is also scope for further research into pedagogical practices that can catalyse Settler transformation on Haida Gwaii, as the islands' communities continue to engage with issues

related to Haida Title and explore models of cooperative governance and collaborative decision-making. Another possible area for further exploration is the issue of governance on Haida Gwaii with regards to the Settler population, within the broader context of Haida governance.

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Appendix A. Decolonizing This Thesis

1. Invite an advisor who can provide a Haida perspective/ Haida oversight

- Invite input into the research objectives, design and methodology
- Invite input into how this research can contribute to / benefit the Haida Nation (i.e. feed into something longer-term/ bigger picture)
- Invite advice re: appropriate protocols to follow at various stages of research (project proposal, research, writing, presenting results)
 - Council of the Haida Nation Research Permit Application
- Invite advice re: appropriate contacts within the Haida community to seek input into project, both informal and formal – especially re: exploring opportunities to enable this research to contribute to the Haida nation
- Provide oversight from a Haida perspective
- The working relationship will depend on the individual and how they would like to participate. I anticipate that it will likely be a relatively informal one with possibly heavier involvement during the planning stage, followed by regular opportunities for updates and feedback, and then again, heavier involvement near the end, with ideas re: how to share the findings more widely with the Haida community in order to benefit the Haida Nation

2. Invite Haida perspectives into my planning and research process

with the goal of gaining Haida perspectives into:

- how this research can contribute to / benefit the Haida Nation
- whether this research is perceived as valuable or relevant from a Haida perspective

- how this research can be decolonized and/or made more valuable /relevant to the Haida Nation
- Plan to meet with individuals/organizations informally to invite input. Focus on community leaders within the Haida community who can provide a Haida perspective on my approach and/or connect me to new contacts. Also consider long-time allies to the Haida Nation who may be able to provide valuable insight into ways that I might decolonize my approach and/or connect me to new contacts:

3. Seek to understand Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, teachings and languages

- be open to other ways of knowing and other ways of being, other ways of communicating and other ways of learning, in all my interactions during this learning journey
- take initiative to learn from individuals willing to share their knowledge with me, acknowledge and appreciate always
- educate myself about colonialism and approaches and objections to the concepts of post-colonialism and decolonization
- educate myself about Indigenous methodologies
- educate myself about Indigenous resurgence

(initial proposed reading list)

4. Situate myself within my research

- with honesty and integrity—be transparent about my intentions; be an ethical researcher while doing ethical research
- acknowledge the epistemological and ontological foundations that I stand on

5. Approach my research with reciprocity in my heart

- Always be asking myself: “How can I give back to the community in which I am doing my research?”, and “How can my research be made to benefit the community in which I am doing my research?”, recognizing that I am a Settler on the Traditional Territory of the Haida
- Maintain an attitude of reciprocity throughout the entire project, including planning, research, and results sharing phases—if I am taking (learning, gaining new knowledge), ensure that I am giving back (contributing to better understanding, respectful relations)
- Commit time and energy to planning for the ‘results sharing’ at the end of the research process—can this thesis feed into, and/or enable something else, that contributes to community well-being on Haida Gwaii, beyond the life of this study

6. Be cautious and avoid extractive attitudes and practices

- Always be asking myself “If I am taking, is it in order to give back?”
- Ensure clear communication about my intentions around research findings
- Ensure clear communication about ownership of data (interview texts) throughout process
- Maintain integrity throughout

Appendix B. Meaning Units (Themes) with Examples from Participant Statements

Meta-Theme: *Yahguudang* – Respect

“the most important single thing on Haida Gwaii is *yahguudang*... And I mean that in both respect for this place...and respect for these people... and respect for the other life forms...”

“it’s about how you carry yourself, how you treat everyone you interact with”

“Everywhere you go is someone’s home, and if you don’t understand what that story is like...before you go, then how can you do it respectfully”

Theme 1: Humility

i. Deep Listening

“It’s about listening, it’s about not speaking over.”

“The eyes and the body language are more honest than the words... You need to understand your own body language.

“It takes time to understand each other and to be able to read each other.”

ii. Way of being

“Recognizing that there’s, there’s beliefs beyond what you know, there’s teachings beyond what you could ever imagine, and you’re never done learning.”

“It’s emotional work...and it’s challenging. You get vulnerable... but you’re just a tiny little speck in it all... We do what we can. (pause) (intake of breath) (pause) And...for me, I see it as (sigh) just being a small part in something that’s a lot bigger than me.”

“If I didn’t have the ability to think outside of myself, you know ... take myself out of that picture, and look at it, from a different perspective, then that might be really hard.”

“being informed and being willing to accept that your opinion is not as important as what the communities that you’re trying to be informed about, are telling you”

iii. Embracing Difference

“She promised to tell her truth, only her truth, and nothing but the truth, but it may not be your truth.”

“Be comfortable operating in ambiguity.”

“We thought very, very similarly in most ways, and really differently on some other things that really helped us gel. It was the differences that made us more effective than the similarities.”

iv. Non-Entitlement

“It’s very important to come here without a sense of entitlement and to have respect, but that doesn’t build a meaningful relationship...I have to be able to disagree with people when I need to, but knowing where my biases are, or where my privileges lie, recognizing those.”

“Meanwhile there’s all this other stuff that’s happening...it’s none of our business, and it shouldn’t be written and published about... and people who come here, you have to have, or respect that that happens.”

Theme 2: Acknowledgement

i. Colonialism

“I think there’s lots of things that sometimes make life here hard. And understanding the roots of why that’s hard, and some of that’s my own baggage, and some of it is like, you know, other people’s own personal baggage, and other parts of it are sort of these

...systemic experiences like inter-generational traumas as a result of residential schools and colonization. ... some of the things play out in day to day life, and it's important to be mindful of that.”

“What’s been missing from the conversation in anti-oppression work for a very long time is that all of this is happening in a context of colonization.”

“The residential schools and the 60s scoop took people out of the community. Out of their homes. Out of families; out of all their relationships. Where you learn things, and it replaced that with something else, that was learned. And...that’s bound to affect politics... and people’s sense of what’s possible.”

ii. Title

“Haida Nation has occupied this Territory for thousands of years, holds hereditary Title, derived their relationship of people and place; the government of British Columbia and Canada have wrongfully granted rights to outside interests to exploit the lands and water”

“I’m a guest here. (pause) I’m living on unceded Territory.”

“We respect and understand your Title to this land. And we understand and respect the hereditary responsibility to look after it. And we will help.”

Theme 3: Responsibility

i. Self-reflection and awareness

“all of those attitudes form something about how you engage with people...It is very individual...but also part of that relationship is acknowledging the systemic forces that...influence our place, and our society and our context, and what things might make the relationship unbalanced”

“I never went back and checked to see if something I knew was still true.”

“I mean I’m working for organizations full of people, for people, that have been through colonialism, that the government wanted wiped off the face of this earth. And church. And state. And (slight pause) if I’m not going to be resilient through my little White privilege challenges, what the f--- is my excuse?”

ii. **Education**

“I think a lot of people who have come here, or even been raised here who are non-Haida...they still have very little knowledge around colonialism, ...There’s still...lots of assumptions, that do not recognize the societal dominance in everything we do, of non-First Nations culture. And uhm, (pause) I think, we all need to work at trying to explain that.”

“My friends were going to those schools....How did we not know? There was evidence everywhere! But I guess the truly blind man, is he who won’t look.”

“It’s really important that you learn about the culture you’re sharing, or, that’s being shared with you. And you do the work.”

Theme 4: Reciprocity

“figure out how you can be part of the solution. If you don’t, you’re liable to accidentally end up part of the problem.”

“If they can go through what they’ve gone through and come out the other end, I either need to step up or f--- off.”

“I feel I’ve been taught so much living here. (intake of breath) That if I don’t, if I don’t (pause) reflect the values of the land where I live, then I shouldn’t be living here.”