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PART I

PASTS AND FUTURES
I

An Introduction
to Haida Future-Making
in Old Massett

The Back Road

There are two main roads in Old Massett. Formally, they are named Raven Road and Eagle Road, so named for the two Haida “sides”—“moieties,” in anthropological parlance—but most often people just call them the front road and the back road. The front road faces Masset Inlet, small dips allowing vehicles egress onto the rocky beach to unload boats for fishing. You can’t miss the front road if you’re driving along the road from the small Masset airport as the highway becomes Raven past the “Welcome to Old Massett” sign that marks the entrance to the Old Massett reserve. If you kept driving along that front road, you’d soon find Christian White’s longhouse, marked by two large poles, where the Tluu Xaadaa Naay dancers practise and perform. The poles are weathered, carved with animals and figures that sometimes represent particular clans’ crests and other times are simply drawn from Haida stories and histories. Passing Christian’s longhouse, sooner or later you’d hit the fire hall and the youth centre, nestled close together, the eagle and raven designs painted on the youth centre’s entrance still fresh from their application in 2013. But let’s turn up instead, at the first right turn we can, and head along the back road, indicated by a small white road sign that displays the road’s name—Eagle Road—in English and Haida. There’s no official place to park by that turnoff, but one can get away with leaving one’s vehicle parked in an out of way the spot by the side of the road, at least for a little while. Walking along there are houses, some beautiful and well appointed, others run
down, a handful even vacant. While about a third are multi-floor affairs that seem spacious, many are smaller, almost squat one-story homes. There’s no sidewalk on the back road, so you walk by the side of the road, along the edge of the asphalt and occasionally veer into peoples’ lawns if there’s traffic. It’s probably windy. There’s often rain.

The back of Christian’s longhouse, which our route passes by, is less impressive than its front, a big patch of dirt that gets unimaginably muddy when the rain gets bad. Christian’s carving shed is to the left and the unadorned back entrance to the longhouse stands unobtrusively at the edge of the patch. There’s usually a few trucks parked there, but when there’s a “do” at the longhouse the entire area fills up fast. Keep walking, and we hit the Old Massett Village Council Band Office and Community Hall, “the Hall” for short, with its beautiful dark wood walls and huge sloping roofs. Walking inside, flanked again by two carved poles, there’s a large open space that doubles as a site for almost all the larger community events and dinners and the only gymnasium on the reserve. Painted at the centre of the floor – where the teams tip-off during basketball games – is the double-headed eagle and raven logo of the Haida Nation. Immediately next door to the Hall is the Chief Matthews School, where I volunteered just about every weekday (and the odd Saturday) of my fieldwork. It’s a large, flat building, whose design evokes longhouse architecture, with large windows encircling the building. The entrance is marked with a small carved pole, excellent for hide and seek, and an elaborately etched granite wall. When the kids aren’t playing, huge ravens hop around in the school’s fields, and their croaks can be heard long after we move away from the school building.

Walking past Chief Matthews, whose small stretch of sidewalk ends quickly, we pass by more residences, a few with elaborately maintained lawns, others overgrown with grass. A car or two might pass by, slowing down to make sure there’s no risk to us walkers, maybe stopping to say hello if the driver knows us, maybe driving along with a sidelong look at the strangers. Our walk has already taken a good half hour, but if we’re thirsty, there’s a pop machine humming outside one of the houses – though its prices are a bit steep – or there’s the gas bar, which has a small convenience store attached. As far as I know, the red “Haida parking only” sign in the window is not an enforced policy, though I’ve never tested it. Across the road there’s another gas station, but this one’s not operating and its windows are boarded up. The sound of dogs barking inevitably accompanies this stretch of the walk, and if you are unlucky a dog may run into the street after you to make it clear that it is defending its home or just to say
“hi,” a fact that can be nerve-wracking either on foot or while driving. At the home stretch now, we pass the Anglican church, built again in the style of a longhouse, its entrance kitty-corner to another massive carved pole. Then the road dips down a small hill, past a pinked-roofed bed and breakfast, a large grassy field (some plastic playground equipment tucked neatly away in its northeast corner), a small abandoned building with a sign that says “museum” out front, and Sarah’s, another longhouse that sells local art and all manner of Haida-related books, from the scholarly to the touristy – the most unexpected of which, for me personally, are the multiple copies of Franz Boas’s *Primitive Art*. Finally, the asphalt street gives way to dirt as the back and front roads join at a wooded entrance that leads first to the Old Massett cemetery and eventually into a series of forest paths that open onto different parts of the beach. But it’s been a long walk already, at least an hour from one end of the back road to the other, and we’ve seen half the town.

And yet, before the 1980s, there was no back road in Old Massett. This came as a shock when David Armstrong mentioned it to me offhandedly during an interview one afternoon.¹ For more than a year, my spatial orientation to the reserve had been shaped by its two roads: front and back. It seemed to make so much sense. For one thing, the living arrangement of my friends and acquaintances seemed pretty equally split between the two roads, and the reserve’s community spaces were likewise evenly scattered, even perhaps slightly favouring the back road. The two roads were even named Raven and Eagle, complementary, both halves together making up the community. But Eagle, the back road, was new, relatively speaking. In our interview David Armstrong described moving back to Old Massett around twenty years ago and being among the first to build a house on the back road. He gestured at the road through his kitchen windows, at the more than fifty houses that ran alongside it. “All this was empty. This is new.”

Old Massett is not, in other words, a static space, no matter how well the shape of the reserve currently appears to “fit” with either my own understandings of community layout or the particularities of Haida culture; instead it is a dynamic and shifting social landscape. Chief Matthews School was built in the mid-1990s, for instance, as an alternative to children on the reserve being sent to elementary school in the neighbouring Village of Masset, historically a settler community. Christian’s longhouse also dates from around that same time, its weather-beaten quality coming from the strong winds and steady rains of Old Massett’s coastal climate rather than any extreme age.² Indeed, the oldest carved pole currently standing in the
village – the pole that stands outside the church – was carved by Robert Davidson and raised a mere forty-five years ago (Davidson 2009); however, this pole is still older than the church building itself, which was rebuilt according to its current design after the old church, which had a more conventionally “Western” architecture, burned down in the 1970s.

So, too, the many “squat” homes that line both sides of Eagle Road are the product of recent history: in the early 1980s, the Canadian federal government passed Bill C-31, amending the Indian Act, which governs Native status in Canada, so as to allow Native women who married non-Native men and the children thereof to retain their Indian Status and band memberships. This meant that Canadian reserves experienced a sudden influx of new residents, who, for the first time since their marriage or birth, had a legal right to live on their band’s reserve and who received small grants in order to build homes there. Many of the houses on the back road stem from this moment in history, and a carpenter friend told me that the squat houses were the ones that could be built for precisely forty thousand dollars, the amount of said grant. Even the vacant houses and overgrown lawns have their own particular trajectories, most of them the property of Old Massett band members currently pursuing their careers or education outside Old Massett but who, it is commonly understood, will return home sooner or later.

As the strange promise of these seemingly abandoned houses indicates, the back road, like Old Massett itself, is shot through with multiple social projects that operate at multiple temporalities. There is no homeostasis here. Instead, Old Massett is very much “in process”; indeed, it is in the midst of many processes. And, crucially, these are social and cultural processes whose temporal horizons are not circumscribed by past or present alone; rather, they are more often anticipatory, aspirational, and predictive. In fact, there are very few moments of social life in which Old Massett’s Haida residents are not in some sense concerned with, perhaps even anxious about, what possible futures should be manifested in their community and what futures should be avoided. The “surprise” of the back road is that, despite appearances, it is ongoing. Its squat houses speak to a moment when the population of the reserve shifted radically, necessitating and anticipating new terms of inclusion (and exclusion) that are still being worked out. Its absent sidewalks are an index of the dilemma of finding funding for small municipal projects on reserve, its overgrown lawns a signal of population movement and (at least) the promise of return. Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii, in the first instance, is concerned with these ongoing temporalities of life in Old Massett and, especially, with the fact of
their futurity, the ways in which the community’s Haida residents negotiate the complexities and ambiguities of the present through producing (and, at times, foreclosing) possible futures.

Rethinking Haida Futures

The ongoing reality of Haida future-making is especially significant because, from a colonial perspective, the community of Old Massett itself was not understood to possess any future at all. Although Haida people have been living in the Masset area since time immemorial, Old Massett as such, a colonially delimited Haida First Nation reserve, administered by the Old Massett Village Council, only came into existence in the late nineteenth century after smallpox and other introduced diseases had decimated the Haida population. Prior to this, individual Haida clans had made their homes in their traditional territories all over the island archipelago of Haida Gwaii, moving back and forth from fishing and resource-gathering camps in the summer to larger villages in the winter for feasting and ceremonies. Old Massett was simply one of these villages, *Uttewas*, “White Slope Town” (Stearns 1981, 35), which, like its neighbours, was the rightful territory of a particular Haida clan. These lifeways were radically transformed after disease claimed the lives of, at a conservative estimate, over 80 percent of the Haida population, eliminating entire generations and reducing many clans to a handful of members. Unable to continue living in their respective territories, the remaining pockets of Haida survivors “nucleated,” to borrow Boelscher’s phrase, into two communities: (1) the town that became Old Massett on the north end of Haida Gwaii’s largest island and (2) Skidegate to the south. In 1876, the Anglican missionary William Collison founded a mission in the Masset area, and, in 1882, the area was allocated to the new, colonially constituted Masset Band by the Joint Reserve Commission headed by Peter O’Reilly (Boelscher 1988, 13). By 1910, Masset had become the seat of the Queen Charlotte Indian Agency (Brink 1974, 100) and the islands had become the “Queen Charlotte Islands,” claimed by Canada as Crown land, upon which Haida people had been allocated a handful of reserves, a tiny fraction of the total territory their ancestors occupied before the turn of the twentieth century (Boelscher 1988, 13; Harris 2002).

At the time, these events fit into a predictable colonial narrative. Or, rather, a colonial narrative of prediction. It was common knowledge at the turn of the twentieth century in settler North America that Native peoples were vanishing. Their inevitable, eventual disappearance was taken
for granted, shaping Canadian federal “Indian” policies and popular representations of Indigenous peoples alike. Take, for instance, Duncan Campbell Scott’s poem “The Onondaga Madonna,” first published in 1898:

She stands full-throated and with careless pose,
This woman of a weird and waning race,
The tragic savage lurking in her face,
Where all her pagan passion burns and glows;
Her blood is mingled with her ancient foes,
And thrills with war and wildness in her veins;
Her rebel lips are dabbled with the stains
Of feuds and forays and her father’s woes.

And closer in the shawl about her breast,
The latest promise of her nation’s doom,
Paler than she her baby clings and lies,
The primal warrior gleaming from his eyes;
He sulks, and burdened with his infant gloom,
He draws his heavy brows and will not rest.

(Scott 1898, 15)

Scott’s poem figures typical settler representations of Aboriginality and its already foreclosed temporality. Her race is “weird and waning,” her nation doomed, and, though her “pagan passion” still “burns and glows,” its end is inevitable, its tragic savageness “lurking” in her face. The Onondaga Madonna and her child were remnants of a time past, the “primal warrior gleaming from his eyes” only an echo of “ancient” feuds, forays, and woes. It is telling that Scott’s poem does not offer any reason why the Onondaga Madonna’s nation should be doomed; it is, rather, a taken-for-granted dimension of the poem’s narrative. For Scott, the Native “race” was disappearing, whether this be through the literal deaths brought by colonial violence and colonially introduced diseases or the “cultural death” of assimilation into settler society. Aboriginals, at least as such, had no future (see, e.g., Byrd 2011, chap. 1; Wakeham 2008, chap. 2).

And there is more to this than poetic narratives of inevitable Indigenous disappearance. In this sense it is worth remembering that, alongside his literary work, Duncan Campbell Scott was also deputy superintendent of Indian affairs in Canada from 1913 to 1932. In that capacity, Scott championed departmental policies and programs designed to ensure the “assimilation” of Aboriginal subjects into Canadian settler society. Here, for
instance, are Scott’s views on a bill proposed in the early 1920s that would allow for the immediate enfranchisement of First Nations individuals at the cost of their Indian Status and any rights deriving therefrom:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point. 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 and that is the whole object of this Bill. (Scott, quoted in Titley 1986, 50)

In other words, far from passively mourning the loss of an already doomed, “weird and waning race,” Scott formed part of a colonial apparatus that was explicitly attempting to make Native people disappear. Particularly devastating among the policies and programs championed by Scott was the residential schools program, under the auspices of which Aboriginal children were taken from their families and brought to Christian-operated boarding schools where, it was claimed, they would be “elevated from their condition of savagery” in anticipation of their becoming “citizen[s] in good standing” (Milloy 1999, 3). The violence and abuses of this attempt to “get rid of the Indian Problem” are now notorious in Canada (Miller 1996; Milloy 1999; Weiss 2015).

While Duncan Campbell Scott’s poetry may seem archaic and outdated today, the ideas he championed both artistically and as a policy maker remain with us, particularly the pressing anxiety regarding the “problem” that Indigenous peoples pose for settler Canada. Consider as illustration a recent article in the National Post collating responses from Post readers all over Canada to a distinctly Scottian prompt: “Ideas for Solving the ‘Native [sic] Issue.’” While some responses critiqued the Post’s premise (e.g., “We will have to stop using inane, simplified and misleading phrases like ‘the Native issue’”) or asserted the need to recognize Aboriginal sovereignty and self-determination, many others accepted the basic idea of a “Native problem” in Canada that required settler intervention to solve, and they responded accordingly. Some posited assimilation as the solution, positioning the repeal of the Indian Act and the “integration” of Native people into “mainstream, multicultural Canadian society” as a way of effectively “dealing with the mess that First Nations Peoples find themselves in.” Others accused First Nations chiefs and leaders of corruption, asserting that the “future leaders” of Indigenous communities needed to leave the “ghettoes called reservations” in order to be properly educated.
for the task of governance. Here a few of these responses, quoted in full with my own emphases:

1. Their problems will only be resolved when the aboriginals themselves remove their fate from the moribund hands of “traditional” chiefs and elders, à la Theresa Spence, whose aspirations are mired in a failed way of life and elect young, intelligent, educated leaders who, while revering the traditions of their heritage, will replace the current hopelessness with a meaningful present and modern, worthwhile future within a co-operative, partnered Canada.

2. A good place to start is to stop. Stop playing the victim card. It’s getting a bit frayed. Stop token mea culpas over how one community’s great-great-grandparents were cruel and insensitive to another community’s great-great-grandparents. Stop the blame game; as in, “my problems must be someone else’s fault.” Stop putting off the time when all Canadians have the same status, the same rights and responsibilities, the same privileges and obligations.

3. Although Canada’s natives and Israel’s haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews) have two totally different cultures, there are some similarities between them. They both want to preserve their traditional way of life; many natives live in reserves, the insular haredim live segregated from other Jews, and there is high unemployment for both. The cash spigots of both the Canadian and Israeli governments are never shut off for both groups. The result: unaccountability, fraud and corruption. The solution: never mollycoddle any minority.

4. Start with the elimination of guilt. This inherited relationship is not of our making. Assimilation is not genocide; it is evolutionary, progressive, positive and a desirable outcome that creates free-thinking, life-fulfilling citizens that will venerate their culture and heritage. I propose that “The National Indian Reconciliation Conference” creates, in one year, a modern relationship of shared responsibilities. Who would not want to participate in this joyous rebirth?

Note the distinct temporal logic present in each of these reader comments. “Traditional” Native political structures are “moribund,” “mired in a failed way of life”; accusations of cruelty are relevant only to the distant past of “great-great-grandparents”; a “traditional way of life” is something that is merely “preserved.” In each instance, distinct cultural, social, and political dimensions of Canada’s First Peoples are figured as static and atavistic, obstacles to prosperity and progress, contributing factors to
“current hopelessness.” The corollary, as we’ve already seen with Duncan Campbell Scott, is a vision of a “modern, worthwhile future” located within settler Canada, a future that is given as inevitable – an assumption that is clearly visible in the injunction to “stop putting off the time when all Canadians have the same status, the same rights and responsibilities, the same privileges and obligations.” Note also the ways in which this temporal logic enables the ostensibly “unchanging” quality of Indigenous “traditions” to be located as a source of Aboriginal suffering, a millstone that prevents Native people from achieving their “evolution” as “free-thinking, life-fulfilling citizens.” Such temporal atavism almost seems to cry out for settler intervention, characterized as modern, dynamic, and progressive. For many of the Post’s readers, then, the “Native problem” is the problem of a permanent pastness, one that must, eventually and inevitably, be superseded by settler Canadian modernity.7

These contemporary letter writers – and the subset of Canadians they represent – share with Duncan Campbell Scott and his Colonial Office the conviction that the ultimate disappearance of Indigenous peoples is predetermined. Whether through outright destruction or assimilation, the extinction of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples is taken – and thereby reiterated – as a sad but inevitable destiny. In the process, Canadian colonial policies and practices aimed at eradicating Aboriginal peoples are refigured into mere “responses” to an already given reality, as forms of settler compassion rather than as immeasurable, ethnocidal violence. This retroactive certainty that Indigenous peoples are always about to disappear forms part of the conceptual foundations of what an increasing number of scholars have termed “settler colonialism,” in reference to colonial states like Canada in which the goal of colonialism is to replace already-present Indigenous populations with a new, settler constituted polity (Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2010).8 Settler colonial logics characteristically fix the temporal relation of settler and Indigenous in the form of a mutual, albeit asymmetrical, anticipation: settler states always anticipate the elimination of the Native so that they can fully realize their project of replacement, while Indigenous peoples continue to exist only in advance of their eventual, inevitable existential erasure (Byrd 2011; Povinelli 2011). As Scott’s example shows, moreover, these logics effectively ideologically mask the violence of the actual settler colonial acts of erasure and replacement by making them appear as simple consequences of an already given reality, a fait accompli: the “truth” of Indigenous disappearance.

This is not to say that I believe that Duncan Campbell Scott deliberately wrote “The Onondaga Madonna” as an anticipatory justification of his
later policies as head of Indian affairs, nor that the letter writers to the *National Post* whom I have quoted necessarily intend to echo his beliefs and priorities so closely. Rather, these are epitomizing examples of a far broader set of settler colonial cultural and political understandings (Fogelson 1989) – understandings that fall more often into the taken-for-granted realm of “common sense” than into the realm of coherent and conscious formulation. Such understandings are not limited to Canada. Indeed, in his well-known critique of anthropology, *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian asserts that, over the course of colonial expansion, one of the preferred strategies of Western powers in their encounters with autochthonous body politics has been to assign “to the conquered population a different time” so as to avoid any cognitive dissonance as one population attempts to replace another (Fabian 2002, 30).

But, as Fabian also reminds us, temporal logics are not things. Rather, the way in which a given cultural order organizes temporality is by definition “necessary,” a basic element through which members of that culture understand the world rather than a conscious cognitive choice that can be subject to “recognition and denial” (34). Colonial strategies of domination, in other words, can, and do, transition gradually into taken-for-granted understandings of the world and the people within it. This is why, perhaps, the notion that there exists a fundamental division between so-called “traditional” and “modern” societies had become so normative throughout colonial worlds by the twentieth century. “Traditional” societies, of which Aboriginal nations are taken as exemplary, do not change; instead, they only reproduce themselves. This means that any shifts in traditional lifeways can be read as a loss of essence, a reduction in authentic “Nativeness” that leads ultimately to the disappearance of Native people as such (Raibmon 2005). “Modern” societies, by contrast, have change built into the narrative; they are “historical,” societies that “advance” through technological and social transformation. Indeed, this is the essence of the modernist notion of progress. Thus the “traditional” is destined to be replaced by the “modern,” and the political project of settler colonial replacement is refigured as ontological fact: the societies that can’t change are disappearing because change is inevitable. The ways in which such disappearances are in fact brought about by the actions of settler states and agents are thereby erased as motivating factors in the narratives.

According to this logic, the Old Massett reserve should have been a temporary space, its population “out of time” in both senses, at once removed from the flow of history and the endpoint of any distinctly Haida existence. This sense pervades Indian agent communications about the
community in the early twentieth century. For the Indian agents, as van
den Brink summarizes, there was a “certain sense of resignation” that “could be felt” among Old Massett’s Haida, that their character was “bad,” that they were “lazy” or, even more damningly, that “these Indians were satisfied to work minimally and did little to improve conditions on reserve” (Brink 1974, 139). Old Massett’s doom seemed palpable in the eyes of these Indian agents, who saw no future for a community unwilling to accept the terms of “civilized” labour, nor any issue with imposing these forms of labour, which were seen as the only determinants of what constituted productive work, on the Haida community. And yet the Haida of Old Massett stubbornly refused to disappear. Quite the opposite, in fact. From its nadir of fewer than a hundred individuals at the turn of the twentieth century, the population of Old Massett has grown exponentially, with 694 Haida currently residing on the reserve and more than two thousand Old Massett band members living elsewhere. Nor has this population been “satisfied to work minimally,” though this “work” has not always been legible (or legitimate) in the eyes of the colonial administration. Among many other things, Old Massett has been a central participant in the politics of sovereignty and Native rights over the course of the twentieth century, from being a hub of the Native brotherhood mid-century (Brink 1974, 139; Tennant 1990) to its residents’ active participation in the Haida Nation’s blockade of logging on Lyell Island in 1984 and the Council of the Haida Nation’s ongoing land title case. The community has been and remains home to some of the most influential Indigenous artists in North America, to Haida nurses and teachers, lawyers, businesspeople and politicians, commercial fishers and resource workers, scholars, storytellers and writers. And there’s always that second road, a commitment to the continuing possibility for the growth of Old Massett and a response to its demographic demands, expansion as opposed to disintegration, at once real and aspirational.

The fact of Haida growth alone, however, does not dispel the settler expectation of Indigenous disappearance. How could it? The field of possibilities granted within the traditional/modern binary allows for only two readings of Aboriginal community development: (1) the people of Old Massett are merely “putting off the inevitable,” attempting to “preserve themselves” in a form as close to their “traditional” past as possible even though this is an effort that is, by definition, unrealizable due to the cataclysmic changes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; or (2) they have embraced these changes and, indeed, “change” as such, and are thereby slowly but inexorably assimilating into Canadian settler society, thus moving
from “traditional” into “modern.” In either case, the only future open to Haida is to disappear, encompassed both literally and figuratively by the settler colonial nation-state.

The most fundamental contention of *Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii* is that this is not the only future for Old Massett and for Haida people. And this not just in the sense that other futures are possible on Haida Gwaii, although they certainly are; rather, I contend that Haida people are actively engaged in the process of imagining, negotiating, and constituting these possible futures both for themselves and for the larger social world(s) of settler Canada. The acts of Haida future-making that I explore are multiple, sometimes even contradictory. There is no single, unified “Haida future” in Old Massett that can be juxtaposed against the colonial forecast of Haida disappearance. And this is crucial. Unlike, for instance, Jonathan Lear’s sketch of Crow life after colonial devastation, the future in Old Massett has neither “collapsed” nor is it being held in abeyance until the “old ways” can be brought back (Lear 2006, 52). Instead, what is most radical about Haida future-making is precisely the proliferation of possible futures – some aspirational, others critical, some hoped for, others dreaded – that are at work in Old Massett. More, this work of future-making acts as a resource for the present, a field of potentialities to be selectively materialized or rejected by different Haida actors according to their own particular social and individual goals, ideals, anxieties, and so on.

This is also to say that there is more at stake in the work of future-making than the futures themselves. We have already seen the extent to which the negation of an Indigenous capacity to generate new and ongoing temporalities is crucial to the work of settler colonial replacement. In working to open up futures, in negotiating a field of possible outcomes, some desirable, others disastrous, I contend that Haida people are actively retaking control of their own temporalities. Indeed, as I show, they are asserting the capacity to determine possible futures for settler as well as Haida subjects, fundamentally inverting the order of colonial temporality. Each chapter examines a particular dimension of this work of temporal reclamation, demonstrating how Haida people assert critical control over their pasts and their presents through the work of producing their futures. In so doing, they explode the foreclosures of settler colonial expectations, envisioning – and materializing – a fundamentally open field of Haida (and Canadian) futures.

What follows, then, is a necessarily partial and selective ethnography of Haida future-making. I make no claim to be able to fully represent the diversity of ways in which Haida people in Old Massett work with, on,
and in response to their possible futures; indeed, their proliferation makes such an attempt unfeasible at best. My goal, rather, is to show the significance of Haida futurity for life in the present through an exploration of four important (and interrelated) instances of future-making in Old Massett and the modes of temporal assertion they represent. This effort comprises Chapters 3 to 6 of this text, following Chapter 2’s outline of the everyday temporalities of life in Old Massett. In order to lay the groundwork for this ethnographic work, I now offer a schematic account, first, of how I use future-making as an analytic and the stakes of discussing temporality within a settler colonial context; second, of my methodology and its relation to the ways in which Haida people are actively asserting control over the often fraught categories of “culture” and “tradition”; and, third, of the chapters that follow.

Temporal Foreclosures and Futures Present

Time and Deferral under Settler Colonialism

One of the primary interventions Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii makes is into the ongoing strategy of temporal deferral that, I argue, characterizes settler colonialism. This deferral may be understood as a kind of corollary to the banishment of Native peoples into the futureless past that characterizes both historical and contemporary discourse in Canada. Put concisely, I contend that, in order to legitimize themselves as “modern” nation-states, settler colonies require their Indigenous populations to be always on the verge of disappearing. To develop this contention, it is useful to turn to the works of recent scholars in anthropology and Indigenous studies who explore the characteristic temporal forms of settler states.13

In 2011’s Economies of Abandonment, Elizabeth Povinelli suggests, following Foucault, that, “as democracy fitfully expanded across Europe and European conquest across the globe,” a particular way of thinking about time developed in which “the truth of some would increasingly be judged in a past perfect being – their already having been, or their potential to stop being what they are in essence – while the truth of others would be judged from their potentiality” (Povinelli 2011, 27). According to this temporal logic, which Povinelli terms “late liberal,” the “futures of some, or the hopes that they have for their future, can never be a future,” while others are evaluated solely in terms of a future they have yet to realize. This is no innocent distinction. Instead, as Povinelli asserts, it makes possible a deferral of ethical accountability in which, for some, “no matter what harms they do, the truth of those harms is deferred into the future.
What is happening isn’t happening because it is what it will have been when the last man has his say” (28).

This late liberal deferral, Povinelli suggests, is embedded within the political and economic forms that characterize globalized capitalism in general and contemporary colonial nation-states in particular. Indeed, it makes these forms ethically thinkable in the face of the “challenge of social difference” to liberal governmentality:

From the 1950s onward, and culminating in the dramatic world events of 1968, anticolonial and new social movements transfigured the prior way in which liberalism governed alternative forms of life by putting extreme pressure on its legitimating framework – imperial acts of paternalist and civilizational governance. Anticolonial and new social movements refigured these paternalistic arts of civilizational care into acts of colonial domination and dispossession. (25)

In response to the crises of legitimacy engendered by this challenge, “state after state” instituted policies of “cultural recognition” in order to maintain their legitimacy as governing bodies (25). Such policies purport to “recognize” cultural difference as valid and integral to the contemporary, cosmopolitan nation, but they do so only in terms that are politically and epistemologically acceptable to the state. In this way, “multicultural” states attempt to limit or control the capacity for “policultural” differences – to borrow the language of Jean and John Comaroff – that unsettle settler society or state legitimacy, such as Indigenous claims to territory and political self-determination (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003). As Povinelli makes clear, the temporal dichotomies and deferrals of late liberalism form a major dimension of this “defensive” process of recognition.

Though Povinelli takes her examples largely from Australia, the critique that colonial policies of “recognition” in fact mask strategies through which the settler state can undermine the political autonomy and cultural integrity of First Nations has also been made more directly about Canada, particularly in Glen Coulthard’s Red Skin, White Masks (Coulthard 2014) and Paul Nadasdy’s Hunters and Bureaucrats (Nadasdy 2003). Both authors make clear that “recognition” is more than a political project in Canada; it is, rather, a moral and ethical one, a complex through which Canadian state and legal actors can evaluate whether or not Indigenous people have the “correct” political training and moral values. In the process, the power to evaluate moral and political legitimacy is retained by the colonial state in the very act of “recognizing” Indigenous political and social rights.
Such complex politics are especially resonant on Haida Gwaii, whose Indigenous governments have at times faced media accusations of poor decision making or improper governance, but they are consistent across Canada, often with the concomitant addition that non-Indigenous experts stand ready to assist and evaluate these “failing” Aboriginal leaders and communities. Coulthard is particularly frank about the politically disempowering effects that this “cunning of recognition” has on Canadian Aboriginal communities, suggesting that, until First Nations cease to value and aspire to such recognition, they will be unable to achieve true political or cultural autonomy from settler Canada.

There are parallels here with Povinelli’s own analysis of recognition in Australia, which makes clear that the Australian state retains control of what constitutes acceptable Aboriginal culture and what does not (and is therefore viewed as repugnant) (Povinelli 2002). In each case, this “cunning of recognition” makes it seem natural that Indigenous populations should require the continuing governance (read: domination) of a settler society that is defined by its seeming commitment to the realization of an idealized future of liberal freedom. The political project of settler occupation can thus continue to appear as the mere effect of an essential, epistemological difference between colonizers who produce the future and colonized who depend on a repugnant past. Still more devastatingly, the particular temporal quality of late liberal deferral means that liberal states have no need to account for their actions in the present, however brutal, because these actions can always be seen as being “retroactively justified” by their contribution to the realization of an idealized future perfect, a future that always already will have been (Povinelli 2011, esp. chaps. 1–2).

While Povinelli’s argument is focused primarily on the last fifty years of liberal governance, the strategy of deferral she outlines has a longer history. Jodi Byrd argues not only that Indigenous people continue to be “located outside temporality and presence, even in the face of the very present and ongoing colonization of Indigenous lands and resources” (Byrd 2011, 6) but also that this deferral “into a past that never happened and a future that will never come” provides the “ontological and literal ground” for settler governance, epistemology, and its original and ongoing imperial and colonial projects (221). The rendering of Indigenous populations “out of time” can thus be seen as one of the central and foundational axes of the settler project, just as its maintenance is required both for ongoing settler colonial legitimacy and as a conceptual precondition for further expansions, both conceptual and actual. Povinelli terms this same complex “the governance of the prior,” invoking both the logic of “priority”
of settler subjects over Indigenous peoples and the rendering temporally “prior” of Indigenous existence in the face of settler occupation. In adopting this double logic as “the legitimate foundation of governance,” Povinelli writes, “the settler state projected those who already inhabited the land before the settlers’ arrival as spatially, socially and temporally ‘before’ – before it in a temporal sequence and before it as a fact to be faced” (Povinelli 2011, 36).

Following Povinelli and Byrd, then, we can see deferral as one of the constitutive elements of settler colonialism. More than just a strategy, deferral makes possible the conceptualization of settler nationhood as an ongoing project that can sustain the continuing presence of Indigenous peoples with prior claims to land and resources. It defuses (or, at least, attempts to defuse) the threat that is posed by these peoples both to the sovereign legitimacy of the colonial state and, still deeper, to the very conceptual coherence of settler nations as relatively politically and ethnically unified polities (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003). Deferral allows settler colonies to figure themselves in the future perfect, as projects that will have already been realized, bracketing the actual lived present (and presence) of Indigenous peoples – and their political and legal claims – as that which will eventually have ceased either to matter or to be matter (Butler 1993).

This structure of deferral is not limited to the more abstract horizons of settler colonial realization. Quite the opposite. We have already seen it in the policy-making work of figures like Duncan Campbell Scott, who operate under the assumption that Native peoples are inherently “doomed” to assimilate or to vanish, thus making it appear that their actions only hasten what is always already assumed to be true. Within the brackets of deferral, then, the lived realities, and imposed violence, of settler-Indigenous relations unfold, but stripped of their ethical significance, as if the attempted “erasure” of Indigenous peoples was an ontological inevitability rather than an ongoing project of the colonial state.

Reclaiming Time: Future-Making as Practice and Analytic

We should not, however, assume that colonial or liberal attempts at monopolizing the field of possible futures are always necessarily successful, even if they unfold hegemonically. Even the subtlest and most naturalized of hegemonies, as Jean and John Comaroff remind us, are “never total”; instead, the “hegemonic is constantly being made – and by the same token it may be unmade” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 25). Take, for instance, the future perfect, a grammatical tense that expresses the future as always
already determined and that figures heavily in colonial discourses of Indigenous disappearance. Because Indigenous people will disappear, in a sense they already have disappeared: in short, they will have disappeared. But the future perfect is not restricted to such hegemonic formulations; rather, this same tense is also drawn on by Haida actors in order to formulate trajectories of movement within the settler colonial landscape (see Chapter 3). This is, in other words, that strange promise expressed by those empty houses whose owners will always eventually come home to Old Massett. This future perfect promise echoes against settler colonial assurances of Indigenous disappearance, marking instead the possibility that Haida who leave the islands to pursue education and careers will inevitably return to Old Massett and put their new skills and experiences to work for the community’s benefit. In this example, we see how even something as essential to the structure of settler temporality as the future perfect can also be brought into other social worlds – worlds that speak precisely against the premise that Haida, like other First Peoples, are simply awaiting their own erasure.

Which is also to say that it is vitally important that, in making critiques of settler strategies – temporal and otherwise – we do not unintentionally replicate their terms and fix their objects in what Joel Robbins has called “the suffering slot,” a “figure of humanity united in its shared vulnerability to suffering” (Robbins 2013, 450). The goal of this book is explicitly not to suggest either that Haida people are abjected in the face of settler time or that their existence constitutes mere endurance within the brackets of liberal deferral. My purpose is, instead, to assert that Haida people are constituting a field of temporality whose horizons are open, even as they are shaped by tenses and tensions, even as they unfold under the shadow of a colonial erasure that is always possible but never certain.

Haida future-making, moreover, is a fundamentally social, political, and cultural activity, which we can understand, following Arjun Appadurai’s recent The Future as a Cultural Fact, as emerging within shared understandings and horizons of expectation. For Appadurai, future-making is shaped more specifically by “three notable human preoccupations: ... imagination, anticipation, and aspiration” (Appadurai 2013, 286). While the boundaries between these three preoccupations are not necessarily as clear as they may appear in Appadurai’s writing, he nonetheless usefully highlights the fact that the ideational dimensions of future-making are always to a certain extent specific and specified. This is to say that there are distinct ways – techniques, even – through which particular futures are rendered thinkable as futures, and these need not be uniform even within the boundaries of
individual communities (or individual consciousnesses). Appadurai points to two in detail: (1) “aspiration,” or “hope,” which he suggests is a “navigational capacity” through which “the poor” as subjects can imagine improved terms of interaction for themselves in relation to the structures of society, capitalism, globalization, colonial domination, and so on (289–93); and (2) “anticipation,” which he characterizes as more prognostic modes of attempting to predict potential futures based largely on statistical data (293–99).

Appadurai’s argument here takes on a somewhat Manichean character as he contrasts an “ethics of possibility” grounded in “hope” with an “ethics of probability” grounded in an overwhelmingly financialized program of anticipation (295). However, we need adopt neither this particular dichotomy nor Appadurai’s abiding emphasis on culturally defined visions of “the good life” as the necessary objects of future-making practices (293) in order to recognize that both aspiration and anticipation are important “methods,” to borrow Hirokazu Miyazaki’s language, through which possible futures are articulated and brought to bear as responses to conditions of the present (Miyazaki 2004, 2006). In Chapter 5, for instance, I show how the aspiration for a particular form of “care” in political leadership acts as the cornerstone of a call for accountability and coherence across the different forms of government to which Haida are subject. This aspiration, I argue, represents at once a critique of leadership in the present and a road map for how leadership should be (or at least could be) in the future. So, too, in Chapters 4 and 6, we see how the anticipation of potential ecological disaster on the islands of Haida Gwaii fuels a set of Haida social and political projects meant to ward off the nightmare future of environmental collapse.

As the above examples also demonstrate, future-making is not a purely ideational process. While they are certainly shot through with imagination, the acts of future-making I discuss are also always materialized (at least to a certain extent) through social practices. To give but a few examples, in Old Massett, fundraising, adoption, protest, even roofing all appear as sites through which particular futures are made simultaneously socially legible and actionable, whether as desired possibilities to be worked towards or as potential cataclysms to be avoided. Think here, too, of the back road, itself a visible sedimentation (if you know how to “look with your eyes,” as my host grandmother repeatedly scolded me) of multiple future-making projects, some ongoing, others stymied.

This has the further consequence of rendering the “present” in Old Massett as, in fact, a landscape of possible futures on the one hand and of
“futures past” on the other. The latter is a concept developed by Reinhart Koselleck, who suggests that any “given present” is itself a “superseded former future” (Koselleck 2004, 3). This has two consequences for my argument. The first, already discussed at length, is that the continuing existence of Haida people, like other First Peoples in Canada and Indigenous peoples globally, marks the colonial expectation of Indigenous disappearance as itself a superseded future, one that shadows ongoing Aboriginal social projects even as their very existence marks it as a future past and passed. Second, and equally significant, when taken to its logical conclusion, Koselleck’s argument suggests that, rather than the “present” being in any sense a cohesive temporal “state,” it is “heterotemporal,” as Shannon Dawdy might put it (Dawdy 2016), a striated moment in which multiple planes of the past and formations of the future intersect.

It is the second part of Koselleck’s argument that is particularly important for my own use of future-making as an analytic. In each chapter I consider a different such sociotemporal conjuncture in Old Massett, examining how particular Haida renderings of past(s) and future(s) are brought to bear on a particular concern in the present. “Future-making,” as I use it, thus includes not only various modes of imagining, anticipating, aspiring to, avoiding, structuring, and materializing possible futures but also ways of reading the past and refashioning the present “retroactively,” as it were, so as to align them with desirable futures and against undesirable ones. I have distinct sympathies here with the notion of Native “traditional futures” as articulated by Jace Weaver. Certainly, I share with Weaver the conviction that “Native peoples do not want to ‘conjure up a past and crawl into it.’ They live in the present and want to move into the future while maintaining what is best in their traditions” (Weaver 2007, 249–50). I think that the conventional temporality of “tradition” can be inverted, however. Rather than moving from the “traditional past” into the unknown future, Haida people are drawing just as much on possible futures as a way of interpreting the past, of clarifying what can be taken as “traditional,” and of marking the boundaries of what “fits” into ongoing Haida life. And I attempt to demonstrate at least a few of the ways in which they do this.

Culture and Tradition: Ethnographic Standpoints

At the end of one of my earliest interviews in Old Massett, “Lauren” and I were leaving the building where we’d spoken “on the record.” As we walked out, Lauren turned to me and told me, frankly: “You aren’t the
first, and you won’t be the last. No one else can save us, but we can’t really turn people away.” Lauren’s meaning, elaborated during our interview, was that Haida people should not depend, nor have to depend, on outsiders to be “saved.” Researchers come and go, taking advantage of Haida hospitality and generosity, but rarely do they make concrete contributions to the community. Worse, they leave and represent what it means to be Haida to the rest of the world, often without further consultations with those whom they are representing. They effectively wrest control of the terms of Haida culture from Haida people themselves, even if their efforts in so doing are well-meaning. Lauren’s sentiments were echoed by others in Old Massett, often summarized in the question: “What makes you different?”

I do not feel I’ve arrived at a satisfactory answer to that question over the course of my research and the writing of this book. But, equally, I do not think I should be able to neatly “resolve” what it means to be a non-Indigenous scholar working in a First Nations community within the complex context of settler colonial Canada. The challenge posed by Lauren and by others does, however, prompts serious and critical reflection on what it means, and what is has meant, to do anthropological research on Haida Gwaii. There are, I should make clear, certain tensions that are unavoidable in the writing of ethnography on the Northwest Coast. One emerges out of disciplinary history. The Northwest Coast is the site of much of founding Americanist anthropologist Franz Boas’s fieldwork, and from it have emerged some of the discipline’s classic questions on the nature of value, ritual, and rank and social class. The potlatch, in particular, has been the focus of tremendous analytic attention, and much ink has been spilled in the attempt to fix its multiple social roles for First Nations peoples themselves and its significance as a way of thinking about economy and cosmology more generally (e.g., Adams 1973; Bataille 1988; Boas and Hunt 1897; Bracken 1997; Codere 1950; Goldman 1981; Mauss 1990; Rosman and Rubel 1986; Suttles 1987).

The literature focused on Haida people has by and large followed this pattern, though John Swanton’s sensitive early attempts to present a Haida cosmology and worldview in what, I think, he took to be a fully emic way are deserving of note (Swanton 1905). What followed from Swanton has largely maintained his focus on the intersections of cosmology, art, ritual, and political structure (e.g., Murdock 1934, 1936) and perhaps, too, a similar sensitivity, as demonstrated especially by Margaret Blackman’s work with the late Haida elder Florence Davidson (Blackman 1992) and
Marianne Boelscher’s careful structural analysis of the negotiation of Haida rank and political status within the clan system (Boelscher 1988). But this very sensitivity to the detail of Haida culture as understood by the ethnographer is also, in a sense, problematic. Boelscher’s ethnography, for instance, though focused explicitly on “the dialectics of symbolic thought and politics” in Old Massett (10), contains scant mention of the Old Massett Village Council or the then emerging Council of the Haida Nation, thus restricting the field of Haida politics almost exclusively to interactions within the clan system, largely by elders. The ways in which this “traditional” dimension of Haida life necessarily intersect with the other concerns of life as lived in Old Massett, political and otherwise, are elided in such analyses, as are forms of Haida sociality that do not appear to be in continuity with precontact lifeways, even as such ethnographies offer ever more nuanced accounts of the particularities of culture on the Northwest Coast in dialogue with the vast literature focused upon them.

There is a real danger, then, that ethnography that begins with this rendering of “culture” as its object might inadvertently erase issues of serious significance to those under study, particularly in the context of ongoing settler domination and Indigenous anti-colonial political activity. Here the rich history of anthropology on the Northwest Coast, however important and sensitively rendered, can in fact act as a constraint upon possible research projects, limiting the questions posed and answers given to only one dimension of Indigenous life on the coast. Equally, it risks pushing ethnographers away from recognizing the complex ways in which Indigenous subjects themselves explicitly mark “traditional” concepts, values, and forms – and, for that matter, the notion of tradition itself – as part of their social projects and prospects.

As I have said, one of the central elements of settler imaginaries regarding Indigenous time is the conviction that Native peoples are overdetermined by a form of tradition that allows only the replication of static pasts and no form of dynamic change. Considered from the perspective of Haida future-making, however, conventional settler dichotomies between what is traditional and what is modern cease to make sense. Haida futures do indeed draw on long-standing historical, cultural forms, including moiety distinctions, clan hierarchies, resource-gathering practices, and ceremonial conventions, but they also draw on a myriad of other sites of social meaning of different time depths. There is nothing incoherent for my interlocutors in political future-making that weaves together liberal democratic aspirations and the complex notion of personal, social, and
ecological respect indicated by the Haida word *yah’gudaang*, to take but one example (see Chapter 5). Each can be equally understood as “Haida” insofar as they all form part of the structures of meaning that Haida people mobilize in imagining their futures and evaluating their present. Rather than a category of absolute constriction, then, or a “template” for repetition, tradition in this context can be better understood as a particular mode of potentiality in the context of many such modes – one whose complex, at times paradoxical, intersections both define and limn the field of possible Haida futures (Richland 2007, 2008).

Which is not to say that “tradition” as an explicit category is absent in Old Massett. Quite the opposite: what my interlocutors usually refer to as “traditional culture” is everywhere. Within this rubric can be found carving, weaving, and other traditional arts (see note 24 in Chapter 2) as well as “Haida dancing,” singing, storytelling, certain categories of major community events that include, most notably, potlatches and mortuary feasts, and even, to an extent, the learning of the Haida language itself. Such traditional practices are an integral dimension of Haida life, and for many community members they are key components of what constitutes their identity as Haida. To give just one example, the teaching of the Haida language and traditional forms of singing and dancing is a key reason for the popularity of the Chief Matthews School. And these modes of culture cannot be readily distinguished from either Haida economic practices or the political landscape of Haida Gwaii.

I do not, however, attempt to make interventions regarding what constitutes this traditional dimension of culture, though I am certainly interested in the ways in which it is deployed. The most significant reason for this is that I have been asked by a number of my colleagues in Old Massett not to do so. These requests speak to a number of different challenges in contemporary Indigenous life. One is the hyper-salience of such concepts as “tradition” and “culture” – or, perhaps, “Culture,” following Manuela Carneiro da Cunha’s proposed convention (Cunha 2009) – as tropes drawn on by Indigenous populations throughout the globe in furtherance of economic and political rights, benefits, and goals. These invocations are complex, at once reifying colonial preconceptions of Indigenousness while also mobilizing them towards Indigenous ends (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Niezen 2003). In the context of these challenging politics, the question of who has a right to “speak for” Indigenous culture is fraught and must, accordingly, devolve on Indigenous communities themselves. One can (and, I think, should) consider the requests I received not to attempt
to “perform” expertise about Haida traditional culture as themselves part of that project. They, too, are Haida assertions of their rights to determine the bounds of tradition and culture for themselves.

In order to begin to respectfully respond to these requests and to the broader inequalities regarding which Lauren challenged me, I attempt to pay careful attention to what Kim TallBear might characterize as the multiple “standpoints” that are present within a community and the different ways in which they solicit, figure, and/or refuse representation over the course of research and in academic texts (TallBear 2013, 23–25). As Lauren and others have made clear to me, it is not my place as a non-Haida researcher to attempt to speak from the standpoint of “Haida culture,” making claims as to what such culture is, isn’t, was, should, or will be (cf. Smith 1999). This “refusal,” in Audra Simpson’s sense (Simpson 2014, chap. 4), shapes my approach to questions pertaining to the cultural. What I attempt to do instead is to follow the terms through which my interlocutors frame their potential futures as they move in and out of the boundaries of what could be considered traditional, foregrounding distinct narratives of the Haida past and present as they emerge through the lenses of different modes of future-making. Rather than risk being overdetermined by the textual archive of received understandings of culture on the Northwest Coast, I approach Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii “naively,” guided by how Haida culture, politics, value, tradition, and temporality were represented to me over the course of my own fieldwork and my interviews, within rather than without the context of my relationships in Old Massett.

Two final, related caveats before moving on. The first is that the interviews I quote are subject to the oversight of the individuals being interviewed. The second is that the major concepts that I explore here are given in English as they were expressed to me, and, with one exception (in Chapter 5), I do not attempt to trace how they might relate to cognate words or concepts in Haida. In large part because of the Canadian settler state’s sustained attack on Aboriginal languages over the course of the twentieth century, English was the first language of virtually all my interlocutors under the age of sixty, though some were involved in programs of Haida language learning and teaching. It would be accurate, therefore, to claim that the language of contemporary Haida thought is largely, at least for the moment, English, and I treat major concepts that emerged in my interviews accordingly rather than assuming they are necessarily correlated to prior Haida expressions or terms.20
Outline of the Book

*Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii* has three parts. The first two chapters provide a framework for how to think about temporality and settler colonialism. I attempt to do this in broader, more theoretical terms in this chapter, while in Chapter 2, “The Everyday Temporalities of Life on Haida Gwaii,” I turn to the different temporal rhythms of Haida life. I show how Haida people operate within a complex temporal landscape, moving between long-held seasonal and social temporalities and colonially instituted forms of time-discipline. While the primary goal of this discussion is to illustrate some of the everyday ways in which Haida people refigure and subvert the terms of settler colonial temporality, it is also meant to serve as a continuation of this introductory chapter, offering readers an ethnographic and historical sketch of the Masset area so as to better orient them for what is to follow.

Part 2 of *Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii*, entitled “Home,” focuses on mobility as a nexus for Haida future-making. Chapter 3, “Coming Home to Haida Gwaii: Haida Departures and Returns in the Future Perfect,” explores one of the basic dilemmas of contemporary life in Old Massett: the fact that, for young Haida, leaving the islands is effectively necessary in order to pursue either postsecondary education or careers outside certain circumscribed areas. The necessity of these movements and the continuing lack of opportunities on island raise the anxious possibility that these departures might be permanent, especially as more and more of the Haida population chooses to reside off island. For my interlocutors in Old Massett, however, these anxieties are warded off and the return home guaranteed through a set of future certainties rendered in the future perfect tense. The first future perfect certainty, “homing,” reflects the shared social sense that off-island Haida will always necessarily be “called home” to Haida Gwaii when they are ready, not only by their friends and relations but also by the islands themselves and the activities that they alone make possible. Intertwined with homing is a second future perfect certainty, “homecoming,” which mandates that, while all Haida come home, they will need to be taught *how* to be at home once they have returned, a process that ultimately channels the skills and experiences returnees have accrued off island for the good of the Old Massett community. I explore the production of these twinned futures, showing their emergence from a longer history of Haida mobility and how they are materialized in the present through fundraising and other community events.
Chapter 4, “Of Hippies and Haida: Fantasy, Future-Making, and the Allure of Haida Gwaii,” considers a consequence that follows from the logics discussed in Chapter 3. That is, while Haida Gwaii has the power to bring Haida home, its homing quality is not limited to Haida, and its promise of natural abundance and life “away” from urban capitalism has also attracted a growing number of settlers intent on living out their fantasies of unspoiled nature and life “off the grid” on island. These migrants, who are often (derisively) referred to as “hippies” in Old Massett, fix the island and its Indigenous inhabitants as the objects of a particular form of fantasy, one that erases Haida rights and resources even as it proclaims respect for “Indigenous practices.” This raises the spectre of a cataclysmic future for Haida people in which the lands and seas of Haida Gwaii are depleted by settler subjects acting without regard for Haida people or resource practices, prompting Haida to attempt to strategically incorporate hippies into Old Massett social relations as a means of producing alternative futures. I explore these intersections, with a particular focus on the ways in which these settlers understand and represent themselves as inhabitants of Haida Gwaii and how, in turn, Haida represent them as potentially threatening strangers. It is through future-making, I suggest, that these seemingly incompatible representative schema can be strategically – or at least aspirationally – reconciled.

Having considered some of the social dynamics of future-making on Haida Gwaii through the theme of mobility, Part 3 of *Shaping the Future on Haida Gwaii*, entitled “Care,” moves on to the political, considering governance, leadership, and legitimacy as another central cluster of themes in Haida future-making. Chapter 5, “Leading ‘from the Bottom of the Pole’: Care and Governance in the Haida World,” begins with another dilemma for Haida people. How is one to manage the complex and sometimes contradictory landscape of governments to which contemporary Haida are subject? One answer, I suggest, is to take all these governments as being accountable according to a single, shared ethical framework that, for at least some of Old Massett’s Haida, hinges on the notion of care. To care for one’s constituents in this framework is both to provide for and to listen to them, to “take care” of them and to “care about” their concerns and perspectives. My interlocutors articulate this schema through a critique of the present that is at the same time an act of aspirational future-making – this is what governments *should* do, this is how leaders *should* behave. In so doing, they render comprehensible and potentially commensurable the otherwise incoherent entanglement of governments that lay claim to

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their allegiance and define their political identities as Haida people and citizens of Canada. This process of articulation, I argue, is itself an important response to representations of Indigenous political possibility that contend that these politics, in the context of ongoing colonialisms, will inevitably become mired in a nested series of inescapable “double-binds.”

Chapter 6, “Precarious Authority: Endangerment and the Political Promise to Protect Haida Gwaii,” follows from Chapter 5 by examining the notion of care at a different scale. It follows the emergence of the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) in the 1970s and its transformation into a fully state-like governmental entity after the dramatic events of the Lyell Island blockade in the mid-1980s. Central to this transformation, I suggest, is the CHN’s claim to a legitimacy that is founded in care for the islands of Haida Gwaii themselves, protecting them from external threat and guaranteeing their existence for the future generations of the Haida Nation. This means, however, that the CHN’s authority is founded in the very precarity of the islands it claims to protect, leading to the need to project a theoretically unending future of threat to Haida Gwaii in order to justify the CHN’s continuing jurisdiction as its care-full protector. Here, it is precisely the anticipation of a nightmarish future that gives legitimacy in the present, a mode of future-making that is, in a sense, the precise converse of the aspirational futures of the previous chapter.

Finally, in my concluding chapter, “Unsettling Futures,” I return my focus to the concept of future-making itself. What is the space of possibility that Haida future-making projects make possible? How does the opening up of this space of possible Haida futures affect our understandings of sovereignty, Indigenous and otherwise? And what, finally, does it mean to be an “unsettling future?” In the answers to these questions that this book begins to sketch out, I suggest that we can detect at least a hint of new ways of imagining and materializing the relationships of Indigenous peoples to settler societies – ways premised not on an always imminent erasure but, rather, on the openness of possible futures.