

∞ refusing the colonial grammar
of c\|a\n\|a\|d\|a

a conversation with luugigyoo
patrick reid stewart

David Fortin and Adrian Blackwell

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart is a Nisga'a architect who has worked with Indigenous homeless people in Vancouver for many years. His PhD dissertation considers the relationship between language and land in Indigenous and settler-colonial cultures. David Fortin and Adrian Blackwell spoke with Patrick through web conferencing on 3 June 2019. We borrowed the title of this volume from his dissertation.

1

2

David Fortin: In your dissertation you state the following: “c\l\n\l\d\l wanted to better control indigenous peoples [...] are the rules of grammar analogous to the rules of law ? by creating a standard education system are first nations peoples really more easily controlled by the state are we to do as we are told and not question authority because of grammar ? of course the results of public education on and off reserve for aboriginal peoples in this province have been less than successful.” Others have suggested that property has a similarly structural impact on the way we design buildings and cities. Have you considered the inadequacy of the rules of grammar that inspired the decolonization of your own research in relation to the kinds of rules imposed by property division and ownership in our country?

luugigyoo patrick reid stewart: education was one tool that the federal government used to control first nations peoples it was the intention of the state that students would learn to read do arithmetic learn to sign their name and follow orders in short mandatory education between 1894 and 1951 that first nations students received from the state made the students more controllable because they could understand the colonial language c\l\n\l\d\l was not the first country to use education as a tool of control the history of europe specifically germany and later america would pattern their education systems after germany the education allowed to first nations prior to 1951 was very rudimentary high school was not allowed post-secondary was not allowed fast forward a generation and we saw a changing picture in education though the promise of the 1972 call for indian control of indian education has not been realized individual efforts such as my dissertation and the dissertations of others continues to push boundaries but at a personal risk because every day as indigenous peoples we are still having to justify our ideas and actions

western ideas of property are about wealth creation and protection the rules that govern zoning in urban suburban and exurban areas are all about control the history of zoning shows that the first zoning regulations were put into place to protect the value of residential properties from commercial institutional and industrial uses of land as an architect i am often faced with the dilemma of following the rules as codified in law or doing what is right by my indigenous client this is decolonization of architecture it is very frustrating to have to work within a colonial system that is not about community good or what is good for the community but what the colonizers think is good for the community as codified in laws and regulations it is exhausting to always have to fight for indigenous knowledge in design to the point that one has to compromise culture every day in every project

DF: The same frustration you felt with the rules to write your thesis in a certain way. You obviously got to that point when you realized: why am I doing this? Why should I need to abide by these rules? And I am going to challenge them. But, every day in practice as Indigenous architects, we are governed by the spatial limitations of the “property line” and we’re saying, “really?” I’m wondering if you have those similar frustrations that you dealt with in your PhD and then day-to-day practice with those rules that are in place for how we use spaces.

lprs well to me i see grammar as a very good vehicle for assimilation and conformity it teaches us hierarchy and it s not democratic it teaches students to respect hierarchy and students are graded based on that hierarchy and on the ability to follow rules to be able to put grammatical rules into their thinking and their writing and its preparation for life it s a very useful system of control it s a nonviolent method of social political cultural control it s got a logic (not an indigenous logic) a guide to it that has been used and if you want to specifically look at the first nations it has been used to control first nations look at treaties for example talk about a one sided affair where you have this long document written in english that colonizers understand—that is the basis of their relationship there was no reciprocity never was never is and never will be first nations chiefs did not understand the language or the concepts that were inscribed on paper as a nisgaa citizen it is evident that even the treaty the nisgaa nation signed in 2000 with c\l\n\l\d\l was one sided i always say the government never signs a deal that is bad for itself property is based on similar tenets if you look at first nations reserves they are very much rule based places first nations were confined to a piece of property were not allowed to go beyond the boundaries if they went beyond its boundaries they had to have a pass and it was controlled by an

indian agent as they were then called so as a generational learning i think back to my great grandmother (we are a matriarchal society) who was born before there were reserves in our territory and i wonder what it would have been like for her before the reserves came i have often wondered what her early life was like she passed away before i knew her the missionaries were there yes but there were no reserve boundaries people lived where they lived traditionally but bit by bit over the decades more and more rules came into the territory and right from the beginning the nis-gaa simoogits (chiefs) objected to these reserve boundaries and travelled to victoria ultimately travelling to england to object but nothing came of their petitions so when I look at todays rules around property divisions there is a similar set of hierarchical rules the rules of property are elitist not democratic if you look at modern urban zoning those same colonizers who control education control land it does not matter how you look at it its the same system we see working

DF: In your research, you have outlined the relationality of Indigenous knowledge on contemporary Indigenous architectural design processes. Furthermore, in your diagram, identity and architecture have a reciprocity between them, as do protocol and location (Figure 1). Related to the latter, non-Indigenous protocols impose rules linked to property, to structure locations with very little to no emphasis placed on the notion of relationality. Can you elaborate on how you feel this should be reversed and why?

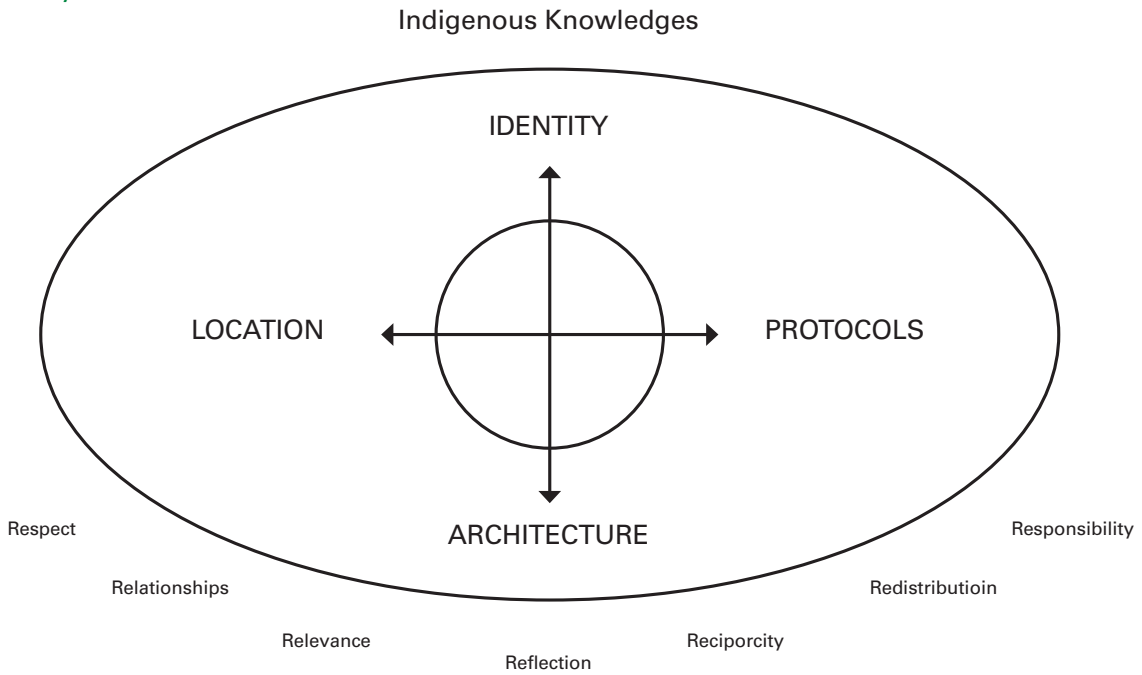


Figure 1. luugigyoo patrick reid stewart, relationality of indigenous architecture to indigenous knowledges, from "Indigenous Architecture through Indigenous Knowledge: Dim sagalts'apkw nisim [Together we will build a village!]" (PhD Diss., University of British Columbia, 2015), 16.

lprs non indigenous protocols form a cerebral or cognitive system a very abstract system where they ascribe value or power to their rules and for me there are two sides of the equation the way that i tackle my writing or my research is by privileging indigenous knowledge not so much by looking at decolonization its through this way of thinking that i can look at relationships and redistribution its by living those principles that we support a traditional base and look to our traditions as the way forward as opposed to being more physical in our resistance by adhering to my form of resistance by making sure that when i am working in community that indigenous knowledge is brought to the forefront this is what we base our work on and the result is for the benefit of the community that is how i have been able to think my way through colonialism otherwise it will just drive me and you crazy everyday it still happens and it is so arbitrary we still have federal government departments that do not trust that indigenous organizations have the capacity or ability to govern themselves or their nations we must turn the system on its head and allow first nations metis and inuit peoples self-determination can we really decolonize? that is get rid of colonization? how would we go about that? an interesting concept and one

that has been entertained around the world for centuries where ever the colonizers landed but a discussion for another day

DF: I have never heard you talk about the violence part of this. I was just thinking about how you said “nonviolent resistance.” If you break the rules of land, for instance, you trespass, you’re breaking the law and you could be, at least to some level, historically reprimanded for doing that.

lprs well look at our history it has happened before the repeal of the indian act in 1951 there were all those silly rules for example first nations peoples could not hire a lawyer we could not congregate in groups of more than three people we could not follow our ceremonies we could not dance not do all these things and more the government confiscated everything cultural they came and they confiscated all of our regalia they confiscated all of our drums all our rattles and took it all away because you know we were told “that its not right” you look at residential schools we had to speak english we could not speak our languages and it was not just in residential schools day schools were also set up to follow those same rules even though it was not a residential setting it was still school ask my wife she attended a mission day school in northern saskatchewan where she grew up prior to going to school she only spoke cree she did not speak english and her question to no one in particular just out loud because she still struggles with this is who fails kindergarten? but she was failed because she could not speak english and her first day of school ended up being very traumatic she still suffers from a form of ptsd she went to school and all of her brothers and sisters were there her cousins lots of other kids and she was raised in cree that is what her parents spoke to her and that is what she had learned so when she went to school she could not speak english she could not understand she did not know how to communicate with that teacher and of course she was only five years old she needed to use the washroom and the teacher would not let her unless she could ask in english that is what the teacher told her and she would not allow any of her relatives her brothers her sisters cousins to help her and she had a cousin sitting right beside her but she was not allowed to tell her how to say in english, “i have to go to the bathroom” and the results were humiliating for her she did not know what to do: she was sent home she was considered by the teacher as “bad” this was a teacher s power over five year olds so it comes at us at all levels outrageous behavior continues a few months ago a substitute teacher and custodian at an elementary school in northern saskatchewan was expelled from the school because the principal did not want her speaking cree in school a teacher at that same school said to the students that she did not want them speaking cree they are to speak only english today marks the day of community protest a cultural protest a language protest as indigenous peoples how can we survive never mind thrive under such genocide?

DF: Schools are perceived to be these nonviolent spaces, but if you don’t follow rules in school, in the old days, you would actually be physically punished. It’s the same thing with blockades and property—everyone is peaceful about property until somebody is in the way of somebody else.

lprs with colonization our culture was violently ripped away from us: they burned down our villages they cut down our totem poles they floated them away and sent them to museums the missionaries took all our cultural items : they took our rattles and our regalia our drums our talking sticks our dances our languages everything one missionary that was in our nation in our village he kept all our material wealth he did not burn it or send it to a museum he i don t know why kept it and his great-grandson was interviewed a few years ago by a newspaper saying and this is reconciliation talking “are you going to return all those things that your great-grandfather took from the nisgaa?” and he replies “nope, it s mine i own this” at the time it was valued at over a million dollars worth of regalia that he had in his personal collection and he says “no it s mine im not returning it” he is (in a western economic sense) benefiting from what his ancestor stole it just makes no sense this is just a small example of what european colonization meant to them it was rape and pillage and to the victor go the spoils

Decolonization Multiplies Our Relationships With Land

this country and many others such as the united states australia and new zealand were founded on this

DF: people would say the same things about land. How many people would say, "Yeah, I will return my property, First Nations were here first? In your interview with Douglas Cardinal, you summarized the following as stated by Douglas:

...each family is responsible for a certain territory and in that territory they know everything that is going on in their territory every herb every plant every tree every animal every bird [as the birds chirp/sing in the trees surrounding his yard where we sat in the sun] every fish they know intimately and they also with their language and what's passed down to them and their history they have an entire inventory of every living being on that particular area.

Indigenous knowledge of place, passed on through generations, is described by Douglas as an inherent "responsibility for a certain territory." Can you describe how you interpret this in terms of one's relationship to the land, and how this differs from "owning" it?

lprs what is this idea of ownership? colonization teaches that this is private ownership and you get a piece of paper that says you own this its an artificial concept of control and we know that looking back over history although there have been uprisings now again colonizers are always willing to use force to keep what they think they own when i look at our concept of "ownership of land" we have territories that are associated with names and houses we have a hereditary system in our nation we all belong to houses wilprs so i am part of wilp daaxan which is a killerwhale house and daaxan is the chief of our house and there is land that goes with his name a territory all members of each house have a responsibility to know their place in the house we all learn to know our place we have a responsibility to teach others who may not know its is community-based governance one s relationship to the land is spiritual there has to be respect for all of creation an understanding that everything is animate you re talking about the grandfathers (rocks) you re talking about the trees you re talking about the water the air in western thinking they make a distinction between animate and inanimate if inanimate objects exist they are there for the taking "nobody owns them" yet this type of thinking has led to the destruction of land of water of resources there needs to be respect for everything for all of creation and respect in the sense of awe i was thinking of this if you pick up a little stone and just think about that and wonder what is it? you know have you ever wondered where it came from what its doing where its going what its future is? it just makes you think wholistically

DF: Interesting. Just hearing you say that reminds me so much of my kids. Because kids haven't been controlled yet they find fascination over rocks, and the insects; they are so interested in ants and worms because they haven't yet been told that those don't have any value.

lprs right and they do not destroy them they look at them with awe and see those things for what they are to them its creation its all living and there s an inherent respect for all that and we lose that and much of western society has lost it the western education system perpetuates the colonial capitalist myths it sees distinction and separateness where none exist it teaches that the planet is a place to conquer to pillage to rape to eradicate of course there are many who see the harm this thinking has done and continues to do so we need to bring this discussion into the architecture studio and classroom our research our thinking

DF: You have spent a lot of time and energy throughout your career working on issues related to Indigenous homelessness. You suggest that Indigenous homelessness provides evidence that comes from, in your words, "the belief that indigenous peoples and lifeways did not need to be respected / valued / acknowledged (savages to be killed or changed / converted) [...] this belief system resulted in government policies and actions which have had intrusive and negative or disintegrative impacts on indigenous cultures since early colonization." Can you elaborate on how Indigenous people can be described as homeless while they are either on, or very near to, their traditional homes? How does your recent work try to confront this pervarsity and what is the most optimistic path forward to address it?

lprs to me colonialism is a system of genocide full stop its based on stolen land—that is the whole point of this whole colonial exercise and it affects us physically culturally spiritually and mentally it s a fight every day the colonizers have separated indigenous people from their land so that s a really hard thing for generations we have been told that the land is not ours even though it is our traditional territory now our land is land held in right of the queen wherever/whoever the queen is and we are told the land is not ours can t be ours this is 2020 and we are still bound by the indian act every day my family we live on a reserve on tzeachten traditional territory we live on reserve land we bought a house but when we went to try and get a mortgage on the house they gave me a piece of paper from the federal department of indian affairs and i asked what is this? it was a declaration that stated i was giving up my first nations status i asked why am i having to sign this? and they said “well because you are a first nations person you cannot own a house on reserve land so you have to give up your status if you do not have status you are eligible to own it” i said well I am not going to do that so i fought them for six months and as with all legal battles with the federal government i didn t win in order to “own that house” they forced us to form a company because a company is considered a taxable entity we formed a numbered company to own our house so that is who continues to own our house we were not allowed to own a house on reserve because the day we pay off our mortgage we would have title to that land which of course the government won t allow on reserve the indian act is something that prescribes our lives has stripped away freedoms that we had prior to contact it s more of a jail sentence than anything it s 2020 and we are still not free we continue to live as wards of the government the indian act is still in place and think of how that impacts first nations peoples even though residential schools no longer exist the last one closed in 1996 there are more kids now in the foster care system in c\l\n\l\l\l than there were in the residential schools at their peak the scoop of children from their families began as the residential school closed it began in the fifties and continues today these are generations of indigenous peoples who continue to be penalized just for being first nations children in c\l\n\l\l\l represent over fifty percent of the kids in care and it is not stopping it is a perverse system and this is a way of breaking down culture and breaking down our nations because kids are growing up off our lands outside our families outside of our culture without our language

DF: Can I ask you a little bit about the housing project you did in Vancouver? It is a transition house. And I am just wondering, is that in any way linked to your approaches to this subject. I think it’s a kind of “Trojan horse” project to try to reduce homelessness for some kids. It’s a building that follows all the rules of the property lines and the land, but it has such a different effect on someone’s transition into the city.

lprs you are speaking about the dave pranteau aboriginal children s village at the corner of nanaimo and grandview highway in east vancouver yes it does break rules and pushes the envelope of contemporary design by using indigenous knowledge as its basis this is the basis of most of my architectural work planning writing speaking and thinking through design i try to support indigenous children the children s village is housing for foster children children in care and the apartments are allocated to the kids so if the foster family breaks down it is the foster parents that are removed and the kids get to stay they get to age in place which rarely happens in the foster care system it was very important to me since i had grown up in the system to try to approach this foster system from a different perspective and luma native housing society continues to do that they provide support to the youth in the building and to the youth in the community through their youth mentorship program and my wife linda and i have both participated in that mentorship program as youth age out of care they are eligible to move into a studio apartment in the building they can stay there for eighteen months and still receive supports from the mentorship program there are youth that have moved from those studio apartments and out into the community and still come back to participate in the mentorship program (Figure 2)

4



2



Figure 2.
 luugigyoo patrick reid stewart
 architect, Dave Pranteau
 Aboriginal Childrens Village
 Panorama, photo: George T.
 Pierce

Figure 3.
 luugigyoo patrick reid stewart
 architect, Dave Pranteau
 Aboriginal Childrens Village
 Nanaimo Street Elevation

my wife linda and i went to australia to the university of sydney for an architectural conference in june of 2018 where our indigenous publishing collective our voices launched our second book our voices ii: the decolonial project linda and i accompanied eight youth and their chaperones with us we had been working with those youth for a few months before the trip they were at all levels of understanding and knowledge of who they are some of them did not know their culture some of them did not/do not know which community they are from some of them did not/do not know their family we met with them each week and they designed and made fashions as a way to showcase their culture or what they understood their culture to be at the time it was a research project for them in a sense because they were/are trying to find out who they are they reached out to family to people in their communities that they had not met and introduced themselves to say who they are some of them reconnected with their families it was this reconnection that helped know what they wanted to create depending on where they are from whether it was going to be regalia or art-work from a fashion perspective they made these creations taking them with them to australia we had a fashion show as part of the conference where these youth showcased their work with many of them walking the catwalk for the first time as part of the conference the youth participated in a panel and talked about housing as well what it was like to grow up in care in the panel that linda facilitated the youth spoke about what it was like as a youth to be profiled when they walked into a store or a restaurant we had these youth involved in lots of things during the trip they did a photoshoot on the steps of the sydney opera house they attended the local raising of the indigenous flag in redfern the area of sydney mostly inhabited by indigenous peoples in the city we asked them so you have grown up in care what do you think youth in care and younger children in care should have in terms of housing what kind

2

of house design do you think youth in care should have we had round table discussions with them getting them to tell us what they want what they need i am acknowledging the work we have done with youth back in c\l\n\l\d\l i travelled to gitxsan territory where we went from community to community having the same conversations because they have over one hundred kids in care living outside their territory and they want to bring them home the name of the project is bringing our children home and the nation is trying to build long houses in each of the six villages what does that look like? it is a whole new way of thinking for the community because the pressure is on them it is not indigenous services c\l\n\l\d\l saying "hey here's a house: go live in it" we are trying to approach this from a community based perspective and we will see what happens it's been two years and we have just started schematic design we hope to have the youth move into the first longhouse in the spring of 2021 the youth in Vancouver play a role and it's interesting to see them think about things they get quite excited we're not social workers we're not counselors we are just there and we have access to other people like counselors and social workers because i fear triggering something that opens them up emotionally it's not easy to have them deal with stuff and some of them are dealing with addictions and abuse while on the trip to australia we had one young man who did not respond well to some stuff not necessarily what we were doing but his life was sort of out of control he disappeared from the group for a few days just because he had been drinking a lot he's a very creative guy but he just can't deal with life he grew up in care and is having to learn to rely on himself

my brother also grew up in care he ran away when he was sixteen and spent the next twenty-four years homeless in vancouver and that was very hard i was too scared to run away when i was in care i had moved so many times i never really knew where i was so i never ran away but he had more knowledge of who he was growing up than i did i was taken completely away i was not told who i was where i was from nothing i was told nothing when you're eighteen when you age out of the system you are supposed to be given an exit interview and they tell you your nation your family where you are from- all that kind of stuff i did not get that so i never found any of that out it took me the next eight years on my own to find my family that in itself was simple but it was very hard to do who knew i walked into the department of indian affairs [as it was then called] in ottawa and i walked to the reception desk and told them my name and i said i think i am registered here i sat there for a few minutes—the receptionist looked up my name and said "yes there you are you are right here and here is your family" i had no idea that i had brothers and sisters and that was most amazing because i had spent years looking and dealing with social services and just not getting anywhere but as soon as i found that i had a lot more information to go on i phoned social services in vancouver and was able to tell them everything they needed to find me and indigenous families are still fighting the foster care system and like i say there are more kids in care than were in residential school it is a perverse system on so many levels

when i look at the work that i do i respond to what i consider the violence that was done to our cultures i say our cultures were violently ripped from us i have one historical photo that i show in some of my talks this extended family is sitting in front of their house and they are all dressed to go they are leaving the village because they were being relocated and then that village was burned down when i look at my design work i think okay our cultures have been made invisible through the removal of everyone from communities our culture and land were violently taken from us and we have been invisible for generations so i give myself permission to as i put it violently put it back so children's village is an example where we have four totem poles on the street in front of the building and our traditional colours are not what the city wanted to see our massing was not what the city wanted to see i abstracted our longhouse village facades and tried to cram it within these artificial property lines (Figures 3,4) which was a struggle and it is a struggle because here we are playing with a sort of a western concept of property and everything is wrong with this but this is what we are given every little step that we can do there's something more than was there yesterday so

6



2



Figure 4.
 Iuugigyoo Patrick Reid Stewart
 Architect, Dave Pranteau
 Aboriginal Children's Village
 Nanaimo Street Elevation

Figure 5.
 Iuugigyoo Patrick Reid Stewart
 Architect, Dave Pranteau
 Aboriginal Children's Village
 Entrance, photo: George T.
 Pierce

i have to allow myself to say it's okay that's all i can do in this project i can't get everything in every project so i try and do culturally based design in each project and the result is that they read at different levels on the street people see totem poles and that's all they see they don't know anything else on another level there are people that would know those stories on the poles there are other people that would understand when they see the building that it looks like a longhouse and reminds me of a village and those elements of culture not everyone sees it but to me that is the richness of design like my

2

writing people see different things in it it can be read on many levels that s the creative part (Figure 5).

DF: Related to your home community, you write the following: “before the intrusion of the europeans the nisga’a followed the resources their architecture was responsive to the climate in a way that has been lost to modern architecture with its reliance on technology lost by a nation colonized and ghettoized” The idea of the ghetto implies spatial divisions based on economic disparities, and you link it here to resources. Is there a path forward for Indigenous communities to maintain, or return to, a contextual and specific relationship with resources within a seemingly global addiction for continued resource exploitation? What role can Indigenous architects and other leaders play in guiding a better path for this future?

lprs so just to back up a little bit homelessness to me and to many of us is a symptom of colonialism it s not the problem colonialism is the problem or the disease the government is selling what is commonly known as the “american dream” where you have a house you have a mortgage you have a car you have two kids they are selling this idea you work all your life to pay off your mortgage you re so busy focused on that you don t have time to think about other things you re being good little humans you re doing what they want you to do you re controllable they manipulate us with their rules

on a global scale i look at it and it s the same thing when you ask that question i say two words middle east to me global colonialism is just that countries think they have the right to interfere with others around the world i look at places like vietnam what was the usa doing in vietnam? having been there and talked to architects planners and academics who live there they call it the american war because they said we did not invade anybody they look at it from the other side and say why did they come as far as you can think back in human history there has always been that kind of struggle the crusades what was that about why did they have to do that i look at our nisgaa land and i think the treaty that was signed in 2000 was very clearly resource extraction based but we were not allowed to talk about resource extraction it was not on the table we had kpmg do an economic analysis of the logging in the nass valley over the last fifty years when the first logging began they estimated that over two billion dollars worth of trees had been taken out of our valley the government said “its not on the table we are not talking about it you re not getting anything for it it’s ours [the federal government]” and we were not allowed to discuss it

when our leadership went into the treaty process saying we want to talk about all our land which means from mountain to mountain top from the head waters to the ocean that s our valley and when treaty talks started the reserve component of the valley which is where the four villages sat comprised seven percent of the total area of the valley but our leadership said we are going for one hundred percent i think that got thrown off the table the first day and the government said we re not talking about that in the end when the treaty was signed we had sixteen percent that s it government says they still own the rest they call it crown land though there are very few non indigenous people who live in the nass valley we are still beggars in our own land

looking at recent international and national conversations about resource exploitation really nothing has changed since the colonizers arrived on our shores they were blinded by greed and continue to be so indigenous nations are expendable it is a conversation in our household every day we get afraid for the future afraid for our children our grandchildren to say nothing of seven generations the time has come that we need to stand up and say enough as indigenous architects we need to use the knowledges of our indigenous nations in our design work we need to assert our place no matter how long it may take it may not be in my lifetime but in the lifetime of my grandchildren and their grandchildren its not over but just beginning

DF: The whole idea that pipelines are for national benefit—that they benefit us all—is absurd. I just can’t figure how people do not understand that they’re going through other Nations’ territories.

lprs its the history of humanity i think we have been too polite with the colonizers and as indigenous peoples have been pushed back it becomes very

8 violent very fast tanks roll armies roll machine guns roll colonizers fight for what they do not own back in the day what did they do when people tried to assert their own rights for example louis riel they hanged him for standing up for his people we have those stories here in the west they hung chiefs because they were trying to stop the colonizers from coming into their territory so they said well that s a treasonous act that s how they dealt with it the fights against the pipelines are no different just different actors

Adrian Blackwell: You talked a little bit about trying to get a mortgage on the reserve land. Do you think about alternative arrangements for how land could be cared for from the current situation? Do you think of future pathways for the care of land?

lprs well i do i know the intent behind the government is to get people locked into mortgages i tell whoever listens that that s what the government intent is they have these new housing strategies they have national housing acts and they are set on getting people to sign up to pay for their house as a mortgage because again the government wants to control people and a community of people working to pay mortgages are a people too busy to make trouble for the government we all become controllable pawns there are a lot of communities across the country where people do not pay rent especially in treaty territories because they believe housing is a right that s a whole different conversation and people base their life on that argument and say this land was stolen from us so the the government has a fiduciary responsibility to provide us housing and education and medical and you know people will read from the treaties where it says they will provide us with housing they will provide us with healthcare they will provide us whatever economic instruments we need to live so they ll provide us farm tools they ll provide us fishing tools but when you look at the history on the west coast sure we could go fishing but we were not allowed to have motors so you ll see pictures where the first nations people are rowing and colonizers are scooting by in their motorized boats so we were not able to compete the settlers said it would be unfair to them if we had motors because we knew where to fish the same with the farming when they allocated farm tools to the reserves indigenous people were excellent farmers they knew the land they knew the seasons the weather they were very productive farmers and settlers complained because they could not compete they complained to the government and said it was unfair so what did the government do? they took away all indigenous peoples plows and farm equipment they said "okay you cannot compete with the white people so we ll take away your equipment to make sure" damned if you do damned if you don t existence is a struggle settlers will come up with a rule to stop you from doing what it is you are trying to do these examples show the insidiousness of the federal government wanting complete control of every aspect of indigenous lives in this country

2 and to address your last question i am not sure what you mean by a "better path" as indigenous architects we can utilize our skills at the community level and to me that s a better way forward to be of service to the communities to be of service to the nations each individual has to decide which side of the fence you re on either you re on the community side or you re not either you are supporting the culture or you re not it s a decision and not everyone is prepared to make it

DF: In my opinion, the projects you've done for the homeless and aging in place living for the kids illustrate the way that you are doing this work. It's not everybody who can understand how the design of a building can contribute to a different narrative. I am sure that it involved a whole team of people to conceptualize that program, but to be able to manifest it in physical space that in some ways resists all the negative things we've talked about today shows that design can actually improve the situation. I feel like that's at the core of why your work is so powerful. There's a power to it, because, as an architect, you understand spatial rules and can navigate them.

lprs linda and i were in calgary last year meeting on the use of data in homelessness research there were probably two dozen people invited from across the country and linda and i were the only two indigenous people in the room they wanted to go over the national homelessness count tool its a survey it was like talking to a wall they were not listening

they had their set of questions and they were trying to get us on side i told linda afterwards i felt like standing up and saying if you think what you are doing here is consultation well it isn't i look at this and think why is it only the two of us here? its like they are saying we have to get them to rubber stamp this then we can roll it out and say patrick and linda were in the room and they seemed to agree to this we were told this is what we are using we decided okay fine they re not going to listen to us in the room and you know you go through a meeting and you can only fight for so long i was just exhausted by the end of the three days i could not do this anymore so we told them we taking the questionnaire back to our table the indigenous homelessness steering committee and say here are the questions that they are going to put on the next homelessness count and we are going to respond to this in writing to them because otherwise they just don't listen

there s a new director general of servicec\l\n\l\l\l that controls the dollars for homelessness programming across the country he was introduced as this open minded person that had the community at heart we spent five minutes with him and we thought oh my this is the worst guy he had spent the last ten years in indian affairs and that s the attitude he comes with "we know better we control the money and we are going to tell you what to do and we are going to tell you how to do it and just go along—just play along" its frustrating and it just continues so there s lots of work to do we have met with him again and again and we are keeping an open mind at this time the liberals have formed another government this time with minority rule we will keep working and we will wait but make no mistake we are working for our nations

as an architect its much the same mindset i am game to play the development game but make no mistake i work on behalf of the community though it gets me in trouble with the rule makers who expect me as a trained architect who know the rules and is supposed to play by them i will always side with my client because it is justice that i seek its equity its fairness its humanity it is these principles that come through an indigenous community-based design process

9

2

2