

CONTESTED HERITAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE
ON *THE SPIRIT SINGS*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to the knowledge of museology, anthropology and Native American studies. It is an analysis of the discourse that surrounded *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, an exhibition prepared by the Glenbow in Calgary as the 'flagship' of the Olympic Arts Festival in 1988.

After the Lubicon Indians of Northern Alberta called for a boycott of *The Spirit Sings*, in attempt to draw critical attention to their long outstanding lands claim, a large and heated debate ensued involving several disciplines, particularly anthropology and museology. Much of this debate took place in the print media, therefore a large body of material remains to be reviewed and studied. The intent of this thesis is to illustrate that the issue of museological representation of First Nations was one of the most central themes discussed in the discourse, but to argue that the major players dealt with this issue on only the most concrete level and therefore largely neglected to recognize that the issue of First Nation's representation was not just a concern over museum interpretation but more importantly an issue of the contested authenticity of national and cultural claims.

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INTRODUCTION

Canadians think wrongly of this country as unformed and without history, but *The Spirit Sings* reflects the long history of the Native people. We're proud of the native history in Canada, and its very important that Canadians generally interested in the roots of this country come to see the exhibition. *Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs.*¹

The irony of using a display of North American Indian artifacts to attract people to the Winter Olympics being organized by interests who are still actively seeking to destroy Indian people seems painfully obvious. *Chief Bernard Ominayak, Lubicon leader.*²

I think Canadians will benefit, the native peoples will benefit, and our visitors from around the world will benefit from a greatly enhanced understanding of native people and their deeply rooted cultural traditions. *Duncan Cameron, Director of the Glenbow Museum.*³

I pointed out (to the Ambassador of Canada) the risk of such an exhibition to be regarded as a kind of cover-up, a nice facade hiding the real world of today's native peoples. *Director, Museum Voor Volkenkunde, Rotterdam.*⁴

If anyone's going to exhibit our national treasures, we should be able to do that. *Joseph Norton, Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council.*⁵

This outstanding exhibition of Canadian Indian and Inuit objects presents a unique opportunity for Canadian and foreign visitors to learn about and celebrate the richness of Canadian Native cultural traditions. *Jack MacLeod, President and Chief Executive Officer, Shell Canada Ltd.*⁶

¹ Joe Clark, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

² Bernard Ominayak [cited in] "Glenbow Museum faces Lubicon Boycott threat," by Wendy Smith, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

³ Duncan Cameron [cited in] "Glenbow Museum Faces Lubicon Boycott threat," by Wendy Smith, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

⁴ Director, Museum Voor Volkenkunde, Rotterdam [cited in] "The Glenbow Affair," by Marybelle Myers, [in] *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Winter 1988): 13.

⁵ Joseph Norton [cited in] "Glenbow faces Legal Action," by Mark Lowey, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 15 January 1988.

⁶ Jack MacLeod, "Welcome to the Spirit Sings," *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 4.

On the day of its official opening, *The Spirit Sings*, an exhibition of Indian and Inuit artistic materials created during Canada's early colonial period prepared by the Glenbow Museum, was greeted by both friend and foe. In their coverage of the day's events, the prominent Canadian news magazine, *Maclean's*, elected to draw their readership's attention to the Lubicon Indian band's boycott of the exhibition by printing a feature photo documenting the 120 demonstrators crowding the entrance to the museum's doors.⁷ Their feature article neglected to report that the opening ceremonies had been well attended by both Native and non-Native dignitaries and invited guests; neither did it comment on the fact that the exhibition had been viewed by over 3,500 visitors on that single first day. From the time that the Lubicon had announced their boycott of *The Spirit Sings*, almost five years earlier, media coverage of the transpiring events often favored one side of the dispute over the other.

While it is not unusual for news papers and magazines to focus on the more dramatic (usually negative) side of an issue, *Maclean's* unbalanced coverage of the exhibition's opening day in certain respects characterizes the discourse that surrounded the boycotted exhibition. As anthropologists and museologists publicly debated the right of museums to display the material culture (artifacts) of Native peoples, the right of museums to re/present First Nations cultures became the central heated focus of the print media exchange. But upon conducting a critical analysis of the discourse, *it is my thesis that the major contributors to the discussion dealt with the issue of 'representation' on a concrete level only. They largely neglected to recognize that their own and others' written assertions about Canada and First Nations—their cultures and nationhood—which informed the discourse were multi-layered, at times conflicting and at times overlapping. Thus contrary and interwoven conceptualizations of nation and culture represent the implicit context through which disagreements concerning the re/presentation of First Nations' heritages were expressed. It is my position that the issue of First Nations representations, typified by the controversy surrounding The Spirit Sings, was implicitly*

⁷ Jack Howse, "Haunting Relics from the Native Land," *Maclean's*, 25 January 1988, 54.

linked to an issue of the contested authenticity of Canadian and First Nations national and cultural claims.

In this thesis I outline the development of the Glenbow's exhibition and the Lubicon's boycott, discuss the iconography of First Nations art and artifacts, and explain how diverse notions of culture and nationhood interpenetrated the sometimes heated English⁸ language debate around First Nations representation. I do not attempt an analysis of the exhibition itself, nor of the Lubicon boycott *per se*.

My research deals with sensitive subject material: the contested right of one group to represent a diverse 'other.' It is imperative, therefore, that I present related biases and background before embarking on this lengthy analysis. I finished a B.F.A. in the 1980s and during the course of my degree, found myself especially interested in Inuit art. In fact, at the time of the Lubicon boycott I was engaged in curating an Inuit art exhibition for the Art Gallery at the University of Lethbridge. While this exhibition did not achieve the scope or size of the Glenbow exhibit, I found myself deeply involved in the issues raised by the various participants to *The Spirit Sings* debate. I too was representing an 'other' culture. The other I was representing, like First Nations more generally, exist today as a vibrant, extant set of peoples, whom theoretically have both the capacity and perhaps the moral and ethical right to re/present themselves.

Thus I found myself torn by the issues raised by the debate. As a 'white' woman did I have the knowledge or the right to re/present an almost unknown 'other'? This thesis represents my own attempt to understand and to come to terms with the ethical, moral and legal contradictions inherent in museum exhibitions of the 'other.' In order to do so I have chosen to listen to and analyze what was 'said' by the participants involved in the Glenbow/Lubicon/representation debate.

⁸ While French language discourse around this issue certainly occurred, I have chosen to limit my discourse analysis to the discussions conducted primarily in the English speaking print media. Thus the reader should note that this thesis concentrates on the English discussions which took place prior to, during and following the announcement of the exhibition and its final realization.

In Chapter One I explore the historical basis of our contemporary understandings of culture. By contemporary understandings, I mean the generally accepted ideas or notions on the part of Canadians of what culture 'is' and 'ought' to be and how these notions form an integral part of the fabric of Canadian society. Through a discussion of a number of anthropological conceptions of culture, I discuss the basic underlying notions in which our conceptualizations of culture are grounded. I show that culture is presently understood as an axiomatic given—something which everyone, every society, 'just has,' or minimally, ought to have.

In Chapter Two I explore concepts of the nation. I begin by tracing the historical roots that inform Western ideologies of nation-states and nationalism. Then I discuss the integral role that culture and cultural identity play in validating a people's sense of nationhood. I establish that there are two conceptual kinds of nations to be considered: those that are politically bounded entities and those that are ancestrally bonded through ethnic and/or indigenous sensibilities.

In Chapter Three I bring the discussions of culture and nation together, to deal specifically with Canada. The concept of cultural objectification is introduced in order to understand how objects such as the material culture on display at the Glenbow—and indeed whole cultures treated as things—assist in validating the nation. I also explore Canadian nationhood and identity, and I begin to address First Nations' ideas of nationhood and how they fit into our multicultural nation.

In Chapter Four I bring cultural institutions, specifically museums, into my discussions. Here, I turn to a discussion of the interpenetrations of the concepts of culture and nation and establish that nations seek ways to validate themselves and establish their own unique identities. Cultural institutions can be seen as agents of the state in constructing, preserving and representing those identities. I posit that Canada generally typifies a society which has made cultural objectification an important component of official

multiculturalism. As Richard Handler explains, cultural objectification is often characteristic of situations where a people are intensely aware of their 'own' culture—to the extent that they may express a need to control, protect and preserve it. A need to exercise control over one's own culture may in turn be deemed necessary so as to preserve and protect the 'nation's' identity, whether that be the citizens of a territorially bounded state or an ethnic indigenous nation within a larger national body.

In Canada, the ideal of a politically established and culture-bearing nation-state exists alongside a belief in the viability of indigenous nations and ethnic groups within the larger national body—or indeed, the idea of separate 'ethnic' nations. Thus, for example, the Quebecois, the Sikhs, or a First Nations people are considered cultural entities within a larger cultural, politically established and territorially bounded nation—Canada. These combine to inform a multi-layered folk understanding of national identities.

These identities are alternately symbolized by cultural markers unique to the groups in question. Often, such cultural markers are in the form of artistic objects or other elements of material culture. Museums, the official 'protectors' and 're/presenters' of culture play a significant role in the conceptualization and signification of such cultural markers within Canada, as they do without. In this chapter I discuss the fact that First Nations peoples conceive of themselves as a 'unique,' diverse group of cultures, and that their conceptualization of Canada as their home and the land of their ancestors, contributes to their struggle to preserve, and in some cases reclaim, their rights territorially and their former way of life.⁹

In Chapter Five I provide background on both *The Spirit Sings* and the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, as well as some history of the Lubicon struggle to resolve their land claims. I

⁹ Anthony D. Smith, "Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no. 3 (July 1992): 439-449. Smith claims that groups whom he classifies as 'communal-demotic' have been conquered and are struggling to preserve and/or reclaim their rights and former way of life. The base of their claim lies in their land and its practical and symbolic meanings. For these people, the land is conceptualized as sacred.

then discuss the convergence of the Glenbow display with the Lubicon boycott against the exhibition, and show how the Lubicon and their supporters attempted to forestall the loan of First Nations artifacts to the Glenbow by other museums. It is my contention that while the Glenbow is not officially a 'national' museum, it was endowed with the responsibility of representing Canadian concepts of culture and nation on a national plane due to the Olympic context in which *The Spirit Sings* took place. The eyes of the world were on the Glenbow and its activities throughout this event, and the staff of the Glenbow envisioned the exhibition as representative of Canadian culture and Canada's roots. The participants to the discourse were divided on the signification of the artifacts on display at the Glenbow. Some authors conceptualized these artifacts as Canadian only, some as solely the heritage of First Nations peoples, while others understood them as indicators of a shared patrimony: pointing to the roots and history of both Canada and the First Nations.

It seems evident from the minutes of early internal meetings, that the Glenbow's staff set about preparing *The Spirit Sings* without any thought of a potential dispute. Working within the conventional museum guidelines of that time, the organizers did not appear to recognize that the exhibit was either culturally or politically volatile. When the boycott was announced they appear to have been taken unawares. During the entire event the Glenbow had no experience or precursors from which or whom to draw guidance. They were in uncharted waters.

The Lubicon too were breaking new ground. No First Nations group in Canada had ever so vigorously challenged the right of a museum to present their culture or their way of life. The Lubicon, unlike the Glenbow however, were clear on their course of action and on why they had chosen to boycott *The Spirit Sings*. Over the ensuing years, their land claims had been thwarted by both the federal and provincial governments, and the latter was clearly acting in concert with oil company interests. A major player in this scenario, Shell Oil Canada stood to gain as long as the land claim remained unresolved. By sponsoring the exhibition and conducting an advertising campaign in the media, Shell attempted to paint a portrait of itself as a philanthropist of Canadian and specifically First Nations cultures. So

when Shell announced its corporate sponsorship of the Glenbow exhibit, the band seized upon the ambiguities of the situation in attempt to draw public attention to their disputed land claim, and hopefully embarrass the relevant governments into settling the long outstanding claim.

By way of a boycott of the exhibition, the Lubicon were asking museums everywhere to validate their claim that they were the victims of government and corporate mistreatment. Apparently missing the irony of mounting an exhibit of First Nations peoples funded by money from a concern who were trying to keep a portion of those same peoples from their land, the Glenbow adopted the position that they would refuse to become a 'political football'¹⁰ for one special interest group. Their position was that academic freedom was at stake. In response to the Lubicon media coverage, the Glenbow launched a public relations campaign of its own.

In Chapter Six I outline the methods which I employed to identify, collect, delimit and analyze the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings*. I qualify my use of the term 'discourse' and present the reader with an inventory of the materials which comprise the discourse. As the discourse is large and varied, I explain why I decided to combine my informed reading of the discourse with a formal content analysis. The latter allowed me to measure, count, sort and list the diverse notions, ideas and concepts expressed by the authors, and assisted in further supporting the interpretations, claims and conclusions drawn from my informal readings of the texts.

In Chapter Six I also explain why my interpretation of the discourse surrounding the Glenbow's exhibit is informed by the work of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill,¹¹ who is in turn influenced by Michael Foucault. As it is my intention to elucidate and illuminate explicit as well as implicit notions of culture, nation, people, and material things that inform the

¹⁰ Michael M. Ames [cited in] "Share the Blame," by Peter Gzowski, [in] *Vanguard* 17, no. 2 (1988): 15-19.

¹¹ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992).

discourse, I find her admonition that researchers use “effective history” as an analytical approach, to be a compelling one. A concept which Hooper-Greenhill acquires from Foucault, effective history allows a researcher to consider cultural, social, political and scientific elements which combine to influence and bring about specific historical trends. Thus, effective history is not the history of the dominant class of a country, or the dominant ideas of a people; rather it incorporates Foucault’s concepts of genealogy and subjugated knowledges. In *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault elaborates his concept of ‘subjugated knowledges’:

By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or a formal systemization....Subjugated knowledges are thus those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory.¹²

Foucault is thus advocating that the researcher should read for the implicit meanings contained in and implied by texts, not just the dominant meanings lying on the surface. He further elaborates:

a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges...a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it.¹³

Discourse for me then contains not only what is ‘heard’ or ‘read’ directly. It is fraught with the layered and ‘silenced’ knowledges and opinions of the man or woman in the street, those ‘naive’ knowledges which form in opposition to knowledge and circumstances imposed from without in the course of daily living. These knowledges are often buried by the dominant knowledge of a society, but are in part available to the researcher through a close and careful reading of texts.

¹² Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* [translated from the French by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mcpham and Kate Soper] (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 81-82.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 82.

In Chapter Seven I turn to my findings. Here I unpack the concepts of culture and nation found explicitly articulated and implicitly implied within the discourse. I also provide a brief background on the Olympic Arts Festival in order to further establish that this festival's continuing presence on the Olympic agenda implies a belief that nations can be distinguished from one another by highlighting their cultural characteristics—a nation's essential cultural uniqueness. *The Spirit Sings*, as the 'flagship' of Calgary's Olympic Arts Festival, was earmarked to fulfill an important part of this essential function—to show the world the unique cultural heritage of Canada.

In this chapter I also provide many examples of the manner in which Canada and its culture and First Nations and their cultures were referred to in the discourse. Even though concepts of nation and culture were not often the specific topics under discussion, I illustrate that a significant understanding of how the speakers utilize these conceptual categories can be gained from the discourse. I further establish that the objects on display at the Glenbow exhibition—namely examples of First Nations material cultures—were understood by the authors as having conflicting signification. For some, the artifacts and art were clearly and only emblematic of First Nations identity/cultures. Other participants spoke of this material culture as Canadian. Finally, a third group, which included those officially representing the Glenbow, conceptualized the Glenbow display as a First Nations display, but clearly conveyed their view that First Nations culture is part of Canadian culture and represents Canadian history and roots. Thus First Nations culture was seen by both this group and those who spoke of the display as 'Canadian' to be a powerful and viable representation of Canada's uniqueness to the visiting Olympic nations.

In Chapter Eight, I further discuss my findings and expand the issues of ownership and control of heritages that I uncovered through my close readings. Control can be interpreted on two levels: the practical and the symbolic. In a practical sense, museums have the ability to either grant or deny access to the material culture that they house, and they can determine certain aspects of their concrete usage. The symbolic level of control concerns social power relationships. Who owns and who controls culture, and who has a

right to do either of these? It was argued by some participants to the discourse that First Nations should have some (or all) measure of control over Native collections, but to what extent that control could be taken was not agreed upon or even defined. Specific notions of culture that were exposed in Chapter Seven such as culture being vulnerable, are extended and deepened here. Of considerable interest is the fact that museums around the world had the opportunity to validate First Nations as authentic ethnic and cultural nations by supporting the Lubicon boycott and refusing to lend their artifacts to the Glenbow exhibit. The irony of museums in possession of artifacts often obtained in questionable ways from the very Nations they now claimed to support will not be lost on the reader.

Finally, I bring the discussions and the findings of the preceding chapters together in my Conclusion. Here I reiterate how museologists and anthropologists who participated in the discourse neglected (in this context at least) to delve into some of the deeper issues that fueled this contentious situation by centering their discussions instead on the rights and immediate problems of representation. The equally important issue of the contested authenticity of *national* and *cultural* claims—is it Canadian, is it First Nations, or is it both?—remained primarily implicit in the discourse, and as such, unresolved.

CHAPTER ONE: Concepts of Culture

I Introduction

Since their inception as public institutions, museums have been perceived as the guardians of the collective heritage of humankind. Their central role, or function, has been to interpret the relationships between material culture, the 'self' and the 'other.' In the past, museums have faced only sporadic external criticism of their interpretive activities. But in recent times the very basis of what museums are all about is being questioned. Even their right to collect, house, exhibit and interpret cultural heritage has come under much scrutiny, as have the symbolic consequences of their activities, especially in poly-ethnic states. It is particularly in the area of exhibition and interpretation of 'the Other' that museums now often find themselves in a quandary. As objects from various cultures around the world have been removed from their original cultural contexts and placed under "glass boxes"¹ they have been assigned new names and new meanings by a foreign culture. In many cases, the material cultures of an 'Other' are in effect hostages of colonization. The call for the return of cultural possessions from the museums in which they are housed has been heard increasingly over the past decade, as aboriginal cultures world-wide give voice to their objections regarding the manner in which they and their material cultures are displayed and interpreted.

Various responses to these voices for change are presently under discussion.² Suggestions include the increased involvement of persons of aboriginal ancestry in exhibition preparation and the opening up of employment and educational opportunities for them in the discipline of museology. These types of solutions risk trivializing the situation if we do not first attempt to better understand the role of material cultures as carriers of cultural

¹ Michael M. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).

² Tom Hill and Trudy Nicks, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples* (Ottawa: The Canadian Museums Association, 1992).

and national symbolism. In particular, we must consider the mechanisms through which a group's collective identity is transferred to, and integrated with tangible material objects.

II Developing a Popular Culture of a People

(A) Introduction

Our present concepts of culture, both within academe and without, are the result of a long cumulative, historical process. Since antiquity Western scholars have proposed ideas, suggestions and theories regarding the origin and nature of humans and their handiworks. In the academic field, the study of humankind has been the principal occupation of anthropology and its precursors.

Anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn conducted a survey of the "general semantic history of the word 'culture'...[and concluded that the] word culture with its modern technical or anthropological meaning was established in English by Tylor in 1871."³ Tylor had in turn derived the term from German usage after some hesitation about its German affiliation with the concept of "civilization."⁴ Kroeber and Kluckhohn explain that in its still earlier usage:

the appeal of the concept of culture lay in the intrinsic meaning of the Latin root—to bring to maturity and domesticity through careful control of growth. Bee culture, horticulture, and agriculture accent the ancient usage. Early distinctions of technical and spiritual arts led to some association of the former with culture and the latter with civilization.⁵

Kroeber and Kluckhohn's research points to the fact that the term 'culture' was founded upon the ancient Latin definition. The Latin word 'cultura/culturae' means "agriculture;

³ A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵ Kroeber and Kluckhohn [cited in] *A History of Ethnology*, by Fred W. Voget (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 371.

care, culture and cultivation.”⁶ Thus the extension of the word culture to a human process of growth is evident. But how do we account for our present concept of *having* culture rather than being cultured? The linked Latin word ‘cultus’ meant ‘culture, refinement, civilization, luxury, splendor of dress.’⁷ It did not imply a state of being in which ‘cultus’ was conceived of as something which every individual and group is presumed to ‘possess’ and has the right to defend. Neither does it seem evident that ‘cultus’ could, if not carefully addressed, be lost or diluted. When, then, did culture become an objectified entity that could be possessed, defended, lost or regained? A brief overview of the significant theories and ideas about culture from the sixteenth century to the 1950s, helps to identify the processes which have brought us to our present understanding of culture as an objectifiable entity over which ownership can be claimed.

(B) Proto-Anthropological Views

Anthropology is chiefly “a product of scientific developments in the Western world.”⁸ Its inception as a separate discipline can be traced historically only to the early nineteenth century. Therefore, we begin our search for the earliest concepts of culture in the West, but before the rise of the discipline of anthropology. A social science centrally devoted to the study of humankind was not a part of the ancient world.⁹ Rather, we find a very qualified interest in this subject within what would today be considered history.¹⁰ Greek and Roman historians were aware of what we today refer to as cultural differences, often

⁶ S.C. Woodhouse (ed.), *The Latin Dictionary* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁸ Voget (1975), 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38-39. Voget explains that “Greco-Roman social philosophers failed to lay the subject matter of such a field with its special kinds of facts, theory, and methodology [as they were] captivated by a geographic interpretation of national character.” Their inclination was to “see the distinctive nature of social orders and cultural achievements as products of national temperaments shaped by climatic forces.”

¹⁰ See for example:

Voget (1975).

Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968).

Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964).

noting consistent relationships between people-hood, physical type, language and behavior. They set out a basic, if somewhat erratic tradition of recording ethnographic detail for later historians. But the details of human institutions and customs included in their histories of wars were secondary and “commonly linked to didactic considerations or to the pragmatics of military, political and commercial purposes.”¹¹ What are today considered cultural variations were to them inter-‘national’ variations. It is Voget’s opinion that the contribution of the Greeks and Romans to the field of anthropology lay less in their “curiosity and attention to foreign lands and peoples” and more in their “interpretations of man and the universe, based on the twin concepts of a natural order and of natural law.”¹²

Through the concepts of natural order and law, Greek and Roman philosophers and historians developed the initial framework for an integrated model of society. The universe was seen as regulated by natural order and largely unchanging, its component parts being interdependent and subject to the whole.¹³ Harmony, the ideal outcome, was achieved by the proper interrelationships between the whole and its parts. Change occurred internally, either advancing toward harmony (fulfillment or growth) or regressing from harmony (nonfulfillment or decay). According to this model the proper functioning of any system represented an equilibrium state in which all units fulfilled their respective functions or duties to their fullest capacity.¹⁴ The inverse of harmony, disharmony, would prevail if the natural order of the system was not maintained.¹⁵

Based upon this model, the greatness of a people was dependent upon the manners and customs of the residents within the nation, which were in part a function of the

¹¹ Voget (1975), 39.

¹² Ibid., 11-12.

¹³ Occasional strong statements about the overall degeneration of the world from an earlier, better state notwithstanding.

¹⁴ This philosophy of the individual and the individual within society is especially strong in Stoicism: a place for everything and everything in its place. It was believed by the Stoics that an individual who attempted to break out of his/her rightful place in society, would upset the social order.

¹⁵ Voget (1975), 11-12.

environment in which they lived. National characteristics, social orders and cultural achievements were likewise understood as determined largely by the environmental conditions (chiefly climate) within which people resided. Each nation was thought to have its own national character. When describing the national temperaments of other nations, Greek and Roman historians measured the 'other' against the qualities and shortcomings of their own nations. Thus Greek or Roman systems were the mean by which the other was judged.¹⁶

Renaissance scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued the Greek and Roman traditions of describing the physical characteristics of a people, their history, the features of their lands, resources, subsistence systems and the social structure of family and political institutions.¹⁷ These scholars showed a particular interest in the customs of other peoples with respect to marriage and the rituals associated with religious belief.¹⁸ Their efforts to understand and explain the diverse religious convictions of newly encountered peoples during the Age of Exploration illustrate that they appear to have been occasionally challenged by the wide divergence of spiritual beliefs—especially when compared with European norms. Yet until the Age of Exploration, the nations known to Western intellectuals fitted fairly comfortably within the confines of the known and accepted history of humankind substantiated by biblical and classical sources. Thereafter, introduction of new peoples onto the scene as a result of extended travel and exploration challenged extant frames of reference and was a rationale for more systemic inquiry. Hodgen explains:

Shaken by the creedal differences which had emerged so stormily in pre-Reformation Christendom, shocked by face-to-face contact with the followers of Mohamet and the idol-worshipers of Mongolia, Africa, and the Americas, disconcerted by the newly apprehended elaboration of the classical pantheon of gods and goddesses, European scholars and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁸ Hodgen (1964), 178.

theologians were forced reluctantly to suspect that God must have revealed Himself, not once only in Judaea, but in varying forms in diverse lands.¹⁹

Exposed to these new realities, where was the historian to place these different nations of humankind? From where did they originate? In what ways were they similar to and different from those in Europe?

The preferred sixteenth century solution to the origins of, and the differences among, humankind was a monogenetic/biblical one.²⁰ Christian religious conventions necessitated an axiom that people everywhere had a common beginning, that they had descended from Adam, and that they once all had shared a common language and religion. But the biblical account of the diversity of humankind was sadly lacking in detail. Moses' account of the creation and the historical overview of God's dealings with Adam's progeny up until the Tower of Babel was brief. Revisionist scholars sought their own conclusions in a effort to fill in the gaps and explain the increasingly obvious diversity of human language, social groups and nations.²¹ If Adam had indeed fathered all of humankind how could one explain the diversity and differences among them?

Theories of degeneration and diffusion were combined with Christian dogma to posit explanations for the cultural differences between human groups. It was thought that through various historical events combined with moral transgression (degeneration) groups had been dispersed (diffusion) over the continents.²² The further people had traveled from the head or center of their faith the further they had degenerated.²³ In this theoretical combination we can see the first glimmerings that a culture—or rather manners, religion, customs, and language—could be lost or contaminated. These

¹⁹ Ibid., 169.

²⁰ Ibid., 254.

²¹ Ibid., 229-230.

²² Scholars had a biblical precedent for this explanation readily at hand: the Old Testament explanation of the Jewish Diaspora.

²³ Jean Bodin [cited in] Hodgen (1964), 256. As a consistent idea this one of Bodin's did not last long. An appreciation of the wealth and power of the nations of the "Indies" grew in the 1500s and 1600s. Thereafter, explanations of difference were increasingly restricted to moral issues and level of civilization.

diffusions or transmissions of cultural traits were conceptualized as occurring by one of two methods: vertically or horizontally. Vertical, or father to son transmission, was seen as natural and good, while horizontal transmission through cross border contact or intermarriage was seen as unnatural and potentially harmful. Thus cultural transmission which stayed within a social/cultural/ethnic group (vertical) was acceptable, while inter-group exchange (horizontal transmission) was understood as being potentially harmful.

Environmental determinism was another theory that helped address problems of cultural diversity. Bodin and others attempted to replace a theocentric/biblical view of humankind's past and present condition with an explanation that was geo (geography) centered. He revived classical theories that linked cultural differences to the relationship between a group of peoples and the environment in which that group was situated.

Bodin believed that humans were basically all the same, and that differences among the nations of the world were a secondary result of geographic or environmental conditions—not innate variations linked to 'races' of humankind.²⁴ Under his influence, national traits such as disposition, physical strength, stature, skin color, human customs and sometimes intellectual capacity were assigned stereotypically by geographers and cosmographers to the residents in each climate.²⁵

At the time, it was of course always appreciated that climatic determinist reasoning had some shortcomings. Certainly all Irish were not prone to falsehoods and all Dutch were not drunks, nor were all English gluttons. All peoples living in the northern climate were not consistently brave, vigorous, insensitive to pain and weakly sexed, nor were all southerners the opposite.²⁶ Climatic determinism and cultural sameness did not stand up as a viable theory when judged against the empirical evidence of far greater intra- and inter-societal diversity.

²⁴ Jean Bodin [cited in] Hodgen (1964), 280.

²⁵ Hodgen (1964), 283.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 287. see also: Harris (1968), 42.

Still, environmental/climatic determinism flourished in response to central questions about the nature and origins of human diversity and a dissatisfaction with theories of degeneration and diffusion within a Christian paradigm. What was human nature? From where did social life spring? What was the basis of inequality in the world? Whatever their theoretical stance, belief in the essential universality of humankind led scholars to use the differences among societies as a tool to help them understand what people everywhere might share in common. The fact that some North American natives exhibited a belief in a superior heavenly being had been explained through the theories of degeneration and diffusion as a survival of former, more complete knowledge of the one true God. Through theories of environmental determinism, Native American religion was conceptualized as part of a greater trait that humankind had in common—the belief in spiritual, god-like beings. As this example illustrates and Hodgen notes, it was common for similarities to be over emphasized and even ‘strained...in an effort to reduce divergent phenomena to some common denominator.’²⁷

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a period of transition preceding the Enlightenment. All Europeans did not become equally educated and liberated from the mythical/magical world-view of the Middle Ages. Until at least the mid-sixteenth century, new observations were often interpreted according to past ideologies and mythologies; the bizarre and strange were often emphasized at the expense of reason and more sober evidence. A broad-based interest in the study of humankind had yet to arrive. ‘The Renaissance had discovered man, but he was a fellow European.’²⁸

Scholars generally agree that the 1680s roughly mark the beginnings of the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment, a period which continued throughout the eighteenth century. Comparative studies among humankind’s societies increased markedly during this time. Both historic and contemporary nations were redefined. By interpreting the present

²⁷ Hodgen (1964), 295.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 358.

by looking at the past for analogous patterns, the past and present were rigorously combined into one history of humankind within which each known society was comparatively situated and played a part. Such comparisons founded a 'natural history' of humanity based upon four categories of comparison: '(1) between Europeans of modern times and the peoples of earlier times, (2) between modern Europeans and contemporaneous uncivilized societies, (3) between peoples of earlier times and modern uncivilized peoples, and (4) comparisons among the observable modern uncivilized themselves.'" This comparison of the accomplishments of modern Europeans (in science, art, technologies, and military conquest) to the ancients and 'savages' paved the way for qualified, yet positive ideas of European progress to predominate by the mid-1700s, almost entirely replacing Renaissance pessimism.²⁹ This led, almost inevitably, to the idea of the 'progression' of social systems.

By the mid 1700s, theories of progress intermingled with climatic, diffusive and degenerative theories. Progress was understood as the direct, central result of humankind's power to reason, as well as a human being's innate desire/drive to improve his/her surroundings. In addition, progress was conceptualized as both cumulative and processual. Each succeeding generation was thought to capitalize upon the learning and experiences of its predecessors. Belief in the essential unity of humankind was maintained—not insignificantly because alternative theories that postulated large distinctions between different nations could immediately be used to legitimate profound inter-personal and inter-class distinctions at home. Societies were likewise evaluated according to the degree of their civilization. Civil/European society³⁰ served as a measuring stick for these progressive stages of advancement. Social structures were seen as metaphorically moving through stages akin to the life cycle of the individual; the body of society advancing toward wisdom and civilization was conceptualized as a parallel to the body of the individual growing from child to wise/civilized adult. Berkhofer explains:

²⁹ Robert Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 44–45.

³⁰ There can be no doubt that, historically, European nations also ranked each other according to 'civilization,' and that France especially laid claim to being the most civilized of the civilized nations.

[T]he ranking of societies that was part of the comparative method became a theory of progression. By analogy between the life cycle of a human being and the history of the species, philosophers in the eighteenth century, especially in France and Scotland, produced a history of the sequence of stages of society that the race had passed through to reach the height of progress exemplified by Europe at the time. Just as a single person advanced from infancy through youth to reach adulthood, so all humankind had passed through savagery and barbarism before gaining civilization.³¹

European intellectuals extended the comparative method and theory of progression to an analysis of the conditions of the 'primitive' peoples encountered by the travelers and explorers of their day and in this way attempted to identify the early conditions of his or her own society in order to understand what humans may have been like in the initial, early stages of the human social cycle. European philosophers such as Rousseau in France and Adam Ferguson in Scotland also compared those nations seen as 'primitive' with the current state of their own societies, but used these comparisons to severely critique excesses of inequality in their own countries as unnatural and evil. As an Other, the cultures of aboriginal people often epitomized for these philosophers many highly valued traits missing from or diminished in their own lives: essential democracy, true self-determination and self-creation, and the benefits of living in small, inter-dependent communities. Even so, these ideologies often sustained European notions of superiority

³¹ Berkhofer (1979), 47.

and in the next century contributed considerably to the subjugation of colonized peoples and to racial prejudice.³²

The conservative early nineteenth century is marked by several discontinuities in intellectual thought. Developments in the new sciences of geology, paleontology and archaeology brought biblical interpretations of the Creation further into question by presenting evidence that the earth was far older than previously thought. Study of the earth's stratigraphy and of fossils evidenced that organic life had developed through a series of stages. Evidence that the earth had developed through progressive, mappable stages was applied to and strengthened the theory of the progression of social structures. Virulent, chauvinistic nationalism grew, stimulated by the Napoleonic wars. Strong feelings of nationalism led to increasingly emphasized boundary markers between European nations and increasingly negative views of newly encountered peoples. Craniology and phrenology further legitimated these views by strongly linking the mind, brain and various physical types for the first time.³³ As Berkhofer explains, an unfortunate outcome of the nineteenth century movement away from biblical historical interpretations and climatic/geographic

³² The continuing effort to define the origin of humankind and to link all peoples to a common origin gave rise to comparison theories that would later inform the substance of the comparative method of August Comte and the survival theories of E.B. Tylor. As explained by Hodgen (1964:308), the comparative method employed during the Renaissance was to solve three problems: [1] the origin of Native Americans, [2] to prepare a chronology of the world according to Genesis and known historical fact [3] and to bolster up hierarchical notions that savagery was the antecedent to culture. A problem with comparing such similarities was determining who was the donor and who was the receiver. It was assumed logically that the oldest culture would be the donor and the youngest the receiver (pages 304-307). Culture theory then became one of progress or degeneration. Humans were believed to have a common origin. Through progressive stages, humankind advanced ideally from savagery through to civilization. In terms of Native Americans it is of interest to note that the Americas were considered younger than Europe, making the Old World the natural donor, or the originator of culture. Several theories were posed in order to explain how the Americas came to be peopled including migration over the Bering Strait and Asiatic descendency. There were also various attempts to link Native American Indians with Christian history. Father Joseph de Acosta's supposition [published in 1588-89] that they were descendants of the Jews, based upon traits he observed including being: "fearful," "ceremonious" and "subtill in lying" as well as wearing a "waste-coate" and going "bare-footed, or with soles tied with latches" in the "ancient habite of the Hebrewes," is but one example of many. [cited in] Hodgen (1964:313). At no point was it considered that Native Americans originated in the Americas, nor that they could explain their own origin and history. For a very few, Native Americans were not even considered human.

³³ Reginald Horsman, "Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism In Great Britain before 1855," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 3 (1976): 61-73.

determinism is that it opened the door on the classification and identification of cultural differences by race rather than by nation.³⁴

Explicitly racial theories of culture and cultural level, were increasingly prevalent from 1830 through to 1900. These theories linked the biology of specific peoples to their brain/skull shape, size and structure, the latter to the intellectual and moral capabilities of the individual, and these in turn to the potential of the group in question to develop and elaborate culture. In their day, these theories were very prevalent; yet retrospectively it is unarguable that few of the central figures of the nineteenth century now associated with the mainstream history of anthropology depended on them: not James Pritchard during his reign (1810-1845) as premier British anthropologist; not Lubbock, Tylor, Smith, Morgan, McLennan, or Bachofen.

(C) Anthropology Comes of Age

"The search for a unified science of humankind intensified with the acceptance of biological evolution and the implied monogenetic origin of all people."³⁵ Once this search began, the formation of formal organized societies consolidating physical anthropology, ethnology and archaeology quickly followed. The organization of these societies, founded on national levels in Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland and the United States, signaled a trend toward the professionalization of the study of humankind and provided the impetus for scientific publications.³⁶ A few prominent names associated with the early development of anthropology should be singled out for their theoretical contributions and insights with respect to the interrelationships between individuals and their cultures.

As I noted earlier in this chapter, E.B. Tylor is often cited as the anthropologist who first provided a formal definition of the term/concept 'culture.' While this attribution is

³⁴ Berkhofer (1979), 50.

³⁵ Vogt (1975), 135.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

technically inaccurate, Voget grants the credit to Tylor because to him 'belongs the distinction of holding anthropology to a cultural rather than a biological or sociological centrum."³⁷ In 1874 Tylor published the well-received and popular *Primitive Culture*, which represented his concerted effort to transform ethnography into a science of culture.³⁸ "Writing in the humanistic vein of progressivism" Tylor describes culture as the achievements of a human group. These achievements are calculated in terms of ethnographic evidence which pertains to the physical productions and technologies of a group as well as to the structure of their social institutions.³⁹

Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes; while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future.⁴⁰

Tylor's methods and techniques for studying humankind were often quite distinct from earlier approaches. It was Tylor's intent to be able to document the condition of culture apart from "history, climate, or race to produce similarities in technology, social organization, morality, religion and the arts."⁴¹ Culture was to Tylor a thing in itself and his goal was to document cultures cross culturally in order to record and compare societies in various stages of growth. Emphasizing the collection of ethnographic data, Tylor is distinguished by his intent to ground anthropological investigation within a

³⁷ Ibid., 147.

³⁸ Ibid., 136.

³⁹ Ibid., 147-148. For Tylor, the individual did not factor into the picture as he believed that the individual's actions and beliefs were consistent with that of the whole group or society.

⁴⁰ E.B. Tylor [cited in] Voget (1975), 136-137. Voget cites this source as: E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, 2 vols. (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1874).

⁴¹ Voget (1975), 138.

replicable, scientific method. Moreover, his definition of the term culture stood unchallenged in anthropology for the next thirty-two years.⁴²

From the last decade of the 1800s to the middle 1900s socio-cultural anthropology clearly became a discipline in its own right. During this time, the Tylor version of culture was reworked and some characteristics of his description were discarded or added to by anthropologists such as Boas. The anthropologic concept of culture broadened. The initial, evolutionary view of culture, by which humankind grew from a single, natural state through various and progressively more civilizing stages was replaced by the concept of culture as a coherent, unitary and mutually interdependent objectified *thing* in itself—existing and to be studied in its own right. Each culture was seen as a unitary whole, even if it was also understood that cultures were endlessly diverse.

(1) Boas and Cultural Historicism

The theoretical and methodological components of cultural historicism achieved their greatest impact on scholars in the United States. Theories and methods developed by Franz Boas (1858-1942) the founding figure of this school of thought and essentially of modern American anthropology, were influenced by his reading of German historicism. Combining his understanding of history with his fascination for ethnology, Boas formulated relationships between cultural things (artifacts, art, beliefs, social systems) and their historical context. For Boas all segments of anthropological investigation (linguistic, cultural, social, physical, archeological, ethnological) were strongly linked; he considered culture holistically. His groundbreaking proposition that form and meaning could have distinct histories, and his recognition that similar objects from diverse cultures might have similar functions but differing meanings and importance, were to prove especially important to later, more symbolically oriented anthropologists.

⁴² Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), 290-291.

Through his own fieldwork, Boas was aware of the central formative role of the individual social learning process, and he integrated the study of folklores and mythologies (central components of many cultural learning processes) into his work. According to Voget it was the awareness of the centrality of social learning processes—enculturation—which Boas transmitted to his students and it was ‘they who translated his use of social tradition into the concept of culture.’⁴³ Boas’ central tenet that unconscious and psychological processes have a causal relationship with behavior reflects the early impact of Freud on anthropological studies of the individual within his/her cultural setting. Combined with a commitment to professionalism and accountability, Boas’ emphasis on the importance of empirical data contributed to an increased interest in the functional and psychological connections between enculturation, language and culture.⁴⁴ His impact can be clearly noted in the groundbreaking work of the anthropologists he taught and influenced: scholars such as Ruth Benedict, Edward Sapir and Margaret Mead. These and other American anthropologists who subsequently founded what has been termed the culture and personality school of the 1930s and 1940s, made a highly reified, individual-forming notion of culture increasingly central.

Boas concentrated on carrying out a ‘detailed study of customs in their bearings to the total culture of the tribe and within an investigation of their geographical distribution among neighboring tribes, in order to determine the environmental conditions, the psychological factors and the historical connections that had shaped them.’⁴⁵ Based upon his own experience in the field, he was convinced that culture itself had a profound effect on individual behavior. Boas’ dogmatic rejection of evolutionary theories and racial

⁴³ Voget (1975), 328. According to Voget, Boas avoided using the term culture for a long time until ‘Radcliffe-Brown distinguished between the cultural and social early in the 1930s.’

⁴⁴ Boas has come under considerable criticism by some researchers who claim that the definition of culture by which he operated was contradictory. Stocking brings perspective to such accusations; see George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 196-197. For critical discussion see Thomas M. Brown, ‘Cultural Evolutionists, Boasians, and Anthropological Exhibits: A New Look at American Anthropology 1887-1905’ (M.A. thesis, John Hopkins University, 1980).

⁴⁵ George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 210.

determinism eventually pushed anthropology from its singular evolutionary frame of reference to an acceptance of the highly political and potent notion of multiple, equally valid cultures. The concept of a person being the product of his or her cultural environment is still strongly held to today.⁴⁶

Boas strongly influenced the world of museum display and museum portrayals of cultures.⁴⁷ When Boas began his career in museum work under the employ of the American Museum, his responsibilities included collecting, researching and exhibiting, primarily in the area of Northwest Coast ethnology. His museum duties included the expectation that he would design displays in order to attract and entertain visitors to the museum. Boas greatly preferred collection and documentation. Display was for him a disagreeable task which he seemingly would have liked to eliminate from his job description. Nevertheless, he had definite ideas about the display of cultural objects. At the time that Boas became a museum employee it was customary for ethnographic materials to be arranged in displays that accented an evolutionist concept of culture. Material cultures from around the world were grouped together in arrangements which validated the nineteenth century notion that culture moved from 'primitive' to 'complex' stages. For example, curators such as Otis T. Mason of the U.S. National Museum and John Wesley Powell of the Bureau of American Ethnology presented exhibits wherein objects characterized by 'like' features, were grouped together irrespective of their cultural contexts. These types of grouping schemes resulted in the dispersal of the material culture objects of a given society throughout the museum's displays. Under this scheme, objects of Northwest Coast culture would be scattered throughout a museum and displayed for comparative purposes with objects that were similar in manufacture or function, but created by far different peoples.

⁴⁶ I should mention Margaret Mead's contribution here. Her work on gender relations and gender roles powerfully suggested that cultures not only were wholes, but that human social roles were extremely plastic and culturally dependent—virtually divorcing them from anything biological or innate.

⁴⁷ Ira Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Exhibits: On Limitations of the Museums Method of Anthropology," [in] *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture. History of Anthropology*, vol. 3, by George W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.) (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 75-111.

This display strategy was an affront to Boas who advocated displays that emphasized ‘cultural holism.’⁴⁸ Boas felt that the grouping of objects to illustrate technological progress, or to show how specific objects may have diffused from society to society, reduced the individual nuances and uniqueness of particular societies to historical phenomena and theoretical supports. Boas favored the grouping of all artifacts from one society together as one display, and suggested that visitors should be left free to draw their own conclusions regarding any theory they may or may not be interested in as they moved about the museum from one display to another. Boas’ preference in display style emphasizes not the absence of a theory of culture, but rather evokes an alternative one: one in which culture itself is objectified and reified, and one in which objects serve primarily to represent to viewers the unified ‘way of life’ of the people who made them. Objects thus become representational of, or signified, their cultural source. The displays of First Nations people found in anthropological museums today are often curated by museum staffs who subscribe to Boas’ advocated method—the grouping of material culture and the group with which it is associated together in one presentation.⁴⁹

(2) Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown and the Rise of Social Anthropology

From 1890 to 1940 anthropology was powerfully informed by a movement now conventionally termed structuralism which combined with functionalism to study social structures such as institutions and their impact on the individual. Like the approach of Boas, structurally oriented theories signal a rejection of the progressivist/developmentalist theories informed by evolution in favor of a greater preoccupation with synchronic form, order, inter-dependence, function and systems. In the 1920s and thereafter these theories are strongly imbued with nominally ‘scientific’ values. Standards of methodology which would subject data to testable controls are introduced and debated. Fieldwork is proclaimed as the only method by which deep anthropological problems can be addressed.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 77-79.

⁴⁹ As I will note later in this thesis, this type of display is now referred to as contextualism.

As well, a concerted effort is made to delegitimize ethnocentric value judgments and racial theories in an attempt to study social organizations in their own terms. Group behavior and beliefs and their relationship to the individual become of greater interest, as culture becomes important on both the micro and macro levels. Discovery of the ultimate origins of beliefs, customs and institutions is basically eschewed by structuralists, who now assert the greater priority of describing and analyzing relationships between social and cultural things.⁵⁰

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1971) deeply informed structuralist anthropological and sociological notions of culture, and provided the key theoretical impetus for British fieldwork-based social anthropology. Durkheim did library-based work on primitive societies (primarily in Australia) and their social orders in order to test the hypotheses [1] that every social fact existed for a purpose (which he did not believe) and [2] that the purpose of a social fact is evident when we know what that social fact accomplishes in the social order (which he did believe).⁵¹ He argued that behind every significant social institution is a collective feeling or sentiment which is often represented to the external world in some form of symbol (i.e. a flag). Further, a significant social institution such as a set of religious beliefs, will be represented by symbolic objects which encapsulate the ‘collective feelings’ or ‘sentiment’ held toward that ‘institution’ by a group of peoples. Objects signify. Durkheim espoused the importance of material culture/certain objects as they become imbued with social significance and re/represented aspects of a social structure both to a ‘self’ and to an ‘other.’ Material culture/certain objects/institutions thus become significant in terms of the culture and the cultural beliefs they signify/represent and the emotions and sentiments they evoke in the individual or group.

Durkheim understood human reality as socio-psychological. Social structures created by humankind exist because of social and individual/group psychological needs, even if the

⁵⁰ Vogt (1975), 312-314.

⁵¹ Ibid., 483.

needs/functions which are served are not overtly understood by the group in question. He argued that an individual is deeply impacted by the groups within which he/she is situated. For this reason he promoted the study of social structures in order to understand how they add meaning to life and determine an individual member's behavior. This aspect of Durkheim's work is important to this study. His idea that societies form the individual, his proposition that objects demarcate specific social institutions and hence boundaries between societies, and his recognition that objects can carry specific and socially important signification and elicit individual emotional response help us to understand the powerful impact of the harnessing of aboriginal material culture (which in turn symbolically harnesses the institutions they represent) in museums, and will facilitate a deeper understanding of the discourse that took place around *The Spirit Sings*.

Durkheim's theoretical concepts continued to impact British social anthropological approaches until late in the twentieth century.⁵² Evoking Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown and others strongly asserted a social parallel to the theories of cultural integration that were being espoused in America; like cultures, traditional societies are a collective phenomena, structurally integrated wholes, with the parts being functionally interrelated to each other, and mutually interdependent. To threaten one part was to threaten all.

Thus by mid-twentieth century many of the now accepted links between notions of culture were well established: cultural integration (functionalism); asserted links between culture and personality (i.e. Mead; Benedict), and language and culture (i.e. Sapir; Sapir/Whorf); social integration and function tied to cultural beliefs; social and cultural holism and 'thingness.' In reference to our contemporary understanding of culture, Kroeber and Kluckhohn claim that by then

⁵² In 1973 Clifford Geertz noted, "recent theoretical discussions on the role of religion in society...emphasizes the manner in which belief and particularly ritual reinforce the traditional social ties between individuals; it stresses the way in which the social structure of a group is strengthened and perpetuated through the ritualistic or mythic symbolization of the underlying social values upon which it rests." see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 142.

a full and open-minded examination of what brought about any given cultural condition would regularly reveal some degree of circular causality. This is both because of the degree to which antecedent conditions of culture necessarily enter into it, and because of the relations of culture to persons. It is people that produce or establish culture; but they establish it partly in perpetuation and partly in modification of a form of existing culture which has made them what they are.⁵³

Their discussion is informed by Durkheim's premise that people are often unaware of the ways in which their culture influences them, but their definitions are also informed by the idea of the active, viable and rational individual in society. Individuals 'do' modify their cultures. Kroeber and Kluckhohn further discuss the impact of cultural change and posit that any change within a culture produces additional changes. This chain reaction theorem becomes particularly salient when applied to cultures that have been subject to colonial repression where change has been imposed and rapid. The obvious implication is that culture is so vulnerable that under disfavorable conditions it becomes subject to loss or even extinction.

(3) Malinowski's Biocultural Approach

Highly skeptical of global notions of culture and of fixed representations of social life, British social anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), and Raymond Firth, reached back to the eighteenth century to revive and make central the notion of the culturally informed, socially constrained, self interested individual—an individual who would interpret perceived cultural truths in the light of their personal interests, and who would bend social practices with a similar intent. At the same time, Malinowski was deeply influenced by Durkheim and by larger debates in psychology and social psychology. He deviated from Durkheim and anthropological structural functionalists chiefly in his occasional, but very strong, emphasis on basic human needs as final causes for social behaviors and cultural beliefs. In his later work he often made statements that could be read to mean that "culture is solely the result of response to physiological drives and needs

⁵³ Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), 326.

as modified by acquired drives.”⁵⁴ In actual fact, there are affinities between his views and Durkheim’s, as Malinowski also sought to explain the existence of human institutions in terms of the fulfillment of human needs. Toward the end of his life he concentrated on developing a general theory of culture rooted in human nature. While the resultant theory did not generate many academic followers, his approach gave support to his theoretical assertions that individual needs are biologically and psychologically determined, and that cultural systems are instruments to fulfill those needs.⁵⁵

A division in conceptual approaches toward cultural studies between Europe and the United States was strongly evident by the 1930s. By this time anthropology illustrated two general divisions: cultural anthropology was dominant in the United States, and social anthropology was centered in Europe, particularly Britain. British social anthropology, which remained closely aligned with comparative sociology, concentrated on the study of primitive society in an effort to understand and identify basic laws regarding the conceptualization, structure and function of human institutions. American cultural anthropology focused on the study of Native Americans in an effort to understand the larger anatomy of culture and the “individual as a typical socialized person.”⁵⁶

Kroeber and Kluckhohn suggest that thereafter, there was little activity in the area of postulating culture theory because of this differentiation between social and cultural anthropology. They themselves decline to define the term culture—instead they choose to list and discuss ‘aspects’ of culture:

[W]e have as yet no full theory of culture. We have a fairly well-delineated concept, and it is possible to enumerate conceptual elements embraced within that master concept. But a concept, even an important one, does not constitute a theory. There is a theory of gravitation in which “gravity” is merely one term. Concepts have a way of coming to a dead end unless they

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵⁵ Voget (1975), 515.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 537.

are bound together in a testable theory. In anthropology at present we have plenty of definitions but too little theory.⁵⁷

Today we still discuss ideas or aspects of culture without the framework of well-defined theories. The concepts of culture by which we operate today are an intermingling of older suppositions and the observations of more contemporary anthropologists. While American anthropology is largely responsible for producing a theory of cultural determinism resting on two assumptions: "(1) that culture exists at a distinct and autonomous level of reality and (2) that culture in its structuring organizes all other relations relevant to human nature and to social action,"⁵⁸ other historical distinctions between British and American social and cultural theory no longer exist.

In fact, cultural anthropologists have had much to say about social institutions; and social anthropologists have all worked with an intuitive notion of culture little different than their North American counterparts. Both have shared a profound conceptual bias towards functionalist representations and theorizing. Both thus emphasized the holistic elements of culture and social life in so-called traditional societies. Both typically treated culture and society as real entities connected to specific 'peoples.' Both understood cultures as patterns through which individuals structure their lives, find meaning in the universe, govern themselves and express their values and concerns. Both recognized that culture plays a large part in individual and collective identities and in the manner in which people assign worth to others. By the 1950s, both had so thoroughly objectified culture as a distinct autonomous thing, that it was easy to speak of culture as something that could be changed or lost, or could clash with another culture. Both advocated not only the 'protection' of traditional peoples, but also the protection of their 'ways of life'—seeing

⁵⁷ Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), 357.

⁵⁸ Voget (1975), 398.

the individual, society and culture as critically and inseparably linked.⁵⁹ Both British social anthropologists and American cultural anthropologists had injected concepts of value and vulnerability into culture theories—theories which coincided with a ‘vigorous social criticism of Western industrial society and culture’ at the outbreak of World War One and of the new industrialism which threatened the individual’s “dignity and worth.”⁶⁰

In keeping with the advance of technology and the industrial revolution, society was now metaphorically conceptualized as a machine,⁶¹ an integration of parts all dependent upon one another for the proper functioning of the whole.⁶² Tampering with the machine implied a loss of, or damage to, one facet of society, which in turn could cause a social/cultural chain reaction whereby the entire culture could be lost, damaged or profoundly altered

Given the great importance of culture to anthropology, and the centrality of the machine metaphor in early twentieth-century social thought, it is not hard to see how this particular notion of culture spread quickly from its source. Neither is it difficult to imagine why the concept of the cultural formation/identity of the individual, and the idea of the right to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 402. Voget states, “The critique of American society ultimately penetrated the policies and practices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and produced a reversal of assimilative programs tied to nineteenth-century theory regarding the evolution of civilization.” This coincides with some changes in Canadian government attitudes and policies towards Natives as well. Gerald R. McMaster notes that in Canada, thanks to some artist’s associations, pressure was placed upon governments to reify Native culture (by way of permitting and assisting them to revive artistic traditions). This eventually resulted in a revision of the Indian Act in 1951, which “finally grant[ed] Indian people religious and cultural freedom.” see Gerald R. McMaster, “Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Art and Craft of the Reservation Period,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 9, no. 2 (1989): 205-236.

⁶⁰ Voget (1975), 401.

⁶¹ This metaphoric shift symbolizes a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of society: from the ‘body’ to ‘machine’ and all that that implies (body-life-organism; machine-inanimate, etc.).

⁶² Voget (1975), 400. Voget explains this as a “concept of cultural integration [which] assumed[ed] that any given culture is more than a planless hodgepodge of features and that there are functional interdependencies and value orientations which bring structure to a culture and regulate its systemic processes....Social structuralism and biocultural functionalism uniformly stressed the mechanical interrelation of parts...commonly associated with mechanical models.” As a result, culture was compared to the workings of a machine in that just as “Disequilibrium and disorganization contradict mechanical operations, and hence the impairment or withdrawal of a unit activity is the beginning of a chain of effects toward imbalance” in mechanical operations, so too, is culture reliant upon the proper functioning of all its parts to operate properly.

exert control over one's culture, were soon closely linked: if culture is responsible for the individual's very definition, surely it must be protected and preserved. Both of these ideas are particularly salient in fieldwork carried out on aboriginal cultures in the United States and Canada. These cultures were understood as being in imminent danger—of dying a cultural death as a result of colonization. Ethnologists in both countries were concerned with the documentation of these 'primitive' forms of culture and with collecting material evidence of their existence before their certain demise.

The concept of 'having' a culture and the impact of cultural formation on the lives and behaviors of all peoples has combined with the concept that culture is inherently vulnerable to change and eradication unless preserved and protected. These beliefs are not only central to the discipline of anthropology. Rather, they permeate psychiatry, psychology, sociology, economics, law, government policy and the discipline of Native American studies. More importantly, they form a central component of 'folk' theories of culture. All cultures, not just Aboriginal cultures, are seen as susceptible to degeneration.⁶³

One consequence of the ubiquity of these ideas of culture is that today this whole constellation of meanings is usually accepted as axiomatic, as a given, far outside the world of academia. No one would argue against the existence of 'culture.' At the same time, culture is something which everybody has but presumably only a few directly observe. How then do we explain the present heated and emotional debates conducted within the museum community over the 'proper' representation of culture; how do we explain the involvement of governments and other groups in the promotion, protection and preservation of cultures on both national and ethnic levels?

⁶³ I noted in my discussion of Franz Boas that ideas of poly/mono-genesis were still part of the academic terrain. It is noteworthy that theories of the 'decay' of social structures, so evident in the seventeenth century, are implicit in the idea that culture can be lost or degenerate if interfered with or contaminated. While present day concepts of decay are not directly linked to the loss of the Christian religion, they do have moral overtones.

The arguments about definitions of culture continue. Is everything in a museum 'culture'? Is every artifact equally valid as a 'cultural representative'—a cultural signifier? Disagreement over the answers that might be given to these questions leads to conceptual and cultural claims based on a variety of understandings of 'what' culture 'is.' Indeed, cultural claims may well be at once the single most unifying (we all have the same culture; we appreciate many cultures living together) and divisive set of group-oriented notions (we want to keep our culture and will fight for it; our culture is who we are; our culture is more valid/valuable than yours) at work across the world. Much of this ferment can be attributed to the strong associations that are presently made between cultures and ideas of the nation.

CHAPTER TWO: Developing the Concept of A Nation

I Introduction

Thanks to our modern technological advancements we have been able to break the confines of gravity to send astronauts and equipment into space. Photographs taken of planet earth show us that from great distances our world appears to be a spherical whole, with large and small land masses surrounded by water. Photographs taken from less of a distance reveal the textual diversities of the land masses; evidence appears of valleys, deserts, plains, forests, and mountains. Earth is a self contained unit complete with all that is necessary to sustain human existence.

Compare this view to a classic representation of the planet such as a globe found in any stationary store or grade school classroom. The shapes of the land masses on the globe will be consistent with a photograph or view from space. But in these global representations of the world, continents are not only divided by water; they are divided within. Differing colors and bold black outlines tell us that our world has been parceled, separated and claimed by political entities. Borders between Canada and the United States, Egypt and the Sudan, Brazil and Bolivia do not appear in a photograph from space. Yet each of us can easily identify, indeed anticipate, these arbitrary divisions when we look at a representation of the earth in the form of a globe or map. The borders which delineate the space claimed by groups of people do not, except for a very few, exist physically, at least not centrally. They are imaginary and in certain respects arbitrary, shifting under the stresses of political movements such as we have just witnessed in what was once East and West Germany and in the former Soviet Union. In this section I discuss the concepts which support our modern notions of nation, nationhood and nationality and show how these concepts, like those of culture, have come to us through a process spanning time. During this process concepts of nation became strongly aligned with the cultural concepts addressed in Chapter One.

II The Cultural Roots of Nations

Benedict Anderson defines the nation, or its average contemporary, as 'an imagined political community.'¹ He explains that the nation 'is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'² Save perhaps for a few aberrant micro-states in the Pacific—their aberrant existence itself confirming the power of the notion of nation and the drives it may create to preserve the existence of that nation—no nation is a literal, face-to-face social community. The communion between citizens of a nation is therefore expressed in symbolic ways, many of which invoke feelings of emotion and patriotism, and these multiple expressions of nationalism generate the type of commitment to the abstraction 'nation' which is usually reserved for family and neighbors. Loyalty to the nation is expressed in song and prose. Nations are advocated, defended, fought and died for. Borders are patrolled and protected. It is not a specific geographic space which compels men and women to give their lives for their country, it is the concept of 'nationhood' and the profound symbolic reality this concept holds for the citizens of a nation.

Like Anderson, Hans Kohn³ defines nationalism as a condition of the mind and a product of conscious collective identity. Kohn argues that it is natural to feel attached to one's birthplace, to prefer one's own language, foods and customs, and to believe in the superiority of these native characteristics. But these characteristics, affirms Kohn, are elements of culture not nationalism; moreover, ethnographic and historical evidence shows that while these may be natural tendencies, they can vary radically. In contrast, Kohn maintains that nationalism is not at all natural. It is instead a product of the growth of

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

² *Ibid.*

³ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study into its Origins and Backgrounds* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 13.

social and intellectual factors at a certain stage in history. For Kohn nationalism is an 'idea' and nations are a product of 'historical development.'⁴

Most historians date the rise of our modern concept of nation to the end of the eighteenth century. But Kohn illustrates that humankind had been afforded several cultural and political experiences that had prepared the groundwork for the rather quick rise of nationalism at that time. Interestingly, both Kohn and Anderson find that the roots of nationalism are planted, not just in politics but in cultural systems. It is only in recent world history that humankind has begun to regard nationality as the center of political and cultural life and activity.⁵

Anderson specifically identifies two large cultural systems that preceded the modern nation: the "religious community" and the "dynastic realm."⁶ He posits that classical communities had a character distinct from modern nations because their sense of group cohesiveness resulted from shared religious and other ideologies. Similarly, classical nations, who were often governed by either monarchies or dynasties, did not form strong political ideologies. With the exception of many social elite, the idea of membership in a political unit had not infiltrated the general citizenry. Residents of a country were subject to the authority of a ruler (and his/her subsequent heirs) rather than a political party or movement such as we presently understand these. Often, the older systems of government and religion were closely linked; the ruler's right to govern was legitimated divinely (given by God and until the Reformation legitimated by the Pope, God's vassal on Earth) while the Church was intimately involved with the day to day political workings of the nation.⁷ The state, or proto-state, was strongly identified with the current ruler. Often these rulers

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Anderson (1991), 7: 12.

⁷ England under Henry VIII was the first to shake off papal authority. However, the example of Thomas More illustrates that the Archbishop of Canterbury (witness too the role of Cranmer) continued to play a central role in all affairs of state.

were able to generate little commitment from the citizenry; poor communication ensured that save for taxes and in war the state impinged rarely on most people's everyday lives.

Religious or dynastic cultural systems served to provide a certain degree of group identity, yet those groups to which people were centrally committed were relatively small and tightly controlled. For example, religious communities shared in the signification of sacred symbols and languages. This symbolic participation established both the people's commitment and sometimes their submission—as access to language/communication was often unequally distributed and provided a means of inclusion and exclusion.⁸ In many European Christian nations only the elite had the ability to read Latin, the official language of the church and often the state. Those who wished to know the words of the Bible, but were unable to read Latin, were dependent upon the clerical hierarchy for access and interpretation.

Kohn finds 'loyalty' to the soil of one's birthplace (and often homeland) a natural and widespread sentiment. Historically speaking, one's geographic 'homeland' was little further afield than the village of one's birth rather than the country at large. Loyalty to the soil on (or near) which one was born restricted the possibility that individuals would feel loyalty to the greater 'country' (or that country's ruler) of which one's birthplace formed a part. Humankind's ability to identify with groups larger than those encountered in face-to-face contact was ideologically limited due to the lack of broad and effective communication, and geographically limited due to a lack of mobility. Moreover, rulers had few reasons to cultivate this kind of identification.

In the 1600s some of the established social systems of Europe began to decline due to an ever-broadening world-view that had resulted from exploration, scientific advancement and the ideologies of liberty and equality propagated during the Reformation. The convergence of these factors with a rapid growth in populations, extended trade, greatly increased literacy and changing economies led to vigorous attacks by scholars on

⁸ Anderson (1991).

commonly accepted beliefs which legitimated the alignment of one's birth-right to social status and divine authority. Changing social forces and relentless social criticism undermined established social systems and paved the way for the rise of the modern nation state.⁹

III The Rise of the Modern Nation State

Before the rise of the modern nation state humankind appears to have experienced group identity through common cultural (including religious) bonds. Kohn emphasizes that objective categorical bonds such as 'common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs, traditions, and religion' are elements often associated with nationalism, and that from such associations one can mistakenly infer the presence of nationalism. He stresses that "Although some of these objective factors are of great importance for the formation of nationalities, the most essential element is a living and active corporate will. Nations are formed by the decision to form a nationality."¹⁰ Kohn understands the French Revolution as the historical political element which climaxed the development of modern nationalism.

The French Revolution was not an isolated political event. Increasingly, state-specific conflicts over international trade had heightened the interaction between peoples and countries since the beginning of the Age of Exploration. The French Revolution was fed by the ideologies which had been spreading throughout the Western hemisphere during and since the Renaissance and Reformation—ideologies which articulated the French Revolutionary slogan of 'liberty, equality and fraternity.' These ideas which formulated a more enlightened view of humankind's potential and a growing sense of individuality combined with developments in science and rapid social changes, forcing the previously close relationship between church and state into an ever widening rift. With the advent of the Reformation the authority of the church as the guardian over all aspects of the state

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-22.

¹⁰ Kohn (1961), 14-15; 19-20.

and individual life had declined rapidly. Law became increasingly secularized.¹¹ The entire continent of Europe was swept by change. But as Kohn explains, France was ripe for revolution. The new revolutionary ideas had a great impact on French intellectuals. The monarchy and the French system of government were particularly abusive, yet at the same time, surprisingly weak. A need for change, felt particularly in the city of Paris, led to the onset of the French Revolution.

The advent of print technology was a significant factor in the success of the Reformation and contributed significantly to the spread of revolutionary thought across Europe. As Anderson explains, the possibility of imaging a nation became historically viable when the cultural conceptions “that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth...[and] the belief that societies were naturally organized around and under high centers” who ruled by divine authority lost their grip on men’s minds and the concept of temporality or simultaneity arose to give meaning to everyday fatalities.¹² These three factors, [1] the sharing of vernacular languages and through them ideas, [2] the questioning of divine authority, and [3] the rise of the importance of, and an increased awareness of current events rooted in time and place, converged at a time when fierce economic, political and religious competition between states (especially from the Napoleonic wars forward) amplified the notion of nation and “drove a wedge between cosmology and history.”¹³

The impact of commercial printing on these searches for new social and religious meanings was particularly dramatic.¹⁴ Through printed material and a shared language, which indeed *became* shared in part through the codification of print, people were able to express their ideas and thoughts and share these with many, many others who could, in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

¹² Anderson (1991), 36.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37. Anderson notes that mechanization permitted thousands of texts to be prepared and distributed in a few wide spread languages including Latin and the most popular vernaculars. By the year 1500, twenty million books had been printed in Western Europe followed by an estimated 200 million by 1600.

turn, read them and subsequently agree, disagree, discuss, respond to or think about what they had read. Non face-to-face communication became an integral part of social life. By reading, individuals became aware that their own views were shared (or not) by others whom they would never know, yet whom, curiously, they were deeply aware of. These communal reading publics or 'imagined communities' incorporated members of the merchant class and women as vernacular texts became steadily more available. Through the power of the printed word it became possible for masses or groups of people to become 'simultaneously mobilized for politico-religious purposes.'¹⁵ No longer did the average citizen identify only with his/her close groups and immediate place of birth. As Francis Bacon declared, "print had changed the appearance and state of the world."¹⁶

In the Western Hemisphere large clusters of political entities, the first modern nation-states, sprang up between 1776 and 1838.¹⁷ Their governments enshrined the ideology of 'one nation, one people' into written constitutions.¹⁸ Each state identified its own unique nation often conceptualized as having one culture, one language, and in some cases one race.¹⁹ In addition, these nations claimed to possess a discrete, bounded and well-defined territory. In order to demarcate the distinctiveness of their nation, citizens began to point to their language, their historical heritage, their patrimony, and their traditional values and beliefs as the markers of their uniqueness and difference from others. As nations and the people who constituted them began to think of themselves as privileged, valued, and unique, the gap between 'us' and 'them' (their neighbors) widened. As Kohn points out: "Thus the gulf between nations grew in the age of nationalism."²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid., 40. Anderson explains that it was newspapers which enabled the imagined community to develop in the colonized Americas. Although persons in differing locations did not access each others news papers, they were aware of the medium and the messages which gave them a collective feeling of simultaneity (we are all in this together). They were also able to keep abreast of what was happening back in the Metropole according to political, social and economic developments. (Ibid., 62).

¹⁶ Francis Bacon [cited in] Anderson (1991), 37.

¹⁷ Anderson (1991), 46.

¹⁸ Ibid., 110.

¹⁹ Ibid., 84.

²⁰ Kohn (1961), 573.

But recall that language, heritage, values, beliefs and patrimony had become aspects of what was to evolve into European notions of 'culture.' Thus the concept of what makes a nation unique became entwined with the culture a nation purportedly exhibits. Notions of culture/nation combined to justify and rationalize movements of national self determination, first in Europe, then across the world. Anthony D. Smith considers the modern nation to be a construct of human invention.²¹ Smith is both critical and suspicious of nationalist rhetoric, finding its motives politically grounded and manipulative. He and others such as Barth (1969) and Brass (1991) point out that there are boundaries other than those defining the nation's borders. There are also boundaries that divide the people within the nation.

Ethnicity is a term which has virtually replaced race and class in social science studies.²² Its connotations are presumed to be less offensive. And this is just the type of linguistic (and symbolic) manipulation which Smith wishes to warn us against. He finds that modern nation building is based upon two premises: activism and assimilation. Both of these premises utilize concepts of the ethnic differences within a nation's boundaries to rally and solidify emotions of nationalism. Ethnic differences can be used to mobilize a nation (again, read as an imagined community) in a number of distinct ways. An ethnic group may be labeled as the "other within" and used as a scapegoat for the economic and/or social ills of the nation. Historically the Jews have fulfilled this role in a number of European nations. Second, a group may wish to point to 'their' ethnic differences (cultural markers) to help establish that they are indeed distinct from other groups within the same nation (often in order to validate that they should be recognized in a special way, or perhaps that they have some sort of special needs). Third, ethnic differences may be positively exposed (and even valorized) in an attempt to bond a nation comprised of diverse cultures—sensually suggesting that 'many nations/cultures have come together

²¹ Anthony D. Smith, "The Myth of the Modern Nation and the Myths of Nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 11, no. 1 (1988): 1-26. It should be noted that in this, Smith's views parallel those of Anderson.

²² Brackett F. Williams, "A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, no. 18 (1989): 401-444.

under one *national* umbrella.' The latter is, of course, the official position of the Canadian state.

While Smith utilizes examples from Third World countries his ideas are pertinent to conditions in the industrialized nations. Overall, industrial states favor a policy of assimilation with respect to both their aboriginal cultures and their immigrant groups. Assimilation is thought to engender stronger sentiments of national pride and encourage solidarity among a nation's citizens.

Smith also describes two differing, yet related, concepts of nations relevant here. The first is the "civic conception" which can be correlated to most Western nations. Within a civic conception, nations are treated as:

units of population which inhabit a demarcated territory, possess a common economy with mobility in a single territory-wide occupational and production system, common laws with identical legal rights and duties for everyone, and a public, mass education system with a single civic ideology. Territory, economy, law and education constitute the four spheres in and through which nations, in this view are formed.²³

The second concept:

sees nations as named human populations claiming a common ancestry, a demonic solidarity, common customs and vernaculars, and common native history. Genealogy, demography, traditional culture, and history furnish the main resources for an ethnic view of the formation of nations....[This concept may embody an] ethnic community...possessing a myth of common descent, common historical memories, elements of shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity.²⁴

From the time of the French Revolution onward, national elite's have deeply appreciated the benefits of engendering mass citizen commitment. As war became more mechanized and total mass enlistment's proved necessary, and since the Napoleonic Wars it has been shown that in order to encourage maximum enlistment nationalist commitment by all

²³ A.D. Smith (1988), 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

citizens must become an integral component of a social structure. In order to ensure nationalist commitment, nation builders have found that a practical tool in the assertion of a nation's distinctiveness is the manipulation of images representing the national culture.

The necessities and benefits of manipulating images of national culture in order to gain broad public support for the state can be understood through the work of Emile Durkheim. As I discussed in the first chapter, the social institutions of a society are often re/presented by objects of material culture. These objects signify important aspects of an individual's social life and evoke emotional response from the social individual. A combination of the solicitation of emotional response and social differentiation through the manipulation of powerful, material, signifiers plays a central role in the evocation of nationalist sentiment, even where the imagined communities—the nation—comprises millions of people.

As our modern nations were forming, nationalist sentiments and feelings of difference were also soon expressed through the development of 'palaces of culture': art collections, museums, churches as historical relics, and the like. Through Durkheim's explanation of the interrelationship between cultural signifiers and the evocation of emotion, it becomes clear that these 'palaces' were themselves cultural markers—pointing to both the civic pride of the nation and reasons for national pride such as conquest or exploration. But palaces of culture do not only exhibit the cultures of 'others.' They can also display a particular reading of nation's past. By looking at 'the way we were,' it is possible for a nation to illustrate 'how far it has come.' The high days of nineteenth and twentieth century nationalism corresponded with the explosive growth of major museums.²⁵

Museums and nationalism experience a highly reciprocal and dialectical relationship; each interpenetrates the other. The material cultures contained within museum walls represent elements of national pride: these are the places we have been, these are the peoples we

²⁵ Archie F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Developments of Canadian Museums* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973).

have met or conquered, these are the cultures we have incorporated. Napoleon was aware of the symbolic value of the treasures he brought home from Egypt and the tremendous culture 'he' had uncovered. Hooper-Greenhill, in her study of the museum movement and its association with knowledge, finds that during the 1800s "a new cultural matrix emerged, that enmeshed the 'museum' within a network of state patronage and art production."²⁶ A significant factor leading to the rise of museums was "the emergence of a state that conceived of the population as a resource."²⁷ The 'state' had a need for the loyalty of its citizens. I have discussed above the reciprocal relationship of the state's need for its residents and the evocation of national loyalty. In turn, the state was validated and its ideals were supported through the collection and display of cultural treasures supposed for the first time to be *publicly owned*.²⁸ Likewise, the nation's culture was for the first time the legitimate patrimony of the public to be cherished and protected from internal and external threat.

Our modern notions of nation and culture are still inextricably intertwined. Nations are assumed to possess and exude a national culture through which its citizens share a sense of identity. This intangible national culture is signified through national treasures and key symbols such as a flag, art, theater, dance, song, sport—all examples of symbols which evoke emotional responses in a nation's citizens. Yet smaller groups within a national culture have similar symbolic referents that they do not necessarily share with the rest of a country. A curious relationship presently exists between our conceptualizations of culture, nation, nations within the nation and material culture, which I will subsequently discuss.

²⁶ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 188.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

²⁸ Hooper-Greenhill credits the ideal of public ownership (rather than individual 'princely' ownership) of cultural treasures and its continuance in the West with Napoleon (1992:189).

IV Nationalism and Social Issues

The message of liberty and human dignity which swept across Europe and the Americas ushered in a new sense of morality as "nations began to grow conscious of themselves and of their political and cultural ideals."²⁹ Nations are formed based upon ideological aspirations and solidified by the formation of a group identity where a political will provides a catalyst. In the United States a pervasive ideal of equality and freedom established a nation which believed itself to be a haven for the oppressed of the world: a land of milk and honey favored by God and selected for his "chosen peoples."³⁰

The images which nations create for themselves do not necessarily correspond with how their governments behave or how their societies are structured. In truth there is much constraint and inequality in all contemporary nations which profess to be free and democratic, ironic in part because within those nations there reside individuals and groups of diverse ethnic and aboriginal heritage's whom themselves sometimes assert nationhood. As these nominally democratic nations were forming, some of the members of these societies fell (or were forced) into differing ranks of a vertical stratification system based upon their ability to access established political systems and economic resources. Means of inclusion and exclusion were exercised by the majority group, which by definition "exerts influence and possesses or controls the bulk of the power within a given society."³¹ Elliott explains that in this type of stratified social structure, "the culture of the majority is the one which tends to be transmitted *via* the public school and the mass media. Consequently, the values, beliefs, and dreams of the majority group are synonymous with the mainstream...culture."³²

²⁹ Kohn (1961), 573-575.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 269.

³¹ Jean Leonard Elliott (ed.), *Minority Canadians: Native Peoples* vol. 1 (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 1-2. Elliott is using Canada as an example to explain minority/majority/ethnic group status.

Today, the notion that individuals in any single state are literally 'one people' is recognized by many thoughtful analysts as an ideology, or perhaps a "cultural myth."³³ The notion of the 'melting pot' in the United States, for example, retains little empirical validity. Political and social recognitions of the internal cultural diversity of state populations with their attendant political and economic disparities are brought to the nation's attention by special interest group politics, combined with altruistic interests in the issues of fairness and access. Since the 1960s, criticism of the dichotomy between professed national ideals of equality and actual life experiences has increased and broadened as cultural maintenance and cultural difference have become increasingly tied to social issues, social problems and notions of rights.³⁴

From a social perspective, prejudice and discrimination based upon "ascriptive" characteristics rather than "achieved" characteristics is now almost universally considered to be socially repugnant; yet in truth real and imagined ascriptive disabilities are ever present.³⁵ Suggested remedies for the negative consequences of status ascription often target the redistribution of valued resources. Elliott argues simplistically that "prejudice and discrimination exist because minority and majority members are forced to compete for scarce resources."³⁶ Other theories suggest that greater cross-cultural understanding is needed, and recommend "educational campaigns attempting to change in-group attitudes concerning out-group members." But as Elliott explains, educational remedies remain irrelevant "*if the institutional structure of society remains unchanged*" and that in recent years non-violent "*confrontation* [is] a strategy for change used increasingly by minority groups in North America [attempting to] educate the general public and inform the power

³³ A.D. Smith (1988), 1-26.

³⁴ Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991), 20. Brass states that "Ethnic groups that use ethnicity to make demands in the political arena for alteration in their status, in their economic well-being, in their civil rights, or in their educational opportunities are engaged in a form of interest group politics which became prominent in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s and which sought to improve the well-being of group members as individuals."

³⁵ Elliott (1971).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. (Of interest, Brass calls this the deprivation theory.)

structure of their demands, solicit support from the mass media, and build morale among their own ranks which will sustain them in future action.”³⁷

Many politically activated groups have increased the world-wide effectiveness of their programs through their integration of the ideal connections between culture and peoplehood, and by expressing these ideas through their own nationalist discourse. These groups have found that tremendous political leverage can be derived through the deployment of key cultural markers which solicit an emotionally driven, sometimes patriotic following and solidify specific group identity. They have become aware of the fact that those people who recognize and validate the state’s power often recognize authentic parallels between the nation state’s ‘rights’ and the asserted rights of ethnic and aboriginal minorities within the state.

The repertoires of available cultural symbols deployed by ethnic/nationalist groups varies enormously and includes both tangible objects and cognitive ideals. Brass speaks of these “cultural markers” as any aspect of culture characterized by a “distinguishing cultural feature that clearly separates one group of people from another.”³⁸ Thus, these markers may often involve in some way a group’s language, religion, territory, diet, dress, or color.³⁹

Anthony D. Smith discusses the integration of these markers with nationalist discourse and points out that ‘stories/narratives’ are constructed around a group’s past, present and future. Through the use of ‘dramatic narrative forms,’ nationalists often take a nostalgic approach to ‘cultural remembrance’ and Smith posits that these discursive narrative structures “inspire the members of the *ethni* to return to ancestral ways and ideals” while simultaneously ‘reawakening the nation.’⁴⁰ Those forms of narrative that Smith postulates

³⁷ Ibid., 13.

³⁸ Brass (1991), 18.

³⁹ Ibid., 18-21.

⁴⁰ A.D. Smith (1988), 1-26.

as particularly effective include heroic folk-tales and ballads, customs and rituals.⁴¹ Richard Handler also convincingly argues that visual arts, dramatic arts, architecture, dance, song and several other categories of cultural activities are effective in mobilizing a group of people toward nationalist aspirations.⁴²

Nationalistic movements by ethnic groups, which are often motivated by explicit socio-economic disabilities, are definitely political acts.⁴³ Brass insists that the use of cultural forms are essential to establish that the group in question is authentically different from others and therefore requires, or has a right to, special political concessions. Like Elliott, Brass finds that nationalistic movements are economically motivated and he notes that these movements incorporate both the advancement of individual rights as well as the group's collective well-being. The prime conditions for ethnic nationalism occur when the *status quo* of the group can no longer be sustained:

Thus, ethnic nationalism and conflict are most likely to develop when the educational, technological, and administrative requirements of an industrializing, centralizing state and the democratic demands of previously disadvantaged mobilizing groups make it increasingly difficult to sustain a system of ethnic stratification or a particular regional or urban-rural distribution of economic resources and political power. New elite's arise from culturally distinct, disadvantaged groups to compete for economic and political opportunities controlled by the dominant group. The more widespread the competition and the more intransigent the dominant elite, the more likely it is that disgruntled elements from the disadvantaged group will turn to nationalism. How far such a nationalist movement will be taken and how successful it will be depends upon both the character of internal social and political communication and organization within the group and upon the political relations with other ethnic groups. For an ethnic nationalist movement to succeed, it is necessary for the elite's who begin the process to be able to pursue, or at least appear to pursue, effectively the interests of other social classes within the ethnic group.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid., 13-14.

⁴² Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture In Quebec* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

⁴³ Brass (1991).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 46.

By the criteria that Brass outlines, an ethnic (or aboriginal) group changes its status from that of a community to a nation when it is successful in achieving one of two political goals: the transformation of corporate rights to control of the public system of education and the right to teach their 'own' history, language and culture within that system; or when a group has achieved autonomy over territory within the state and/or obtained their own country.⁴⁵

In Canada, Quebecois nationalists have already achieved significant, formal, political recognition for a French cultural 'nation within a nation.' French has been enshrined as one of the two founding and official languages of the Canadian nation. Through the use of cultural markers, Quebec nationalists have achieved recognition of their distinct cultural heritage and consequently now access established systems of power. For example, they have the right to teach their language, heritage and culture within a public school system they completely control.

Nor is this kind of quasi-national recognition confined to the province of Quebec. As an 'official' founding language/culture, education in French is offered throughout the country of Canada and even in English speaking schools the French language, culture and heritage are integral parts of the public school system. Access to many desirable federal government jobs requires that an individual is conversant in both French and English. Government speeches are given in both languages. Prime Ministers are now expected to speak both French and English. Politically, an aspirant Prime Minister cannot be elected without at least some support in the province of Quebec. As a province, Quebec carries a good deal of political and ideological clout.

Strangely, for all their concern with culture, language and heritage, Quebecois nationalists have been largely silent on the subject of the national aspirations of Native people found within their own province. First Nations groups that call Quebec home, have found *their* land claims, heritages and languages largely negated by successive Quebec governments.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Indeed, a tiny number of Native schools have achieved the right to teach in their Native dialects under the supervision of Native parent boards. First Nations peoples throughout the country of Canada have not yet enjoyed nearly the same success in their claims to nationhood and for the recognition of their culture as have Quebecois nationalists. Yet, First Nations claims to land, culture, language and heritage, predate the claims made by any subsequent cultural group, both historically (as they were here first) and politically. The federal government, and prior to them, the British government, has always recognized that First Nations groups, in principle, had 'rights' to the land on which they had lived for centuries. Treaty negotiations were a Band-Aid solution to come to terms with the conflicting desire on the side of the dominant power to keep as much land as possible, and to recognize that the 'land' they occupied was, in effect, the prior claim of other political/cultural First Nations entities.

CHAPTER THREE: Culture, Nation, First Nations and Politics

I Introduction

I have noted that members of Western societies are very much aware of culture and cultural issues. Popular conceptions of culture stress the importance of the group heritage as the fundamental factor in the formation of individual identity. Given this conception of culture as the prime formative factor in individual identity, and coupled with the notion that cultures are vulnerable (subject to being lost or at least diluted), it is not surprising that governments are called upon by more aware elements of the public to introduce policies which will preserve, enhance and encourage cultural expression. In turn, efforts made by state governments to encourage, enhance and preserve cultural expression, convey the state's desire to maintain a sense of solidarity amongst the citizens of the nation and helps to create a national, (multi-)cultural image. This image is, in turn, portrayed by the nation's citizens to citizens of other nations throughout the world.

Nations and ethnic groups alike are today routinely understood as possessing distinct cultures distinguished by recognizable cultural differences.¹ Handler studied the discursive interpenetration of Quebecois nationalist discourse in the academic disciplines of anthropology, political science, sociology, history, and philosophy and found that these varying fields inform each other to such an extent that it is now difficult to find a frame of reference within which to understand nationalism, that is not itself *a consequence of nationalism*. He explains that:

Nationalism is an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity and homogeneity encompassing diversity. It is an ideology in which social reality, conceived in terms of nationhood, is endowed with the reality of natural things. In principle a nation is bounded—that is, precisely delimited—in space and time: in space, but the inviolability of its borders

¹ Handler (1988), 18.

and the exclusive allegiance of its members; in time by its birth or beginning in history. In principle the national entity is continuous: in time by virtue of its uninterruptedness in history; in space, by the integrity of the national territory. In principle national being is defined by a homogeneity which encompasses diversity; however individual members of a nation may differ, they share essential attributes that constitute their national identity; sameness overrides differences.²

Handler strives to illustrate that the “relationship uniting nation and culture, the collective individual and its patrimoine” is double edged; having culture is proof of being a nation; and being a nation is proof that you have a culture.³ He calls the notion that a nation can possess something as intangible as culture, “possessive individualism.”⁴

Through his term “possessive individualism,” Handler suggests that individuals within a group, or a group as a collective identity, appropriate objects of their social structure by ‘objectifying’ them.⁵ In the discussion below, I discuss in detail the idea that a culture can become objectified and appropriated by members of groups within the framework of a political agenda. Subsequently, I will discuss the political manipulation of culture and the politics of artifacts. Finally, I contextualize my discussion within the framework of Canadian Multiculturalism and I will ask where First Nations and their cultural/nationalistic claims fit within my overall framework.

II The Objectification of Culture

Reflecting my earlier discussion of the evolution of the notion of culture, ‘Disputants in the ‘culture wars’ [now] share an understanding of what cultural property is....[and agree] to a world-view in which culture has come to be represented as and by things.’⁶ The identity of a nation-state or ethnic group is presumably made evident through the control

² Ibid., 6.

³ Ibid., 153.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 215.

over and the display of cultural property. But it would be simplistic to suggest that we can always point to clearly defined, mutually agreed upon meanings behind specific cultural indicators—that is, what they actually re/present. Brian Durrans writes:

Differentiating between self and other, and within the category of 'the other,' is necessary for any kind of grasp of the world, and is therefore also a potential source of error. How we project ourselves is subject to bias: what people would like others to know about them usually differs from how they actually live. Collectable evidence provides some measure of the material conditions of social life, and interpreted sensitively, can also give insight into the way people misrepresent those conditions ideologically.⁷

As Durrans states, in a poly-ethnic state a relationship arises between key cultural artifacts and the representation of ourselves and others. Just as nations are imagined and created through human invention, so is the image of ourselves and our culture. These images are validated and displayed, with the assistance of: tangible objects such as fine art and handicraft; cultural performances; the reenactment of past histories; and through the present day continuation of traditions. Ironically, the prevalence of such formal displays and reenactments itself symbolizes the distance between these 'things' and the everyday life of the people.

But what transpires when objects of material culture are presented? What is displayed? And perhaps more importantly, what is understood about the culture by those whom gaze? Throughout this thesis I have used the word "re/present" to indicate a particular movement in meaning. Important transformations in meaning take place when a cultural artifact is taken away from the culture (meaning a specific group of people) of which it 'belongs,' or once belonged, and is confined to a location within a museum; or (alternatively) an articulation of the culture is formally presented through song, dance or ritual (put on by experts) in order to show members of an 'outgroup' aspects of the 'ingroup's' culture.

⁷ Brian Durrans, "The Future of the Other: Changing Cultures on Display in Ethnographic Museums," [in] *The Museum Time Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, by Robert Lumley (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1988), 146.

The point I am making here is, that when an object is displayed within a museum it is 're-presented.' (I use the word re/present.) This re/presentation occurs when a member of one 'culture' takes an object of another culture and displays that object in a certain way. Certainly, the display cannot help but reflect the *understanding of the presenter*. In other words, the world-view of the presenter becomes entwined with the understanding he/she may or may not have of the 'other' being presented. Further, another layer of interpretation is added if the presenter attempts to take into account how he/she thinks the presented group wishes to be re/presented. How the display is read by those who view it is another thing again. In essence, the object on display is re/defined and re/presented in multiple and layered ways.

On the other hand, when a group presents an aspect of 'their own' culture to others there are often certain things that this 'in' group wishes to convey to the viewer. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault introduces a concept that he calls the carceral gaze or 'Panopticon.'⁸ By tracing the genealogy of the necessary 'other within' European society, Foucault discusses the rise of the concept of 'madness' and the rise of the 'madhouse' or sanitarium. Madhouses were places in which the 'insane' or physically deviant were housed. It was the custom of many elite to walk through these palaces of madness to observe the curious specimens of humanity that could be found within. Those who 'looked at' the peoples within the cages/rooms of the madhouse, distanced themselves from the essential humanity of those within by looking 'at' them. Looking 'at' implies a non-emotional gaze/look that 'incarcerates' those being looked at by a distancing mechanism. This mechanism can best be described as the absence of emotion or empathy—the essential dis-connectedness of the observer from the observed.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* [trans. from French] (New York: Paladin Books, 1973).

Foucault traces the deployment of the carceral gaze through the fields of medicine and the disciplined world of the prison.⁹ Significantly, the time periods he allocates to the rise of this 'gaze' at the deviants parallel the rise of cultural palaces. Objects were incarcerated and 'gazed upon' by the people who walked through the museums of culture.

It is entirely possible for a member of a culture to gaze at an object that belongs to a vastly different culture, and although he or she may find it artistic or interesting or even wonderful, have little or no emotional response to that which is being gazed upon. Alternatively, powerful emotional responses may be evoked that have little to do with those the object represents. Instead, the act of gazing incorporates the culture being gazed at within the dominant structures of who gazes. This gaze is fundamental to the more general process of 'objectification.' That which is being looked at is simply an 'object,' be it material culture, a person in a doctor's office, a criminal or the physically deviant of the seventeenth century.

Conversely, a member of the 'in' group to whom that object once belonged will not likely be able to look at this museum object in the same carceral way. Based on Foucault, we must posit that the necessary distance—the lack of emotion or relatedness to the object—will not be present in order for that object to be seen merely as a 'thing' by an in group member. Thus material culture representations typically hold vastly different meanings for different individuals and these meanings will be dependent upon stance—the significance of the thing to the observers and the attendant reverberant non/emotional responses to what that thing signifies.

This combination of gaze and signification combines with yet another aspect of understood culture when a cultural group represents an aspect of the 'self' to the 'other.' For when a group puts a portion of its culture on display, those doing so make a complicated statement about their self identity. They articulate what is important to them

⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Clinic* [trans. from French] (New York: Paladin Books, 1977).

in terms of 'self-presentation' and they incorporate their understanding of what the 'other' may want to see. In order to be effective, cultural markers that have the potential to 'move' the other must integrate the ability to sever the 'gaze'—to stymie the distancing mechanism just enough so that the 'observer' becomes identified with that which is being 'observed.' It is this combination of signification, distance, self-awareness and re/presentation, which is a fundamental underlying factor in issues of culture and nationalism, particularly where issues of material culture come into play.

Handler has conducted extensive research on the relationships between cultural artifacts and the representation of self and other. Although his study is specific to Quebec's French Canadian culture his exploration is applicable to issues of culture and nationalism more generally. He provides a telling account of:

what might be called fetishism of material culture that animates governments, citizens, and museum curators alike in their zeal to preserve their "heritage." Whose heritage a particular collection represents is often open to question; but the idea that objects, or material culture, can epitomize collective identity—and epitomizing it, be considered as the property of the collective—is rarely disputed.¹⁰

Handler strengthens my earlier discussion of the objectification of culture. He theorizes that traits, or aspects, of culture are just as objectifiable as are physical objects, since both can be (and are) put on display. Some of these objectifiable cultural traits which Handler draws attention to in his study include modes of dress, kinds of foods, styles of music, dramatic productions, art and/or handicraft, architecture and monuments. All of these things are concrete, tangible, 'see-able' elements of culture. But I want to emphasize that he is just as interested in those less easily recognized elements of culture which he claims are objectified within a society through both formal and informal reenactments of a people's traditions.

¹⁰ Richard Handler. "On Having a Culture: Nationalism and the Preservation of Quebec's Patrimony," [in] *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, History of Anthropology vol. 3, by George W. Stocking, Jr. (ed.) (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 194.

A striking illustration, which I include here to better explain Handler's notion of cultural objectification, concerns a French-Canadian family with whom he, his wife and another anthropologist were boarding with at the time Handler was conducting field research. This particular family had been asked to recreate their dances and traditional Christmas celebration for television. When the parents and their relatives were children, they had routinely engaged in square dances, jigs, and a late supper following Midnight Mass. Over the years they had continued these traditions with their own children. In order to film the event for the media, it had to be staged earlier, 'as if' it were Christmas, and 'as if' it were being done in the older context of family and community everyday life. On the evening of the actual celebration, Handler notes, the family interrupted 'an ongoing ceremony in order to watch the recorded version of it.'¹¹ Handler observes that after the program ended, the family returned to their previous activities. He writes, the Laurier family are 'beginning to witness, unknowing perhaps, the objectification of aspects of their culture.' From this, Handler concludes that while the Laurier's culture is being objectified by others (out group), they in turn have begun to objectify their own culture themselves.

Handler elaborates on a further example which established, for him, that the family had certainly begun to objectify their culture. Mme Laurier suggested that the guests (himself, his wife and the other anthropologists) pay an extra fee, presumably because of the extra meal provided, since their stay was timed to take in the celebration. But Handler interprets this suggestion as evidence that they recognized the value of their celebration as a tourist attraction.¹²

Cultural objectification implies that the group (be that an ethnic group or the nation) believes that they possess certain traits and that they subscribe to the right to claim them as cultural property. Once cultural markers are 'possessed' they become *patrimoine*. Within the context of Handler's study, people often asserted that:

¹¹ Ibid., 56.

¹² Ibid.

the *patrimoine* does not represent only old stones, old houses, old mills. Our description of the *patrimoine* is a description that goes back to the very origin of the word—that is, to the word *patrie*—which is to say, the cultural heritage in its entirety, whether it be a question of our traditions, our crafts, or the fruits of the labor of all those who preceded us.¹³

Thus to speak of *patrimoine* is to speak of a nation/culture as a

property owning collective individual...[thus allowing] any aspect of human life to be imagined as an object, that is, bounded in time and space, or (amounting to the same thing) associated as property with a particular group, which is imagined as territorially and historically bounded. Moreover, possession of a heritage, of culture, is considered a crucial proof of national existence.¹⁴

Handler's study reinforces, once again, the interpenetration of culture and nation.

The protection and preservation of Quebec's French heritage has a long history of provincial and federal government intervention. Handler itemizes government policies that were enacted in order to maintain cultural characteristics of French/Quebec culture that had been identified as essential ingredients in their conceptualized distinctive society. These characteristics are understood as 'belonging' to the province and the people; with the province carrying the responsibility to preserve them on behalf of the people. Handler interprets this activity as evidence of a nationalist movement of a nation within the larger dominant British-Canadian culture which outnumbers French Canadians and has more economic and power-wielding clout. Briefly, the hypothesis on which he bases his assertion is: that where an ethnic community takes overt political action to distinguish itself from the larger community and employs cultural markers to do so, we are witnessing the ethnic population's aspirations towards the possible formation of a nation.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 14. This is a direct quote of a government minister speaking at a public presentation of the 1978 White Paper on Cultural development, transcribed by Handler.

¹⁴ Ibid., 141-142.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Langdon Winner also addresses cultural objectification, but with reference to political rather than nationalist contexts. He asks “Do artifacts have politics?” and finds that the manufacture of ‘technical’ material culture provides clear evidence of social values. Winner insists that to consider the technical ‘things’ that a society designs and leaves behind as apolitical is naive. He therefore advocates a ‘look behind technical things to notice the social circumstances of their development, deployment, and use.’¹⁶ In his study, cultural things are defined as objects with physical properties, such as machinery, architecture and roadways. Cultural things also include the ‘systems of interaction’ which result as people use these physical objects and the public spaces (or systems of operation) they create. Winner concludes that ‘artifacts can have political qualities’ because of the ways in which “specific features in the design, or arrangement of a device or system could provide a convenient means of establishing patterns of power and authority in a given setting.”¹⁷ To illustrate how this power and authority can impact negatively, Winner suggests that between the 1920s and 1970s certain New York roads and parkways were designed and built in a manner which ensured that the parks remained accessible to ‘whites, of ‘upper’ and ‘comfortable middle’ classes’ only.¹⁸ In positive example of the relationship of cultural artifacts to societal values, he notes that a shift in society’s sensitivity toward handicapped persons has resulted in the implementation of technologies designed to ease their access to public places.

Including Winner’s study, here, might seem a bit of an aside. But if we accept Winner’s assessment of material culture then even the systems by which we gaze upon, preserve and protect cultural manifestations are suspect to inquiry. In particular, the procedures of national cultural institutions, which I address in the next section.

¹⁶ Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” *Daedalus* (Winter 1980): 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* At the time, 12 foot high buses were the primary mode of transportation of blacks and poorer people. The overpasses designed by architect Robert Moses were just short enough that the buses could not travel under them—their design could be seen as reflecting social and racial bias of the time. (pages 123-124) Following Winner’s train of thought, museums and the systems they operate within can also be considered cultural artifacts—the study of which would then reveal their ‘convenient means of establishing patterns of power and authority.’

III Imagining a Multicultural Canada

Societal values shift under the pressure of social changes and these “changes in values have serious implications for society [in that] they create a demand for new government policies and priorities.”¹⁹ A shift in Canadian values following World War Two led to a dramatic shift in the talk about, and the symbolic expression of, ‘Canadian culture.’ Canada emerged as a nation in a manner distinctly different from its neighbor to the south. The people of Upper and Lower Canada did not choose revolution as the road to independence, even though there “was growing discontent with the obvious social inequalities perpetuated by elite groups who remained loyal to the Crown.”²⁰ The rebellions that did arise in both Upper and Lower Canada were quickly and soundly crushed. Blishen quotes Horowitz²¹ to explain that:

The failure of these populist rebellions meant the continued ascendancy of existing political and economic elites, the strengthening of Tory values and continuation of belief in the evolutionary development of “responsible government” under colonial rule. Elitism, based upon acceptance of limitation and hierarchy, was embodied in a status system patterned after that of Britain. For the elite, change was an inevitable outcome of national development, but not at the expense of social stability. National development was to be based on a strong belief in convention and tradition, on the value of individual effort, but also on the value of collectivism evident in a willingness “to use the power of the state for the purpose of developing and controlling the economy.”²²

The British North American Act of 1867 officially ended colonial rule and incorporated the Canadian state. The Act included references to the notion of collectivism, an acceptance of limited diversity among the Canadian people, and a willingness to use state intervention in economic matters. This state willingness to intervene in economic matters

¹⁹ Bernard Blishen, “Continuity and Change in Canadian Values,” [in] *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, by Alan Cairns and Cynthia Williams (eds.) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, page 3.

²¹ Blishen cites this source as: G. Horowitz, “Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation,” [in] *Party Politics in Canada*, 4th Ed., by Hugh Thorburn (ed.) (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1979).

²² G. Horowitz [cited in] Blishen (1986), 3-4.

is today paralleled by a willingness to use the power of the state for the purpose of the development and control of culture. The evocation of national unity in Canada has offered a challenge to the social/economic/political elite, due firstly to the expanse of the sparsely populated territories of the nation, secondly, because of deeply established British-French differences, and latterly because of increasing class, regional and cultural diversification.

Since 1896, the Canadian federal government has encouraged increasingly diverse immigration from other countries. Even in tough economic times the federal government initiated a number of public enterprises, including the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Corporation in 1936 and Trans-Canada Airlines in 1937. These were state-owned national enterprises responsible to Parliament and they were and remain symbols of Canadian nationhood.²³ Government strategies like the CBC and Trans-Canada Airlines, as well as the earlier, national railways were implemented to improve communication throughout the country, but also to establish a sense of unity and a broadly common culture.

While national unity was desirable, colonial ties remained strong for a long time. This was due to the preponderance of people of British origin outside Quebec, with strong British identities and values, who dominated political, economic and cultural realms well into the 1960s. British notions of elite rule and class structure which had historically characterized Canadian society and government, were only weakened following the Second World War.

Since that time Canadian values have been (and continue to be) adjusted as a result of societal changes. These changes include: an increasing distance from Britain; increased worldwide immigration; more exposure to 'others' through diverse mass media and mass mediated popular culture; a declining birth rate and increasing longevity; a trend toward increased emphasis on self-expression and independence; and an increase in demand for education for all young people regardless of their socioeconomic background, 'in the belief that this would lead to greater equality of educational opportunity and a more

²³ Blishen (1986), 7.

egalitarian society”—all of which have greatly changed the face of Canadian society.²⁴ These enormous social changes have resulted in a “set of values” that have emerged since the Second World War which can be recognized as ‘typically Canadian.’²⁵ Blishen summarizes this set of values as ‘egalitarianism weakened by elitism, achievement muted by a leaning toward ascription, change but not at the expense of stability, individualism but a continuing dependence on collectivism and diversity balanced by a substantial degree of uniformity.’²⁶

Considering the above values in combination with Canadian’s overall tendency to accept government intervention, it should not be surprising that the Canadian state has come to recognize a limited range of culturally-linked minority rights, responding to increasingly strongly asserted Quebecois and later immigrants’ claims of cultural diversity. Over time these rights have been entrenched as part of Canadian legal rights and within the Canadian Constitution. Greater recognition of minority group rights can be dated to the quiet revolution of the 1960s, when French Canadians as an ethnic community strengthened their demands for greater socioeconomic standing and a more autonomous political status. The discontent of other elite immigrants and their children with their initial exclusion from the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission investigations and reports of the late 1960s, led to their almost accidental inclusion in the official policy of Multiculturalism introduced by the federal government in 1971.

The reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism appeared between 1965 and 1968. It had been long recognized that the Quebec Francophone community was dissatisfied with their ‘inferior socioeconomic position and with the country’s failure to recognize Francophone claims for equal status with the Anglophone community....The Commission’s recommendations were aimed at rectifying these injustices through measures aimed at promoting Bilingualism and Biculturalism which would create greater

²⁴ Ibid., 14.

²⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁶ Ibid.

status equality between French and the English Canadians.”²⁷ As a distinctly secondary objective, the Commission was also asked to consider the ‘contribution’ of ‘other ethnic groups.’ Blishen discusses the fact that this secondary mandate gave other ethnic group spokespersons ‘the incentive to fight for their ethnic identity and press for equal recognition with the two founding cultures.’²⁸ When the Official Languages legislation was implemented in 1969, these politically active ethnic groups opposed it because they felt that it threatened their status. The government’s response to this negative reaction was to appease ethnic communities by encoding a very limited form of multiculturalism as an official policy.

Under the influence of a wide range of multicultural programs, ‘individuals [thereafter] have become aware of their ethnic identity and more interested in participating in the demand for minority groups rights, particularly in the case of visible minorities.’²⁹ Blishen calls the type of activity in which individuals as a collective demand state recognition of the right to a privileged status (along with material equality) a form of ‘communal politicization’ and states that ‘its growth is a reaction against the failure of...traditional limited forms of participatory democracy to provide the conditions which would allow individuals to be more self-expressive and to feel that their concerns are the concerns of the governing elites.’³⁰

By 1971 second and third generation ‘ethnic’ (that is to say neither British nor French) individuals had risen in considerable numbers to spokesperson positions and positions of considerable influence. Some, notably those of Ukrainian origins, had been long sensitized to nationalist talk and action by struggles for autonomy in Ukraine. In essence these spokespeople used the hearings of the Bi and Bi Commission as an opportunity to apply hard learned lessons from their countries of origin to the Canadian context. By establishing

²⁷ Ibid., 19.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., page 20.

³⁰ Ibid., 22-23.

a limited set of programs which ethnic group spokespersons, politicians, academics and bureaucrats could thereafter interpret more widely, the policy of Multiculturalism effectively changed the central texts of the Canadian nation, broadening them to more authentically include a greater diversity of individuals than ever before.

IV From 'Indians' to First Nations in Canada

Recently, people of First Nations ancestry in Canada have become particularly active in communally-oriented politicization. But as McMaster notes, before the Second World War, the efforts of Native peoples to organize cross culturally were severely hampered by a number of federal government policies. Native people were often confined to their reservations in small groups; access and contact between tribes was limited by this restriction. The Canadian government practiced a policy of assimilation. The 1927 revisions to the Indian Act of 1874, explicitly deemed many forms of political activity to be illegal. Further revisions to the Act were introduced in order to squash certain forms of Native cultural expression.³¹ Important social institutions like the Potlatch of the Northwest Coast and the Sundance of the Plains were declared illegal, and involvement in them could lead to prosecution.³² Through my discussion of culture and its dialectic relationship with individuals, it is easy to understand how the stripping of Native peoples' material cultures throughout the process of colonization is now often pointed to as a factor leading to the loss of important institutions. It is equally understandable that a sense of loss, grief, or anger often resulted with the realization that objects which held great social significance to the members of specific cultures were lost to them. Anomie is the certain result.³³

³¹ Gerald R. McMaster, "The Politics in Canadian Native Art," [in] *Thunder Bay Art Gallery Mandate Study 1990-1993: An Investigation of Issues Surrounding the Exhibition, Collection and Interpretation of Contemporary Art by First Nations Artists*, by Robert Houle and Carol Podeworny (eds.) (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994), 7-19.

³² Elizabeth McLuhan and Tom Hill, *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers*, exhibition catalogue (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario/Methuen, 1984), 13.

³³ Emile Durkheim's term, 'anomie' refers to a sense of dislocation that is felt by an individual member of society when that society is in a state of flux or turmoil.

Nevertheless, certain forms of pan-Indianism are certainly much older than the Second World War dates given by McMaster.³⁴ Over 200 years ago, the Cherokee Nations had adopted a written constitution modeled after the American one. Sequoyah created a new syllabary that enabled the Cherokee to become literate in their own language and through which they printed newspapers and books. Other tribes followed suit. In the nineteenth century, two Shawnee brothers, Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa, began a movement that would invigorate and re/unite the demoralized peoples north of the Ohio. This movement was both pan-tribal and religious. Tecumseh called for an 'Indian'³⁵ religion, the Indian way.' In addition to the beliefs that Indians should renounce alcohol and maximize the use they could obtain from white technology, this movement incorporated the belief that the land belonged to all native peoples and no tribe, town or chief had the right to make a cession to white men or white government.³⁶

Leaders such as Geronimo (Goyathlay), or Carlos Montezuma, later, and movements as diverse as the Society of American Indians, The League of Indians and the Ghost Dance, constitute dimensions of the 'long threads' of Native American resistance to white rule.³⁷ Native peoples are historical, legal and cultural survivors. Their struggle to retain their identities has been intricately intertwined with the challenge of living alongside, or within, white civilization. During both the First World War and the Second World War, Native men fought for the Canadian and U.S. Armed Forces; many were decorated.³⁸

McMaster discusses the fact that "approximately 3,000 men and women from reserves across Canada enlisted to fight with the allies in World War II."³⁹ He suggests that the physical movement from reserves to Armed Forces locations across the country and

³⁴ McMaster (1994), 7-19.

³⁵ My use of the term "Indian" follows Nabokov.

³⁶ Peter Nabokov, "Long Threads," [in] *The Native Americans*, by I. Ballantine and B. Ballantine (eds.) (Atlanta: Turner Publishing Corp., 1993), 301-383. This book was authored and edited by Native Americans.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 301-383.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ McMaster (1994), 7.

subsequently the world, opened up new vistas to a younger generation of Native peoples. Following the war "the thought of returning must have caused many to re-think what it was they were returning to. The war changed the world forever, and without a doubt, the life of Native people in Canada as well."⁴⁰ A flow of Native people to urban centers in search of employment followed the war. These people began to gather together in groups, especially those Native men who had "served in the military and now preferred to work in the cities rather than return to the reserves."⁴¹

Once an increasing number of Native peoples gathered to work and talk in Canadian urban centers, Native organizations across the country were formed. Their mandates focused on providing Native peoples within their communities assistance with their social needs. In 1951, The North American Indian Club was formed in Toronto, in 1954, the National Indian Council was organized and in 1957 the inception of the Indian-Eskimo Association marked the formation of a strong lobbying force for change in Ottawa. In 1961, The National Indian Council extended their mandate to the representation of both status and non-status Indians and began to focus on the promotion of cultural exchange in order to alleviate the negative stereotyping of Native peoples.⁴²

In 1960, citizenship and the legal right to vote was granted to 'status' Indians under the Bill of Rights. Citizenship had been granted to U.S. Indians in 1924 under the Indian Citizenship Act. On this occasion the New York Times had observed with some irony:

If there are cynics among the Indians, they may receive the news of their citizenship with wry smiles. The white race, having robbed them of a continent, and having sought to deprive them of freedom of action, freedom of social custom and freedom of worship, now at last gives them the same legal basis as their conquerors.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁴¹ Ibid. Of course the 'need to gather' among military men is not confined to Native persons. Ex-military organizations are extant within all cultures.

⁴² Ibid., 10.

⁴³ Nabokov (1993), 382.

The importance of Native art to Native politics also increased after 1960 and the inception of Native citizenship. Still, it was not until after the Canadian government's introduction of the White Paper in 1969, which proposed the dissolution of special Native rights and statuses, that Native organizations became strongly active in the realm of culture and cultural preservation. Prior to this date, Native art reflected the individual artist and his/her local cultural and artistic heritages. Expo 1967 offered a group of Native artists the opportunity to work together. Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, Alex Janvier, Gerald Tailfeathers, Tony Hunt, Bill Reid, George Clutesi, Noel Wuttunee, and Tom Hill were given commissions to paint murals on the facade of the *Indians of Canada Pavilion* in Montreal.⁴⁴ These commissions were followed by several exhibitions of Native art in a number of galleries and museums and gave Native artists the courage and initiative to come together to discuss their common concerns. Today the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCANA) is a vital, political and artistic organization which promotes Canadian Native art in the marketplace and addresses important concerns and legalities.

Protests against the White Paper of 1969 by many non-Native organizations and churches and "all Indian political organizations," particularly the National Indian Brotherhood (which later became the Assembly of First Nations), forced the government to backtrack on its proposal to abolish the Indian Act and "absolve itself of its obligations toward Canada's Native population through forced assimilation."⁴⁵ Raymond Breton states that it was during this time that a "new sociopolitical awakening was...taking place...[which saw] the emergence of a new class of Indian political leaders."⁴⁶ The White Paper was finally withdrawn in 1971, the same year that the government introduced its multiculturalism policy.

⁴⁴ McMaster (1994), 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁶ Raymond Breton, "Multiculturalism and Canadian Nation Building," [in] *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, by Alan Cairns and Cynthia Williams (eds.) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 38.

Since the formation of the National Indian Brotherhood, now known as the Assembly of First Nations (1981), but more particularly since 1990, Native people of Canada have adopted the self-descriptive term 'First Nations,' rather than 'native' or 'Indian.' The term 'First Nations' may be understood as an act of self-affirmation,—they were after all the First Nations of this country—but it must also be understood as their recognition of the effective political clout that may be gained by talking about Native peoples in national and cultural terms. The Canadian state and the Canadian people have largely accepted the historically evolved notions that there are vital bonds between culture, nation and self-identity as discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis. The official policy of Multiculturalism has grown out of, and further legitimized, the widely held and popular belief that to destroy a culture is to destroy a people. Increasingly, both the federal government and the people of Canada have become concerned with the possible loss of Native cultures, and many have begun to accept that First Nations peoples can be conceptualized as fulfilling the basic 'authentic' requirements for a nation: a population with a distinct heritage, language, identity, territory and culture.

The influence of First Nations groups is felt today in all political arenas. Both the defeat of the Meech Lake Accord due to Elijah Harper's uncompromising stand and the Oka crisis in the 1990s have shown that First Nations in Canada have a collective organization beyond their individual tribal affiliations and that they have broken the geographic boundaries of reservations and the political boundaries of local level subjugation. In large part the collective identity underlying such action is supported by notions of the importance of cultural maintenance and by mechanisms of cultural objectification. Native cultures are routinely objectified by reference to them as living entities which can be lost

or at least damaged if not carefully cared for.⁴⁷ Such arguments are increasingly politically potent.

Every present day First Nations culture incorporates significant material objects which point to social institutions and beliefs that are significant to the individual members of that society. In turn these objects elicit individual emotional response. Objects signify, as we have discussed. In the case of First Nations cultures, these material objects not only signify socially; they represent loss, grief, anger, nostalgia, deep feelings of the 'way we were,' the 'way we are now' and the 'way we might be.' Like other cultural groups, Native peoples recognize that their multiple cultures are intricately interwoven with the symbols they have designated as important to their self-identity and with the objects that represent to 'others' who 'they' are. The fundamental link between the individual and his/her culture, is a link that First Nations understand and utilize in order to identify, preserve and promulgate the vital elements in their cultures. In turn, these same links are understood as valid, strong reasons to assert the need to preserve First Nations cultural heritages by many of the 'others' to whom they represent themselves.

The belief that specific cultures 'belong' to specific groups of people (an idea made possible through the evolution of contemporary notions of cultures and nations, the objectification of cultural artifacts and hence of material cultures) is the underlying ideal driving the concept of repatriation. Efforts to repatriate Native artifacts from collections around the world back to Native communities, have been undertaken with varying results. Not surprisingly, the manner in which Native objects are displayed and re/presented in museums has become a point of contention. Native group spokespeople who are concerned with the re/presentations of their cultures, have claimed legal and ethical ownership of their cultural markers and have demanded a say in the manner in which their

⁴⁷ Fraser J. Pakes, "But is It Indian?: Indian and Non-Indian Interpretation of Plains Indian Art," *Native Studies Review* 3, no. 2 (1987): 27. Pakes addresses the interpretation of Plains Indian material culture and draws some interesting comparisons between historic and contemporary forms of art, arguing that the more contemporary forms should be accepted as authentic. Of powwows he states, "The powwow is truly a traditional affair which, though it has seen modifications and even innovations, still retains the essential

people are re/presented through the display of their cultural objects. In the next chapter I examine these issues within the context of a discussion of the museological representations of cultures.

central thread of culture that is totally authentic." Certainly the powwow can be seen as a reenactment and as an act of cultural objectification as understood by Handler.

CHAPTER FOUR: Museum Representations

I Introduction

Putting the 'Other' on exhibit is a phenomena peculiar to the Western world. Historians trace an interest in exhibitions to the Age of Discovery; when curious collections of concrete materials were brought together. These collections, now referred to as 'cabinets of curiosity,' varied in form, but were essentially a hodgepodge assemblage of materials which a learned person put together for his/her own amusement or as a basis for scientific studies. These collections contained natural objects such as: samples of flora and fauna gathered from all over the world; animal parts and sea shells; curious accidents of nature such as the remains of a malformed animal or a strange growth in a tree branch; man-made artifacts and treasures such as the workmanship of aboriginal peoples in far away lands; European fine art including both painting and sculpture; objects of status and value including coins and precious stones; and magical elements such as the bones of a saint or the horn of a unicorn.

When we look on these collections from our present perspective, they may seem irrational and even ridiculous. But Eilean Hooper-Greenhill¹ points out that these collections were, in fact, eminently reasonable, when they are considered from the point of view of the collector. The specific rationale and points of view which inform these collections reflect the boundless fascination with, and curiosity about, anything and everything—a mind-set commonly found as part of the intellectual *episteme* of that historical time.

In museums today, collections of natural materials, artifacts and works of art are normally displayed to try to tell a story of one type or another; these displays tell unintentional stories too. Interpretive narratives are told from the cultural and social positions of those doing the re/presenting. The organization and presentation of cultural materials by

¹ Hooper-Greenhill (1992).

museums reflect their understanding of the universe according to the knowledge that they have of themselves and the interrelationships they have with the 'other.' Centuries from now, their 'episteme' may seem just as ridiculous or impenetrable to future intelligentsia as the cabinets of curiosity seem to us now.

In this chapter, I consider the phenomena of collecting and exhibiting which has become the domain of the cultural institutions largely categorized as 'museums.' I then try to understand the museological activity of presenting culture through material collections, their preservation, exhibition and interpretation. Finally, I discuss the highly political implications of the question: "Who has authority over the material culture housed in museums?"—especially in the case when the represented cultures are alive and vibrant today.

II From Collections to Museums

The origins of museums are often traced by museum historians to the time of Aristotle. These scholars connect Aristotle's interest in science and the vast assortment of specimens he collected for his diverse research to today's widely divergent types of museums: natural history, anthropological and fine art.² Other historians, with narrower definitions of what constitutes museum origins, link them to the aforementioned Renaissance cabinets of curiosity—collections which were driven by "the desire to establish the position of mankind in the grand scheme of things."³

Wherever the origins of museums may lie, the activity of amassing 'curious' material possessions has preceded museums as institutions. Generally, collections begin when an individual feels a desire to possess a certain kind of material. Often the collection provides

² Archie F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 18.

³ Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinets of Curiosities in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 2.

this individual with a sense of accomplishment, and in some cases with social status. But often the verb 'collecting' transforms to the noun 'collection' as objects are subjugated, defined and categorized. The passion for 'collecting' that is found in many individuals who spend a lifetime acquiring specific types of objects, may be accompanied by an acute drive to 'possess' that which they collect—the collection becomes part of the collector.

Histories of museums focus on collectors and collections. Many museums today trace their lineage to a single benefactor and a single collection. Private collections are not easy to maintain. The unyielding task of managing large collections, or the death of a collector who leaves his/her collection to an uninterested heir, may trigger the sale or endowment of the materials to a public institution. Often the collection experiences a transformation of meaning and status that can be likened to a 'rite of passage' as it moves from private spectacle to public, often national, ownership.

The early models for today's museums were the "cabinets of curiosity" popularized during the era of the merchant princes and exploration. "By the end of the 16th century," notes Hooper-Greenhill, "collections and 'museums' had become fairly commonplace in Europe."⁴ Michael Ames explores the connections between the Renaissance ideal "that people have both a need and a right to learn freely and have free access to knowledge," and the trend toward the democratization of private collections. Private collections, which had been elitist and restrictive towards public access,⁵ were often looked after by the collector him/herself, or perhaps a few servants. Once these private collections became public ones, a parallel need for the development of specialists to look after them arose.⁶

⁴ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 78.

⁵ Ames (1992), 16. Ames states: "A few hundred years ago in European countries scholarship and museum collections were restricted to a few people, typically only members of the ruling classes or gentry. Public access to writings and works of art was strictly limited to distant viewing in formal institutions such as cathedrals or on formal royal occasions. Scholarly work on museum collections was insignificant, for private access was granted only through the favor of the owner, and there was neither the necessity nor the means of communicating knowledge beyond the privileged few. Many collections of natural and cultural materials began as private trophies, curiosities, and booty of the wealthy; other collections were religiously inspired and were used by the churches more for veneration than for study."

⁶ Ibid.

This change in the 'care' of collections was accompanied by an attendant change in meaning. While the significance of a collection was usually privately enjoyed by the owner of a collection, the movements of collected materials to public space were accompanied by a change in meaning as cultural palaces became national signifiers of a nation's heritages:

When museums took over these royal collections they also took on a number of the royal functions, such as the protection they offered learning, the safety and continuity provided the collections themselves, and the "symbolic function of being a national treasury or shrine."⁷

Museums adopted yet another role as part of their mandate:

"one of the essential aspects of the change in the first half of the nineteenth century from cabinets of curiosities to museums," [was] the introduction of systems of scientific classification and interpretation of artifacts. With the emergence of public museums we find also the emergence of a museum profession.⁸

This introduction of the systems of 'scientific classification and interpretation of artifacts' to which Ames refers, was largely the domain of anthropologists. During the years 1840-1890, the discipline of anthropology was intricately entwined with museum/ethnographic collection and display. In their study of culture during this 'Museum Period,'⁹ anthropologists focused largely on concrete materials. There was a concerted effort on the part of anthropologists to collect the material cultures of threatened aboriginal societies around the world, and to bring these collections/cultures under the protective walls of Old and New World museums. However, once these collections/cultures were safely housed, they were the recipients of Western standards of categorization and Western interpretation reflected through Western ideologies, values and beliefs.

⁷ Ibid., 17. Passages in quotes here and below: H.H. Frese [cited in] Ames (1992), 17.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ William C. Sturtevant [cited in] Ames (1992), 39.

III Claiming Ethnographic Authority

Schemata by which the wonders of the world are classified shift and change, as paradigms of knowledge are altered by new information, scientific investigation, and changing social concepts of values and morals with respect to the 'other.' Ames notes that private collections usually reflect an individual's tastes and interests. An outsider who is permitted to view the collection sees in it an image of the collector him/herself. In contrast, when collections become public domain they tend to reflect a wider public agenda. As Renaissance collections became professionalized, the educated classes were granted some measure of public control over museum enterprises;¹⁰ consequently, the orientations of these collections/displays are consistent with the values and social reality of these same 'educated classes.'¹¹

Following Durkheim, Raymond Breton observes that "people have symbolic as well as material interests"¹² and that these symbolic needs are largely met through societal institutions which offer the "possibility for the discovery of identity, for meaningful participation, and for the attainment of social recognition."¹³ "Those who are part of the society share its cultural assumptions and meanings, partake in the collective identity, and respond to common symbols."¹⁴ However if:

the symbolic/cultural system is inadequate for certain groups in the society, it will be a source of alienation for them. [They will become estranged from the culture it carries and] become resentful toward the institutions that fail to recognize adequately their identity, societal role and aspirations.¹⁵

¹⁰ I have previously noted that when private collections became public, a need arose for educated individuals who could care for, interpret and explain them. Thus, the educated classes were an obvious choice for museum positions.

¹¹ Ames (1992), 16; 21.

¹² Breton (1986), 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

Since national museums, as social institutions, reflect the dominant values and beliefs of the society in which they are incorporated, we can anticipate that ethnic and aboriginal communities may not see themselves adequately validated by the imposed museological symbolic system, or may well object to the manner in which they are represented. In either case, dissatisfaction on behalf of the mis- or dis- represented group can certainly result. This dissatisfaction may be manifest through demands for change or through the creation of ethnic 'parallel' institutions; institutions which more accurately reflect the identity, culture or nationhood of the dissatisfied group.

The practice of representing of the 'other' according to Western museological traditions has come under heavy criticism recently, as indigenous peoples who wish to 'possess' their own cultures are finding their own voices and their own places within the larger national scheme. As a result many individuals and groups are challenging the right of 'others' to tell their stories for them.¹⁶

Ironically, it was never the intention of early anthropological museums to illustrate Native culture according to the Native point of view. It should be remembered that these museums were an outgrowth of the cabinets of curiosity which provoked a scientific interest in a study of culture and natural objects under the expansion of Western imperialism and rationalism. In the later part of the nineteenth century the material cultures of 'primitive' societies were treated as natural science objects, valued according to the same scale as were the flora and fauna of diverse regions.¹⁷ The very presence of these material objects in museums were seen as a affront by some. This is poignantly noted by William E. Taylor Jr. in the Forward to the exhibition catalogue, *Bójou, Neejee!*¹⁸ He quotes the 'British Museum's greatest Victorian administrator' as saying "It does not seem

¹⁶ See for example: Ames 1992; Durrans [in] Lumley (ed.) 1988; Karp and Lavine (eds.) 1991; Clifford [in] Ferguson et al. 1990.

¹⁷ Ames (1992), 49.

¹⁸ William E. Taylor, Jr., *Bójou, Neejee!* exhibition catalogue, by Ted J. Brassler (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, The National Museums of Canada, 1976), Foreword.

right that such valuable space should be taken up by Esquimaux dresses, canoes, hideous feather idols, broken flints and so on."¹⁹

I have noted the role of Franz Boas and his challenge to the museological systems of display current to his time. He lobbied extensively for display styles that would allow Native materials to reflect their use and meaning within the culture to which they belonged. Boas was the first to professionalize the 'living display:' re/creations or re/presentations of natural images he had witnessed during his field work. During his tenure, there were no articulate, cohesive Aboriginal groups who seriously questioned an anthropologist's authority to speak for and about the peoples he/she studied. Nor had the discipline itself begun to question whether or not the illustration of 'authentic Native cultural practices' was possible or even desirable.

Over the past twenty years the ethnologist's authority to speak for or represent 'others' has come under intense scrutiny, as members of the discipline of anthropology continue to evaluate 'what' it is they 'do.' Anthropologists like James Clifford question the ability of an ethnographer to interpret the culture of an 'other' at all. He notes that it is difficult to study a foreign culture unencumbered by one's own culture, for in essence "we are experiencing a state of being *in* culture while looking *at* culture."²⁰ He acknowledges that anthropologists have always been aware that their own cultural limitations imposed boundaries on what they could and would understand about an 'other' culture. For this reason, native informants have long been recognized as vital to ethnographic field work. In addition to more reliable data gathering, the use of informants serves to 'give voice' to the other.

But there are a number of limitations to the use of informants of which anthropologists are well aware. Firstly, there is no guarantee that 'what' informants tell an anthropologist

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), 9. My italics.

about a culture, is the way that culture 'is.' Informants, too, work within their own individual and cultural understandings. They may have a personal agenda, or a desire to present his/her culture in a specific light. They may choose to tell the anthropologist only what he/she thinks the anthropologist may want to hear. A goodly amount of ethnographic 'self-fashioning' takes place, both by members of the culture being studied and by the anthropologist in residence. There are specific and discernible limitations to 'participant observation.'²¹

Clifford's most pointed criticism of ethnographic publications is that anthropologists often use lengthy quotes from informants, dialogues of conversations, and [at one time] phraseology such as 'my people,' to insinuate that they have an intimate relationship with the people they have studied. Consequently, they give the impression that they have 'experiential authority,' or deep inside knowledge of these same people.²² In actual fact, such a level of cultural comprehension is not often achieved.

Current challenges to ethnographic authority are centered around the question of voice. Who can and who should speak for an other has become an issue of human rights. In the words of Joanna Bedard, 'It is not right that anyone should define someone else, tell them who they are and where they 'fit in.' You cannot do this to someone if you think of them as your equal.'²³

IV Exhibiting the Other

Similar disputes are surfacing in the world of museums. Ames notes that Boas is responsible for laying the groundwork for the first of two modern methods of displaying aboriginal material culture: *contextualism*. 'Boasian' displays are those in which form and meaning are integral. The second commonly used type of display is called *formalism* and is

²¹ Ibid., 34.

²² Ibid., 35-37.

²³ Joanna Bedard [cited in] Ames (1992), 143.

the preserve of fine art curators. Formalist displays are characterized by their presentation of ethnographic materials that are regarded as specimens of fine art, in recognition of their outstanding aesthetic qualities. Neither method is universally satisfactory as a representational strategy. The formalists isolate the materials from their cultural context and thus appropriate them into Western systems of classification of fine art. Contextualists presume to 'represent the native point of view [but] are still outsiders who are attempting through their reconstructions to simulate someone else's experience.'²⁴

Ethnographic materials have thus found their way into museums of fine art (formalism) and anthropological museums (contextualism), each with their own clearly defined methods of display and interpretation. Ames explains that it is when fine art museums (and/or fine art galleries) use a contextualized interpretation, or when anthropology museums use a formalist style, that confusion ensues:

Though the formalists and the contextualists hold opposing doctrines, they are usually willing to tolerate differences providing the formalists remain in art museums and the contextualists remain in their museums of anthropology and natural history. Only when boundaries are crossed do people get agitated or confused. If a museum of anthropology displays the material workings of a tribal society as fine art, then a boundary is violated, categories become mixed, and people are likely to become disoriented and upset.²⁵

Lis Smidt Stainforth finds that this crossover in display styles was utilized for *The Spirit Sings* exhibition. She suggests that the simultaneous treatment of material objects as both fine art and ethnographic objects may have created a turmoil in viewer perception.²⁶ In actuality, the Glenbow's display techniques were not entirely original. In any event, it may be more interesting at this point in my thesis to ask what museum displays of 'the Other' have to say about exhibiting culture, rather than what they may or may not say about the culture on display.

²⁴ Ames (1992), 53-54.

²⁵ Ibid., 53.

²⁶ Lis Smidt Stainforth, "Did The Spirit Sing?: A Historical Perspective on Canadian Exhibitions of the Other" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1990).

We might first ask who is the other? Ivan Karp addresses this question²⁷ and suggests that exhibitions of the other tell us much about ourselves, for 'the other' is a creation of our own making. We understand the other against the background of our own experiences. The 'necessary other,' posited by Foucault, thus exists as a point of tension in self-definition. Whether the other is understood as a positive, ambivalent or negative polarity, derives from cross-cultural encounters.

Karp describes two methods of exhibiting the other: exoticizing and assimilating. He states, 'Exoticizing often works by inverting the familiar, showing how a well-known practice takes an inverted form among other people.'²⁸ When applying this method of display, a form or concept familiar to the consuming culture becomes the standard against which an object or practice of an other culture is contrasted. This dominant method of portraying the 'other' is seen in many popular-culture media forms. Exotic portrayals project stereotypical and oppositional images. Misinformation results; the culture being portrayed is not considered on 'its own terms' within its own cultural constructs. Customs, objects and concepts are de-contextualized.

Assimilating strategies are more subtle. Here the particularistic elements of the history, culture and social context of the object being exhibited is stripped away by the museum surroundings; another history and context (normally, that of the museum's dominant constituency) is then imposed in its place. In the case of an aboriginal piece for example, the object on display is isolated from its creator and its cultural reference. The art object refers instead to the artistic values of the exhibiting culture and becomes inextricably entwined with that culture's aesthetic values. In an ethnographically oriented exhibit, an object is often identified with one functional activity known to viewers; it becomes a 'cup' or a 'basket.'

²⁷ Ivan Karp [in] *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds.) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 373-385.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 375.

Once one is aware of the concepts of assimilation and exoticizing, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's charge that 'the meanings of ethnographic objects are created by ethnographers' becomes clearer. She states:

Objects become ethnographic by virtue of being defined, segmented, detached, and carried away by ethnographers. Such objects are ethnographic not because they were found in a Hungarian peasant household, Kwakiutl village....or Michelangelo's studio, but by virtue of the manner in which they have been detached, for disciplines make their own objects and in the process make themselves.²⁹

Thus 'exhibits...are displays of our disciplines' rather than 'accurate' accounts of other peoples in any transcendental or objective sense.³⁰ This becomes very evident if one pays attention to the dilemma that these disciplines experience when trying to decide if objects derived from so called 'primitive' cultures were really art or artifacts. Today the argument about whether the artistic products of contemporary aboriginal cultures should be labeled art or craft continues. The labels art, artifact, craft, or material culture, are imposed upon objects and symbolize group power relationships. For as Ames states:

Deciding what is 'art' is not just a matter of institutional mandate, academic tradition, cultivated judgment, or semantics. It is also a political act because the label 'art' determines what is to be admitted into that inner sanctum of the cultural establishment, that institutional marker of good taste, the prestigious art gallery. To exclude the arts of native peoples from these legitimizing agencies, Millard³¹ suggests, is to collaborate in the suppression of their identity and their continued exclusion from the full life of a country.³²

²⁹ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," [in] *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds.) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 387.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 434.

³¹ Peter Millard, "Art of the Inuit," letter to editor, *Globe and Mail*, 26 June 1990, sec. A, p. 18 [cited in] "Biculturalism in Exhibitions," by Michael M. Ames, [in] *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1991): 7-15.

³² Michael Ames, "Biculturalism in Exhibitions," *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1991): 7-15.

In 1984, New York's Museum of Modern Art exhibited *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*. The MoMA³³ described the exhibition as 'being *the first* to juxtapose modern and tribal objects in the light of informed art history.'³⁴ This claim was based upon the fact that, in this display, materials normally considered ethnographic (therefore normally regimented to a museum of anthropology) were now on display alongside the works of fine art by prominent Western modernists such as 'Picasso, Le'ger, Apollinaire and many [other artists who] came to recognize the elemental 'magical' power of African sculptures.'³⁵

This exhibition created a considerable amount of discussion by scholars and fine art aficionados with regards to the curatorial techniques utilized by the MoMA staff. Essentially, aboriginal materials were appropriated into the Western art context. McEvelley, Rubin and Varnedoe discuss the MoMA's display juxtapositions of 'Western/aboriginal' art at length.³⁶ These three authors are centrally concerned with whether or not the aboriginal objects on display can be classified as "art."

On the other hand, James Clifford addresses the incongruities of this exhibition.³⁷ He compares the exhibition's content and design to other exhibitions of African art found around New York during the same time period. Clifford concludes that the MoMA exhibition projected a limited and exclusionary history of modern art because the African objects were displayed void of content and stripped of context. He asks if there is not another way to structure the story of African influence on Modern Art, and cautions art galleries and museums that we do not need yet another exhibition which furthers the status

³³ MoMA = Museum of Modern Art.

³⁴ Thomas McEvelley, William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe, "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief: 'Primitivism' in Twentieth Century Art at the Museum of Modern Art," [in] *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*, by (eds.) Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge Mass: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 1990), 339. My italics.

³⁵ James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and Modern," [in] *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*, by (eds.) Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge Mass: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 1990), 412-413.

³⁶ McEvelley, Rubin and Varnedoe (1990), 339-405.

³⁷ Clifford (1990), 412-413.

quo, but instead require exhibitions which challenge “the relations of power whereby one portion of humanity can select, value, and collect the pure products of others.”³⁸

A point often overlooked by museum and art curators is that the materials on display, whether they be created by people or nature, have been taken from their original and natural settings. Once placed within the museum environment, they, perhaps of necessity, become different things entirely—pointing to their original contexts, signifying the displaying culture, but part of neither one. The museum or art gallery setting sends multiple messages to viewers and ensures that viewed materials will be reinterpreted in light of a viewer’s cultural understandings.

Museums, argues Svetlana Alpers, are “a way of seeing.”³⁹ Seeing is culturally specific. In Western museums, objects are isolated and displayed so that they can be viewed in a particular manner according to a particular understanding of museums. The fact that an object is in a museum tells us that an object has value and deserves to be looked at. Alpers states that “the taste for isolating this kind of attentive looking at crafted objects, is as peculiar to our culture as is the museum as the space or institution where the activity takes place.”⁴⁰ Michael Baxandall agrees that methods of display are culturally conditioned. He notes that the exhibition of cultural materials is a “social occasion involving at least three active terms,” or factors.⁴¹ Baxandall understands these active factors as, the creator of the object, the exhibitor and the viewer. While all three are active in the exhibition, the role played by each differs in purpose and intent. In addition, each is subject to a specific culture and that culture’s notion of culture.

³⁸ Ibid., 421.

³⁹ Svetlana Alpers, “The Museum as a way of Seeing,” [in] *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds.) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 25-32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁴¹ Michael Baxandall, “Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects,” [in] *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds.) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 41.

The contributions of each of these factors are played out in many noteworthy exhibitions, such as *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, an exhibition prepared by Susan Vogel for the Center for African Art in New York. In an essay titled *Always True to the Object in Our Fashion*, Vogel explains that the purpose of that exhibition was to present African objects in a way that would draw the viewer's attention to the manipulative powers of display. A team of co-curators was selected; it included professionals from various fields and from both African and non-African descent. They were given the mandate of selecting objects for the exhibition, but they were not given institutional guidelines/criteria for the selective process. The team members were thus free to select objects for highly personal and subjective reasons.

Once the objects had been selected for display, both historical and contemporary exhibition styles were imposed on this widely diverse assemblage of objects. The utilized styles included those found in the art museum, the natural history museum, the anthropology museum, and the curiosity room of the eighteenth century. However, the curators did not necessarily match conventional display styles with their ordinarily related objects. Experimentally, for example, ethnographic material was not displayed in a contextualized style. A particular large bundled fishing net normally exhibited ethnographically with a label describing its function, was displayed like a sculpture in an art museum: alone, uncovered on a base and spotlighted. Interestingly, this resulted in several inquiries by collectors wanting to know where they could purchase such a magnificent piece. These viewers, obviously, were unaware of being manipulated and did not 'see' what was laid before them. As Vogel writes, "Unless we acknowledge that African art as we see it has been shaped by us as much as by Africans, we cannot see it at all."⁴²

⁴² Vanessa M.L. Vogel, "Always True to the Object in Our Fashion," [in] *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds.) (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 195.

V Current Museological Issues Regarding First Nations.

(A) Introduction

Throughout *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*, Michael Ames reminds his readers that Western museums are telling a Western version of history.⁴³ He underlines the fact that museums are a product of Western society, tradition, culture, beliefs, standards and values and that in the past they have operated largely to serve Western audiences. It is only recently that “others” have become aware and critical of the way they are represented within this tradition. This awareness has been paralleled by the increasing “democratization” of museums.⁴⁴

Museums began as cultural institutions serving the interests of small, elite segments of societies. But as demands that these societies become increasingly democratic and egalitarian have increased, museums, parallelly, have had to respond by becoming more conscious of their need to serve *all* segments of society, not just those who participate in the dominant culture. This has not necessarily been a voluntary move. But Sir Roy Strong, speaking for curators in the United Kingdom, explains that it has been a necessary one because:

in the past we have had a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude to our visitors. We can no longer afford to think that way because, for the first time, we need each of them to part with some of that income before they have left the building.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ames (1992).

⁴⁴ Ibid. Throughout *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* Michael Ames lends understanding to the modern conditions that affect museums. For a specific discussion on consumerism see “Chapter Two.” In “Chapter One” Ames explains that democratization is part and parcel of consumerism and the ideology that the customer is always right. This “consumer adage” suggests “the relatively novel idea that museums also should pay more attention to Aboriginal people whose heritage they contain and display” (1992:12). Another view is that of Sir Roy Strong, a curator in the United Kingdom, who claims that democratization is the result of a museum’s audience being tourists wanting to be entertained and that museums are now catering to a new leisure class. see Sir Roy Strong, “Scholar or Salesman?: The Curator of the Future.” *Muse* (Summer 1988):16-20.

⁴⁵ Sir Roy Strong, “Scholar or Salesman?: The Curator of the Future,” *Muse* (Summer 1988):16.

Operating funds are often sorely needed. Visitors to the facility are important. Museums are dependent upon public funding in order to operate and they find themselves increasingly pressured to prove that they actually serve and benefit the public at large.⁴⁶ Proof of public service is calculated through museum attendance studies. Museums, therefore, constantly try to develop interesting and varied programming which will solicit a wide variety of people and compel them to actually pay an admittance fee and enter the premises.

Traditionally, people of First Nations ancestry have not often been considered part of the constituency of museums and galleries.⁴⁷ Instead, they have been the subjects of displays. Their cultures are seemingly compelling and often solicit an excellent response from the museum-going public, as evidenced by attendance figures. But culture on display is a politically volatile topic. As I have established earlier, people are very aware of the role of culture in their lives and that they are represented by and defined by their culture. If a group feels that they possess a culture and that 'their' culture is either misrepresented or presented in an offensive manner, it is to be expected that this group will respond both strongly and quickly. When the Royal Ontario Museum⁴⁸ exhibited *Out of the Heart of Africa* in Toronto in November 1989, the African-Canadian protest that ensued was so loud and contentious that several museums that were to receive the traveling exhibition canceled their bookings.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ For a case study on this issue see Paul DiMaggio and Michael Useem, "Cultural Property and Public Policy: Emerging Tensions in Government Support of the Arts," *Social Research*, no. 45 (1978): 356-389.

⁴⁷ Ames explains that the consumer revolution has brought two publics into the museum: the constituents that provide financial support and the originating populations "whose histories and cultures are represented...[both of] whom likely have separate interests." The former come to be "entertained by glimpses of other cultures and earlier times...and the originating peoples...[come to see] how their own cultures and histories are being used as exotic entertainment by and for others" (1992:12).

⁴⁸ The Royal Ontario Museum is usually referred to as "the ROM."

⁴⁹ For discussion on this exhibition see Lec-Ann Martin, "Life is Full of Contradictions: Reflections on Reality," [in] *Thunder Bay Art Gallery Mandate Study 1990-93: An investigation of Issues Surrounding the Exhibition. Collection and Interpretation of Contemporary Art by First Nations Artists*, by Robert Houle and Carol Podedworny (eds.) (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994), 34-39; and Michael M. Ames, "Biculturalism in Exhibitions," *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1991): 7-15.

First Nations spokespersons, academics and leaders are often unsatisfied with Western cultural institutions. Ames comments that ‘most of the criticisms of museums flow from the simple fact that they are the self-appointed keepers of other people’s material; self-appointed interpreters of other’s histories’ and that these criticisms ‘circle around the question of who controls the rights to manage and interpret history and culture.’⁵⁰ In essence, the struggle is one of access to power filtered through access to culture.

Following *The Spirit Sings*, the conference *Preserving Our Heritage* was held to address the question of ‘who’ holds the rights to the objects of specific material cultures and their interpretation. The conference was a joint effort by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association. Its intent was to come to terms with issues that had been raised with respect to the ownership of First Nations material cultures, and the rights to re/present them. Prior to the conference, those concerns had not been seriously dealt with by the broader museum community. The controversy that surrounded *The Spirit Sings* served as a catalyst in bringing several of these issues to a head, and the conference was called as a positive way to deal with concerns common to both First Nations and Canadian museums. Tom Hill explains that they decided to form a joint task force to assess and define long term solutions. At the first conference meeting 120 issues were raised, analyzed and grouped under the three following major areas:

- (1) increased involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the interpretation of their culture and history by cultural institutions;
- (2) improved access to museum collections by Aboriginal peoples, and
- (3) the interpretation of artifacts and human remains.⁵¹

In the following section, I introduce these three designated areas of concern. While I discuss them briefly in the context of their importance to the relationship between First Nations representatives and museum personnel, I do not expand on these in any detail. I

⁵⁰ Ames (1992), 140.

⁵¹ Tom Hill, “Between Two Potentially Strong Allies,” [in] *Thunder Bay Art Gallery Mandate Study 1990-93: An investigation of Issues Surrounding the Exhibition, Collection and Interpretation of Contemporary Art by First Nations Artists*, by Robert Houle and Carol Pododworny (eds.) (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994), 40-44.

leave the detailed discussion for the analysis that will be found later in this thesis. The next section, however, prepares the reader for the following chapter which covers *The Spirit Sings* and the Lubicon boycott.

(B) Access

Many museum collections were formed, and now still serve as 'study collections,' an assemblage of objects that support a particular understanding of history or nature.⁵² Historically, access to education was reserved for the elite and access to early museums was similarly elitist territory. I have mentioned that museums became public spaces under the ideology of nationalism. But this access to museum public space has primarily been limited to the exhibition space. The general public has as yet gained little access to those tightly controlled spaces which operate outside of public view. Even scholars cannot be assured that they will find museums cooperative and supportive regarding their investigations.⁵³ Museum officials remain the gatekeepers of heritage and culture by controlling who comes through their inner gates to access the treasures they 'own.'

Catherine Bell (coming from a legal background) postulates that there is a basic, ideological difference between Western and Native understandings of ownership.⁵⁴ She suggests that misunderstandings between opposing parties in repatriation claims may be based on the fact that Western society does not validate Native notions of 'group ownership' which apparently conflict with the Western norms of 'individual ownership.' It therefore becomes problematic when Native claims for repatriation are based upon the assertion that an 'individual' did/does *not* have the 'right' to sell a cultural object.

⁵² Key (1973).

⁵³ Ames (1992). In Chapter Three of *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*, Ames discusses the dilemma that scholars inside the museum contend with as museum administrators have little regard or sympathy for research. This attitude also makes it difficult for scholars outside the museum who want to access the museum's resources as often there is no adequate method of accessing that material and work space is not provided for researchers.

⁵⁴ Catherine Bell, "Reflections on the New relationship: Comments on the Task Force Guidelines for Repatriation" (paper submitted to the Canadian Museums Association Legal Affairs and Management Symposium, 1992).

Certainly, Bell's observations of 'difference' have relevance; but is there more to it? The dominant ideology of most Western countries holds that museums 'own' their holdings. But we must ask "on what grounds?" Legal rights to many artifacts are based on the adage 'possession is nine-tenths of the law.' Many museum artifacts (albeit not all) are, in actuality, 'ill gotten gains' from colonization, or the 'spoils of war.' In fact, the repatriation of artifacts from one nation to another has been based on the argument that the country/culture in possession has gained the cultural objects in dispute by questionable means. The Native concept of ownership may not be necessarily 'different' from that of the Western cultures within which they live. Perhaps, the difference arises when First Nations people request the repatriation of their material culture *from their own state governments*. Then the question of 'which nation' holds the rights to these objects becomes highly volatile. Furthermore, the rights to ownership have become interpenetrated with ideals of cultural heritage and nationhood. If a culture is intricately linked with the formation of group identity, if a culture is something that a people 'has,' then how can another group of people claim ownership over elements of a culture that does not belong to 'them'? Today many museums which house First Nations material culture have little choice but to re-examine their attitudes and their policies.

The goals and objectives of museum boards and staffs differ radically from the goals and objectives of most First Nations peoples. As an illustration, one of the greatest areas of conceptual difference lies in the highly divergent and emotionally permeated terrain of 'sacredness.' Western cultures and Native cultures may not understand 'the sacred' in the same way. In any case, Western museums, scholars and governments have traditionally shown little empathy for professed Native sacred traditions; it is only a few decades ago that Native children were forced into boarding schools taught by the 'sacred arm' of Western society. Museum curators have often offended and infuriated Natives because of their seeming lack of respect for First Nations religious objects. During *The Spirit Sings* exhibition a (sacred) Mohawk face mask was on display; likewise the exhibit featured Plains medicine bundles. As Joseph Norton, the Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council,

pointed out many objects on exhibit were never intended for viewing by outsiders' eyes and were certainly not created for public display and entertainment.⁵⁵ Ironically, and indeed sadly, these sacred materials are often the most valued objects in a museum's collection and consequently are jealously guarded.

When representatives of the First Nations claim that these carefully catalogued and displayed materials remain an integral part of First Nations cultures, museums argue that they are also part of the larger nation's patrimony. And herein lies the rub. For while Canadian government officials may accede to, or even assist, repatriation of First Nations cultural artifacts from other countries back to Canada, they are not so quick to consider returning First Nations objects that presently reside in Canadian institutions back to First Nations groups. First Nations are a part of Canada in their eyes; they are not separate, autonomous Nations with corresponding claims to autonomous 'culture-hood.' The heritage of First Nations groups is conceptualized as the heritage of Canada; hence, Canada has 'ownership' rights over First Nations material cultures.

On the other hand, First Nations leaders do not conceive of themselves and their constituencies as 'wholly' part of Canada. Instead, they conceive of themselves as belonging to and representing the First Nations of this country: with plural cultural heritages, distinctive languages and specific, bounded claims to land. Hence, their material culture that is held in custody throughout the world, including Canada, belongs to them and them only.

(C) Repatriation

Repatriation has become a buzz word relating to Native materials. Use of the term by the museum community stems from its association with prisoners of war being returned, or

⁵⁵ See:

Mark Lowey, "Crooked-nose Mohawk mask has a long history," the *Calgary Herald*, 28 January 1988.

Grace Wong, "Mohawks block museum display of sacred mask," the *Montreal Gazette*, 18 January 1988.

repatriated, to their homeland. When cultural materials are repatriated, the key message is that the heritage of a nation is then being returned home from captivity to its original source. International museum communities are all involved with repatriation. Many countries have put legislation into place in order to prevent materials that are deemed inherent to the national culture from being sold outside of their respective countries. Most of these countries also provide funding for the repatriation of 'their' material cultures from distant territories.

The repatriation of the Scriver Collection is a case in point. The events that led up to the arrival of the collection in Edmonton are compellingly related by Philip Stepney in *The Scriver Blackfoot Collection: Repatriation of Canada's Heritage*.⁵⁶ This exhibition catalogue was prepared by the Provincial Museum of Alberta with the assistance of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism. In his introductory essay, Stepney describes the process of repatriating the Scriver Blackfoot Collection from the United States to Canada. The repatriation process, which took more than two years and carried Stepney over 50,000 miles, involved 'the Provincial Government of Alberta, the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board of the Federal Department of Communications, Environment Canada, Canada Customs, the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, D.C., the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Department of the Interior.'⁵⁷ In describing his first encounter with the collection he writes:

The collection, the singular beauty of each piece, and the volume and extent of the material exceeded my wildest expectations. Looking at videos of the collection had been almost like looking at it through stained glass windows. Now piece after piece appeared, each complete, and all obviously chosen not only for their beauty and authenticity, but also for what they represented. Together, spread out in front of me on tables, was almost the full range of material culture heritage of the Blackfoot of old, preserved in a state as if made only yesterday. I began to understand why Bob [Scriver] had been so cautious about lifting the veil on his collection.

⁵⁶ Philip Stepney, "Repatriation of the Scriver Blackfoot Collection," [in] *The Scriver Blackfoot Collection: Repatriation of Canada's Heritage*, exhibition catalogue, by Philip H.R. Stepney and David J. Goa (eds.) (Edmonton: Provincial Museums of Alberta, 1990), 13-22.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Not only were the pieces priceless themselves, the collection contained the very essence of a bygone cultural expression of a native people. Not only did it contain nearly every type of material item, it contained ceremonial bundles described by Clarke Wissler, complete and among the most elaborate known. It was as though a cover was lifted off the past.⁵⁸

After reading the above description it is easy to understand why such valued materials would be sought after and considered worthy of repatriation. But whose culture is it? From the museum catalogue, which describes the exhibition and collection as 'the repatriation of *Canada's* heritage,' it appears that the material culture of the Blackfoot is, first and foremost, Canadian. But after reading the description, one wonders if the feeling of awe and reverence that Stepney implies was his reaction to the collection, should not have been accorded, firstly, to the culture who created it.

Stepney's description of a First Nations' historic materials stands in marked contrast to the dominant European view of Natives and the verbal pictures they painted of the imminent demise of Native cultures commensurate with the time in which the Blackfoot collection was created. Eldon Yellowhorn comments on this disparity:

Observing the rapid decline of their subjects, the 19th and early 20th century anthropologists determined the initial objective of their discipline would be to document indigenous cultures and to collect the material goods created by the artisans. America became a field laboratory for the social theorists interested in explaining cultural evolution, and the ethnographic accounts were used to support an argument when informants were no longer available. The intangible elements of Indian society became largely the property of historians and other intellectuals.

The material culture of the Indians became a rarity as the Indians adopted the accouterments of civilization. Their technology and aesthetics became valued, as collectors of antiquities realized the potential market for such unique objects. The spiritual value of a medicine bundle became subordinate to its economic value, and moccasins transcended their function and became "artifacts." In a sense, the treatment of ethnographic collections mirrored the social attitudes towards the Indians: their material culture was valuable but the Indian was expendable.

⁵⁸ Ibid., page 15.

Ethnographic collections are a source of contention for many Indian groups because they are constant reminders of their fractured history. They parallel other aspects of that lost heritage and, like land itself, or children adopted outside their culture groups, the Indians desire to reclaim them. There is a realization that the ancestors often had no basis on which to protect themselves against the dissolution of their culture. They released their hold on it under duress.⁵⁹

The 1922 appropriation of Northwest Coast cultural materials by authorities enforcing the anti-potlatch policy, is an example of a situation where Native materials were released under duress. In spite of the 1884 Indian Act which proclaimed that the Potlatch was a misdemeanor, and that participants were liable to imprisonment if they participated in such a celebration, several families continued their traditions but took them underground. Gloria Cranmer Webster⁶⁰ documents the activities of Indian Agent William Halliday, who made it his personal mission to destroy the Potlatch. He personally ensured that several high ranking chiefs and their wives were imprisoned for the crime of continuing their cultural traditions. The trial of these Chiefs and their wives resulted in “an illegal agreement.”⁶¹ Under this agreement “Those who were charged under the potlatch law did not have to serve their gaol sentences if their entire villages agreed to give up their ceremonial gear, including masks, rattles, whistles and coppers.”⁶² It is on the basis of these types of cases that some First Nations peoples question the ‘legal’ right of museums to control, house and interpret their material cultures.

Following the ‘illegal agreement’ between the Government and the Chiefs, a magnificent collection of Northwest Coast material culture was gathered, crated and shipped to Ottawa where it became known as the ‘Potlatch Collection.’ It was later divided between the Victoria Memorial Museum (now the CMC) and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM).

⁵⁹ Eldon Yellowhorn, “Wintercounts,” [in] *The Scriver Blackfoot Collection: Repatriation of Canada's Heritage*, exhibition catalogue, by Philip H.R. Stepney and David J. Goa (eds.) (Edmonton: Provincial Museums of Alberta, 1990), 25.

⁶⁰ Gloria C. Webster, “From Colonization to Repatriation,” [in] *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*, exhibition catalogue, by Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin (eds.) (Hull, PQ.: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992), 25-38.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, page 34.

⁶² *Ibid.*

George Heye, a collector from New York, purchased thirty-five artifacts which were sent to the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation.

Webster records that forty years later "we began to work towards the return of our treasures from the museums."⁶³ Due to intensive lobbying, the CMC returned its part of the collection on the condition that two museums would be built to house the materials. This request was agreed to by the Native groups involved, and the Kwakiutl Museum in Cape Mudge opened in 1979, while the U'mista Cultural Center opened in Alert Bay the following year.

The materials housed in the ROM were returned to the relevant Native peoples in 1988, but the materials in the hands of the Heye Foundation, at the time of the publication of Webster's article (1992) were still being sought. In this case a claim for repatriation from the Heye Foundation is well grounded in historical documentation which convincingly illustrates that a legal injustice was committed against these Native groups and their material culture. But this case is an exception. In general, most calls for repatriation are difficult to underpin, and proof that an illegal or immoral act was committed against an ancestor which effectively caused that ancestor to give up cultural objects is often difficult to prove.⁶⁴

(D) Interpretation

People in positions of power with respect to museum material culture in Canada and many peoples of First Nations ancestry do not view Native ethnographic objects and the legal ownership of these material cultures in the same light. First Nations spokespersons assert that these objects are an integral part of their cultural heritage and understand their role as signifiers of 'who' they are in terms of the meanings they lend to everyday life. In the

⁶³ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁴ Bell (1992).

Western system of art appreciation, which takes us beyond the realm of anthropology, many of these objects have become commodities which increase in monetary value over time as long as an art market for them exists.

Over the last few decades, interest in North American Native materials has been growing and auction houses are commanding impressive prices for older materials even in this recessionary time.⁶⁵ This has accentuated an already prevalent interest in authenticity which manifests itself on the contemporary Native art scene.⁶⁶ Native artisans have been producing materials for consumption since the time of contact.⁶⁷ As long as the artifact looked and felt Native there was no question of its being Native. But as younger Native artists have become more aware of, and educated in, Western art history, methods and means, their final products often become less identifiable as Native. Questions of authenticity bring down the value of a particular piece, conversely Native artists have no wish or reason to continue to create traditional art simply to convince a buyer that a piece is authentically Native. Like any artist, they want to express themselves through their work, and say something about their contemporary lives. That Native art now juxtaposes themes drawn from Western society with traditional life, is understandable in light of the interpenetration of Native society and the powerful, dominant social structure.

⁶⁵ The *American Indian Art Magazine* is a quarterly publication which regularly features a section titled "Auction Block." See this periodical for interesting reports of recent auctions of Native American artifacts including the selling prices and photographs of select pieces.

⁶⁶ For a full discussion on the dichotomy of art versus artifact and its impact on contemporary Native art, see Vanessa Vogel, "More Totems and Taboos: Cultivating Alternative Approaches to First Nations Arts and Artists," [in] *Thunder Bay Art Gallery Mandate Study 1990-93: An investigation of Issues Surrounding the Exhibition, Collection and Interpretation of Contemporary Art by First Nations Artists*, by Robert Houle and Carol Podeworny (eds.) (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994), 45-63. Here, she observes that anthropology's definition of tradition is static and unchanging. When this view is applied to traditional primitive peoples they themselves are seen as fixed in time. If they should experience change, as they of course have, "their arts were no longer deemed authentic, that is, traditional" (page 46).

⁶⁷ Ruth Phillips, "Why Not Tourist Art? Significant Silences in Native American Museum Representations," [in] *Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, by Gyan Prakash (ed.) (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 98-125.

Native artists intent upon making art a career recognize the importance of getting their works in front of the public where they can begin to develop a following. In the Western economic system, art demands a greater price than does craft. Therefore it has become the mission of contemporary Native artists to be recognized as artists rather than artisans or craftsmen and to have their works displayed in venues where they are recognized according to the Western tradition of fine art.

Recognition of Native art as "art" is an extension of the struggle for power between the groups who define art and those who wish to extend its definition. Jamake Highwater understands this struggle as particularly difficult for Native artists, who are, in many ways, also struggling with their enculturated identities. In *Controversy in Native American Art* he discusses this dilemma of the Native American artist who is caught between the importance of 'group' identity in First Nations culture, and the ideology of 'individualism' which permeates Western societies. To succeed as an artist in the Western system, one must, Highwater suggests, be seen as highly individualistic.⁶⁸

The defining of Native art as either 'art' or 'craft' has become a political issue. This is clearly evident in the documentations prepared for two recent exhibitions. *Land Spirit Power* (1992) and *Indigena* (1992) were prepared and exhibited by the National Gallery and the Canadian Museum of Civilization respectively.⁶⁹ Ames notes, as I have above, that the tension between 'art' and 'craft' is a

matter of status and power....Artifacts hold a lower rank than art in the Western prestige system, and craft is even lower down the scale of public worth. To have one's own work or one's own culture represented in a national gallery adds value to it, while to be excluded is to be considered inferior.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Jamake Highwater, "Controversy in Native American Art," [in] *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*, by Edwin L. Wade (ed.) (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), 223-242.

⁶⁹ Alfred Young Man (ed.), *Networking: Proceedings From National Native Indian Artists' Symposium IV* (Lethbridge: The University Of Lethbridge, 1988). For further reading on the art versus craft issue and the politics of showing Native art in Western galleries and museums see this collection of papers and discussions. see also: Lee-Ann Martin, *The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Contemporary Native Art and Public Art Museums in Canada* (a report submitted to the Canada Council, 1991).

⁷⁰ Michael Ames, "Biculturalism in Exhibitions," *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1991): 7-15.

Contemporary Native artists have been vocal in their criticism of Western museums and galleries that exclude their work because it is not true 'art' and reject the confinement of their work to anthropologically contextualized realms.

The issue of being excluded from contemporary Western art venues is closely aligned with issues of the re/presentation of Native culture and cultural materials. The exhibition *Revisions* (1988) is an interesting example. Held at the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, Alberta, *Revisions* featured works by artists of First Nation's ancestry, prepared and exhibited in protest to *The Spirit Sings*. In the introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue, curator Helga Pakasaar comments on the imperialism (power over the 'other') implied by exhibitions that claim to treat First World and Third World artists as equals. She states:

As an exhibition of native art, *Revisions* also risks highlighting notions of difference, exclusion and the other as spectacle in such a way that further marginalizes those who are already one of the more invisible "visible minorities." Given that cultural and academic institutions are always in some way complicit with the systems that allow them to exist, *Revisions* sits uncomfortably within a context that historically has excluded native people. Although the Walter Phillips Gallery has an ongoing commitment to presenting contemporary art from diverse cultural perspectives, it also contributes to the mainstream contemporary art canon, a milieu that certainly has shaped my curatorial interests, notions of quality and presentation aesthetic, which have influenced this exhibition and publication. How, then, can the artists in this exhibition trust that they are not left serving some symbolic agenda that is other than their own, yet again enacting some white man's version of themselves? They can't.⁷¹

There is an inherent contradiction in these seemingly mutually exclusive self/other definitions. First Nations are demanding their right to be recognized as Nations with their own material cultures and traditions. First Nations artists are demanding to be recognized as artists within the standards of Western tradition, but reject Western interpretations. Many of these same artists who are openly critical of museum methods and claim that

⁷¹ Helga Pakasaar, "Introduction," [in] *Revisions*, exhibition catalogue, by Charlotte Townsend-Gault and Mary-Anne Moser (eds.) (Banff, AB: Walter Phillips Gallery, 1992), 2.

museums do not have the right to 'own' 'their' cultural material, are openly critical of the manner in which this cultural material is displayed and interpreted. They are also critical of interpretations applied to contemporary works by Native artists. The struggle of Native artists for self-definition and recognition parallels the struggle by the First Nations to define their cultural pasts apart from Western history, or within a framework that recognizes their relationship of past subordination to Western history.

In an essay published in the exhibition catalogue for *Land Spirit Power*, Diana Nemiroff tries to make some sense of these and other contemporary contradictions. She traces the "genealogy" of several exhibitions where Native Art has been placed in a mainstream Western Art context and attempts to bring some understanding to 'present positions in relation to the attitudes of the past.'⁷²

Nemiroff, not surprisingly, finds nationalistic themes associated with exhibitions of Native art. The gallery staff's own conceptions of the 'place' of Native art are reflected in the context through which Native art is offered to the viewers. The 'nationalistic themes,' uncovered by Nemiroff, point to the nation state, not First Nations. In essence Native art is appropriated and situated within the Canadian national context in order to ground the Americas in histories and cultures which are, in turn, used to validate the present, dominant culture. Ames with the help of Margaret Atwood lends understanding to this process:

Europeans of North America, perhaps feeling the lack of a history and New World culture of their own, frequently appropriate the histories of the First Peoples as their own—'our native heritage' and 'our native peoples,' as is heard in polite circles. 'The problem is,' Canadian author Margaret Atwood once observed,⁷³ 'what do you do for a past if you are a white, relatively new to the continent and rootless?' We adopt the Indians as our

⁷²Diana Nemiroff, "Modernism, Nationalism, and Beyond," [in] *Land Spirit Power: First Nations At the National Gallery of Canada*, exhibition catalogue, by Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle and Charlotte Townsend-Gault (eds.) (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992), 20.

⁷³Margaret Atwood [cited in] *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, by Michael M. Ames (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 87. Ames cites this source as: Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anasi, 1972), 104.

ancestors. Now that they are reclaiming their history, where will that leave us?⁷⁴

Many First Nations spokespeople and individuals recognize that their cultural treasures, whether they are labeled art, craft or material heritage, have been integrated into Western ideologies, theories and stories; all of these constitute narratives which Western cultures tell themselves about themselves. With the recent and public recognition that Canada is a socially and culturally pluralistic society, the process of "appropriating" the other's culture is being recognized as a device used by the dominant ideology to capture and contain the voices of First Nations. Increasing awareness on the part of many Canadian citizens, and some members of government, of the importance of cultural identity to the individual, has made the oft-repeated scene of one group speaking on behalf of a diverse 'other' unpalatable to many Canadians. As Ames states 'In this new world order the minorities expect the same rights and privileges as the majority.'⁷⁵ The majority has always had the right to claim and control a heritage. First Nations, a group of minorities, are claiming that same right in the battle: *Whose heritage is it?*

⁷⁴ Ames (1992), 87.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 167.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Glenbow, *The Spirit Sings*, and the Lubicon Boycott

I The Glenbow Museum

Like so many museums and galleries throughout the world, the Glenbow owes its heritage to the legacy of a wealthy philanthropist and avid collector.¹ Eric Harvie was born in Orillia, Ontario in 1892. Lured by romantic notions of the West, the youthful Harvie left Ontario to go to Alberta to work in his uncle's firm as a law clerk. He subsequently graduated from the University of Alberta with a Law degree, and he later established a profitable law practice in Calgary. But it was oil that made him an extremely wealthy man. Dempsey notes, 'Eric Harvie's rise to become one of the wealthiest oilmen in Canada is the stuff from which legends are made.'² The wealth Harvie acquired from his oil investments gave him the financial freedom to retire from the practice of law in 1947 and to indulge his passion for collecting. Under a charitable organization which he named the Glenbow Foundation, he amassed a breathtaking collection of Canadian art and historical artifacts, but he concentrated the focus of this collection on the West.

Harvie had recognized that in the era of Western prosperity, the face of the West would be forever altered. Many of the Western objects that he and his staff collected were literally 'saved from the trash heap,' as technology changed and automation increased. Dempsey writes:

In the 1950s and 1960s [the peak period of Harvie's collecting], interest in history and the arts in Western Canada was at a low ebb. Alberta had no major art museums, history museums, or archives; paintings by artists such as Paul Kane could be purchased for as little as fifteen hundred dollars and just about every farmyard and old family home contained some relics of

¹ Today the Glenbow is known as the Glenbow-Alberta Institute.

² Hugh A. Dempsey, *Treasures of the Glenbow Museum* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1991).

pioneer life. Only they weren't referred to as artifacts; they were called junk.³

On 15 April 1966, in commemoration of Canada's upcoming centennial, Eric Harvie donated his accumulated collections to the citizens of Alberta, along with buildings, properties and a cash gift of \$5 million dollars. Dempsey records the size of the donated collection:

The collections at the time of the gift were insured for almost \$5 million and included 20,000 ethnographic specimens, 14,000 works of Art, 10,000 pioneer objects, 4,000 military items, 20,000 books and pamphlets, 1/2 million pages of manuscripts, 70,000 negatives, 43,000 archaeological objects, 5,000 mineral specimens and 24,000 natural history specimens.⁴

Harvie assigned his collection teams to the task of collecting materials that documented the history of Western Canada. His own, private, collecting activities were extended to everything and anything that interested him. He particularly enjoyed acquiring large collections completed by other collectors or museums.

After his donation of the Glenbow Foundation to Albertans, Harvie continued to collect under a new foundation which he named Riveridge. He focused his activities on increasing the collections of the now autonomous Glenbow. It was through his efforts that the Glenbow acquired the Roe collection which greatly extended the museum's holdings. J.S. Roe had started his collecting activities while he was operating a trading store and curio shop at Pipestone, Minnesota. Over the years he purchased many Native artifacts and had "traveled to various locations in the United States, Mexico and Alaska, purchasing 28 Indian collections and hundreds of individual artifacts."⁵ The Roe collection added seventeen thousand artifacts to the Glenbow's holdings including "a fine collection of catlinite pipes; a French-made tomahawk; dresses ornamented with porcupine quills; saddles, including one found on the Custer battlefield; a vest owned by Cut Nose who was one of the Sioux people executed after the Minnesota uprising of 1862; works by Maria

³ Ibid., 14.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 29.

Martinez, the famous Southwest potter; a collection of pipes exhibited at the 1982 World's fair; and a pipe bowl and stem owned by Sitting Bull."⁶

As this list illustrates, Native peoples and their material cultures were areas of particular interest to Harvie. These interests have continued to permeate the agenda of the Glenbow, and have become an active, high priority area of collection and exhibition, especially since Duncan Cameron's reopening of the Ethnology department.⁷ The aboriginal societies of the Plains represent the largest groupings of ethnographic collections held by the Glenbow. Along with objects representing Plains material cultures, the Glenbow has preserved Plains songs, stories and histories. Today, many people find these records and artifacts valuable to an understanding of history, and they have helped Plains people recreate and revive past traditions.

The Glenbow collections also include representations from other First Nations including the Inuit. But not only Native peoples appear in the Glenbow archives. The Metis, the Mounted Police, the western lifestyle of cowboys, the fur traders, and the lives of immigrants and pioneers, as well as the present twentieth century, are strongly represented by the Glenbow's holdings. So also is contemporary and historical Canadian pictorial art.

In the years prior to 1970, the Glenbow had become, overall, more of a repository than a museum. The collections had been permitted to grow faster than the available display and storage space could accommodate. Thus, both staff and materials were scattered heterogeneously throughout the city of Calgary in the various buildings which Harvie had appropriated for storage and administrative functions.

Due to Harvie's influence, the Glenbow has also extended its mandate into a number of related fields including book binding, publishing and conservation. A thematic unification of the Glenbow's activities, other than a predisposition to preserve Western Canadian

⁶ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 195. Dempsey states that the Ethnology department had been 'mothballed' since 1976.

history, remained elusive. No clear-cut mandate or goals had been correlated for the museum; what was strongly felt by all of the staff was the need to extend public exhibits.

Once the Glenbow Foundation had become the responsibility of the province, a Board of Governors was appointed and the Glenbow Art Gallery opened in 1969, located at 902-11 Avenue Southwest in Calgary. This location provided 10,000 feet of much needed exhibition space. But the difficulties correlated with cramped physical space, lack of storage space and the absence of a clear mandate, were vitally addressed only after Eric Harvie died on 11 January 1975. In 1976, the institution was brought under one roof in an eight story structure. Here the Glenbow can be found today. The bringing together of the Glenbow's resources signaled accompanying changes in the Glenbow's dynamics, its operations and its public mandate.

In 1977, Duncan Cameron began his tenure as the Director of the Glenbow, bringing with him twenty years of museum experience and an impressive array of credentials, including his term as the Director of the Brooklyn Museum in New York. Appointed just one year after the new building had opened, Cameron was the first 'fully experienced museum professional to be given the title of Director [at the Glenbow] and the authority that went with it.'"⁸ A new Board was willing to take the Glenbow in new directions and Cameron was excited by the challenge. As Cameron himself explains:

It was a museum waiting to happen....It was very clear that they [the governing board] wanted to turn the Glenbow around and wanted to build a strong professional staff, raise the profile of the Glenbow and become a professional institution that was taken seriously, not just in Canada, but elsewhere.⁹

Cameron's first task was to build a strong team of professional and support staff and to hone their skills. He fine tuned existing departments and instituted others. He also initiated

⁸ Ibid., 195.

⁹ Duncan Cameron [cited in] "Interview: Duncan Cameron," by Donna Livingstone, *Glenbow* (Winter 1989): 12.

the Glenbow's participation in CHIN,¹⁰ an international computer network that links museums together to enable them to access detailed information on each other's collections.

In 1981, the Glenbow announced that it had 'come of age' when it hosted three significant exhibitions: *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria*, a traveling exhibition which also viewed at the Metropolitan Museum in New York; *Pipes That Won't Smoke*, an exhibition of North West Coast argillite carving prepared by the Glenbow itself; and another guest exhibition, *Four Modern Masters*, featuring the works of de Chirico, Ernst, Magritte and Miro. Looking back, Cameron spoke of this time as a kind of 'in service training program. It was an attempt...to start to convince the public that major and important exhibitions could and would happen at the Glenbow."¹¹

Three major exhibitions in one year set the tone and the pace. Over the next few years, the Glenbow presented several major international exhibitions including, *The Dinner Party* featuring the work of Judy Chicago, *Pre-Columbian Art of Costa Rica*, and *Metis*, the latter curated by Julia Harrison of the Glenbow. The crowning achievement of two decades of consolidation, development and hard work was to be *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*. This exhibition would explore and present Indian and Inuit artistic material cultures and was to be prepared by the Glenbow for the 1988 Winter Olympics Arts Festival.

II The Spirit Sings

A major component of every Winter Olympic Games is an Olympic Arts Festival.¹² The 1988 Winter Olympic Arts Festival in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, was no exception. During

¹⁰ CHIN = Canadian Heritage International Network.

¹¹ Duncan Cameron [cited in] "Interview: Duncan Cameron," by Donna Livingstone, *Glenbow* (Winter 1989): 12-13.

¹² Susan J. Bandy, "The Olympic Celebration of the Arts," [in] *The Olympic Games in Transition*, by Jeffrey O. Segrave and Donald Chu (eds.) (Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1988), 163-169.

the Olympics, glowing press reports praised Canada's and Calgary's talents. The 1988 Festival was said to be the largest to have ever been held in conjunction with the Olympics; some press reports went so far as to claim that sports had taken a back seat to art.¹³ At the center of the Festival, strategically positioned, was "the most ambitious and complex museum exhibition project undertaken in Canada in recent decades."¹⁴ This exhibition was entitled, *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*.

Plans for the exhibition began as early as April, 1983, when the organizing committee for the 1988 Winter Olympics approached the Glenbow and requested that they mount a major exhibition for the Arts Festival. By April of 1986, when the Olympics Calgary Olympics (OCO) chairman Frank King dubbed the exhibition the 'flagship' of the Arts Festival, the exhibition had secured corporate financial sponsorship from Shell Canada,¹⁵ and had become the target of a well organized boycott by a small Cree Indian band from Northern Alberta.

The concept for the exhibition, according to the Glenbow's Director Duncan Cameron, had been germinating in Julia Harrison's mind for some time, but had been awaiting the right moment and the right funding. Through her contacts with Dr. Christian F. Feest and a recent visit to Europe, Harrison, who was the Curator of the Glenbow's Ethnology department, had become aware of the vast and largely unknown array of First Nations ethnographic materials hidden away in public and private European collections. Harrison was concerned that the majority of this material was effectively lost to Canadian scholars. As she expressed in an essay on the exhibition:

¹³ See for example:

[?] "Some 3,000 Artists Converge on Calgary for the Biggest Ever Olympic Arts Festival." *Globe and Mail*, 23 January 1988, Metro Edition, p. E1.

[?] "Sports Take a Back Seat to Arts Festival, For Now," *Montreal Gazette*, 26 January 1988, sec. C, p. 8. Pamela Young and John Howse, "The Arts Game," *Maclean's* 101, no. 4 (February 1988): 97.

¹⁴ Press release issued by Glenbow, 18 March 1987. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁵ Anonymous, "Shell Announces Olympic Sponsorship," *Glenbow* (July/August 1986): 18.

Europeans often have material somewhat different from collections held in North America—the European collections are generally much older and reflect less outside influence than the Native materials held in North American collections. European collections therefore provide important benchmarks from which to study and date stylistic changes and adaptations evident in later collections.¹⁶

Upon her return home she expressed to Cameron her wish to develop an exhibition around a story line of the (metaphorical) repatriation of Canadian material culture that had been lost or taken from ‘our heritage’ during colonization. But the mechanics of actually mounting such an ambitious exhibition appeared insurmountable; for the time being Harrison’s dream was shelved. When Calgary’s acquisition of the Winter Olympics was announced however, and when the OCO asked Cameron what he could do for them, the instrument whereby the financing and mechanics could be provided was at hand. Harrison’s exhibition stood at the threshold of reality.

But before the Glenbow could cross that threshold and commit to the exhibition, the logistics of the project had to be worked out and the necessary resources had to be identified and secured. European collections are not easily accessible. There is no computer system such as CHIN, and the concept of public access is much more constrained than in North America. The location and assessment of European collections presented an enormous challenge to the Glenbow, and even once relevant objects had been identified the Glenbow had to tread carefully when negotiating the actual ‘loans’ of the pieces to their exhibition.

The first investigation into European collections and the ‘courting’ of European museums, galleries and private individuals, was conducted by Julia Harrison. With the help and assistance of Dr. Feest (who was the Curator of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna¹⁷ as well as the Editor of *The European Review of Native American Studies*) and the

¹⁶ Julia D. Harrison, “The Legacy of ‘The Spirit Sings,’” *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 7.

¹⁷ This museum is very important and influential world-wide. Through its association with such a prestigious institution and through the attendant political connections such association provides, the Glenbow was, at this early stage, benefiting itself and the project.

Canadian embassy system, Harrison visited collections in several countries. Her mission was to introduce museum and gallery staffs to the concepts underlying *The Spirit Sings* in order to enlist their participation and support as well as review their collections. Harrison's initial visit overseas made it clear to her that the assembly of a curatorial team would be necessary in order to cover the extensive foreign collections, and to do justice to the scope of *The Spirit Sings*. Accordingly, six guest curators were selected and invited to attend a forum to discuss the exhibition's mandate, suggest its title, and to develop a strategy and a time line which would see the project through to a successful completion. Although the Olympics were as yet nearly five years away, the project appeared almost overwhelming in terms of the preparation required.

Six historians, referred to as the "scientific committee," met in Ottawa with Harrison and Cameron on 17-18 October 1983. The minutes of these meetings record that Cameron:

offered his perspective on the project and commented on the enormity of the task ahead. He pointed out that Canadians had never had the opportunity to view what might be termed *Canada's* national treasures all in one place at one time.¹⁸ The mandate for the exhibition would be to gather all material deemed vital to the exhibition by the scientific committee, regardless of its location in the world. The responsibility for deciding what material could be categorized as national treasures would be left to the scientific committee...[T]he committee expressed unanimous excitement at being invited to participate in the project [and the remainder of the meetings were utilized for questions and discussions].¹⁹

Each member of the scientific committee was also given the responsibility of curating a segment of the exhibition. They were selected through a process which matched the member's academic specialty to a segment of the exhibition to be curated: Ted J. Brasser, from the National Museum of Man, became responsible for the Northern Plains; Bernadette Driscoll of the Winnipeg Art Gallery was responsible for the Canadian Arctic; Ruth B. Phillips, from Carlton University, for the Northern Woodlands; Martine Reid from

¹⁸ The use of the phrase "Canada's national treasures," indicates that from the early planning stages of the exhibition, the cultures of First Nations people were being conceptualized as part of the Canadian heritage. My italics.

¹⁹ *Glenbow Project OCO' 88, feasibility study* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives.

UBC and Bill Reid, a famous Native artist,²⁰ were the team responsible for the Northwest Coast; Judy Thompson, from the National Museum of Man, would cover the Northern Athapaskan region, and finally Ruth Holmes Whitehead, from the Nova Scotia Museum, would curate the Atlantic Regions of Canada.

At this point the exhibition was still in a feasibility stage. While the Glenbow was working out the costs and resources on their end, the scientific committee was charged with the task of developing a story line that would complement and enrich the Olympian mandate of the exhibition. Each curator would conduct his/her own research and make his/her own travel arrangements. Short term costs would be covered by a grant that had been provided by the Calgary Olympics Committee and the National Museums Corporation for the Glenbow's OCO' 88 feasibility study. A corporate sponsorship was still being sought to cover the long term costs.

As each committee member conducted his/her research and traveled, he/she was responsible for the identification of artifacts that they hoped to borrow. They took photographs of designated objects, and wrote reports itemizing the qualities that made those objects unique. Harrison had instructed them to 'rate' their choices; objects that were considered prime examples of a particular type of craftsmanship were rated 'first.' Second choices were necessary as 'back-ups' in case the application for the 'loan' of the object to the Glenbow was denied. Conservationist Fred Greene and a Glenbow photographer followed up on the committee members institutional visits in order to photograph identified pieces and to compile condition reports. Many highly desirable objects were identified as being totally unsuitable to travel or as requiring special treatment due to their considerable age.²¹

²⁰ Because of his failing health, Bill Reid consented to work on the project if his wife, Martine, was involved. As time progressed, his health continued to decline, and the full responsibility for their project fell to Martine.

²¹ Personal conversation between the author and Fred Greene, August 1993, Lethbridge.

As the scientific committee continued to explore, identify, describe and correlate their materials, an enormous amount of scholarly material and information about European (and other) collections became available. Harrison was adamant that everything be recorded as precisely as possible so that future researchers and historians could benefit by the documentation. While just over 600 objects were identified as appropriate for the exhibition, thousands more were documented with slides and condition reports. Details as to where each object was located, be it gallery, museum or private collection, were carefully kept. The direct result of the researches that preceded the exhibition are the extensive records that are now accessible in the Glenbow Archives. It should be noted that the estimated number of Canadian Inuit and Indian items in foreign collections exceeds 350,000.

The Glenbow's feasibility study, *Glenbow Project OCO' 88*,²² was completed and presented in September of 1984. In this document under the heading, "General Comments," Harrison reports:

There is sufficient material in European collections to form the core of an exhibition....The reaction to the exhibition idea was very positive from both museum people and Embassy officials. The anticipated reticence about loaning valuable material was encountered, but almost always tempered with a desire to cooperate under the blanket and spirit of the Olympics.²³

The estimated costs of the Exhibition were high and it was recognized (as it had been from the start) that a sponsor for the exhibition would be necessary. Now, with the initial investigation complete, OCO had something tangible to sell.

²² As I have previously noted *OCO' 88* stands for *Olympics Calgary Olympics' 88*. The feasibility study is a compilation of reports and memos generated as the Glenbow studied the possibility of getting the exhibition off the ground. When prepared, these reports were not intended to be part of a larger document. As a result they retain their original headings and page numbers. As the pages of the feasibility study were not renumbered I have elected not to reference page numbers when quoting from this source. Many of the page numbers are, in fact, duplicated.

²³ Julia Harrison [cited in] "General Comments," [in] *Glenbow Project OCO' 88* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives.

The OCO' 88 Committee approached a number of corporate sponsors, and in the spring of 1986, Shell Canada and the OCO announced Shell's exclusive corporate sponsorship of *The Spirit Sings*. Further funding for the exhibition from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Nova Scotia Museum, the Province of Alberta and the City of Calgary was also committed and secured. With these financial commitments, the success of the exhibition seemed secured. But shortly after Shell's announcement of its corporate sponsorship, with a grant totaling \$1,100,000.00, the Lubicon Cree prepared an announcement of their own: a boycott of *The Spirit Sings*.

III The Lubicon Cree

The story of the Lubicon Indian land claim dispute has been the subject of literally hundreds of articles and at least one book.²⁴ Each time the story is retold of how a small band of Indians in Northern Alberta fought to retain their livelihood, resisted dependence on welfare and attempted to thwart the pumping of millions of dollars worth of oil from their traditionally claimed homeland.

Generally, striking oil is considered an economic boon to a community. But in the case of the Lubicon Cree, the discovery of oil served to undermine what was once a healthy, self-sufficient and remote community. James G.E. Smith has written that the Lubicon faced "destruction because their traditional culture has a well-defined environmental adaptation."²⁵ The disruption by oil exploration of the Lubicon economy, which was based on hunting and trapping, is asserted by Smith as being the major contributor to the breakdown of the Lubicon's society and culture.²⁶ He writes:

²⁴ John Goddard, *Last Stand of the Lubicon Cree* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1991).

²⁵ James G.E. Smith, "Canada—The Lubicon Lake Cree," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1987): 61-62.

²⁶ *Ibid.* The Lubicon economy immediately prior to the commencement of oil and gas exploration was of course not literally traditional, in a pre-contact sense. But it did contain many highly symbolic elements, such as hunting and trapping, that Lubicon people could associate with their original culture. It also allowed them considerable economic independence and self-reliance.

Without the environmental resources of the past, the men and women cannot teach children the knowledge and skills of their culture; in the isolation of the hinterland, Elders do not have the knowledge, skills and resources to help the younger generation to adapt to modern industrial society. The generation gap has become a cultural gap: young people are neither adapted to the past nor to the future.²⁷

The Lubicon region is situated in Northern Alberta, approximately 100 kilometers north-east of Peace River. Oil companies began to explore in this region in the 1950s, but their activities had little impact upon the residents until 1972, when the world price of oil escalated drastically. By 1981 a third of Alberta's oil wells could be found in the region that the Lubicon claim as their traditional hunting ground.²⁸ Fennell, Weatherbe and Morris identify specific results of this intrusion—seismic roads cut through the forest, vandalized traplines, the decline of wild game and uncontrolled forest fires—as significant contributing factors in the increase in government assistance to Lubicon peoples. In the 1960s, only 10% of the Lubicon people applied for assistance. By 1985 this figure had risen to 95%.²⁹

Observers of the Lubicon scene all assert that a settlement of their land claims is essential in order to enable and empower the Lubicon so that they can take control of their own destinies. John Goddard³⁰ points out that the Lubicon simply want the reserve promised to them by the provincial and federal governments in 1940. When the Lubicon applied for a reserve in 1933, they were entitled to a land base of 25 square miles. This figure had been calculated on the basis of 128 acres per person for 127 people. However, the population figures were in error. In 1940, the allotment of reserve land was increased to include 128 acres for each of 457 people. This increased the reserve size to 69 square miles. The land agreement between the Lubicon and both levels of government included the tribe's rights to minerals found on that land, as well as the environmental control of 8,500 square miles

²⁷ Ibid., 61-62.

²⁸ Tom Fennell, Stephen Weatherbe and Leslie Morris, "Last Stand of the Lubicons," *Alberta Report*, 29 April 1985, 7-12.

²⁹ Ibid., page 8.

³⁰ John Goddard, "Last Stand of the Lubicon," *Equinox* (May/June 1985): 67-77.

of territory. These rights of environmental control, theoretically, meant that the Lubicon could limit oil development to a level where hunting and trapping could continue.

The application for a reserve by the Lubicon in 1933, was made necessary by the fact that they had been overlooked in 1899. During 1899, Federal Agent David Laird traversed Northern Alberta in order to obtain the signatures of Chiefs and Elders to Treaty Eight. Under Treaty Eight, land was designated to each Native at 128 acres per person. Traveling the main water routes, the Peace in the northwestern part of the province and the Athabaska in the northeast, Laird's party failed to penetrate the interior north of Lesser Slave Lake, where the Lubicon, as well as several other Cree bands made their homes.³¹

A year later, commissioner James Macrae, pursuing a mission similar to Laird's, wrote to Ottawa that he had heard from others that there were Indians in the region north of Lesser Slave Lake who had yet to be brought into treaty and that he had been unable to reach them. Macrae estimated their number to be around 500 people. But Goddard points out that genealogical studies,³² conducted jointly by the federal government and the Lubicon band in the 1980s, indicate that treaty parties missed several thousand people in the Northern Lesser Slave Lake region and that the Lubicon may actually have numbered closer to 2,500 persons.³³

In 1939, Laird's successor, Napoleon L'Heureaux, and Pant Schmidt, the Federal Inspector for Alberta agencies, visited Lubicon Lake to investigate an appeal signed by fourteen X designated signatures, by the Lubicon people for a reserve. Upon investigation, these two men recommended that a reserve be established at the west end of Lubicon Lake. Although Ottawa approved the recommendation, no treaty was signed. In 1940, a

³¹ Goddard (1991), 11.

³² There are conflicting views on the date that Woodland Cree Indians were first present in this region. For a discussion on the topic see James G.E. Smith, "the Western Woods Cree: anthropological myth and historical reality," *American Ethnologist* 14, no. 3 (August 1987): 434-448.

³³ Goddard (1991), 12.

survey crew flew north to complete the mandatory ground survey required to establish treaty land. The crew was prevented from completing their task by bad luck; a difficult forest fire limited their survey to an aerial one. Bad luck turned to neglect when the federal government, low on funds during the Second World War, simply put off the survey. Neglect, as Goddard notes, became self-interest when ‘two major oil strikes in the Edmonton area launched an Alberta oil and gas industry in 1947...[and] [a]ttention was again drawn to the promised Lubicon reserve.’³⁴ The Alberta government asked the federal government to clarify its position with regards to the land set aside for the Lubicon. Although the province of Alberta was committed to oil exploration, they were, at that time, prepared to set aside the 25.4 square miles that had been promised as reserve land in 1940. The federal government did not respond to the provincial government’s request for clarification, not even after the Alberta government issued an ultimatum. In the absence of federal response, the Alberta government proceeded as if no reserve was in place.

While Goddard does not suggest a motivation for the lack of federal government response, and their non-fulfillment of their promises to the Lubicon, he does list a series of blatantly unethical practices by the federal government with respect to Lubicon claims. Federal employees tampered with band membership lists and stripped thirty Lubicon members of their ‘Indian’ status in order to reduce Lubicon membership totals, and hence land allotments. His reading of certain reports filed at Indian Affairs, suggested to him that there was a plan in place to obstruct the Lubicon from gaining the mineral rights which had been promised during reserve negotiations. Goddard also discusses the fact that federal reports which had previously evaluated the promised reserve lands as desirable for the Lubicon band’s needs and use, later began to describe it as an ‘undesirable location.’³⁵ In any case, a reserve was not forthcoming, and as Goddard notes:

Without Indian status and band recognition they had almost no way of pursuing their land rights; and without protected land title they were poorly

³⁴ Ibid., 30-31.

³⁵ Ibid.

equipped, in the face of advancing oil exploration, to survive as distinct Aboriginal peoples.³⁶

For the moment the Lubicon's land rights remained unenforced, but in due time they would be vigorously pursued.

IV The Lubicon Boycott

In 1979 an important alliance was struck between two very different men, Bernard Ominayak and Fred Lennarson. Ominayak, a young soft-spoken Lubicon Cree, became the Chief of his band after the Isolated Communities Advisory Board collapsed, due to the loss of its government funding. Members of the Lubicon Band urged him to let his name stand for the difficult task of leading his people. He was twenty-four years old. Goddard describes him as a 'natural leader' and an unselfish server who had long held the trust of community members.³⁷

Fred Lennarson was a hard-edged and seasoned human rights activist. Goddard writes of Lennarson's lengthy involvement in human rights activism and notes that after Lennarson enrolled in an Urban Affairs masters program at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, he wrote his thesis on

community based social change and developed working relations with Saul Alinsky, the preeminent community organizer in America, famous for the type of tactical flare and audacity that Lennarson would later bring to the Lubicon campaign.³⁸

When these two men entered into their partnership, the Lubicon had just suffered a crushing legal setback. In October, 1975, a caveat was filed by the Isolated Communities which included the Lubicon. This caveat, filed against the Alberta government, claimed a legal interest in a large section of northern Alberta. The hearing of the caveat case before

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

the courts was postponed by the government until it had the opportunity to pass Bill 29 in March of 1977. Bill 29 retroactively changed the law, and resulted in the caveat case's dismissal from the courts. The caveat was now said to have no legal basis.

Lennarson explains that it was the retroactive legislation brought in by the Lougheed government that 'hooked' him into becoming a consultant and comrade to Bernard Ominayak and the Lubicon people. At the request of Harold Cardinal, then president of the Indian Association of Alberta, Lennarson had been advising the Isolated Communities who were without a treaty and had assisted them in bringing their case before the courts. He recalls that on the evening before Bill 29 was passed, he received a phone call from Cardinal telling him that the provincial government was enacting retroactive legislation in order to change that law so that the caveat action would become an irrelevant one. Lennarson remembers expressing disbelief: "This was Canada. This just couldn't happen in a free and democratic country." Cardinal assured him that he had received a tip and that it was reliable. When Cardinal's information was verified, Lennarson said that he just "had to take a stand." He likened it to the Nazi regime in Germany where it "was inconvenient for neighbors to protect their neighbors" and where those not of Jewish descent "continued to go out for supper and attend operas. Life still went on for them.... You know you think about those things and you ask yourself—what would you do in the same situation? Would it be too inconvenient?"³⁹

When Lennarson and Ominayak joined forces, Lennarson advised the Chief to build an organization beyond his own community.⁴⁰ Through his previous activist work, Lennarson was aware of the power of public outrage and media exposure in the advancement of social causes. Over time, he and Ominayak developed an activist strategy which included court action, the solicitation of public empathy and steady media exposure.

³⁹ The quotes in this paragraph are taken from my telephone interview with Lennarson. I spoke to him at his Edmonton based business, The Mirmir Corporation, 8 October 1993.

⁴⁰ Goddard (1991), 71.

Goddard praises Lennarson's abilities to gather and analyze information, conceptualize injustice and to devise popular strategies for action. He understands Lennarson as central to the public exposure that the Lubicon gained:

without him it is almost inconceivable that the case of a small, Northern Alberta band could have come to international attention and to the forefront of the Aboriginal-rights struggle in Canada.⁴¹

The statement above appears to be borne out by the evidence. Lennarson's first action was to establish a flow of funds for the Lubicon which the government had insisted was only available to bands with an official Indian status. Previous to 1982, the Lubicon had received minimal benefits. Post 1982, Ominayak was receiving a salary as Chief—\$6,000.00—and the band had achieved an operating budget of \$276,679.00, a band office with a secretary, and more importantly, telephones and housing.⁴²

Smarting from the caveat experience, the Lubicon realized that the provincial government was not going to play fair. As the government was obviously not going to meet them in the courts, the Lubicon had to choose another medium through which to reach them. They began operating under the premise that in order to reach a government, members of that government must be pressured by their constituents, or the government must be called upon, in public, to explain their actions.

Lennarson and Ominayak began by taking public speaking engagements to tell others about the band's land claims difficulties. The public following that they gained was increased by a technique that Lennarson terms a "chain letter." Originally, Lennarson sends the information of the band's plight to many activists, acquaintances and possible sympathizers. These people, in turn, make additional copies, add to or delete from the information provided, or include it in their own news letters. Information from Lennarson's company, The Mirmir Corporation, goes to countries as diverse as Australia,

⁴¹ Ibid., 63.

⁴² Ibid., 71-72.

Japan, Poland and the Soviet Union. Thus news of the Lubicon's land claims issue reached many countries in a relatively short period of time.⁴³

By January of 1983, Lennarson's corporation was mailing regular updates on the Lubicon situation to over 600 individuals and organizations. With momentum growing for their cause both at home and abroad, Ominayak and Lennarson increased their public activity. In 1983, both Lennarson and Ominayak addressed the World Council of Churches in Vancouver. In the Spring of 1984 a Third World fact-finding delegation of ministers and priests headed by Archbishop Edward Scott visited the Lubicon band. Judy Steed, a feature writer for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, went with them.

Steed's story of the Lubicon appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on 7 April 1984. It was a substantial media debut. She highlighted the World Council's findings and quoted from their letter to Prime Minister Trudeau in which they accused the provincial government of Alberta and the oil companies of engaging in genocidal activities. After vividly describing the legal battles the band had fought for their land and upon itemizing their present economic plight, Steed summarized: "Meaner treatment of helpless people can scarcely be imagined."⁴⁴

The media had discovered the Lubicon. Subsequent to Steed's article, the CBC's *The Journal* ran a documentary citing "political neglect and bureaucratic deceit." *The New York Times* followed with an article on 5 June 1984. Their report was entitled "*Caught Up In An Oil Rush, a Canadian Tribe Reels.*" Media coverage continued to grow prompting the right wing and oil company friendly *Alberta Report* to run a story explaining "*How A Tiny Alberta Band became An International Media Darling.*"⁴⁵

⁴³ Telephone interview, 8 October 1993.

⁴⁴ Judy Steed, "The Last Stand of the Lubicon Cree," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1984.

⁴⁵ Fennell, Weatherbe and Morris (1985), 7-12.

The announcement that Shell Canada had become the corporate sponsor of *The Spirit Sings* must have presented itself with the full force of irony to both Ominayak and Lennarson. As a company involved in oil exploration on Lubicon hunting grounds, Shell was now going to fund an exhibition of the material cultures of First Nations! The association of Calgary's Olympic organizers, a major oil company, and the Alberta provincial government with a First Nations display, demanded a reaction. Lennarson and Ominayak called for a boycott, first against the Olympics, then later, specifically against *The Spirit Sings*.

The original name of exhibition was to have been "*Forget Not My World*." Once the boycott was called, museum organizers quickly realized that the title of the exhibition lent itself to the rationales underlying the boycott and could easily be utilized to support and give credence to these rationales. On the advice of people like Dr. Feest, the Glenbow quickly changed the name to *The Spirit Sings*.

In his correspondence however, Lennarson retains the original name for the exhibition. In a statement made through his network chain-letters he wrote:

The name of the exhibition is "*Forget Not My World*." "*Forget Not My World*" is a title heavy with irony in light of the incontrovertible fact that the interests behind the Calgary Winter Olympics are the same as those actively seeking to destroy the Lubicon Lake people; namely, the Alberta Provincial Government and its oil company allies.⁴⁶

In that same letter, Lennarson outlines the associations between the Olympic organizers and oil interests and notes that:

- Shell Oil is the exclusive corporate sponsor of the Glenbow exhibit and a major player in the Band's traditional area.
- Glenbow Chairman E.D.D. Tavender is a senior partner in the Calgary law firm in which one of his partners, Jack Robertson, is representing oil interests in opposition to the Lubicon.

⁴⁶ Fred Lennarson, remarks from letters sent through the chain-letter system of the Mirmir Corporation (15 July and 11 December 1986) both letters deal with the subject of the association of the Glenbow with oil interests. TMC.

- another member of Glenbow's Board, Harold Millican, is a friend and advisor of ex-provincial premier Peter Lougheed, now Honorary Chairman of the Olympic Organizing Committee (OOC).
- Millican is also Chairman of the Indian Liaison Committee: set up by the OOC to defuse the boycott.

In a subsequent newsletter, Lennarson underpins his claim that the Glenbow is allied with the Alberta government and oil interests through his stress on the fact that the Glenbow is funded by the province and nine of the fifteen governors of the Glenbow board are appointed by that same government; three of five new appointments in 1986 went to two presidents and one director of oil and gas corporations. He also refers to the list of financial contributors contained in the Glenbow's annual report and comments that "the list reads like a mini-version of the Canadian Oil Registry."⁴⁷ Again, he reminds his readers that these same companies who support the museum are also actively extracting resources from the Lubicon area.

When Chief Ominayak announced the boycott of the exhibition, he clearly expressed his rationale for the steps he and Lennarson had decided to take:

The irony of using a display of North American Indian artifacts to attract people to the Winter Olympics being organized by interests who are still actively seeking to destroy Indian people, seems painfully obvious.⁴⁸

The irony transparent to Lubicon supporters, but seemingly lost on the OCO, was Shell's sponsorship of the exhibition. It was only after Shell's pledge of \$1.1 million in corporate support, that the boycott focused specifically on the exhibition. Notably, it was also after the shift in the boycott's focus and Shell's announcement, that the boycott began to gain momentum. This momentum was assisted by newspapers across Canada who picked up the story and began reporting, almost daily, on each new development in the boycott/Glenbow/government confrontations.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bernard Ominayak [cited in] "Glenbow Museum faces Lubicon Boycott Threat," by Wendy Smith, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

Besides gaining public support, Lubicon boycott organizers took practical steps to scuttle the exhibition. The loan process, that is the process by which the Glenbow requested and 'borrowed' artifacts from other institutions and/or private collectors, was rather precariously rationalized by the metaphoric theme of the exhibition. I have previously discussed the fact that Harrison had envisioned the theme of *The Spirit Sings* as 'the bringing back of Canada's heritage to Canada.' Lennarson and Ominayak focused their next efforts on the museums which had been identified as 'holding' desirable objects for the exhibition. In order to convince these museums not to loan their objects to the Glenbow (and hence in order to scuttle the exhibition), Lennarson organized his corporation and his (now) world-wide support network to engage in a massive letter writing campaign. The museums they targeted were urged not to loan their artifacts to the Glenbow "at this time" as a show of support for the Lubicon land dispute.

Native organizations across the country of Canada offered their support one-by-one, in some cases publicly announcing it through news releases. In September, 1986, the *Calgary Herald* reported, 'Natives across Canada are lining up behind a call for an international boycott of the 1988 Olympic exhibition of Aboriginal artifacts,' listing the Assembly of First Nations, the Indian Association of Alberta, the Metis Association of Alberta, and the Grand Council of Crees of Quebec, as supporters joining "the letter writing campaign on behalf of the Lubicon boycott."⁴⁹

The chain-letters, which called upon museums to demonstrate their support by refusing to loan their artifacts to the Glenbow, explain that the boycott had been called by the Lubicon "on the grounds that the Olympics would enhance the prestige and respectability of the Alberta Government and the oil companies,"⁵⁰ who are the same 'people who are trying to wipe out the Lubicon.'⁵¹ The reader will recall that the structure of the 'chain-

⁴⁹ Wendy Smith, "Native Support Grows for Lubicon Boycott Call," *Calgary Herald*, 27 September 1986.

⁵⁰ Chief Jim Bear, Chairman, Centre, letter from the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Center of Manitoba Inc. to Prince Charles, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Royal Patron of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Buckingham Palace, London, England, 12 November 1986, TMC.

⁵¹ Sam Sinclair, President, letter from the Metis Association of Alberta to Dr. W.C. Sturtevant, addressed to The Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C., 15 August 1986, TMC.

letter' allowed the recipients to add comments or delete others before he/she sent it on to other organizations and individuals. The Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, for example, sent on the information they had received with a forwarding letter to the Ulster Museum at Belfast, Northern Ireland, urging the museum to refuse the requested loan to the Glenbow.⁵² Likewise, the Assembly of First Nations wrote to the British Museum in London, England stating:

Unfortunately as they [Lubicon] see it, the interests behind the games and this arts display are the same interests that are effectively blocking efforts to reach an equitable settlement of the Lubicon's aboriginal rights to land. Therefore, the Lubicon Band is actively pursuing a boycott by raising international attention and requesting the museums contacted by the Glenbow Museum to refuse to loan their request for Indian artifacts.... The deliberate Provincial government and oil company actions in the band's traditional areas have already destroyed their traditional hunting and trapping economy and the band's way of life and are now literally threatening the very existence of the Lubicon Lake people as an aboriginal people....The exhibition of Glenbow has not been endorsed by many of the First Nations across Canada. Specifically, the Indian Association of Alberta have indicated its support for Lubicon....You may well be assured that the AFN has thoroughly assessed the situation of the Lubicon Lake Band and will continue to support and assist the band's efforts.⁵³

With the letter writing campaign underway, the Lubicon continued to send updates to members of the chain-letter organization, make public appearances, release statements to the press and attend meetings and protests. On 23 November 1987, Alberta Indians joined in a demonstration of support for the Lubicon and their land claim. Approximately one hundred supporters marched from Churchill Square to the steps of the Legislative Buildings in Edmonton where Narcisse Blood, on behalf of the Treaty Seven Bands, announced their support of the boycott. Although Ominayak was in attendance, he declined to speak publicly, stating, "Its just not my style."⁵⁴

⁵² Ted Moses, Grand Chief/Chairman, letter from the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) to the Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 12 September 1986, TMC.

⁵³ George Erasmus, National Chief, letter from the Assembly of First Nations to British Museum in London, England, 25 September 1986, TMC.

⁵⁴ Lesley Crossingham, "Band Calls For Settlement," *Windspeaker*, 27 November 1987.

But Lubicon support was not limited to Canadian Native groups. Individuals throughout the country rallied to their support. The Glenbow received many letters from irate citizens, and the residents of Canada began to express their empathy and outrage through the forum of 'letters to the editors' of their local newspapers.

International support for the Lubicon, especially in Western Europe, grew rapidly. The *Edmonton Journal* reported that

60 delegates passed a five part resolution Saturday during a conference on North American Indian support groups in Luxembourg....[Delegates resolved] to convince the countries and the peoples of Europe to abstain from participation in the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, and to [demand that Canada take immediate action to provide]...a just and fair settlement of the band's aboriginal rights and claims.⁵⁵

In October of 1986, the Lubicon announced they would carry their protest to Europe and conduct a two week tour of several countries, speak at meetings and meet with museum officials. The tour was initiated and sponsored by twenty-three Lubicon support groups in Western Europe!

Reaction to the Lubicon call for a boycott, varied within the museum community. Under normal circumstances, most museums would be cooperative regarding the loan of their artifacts to an exhibition of such caliber, provided that the proper controls were in place to ensure the well-being of the objects. Until the announcement of the boycott, the most pressing concern for museum officials had been the vulnerability of fragile objects under travel conditions and the conservation measures that needed to be taken while these objects were on display. But once the potential 'loan' museums became the recipients of the chain-letters instigated by the Mirmir Corporation, another item of concern became part of the overall agenda. Museum staffs overseas, largely unfamiliar with Canada, its geography and politics, became alarmed and began to express the need for more information and for reassurance regarding the safety of their objects. Museum staff within

⁵⁵ Karen Booth, "Delegates Pass Resolution," *Edmonton Journal*, 14 April 1986.

Canada and those in the USA recognized immediately that they were caught in a moral and ethical dilemma.

For the curator of the Museum of the American Indian in New York City (Heye Foundation), the resolution of this moral and ethical dilemma and the decision not to loan eighty-six requested artifacts, appears to have been relatively easy. James G.E. Smith, the museum's curator, had previous close associations with the Lubicon. An authority in Cree ethnology, his study of the Western Woodland Cree had been important in establishing that the Lubicon had indeed occupied their territory aboriginally, essentially refuting an argument advanced by government lawyers which claimed that the Western Woodland Cree had migrated into their current lands of occupation due to the fur trade and were therefore not entitled to claim a traditional existence in Northern Alberta.⁵⁶ In a memorandum that Smith sent to Roland W. Force, President and Director of the Museum of the American Indian, he develops the arguments that had led to his recommendation not to loan.

This four page memorandum, dated 16 June 1986, explains that the Lubicon boycott is against two levels of Canadian government, not the Glenbow *per se*. He describes the circumstances which left the Lubicon without a reserve or a treaty, and gives credence to the band's position that 'the policies of the Governments of Alberta and of Canada have been in violation of British policy, the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the British North America Act, The Indian Act [under the BNA], the Constitution of 1982, and the Indian Act of 1982.' Smith goes on to outline the downward economic spiral experienced by the Lubicon since the discovery of oil, 'in an amount equivalent to Kuwait or Saudi Arabia,' and conveys his disgust with the caveat verdict rendered by Justice Forsyth in 1975 wherein the 'destruction of the economic and moral basis of Cree society apparently can be adequately compensated for by the award of a monetary settlement, if a court in the future so decrees.' He finds this Judge 'totally unfamiliar with the developments in anthropology since the early 20th century that have shown the functional interrelations of

⁵⁶ Goddard (1991), 110; 146-147.

the social institutions and patterns of culture.” Smith concludes that ‘the title of the exhibit ‘Forget Not My World: Exploring the Native Canadian Heritage’ is an abomination in a province in which the world and heritage of the Canadian Native is forgotten in the best interests of oil companies.”

He therefore recommends that:

- 1) The Museum of the American Indian reject the application of the Glenbow Museum, specifying that the action is taken against the Government of Alberta and not the Glenbow Museum, and
- 2) The Museum of the American Indian notify all other museums known by us to have been requested to lend to the exhibit of our decision and the reasons therefore.

Smith concludes: ‘Furthermore, I see no relevance between this exhibit and the Olympic games [*sic.*], and the Glenbow has not responded to my inquiry on that point.’⁵⁷

Which museums Smith contacted as per his recommendations is not known. It is known that he sent a letter dated 20 June 1986, to Dr. Feest in Vienna, who was acting as the Glenbow’s foreign advisor. His letter to Feest included a copy of the above memo, so it would be reasonable to assume that other museums received copies as well. In any case, Smith’s refusal to lend eighty-six artifacts would not be the last refusal the Glenbow received.

The Glenbow’s initial response to the Lubicon boycott was to counter Lubicon claims that the museum was an agent of the provincial government and to balance Lubicon charges of their deprivation by stressing the positive results for Native peoples that could be gained by a world class exhibition of their material culture. Reporters quoted Duncan Cameron as stating:

I think Canadians will benefit [from the exhibition], the native peoples will benefit, and our visitors from around the world will benefit from a greatly

⁵⁷ Memorandum from James G.E. Smith, Curator, to Roland W. Force, Director of the Museum of the American Indian, regarding artifact loans, 16 June 1986, Glenbow Archives.

enhanced understanding of native people and their deeply rooted cultural traditions...⁵⁸

[T]he culture of his [Ominayak's] people is being plowed into the ground, or destroyed—no one is arguing with that fact. There is no lack of sympathy for the plight of the Lubicon people on the part of myself or my staff. But that is not the issue. We think we're doing something that is very much in the interests of our native peoples, creating a heightened awareness of their rich cultural tradition.⁵⁹

Cameron attempted to downplay the boycott. Even when loans began to be refused, he continued to maintain that the exhibition was on track. "All goes well," he stated "and anyone saying the exhibition is imperiled...or that we are injured in our project, is quite wrong."⁶⁰ Harold Millican, Chairman of OCO's Native Peoples Committee and a Glenbow board member, was the only one to express public concern about the Lubicon stance. In May, 1986, he stated that he believed that the Lubicon had a legitimate grievance even if he could "not agree with their method of attack."⁶¹ After the Museum of the American Indian announced their decision to decline the Glenbow's request for eighty-six of their artifacts, Millican publicly expressed his concern that such a decision could set a precedent for other international museums sympathetic to the land claim struggle of the northern Alberta Cree band and that "sixteen per cent of the artifacts are being withheld right from starters and that's a serious dent."⁶²

However, expressions of alarm over the possible demise of the exhibition (like Millican's above) were largely kept under wraps. Glenbow representatives maintained their

⁵⁸ Wendy Smith, "Glenbow Museum Faces Lubicon Boycott," *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

⁵⁹ Wendy Smith, "Glenbow Chief Acts On Indian Boycott," *Calgary Herald*, 15 September 1986. The reader may notice the paternalistic tone in these statements. Cameron's use of the word 'our' illustrates how First Nations were adopted into the greater Canadian nation so that 'all' of Canada was considered heir to the "rich cultural traditions" of First Nations peoples. This statement also lays some groundwork for my later discussion of the discourse that surrounded the exhibition: claims that Native people were biting the 'hand that feeds them.' As Cameron notes, the Glenbow is doing something "very much in the interest of 'our'...."

⁶⁰ Wendy Smith, "Museum Says '88 Exhibit on Track," *Calgary Herald*, date unknown, Glenbow Archives.

⁶¹ Wendy Smith, "Glenbow Faces Lubicon Boycott Threat," *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

⁶² Wendy Smith, "Lubicons May Scuttle Show At Glenbow," *Calgary Herald*, 3 October 1986.

composure in the face of the media while sweating profusely in private.”⁶³ An aggressive, but fairly subtle counter campaign in answer to the boycott was launched from the Glenbow. In this counter-response the museum received assistance from the federal government, who sent letters and representatives to foreign museums. In May of 1986, the Glenbow sent reminder letters to museums who had not yet responded to their requests to loan. But commitments continued to be slow to arrive.

The loaning of materials between museums is an involved process which usually takes a considerable amount of time. Each institution has certain requirements regarding security and/or climactic controls which must be satisfied before they grant loan requests. On the whole, institutions prefer to be cooperative with each other, but when they are reluctant to grant a request they can simply make the requirements for the loan too costly or too involved for the borrowing institution. The Glenbow had, of course, made their requests for loans well in advance of the projected exhibition date, and had gone to considerable trouble to meet the requirements for the loan of each object. As Beth Carter stated to me in our interview, “We were on the hook; we had cases ready for artifacts but didn’t know if we would have anything to put in them.”⁶⁴ As time passed, the Glenbow’s concern increased.

In August, 1986, the museum became more aggressive in their boycott response by sending out letters designed to reverse any damage done by Lennarson’s letter campaign and the position taken by the Museum of the American Indian. These letters downplayed the Lubicon stance, explained the Glenbow’s position and solicited support from the museums to whom they were sent. To his museum colleagues Cameron writes:

It has come to my attention that there has been correspondence circulating from the Heye Foundation [the Museum of the American Indian/Smith] and

⁶³ Personal interview with Beth Carter of the Glenbow (Julia Harrison’s assistant at the time of the exhibition), Calgary, Alberta, 1 October 1993. At this time she expressed to me that the situation was very stressful on all of the Glenbow staff.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

the Lubicon Lake Band in Northern Alberta concerning a boycott of the Olympics, including the Glenbow exhibition.

The Curator of the exhibition [Harrison] and I recently met with the members of the Lubicon Lake Band to discuss the situation. The plight of the Lubicon Lake Band is a grave one indeed, and has the intense sympathy of many members of my staff. But as we discussed with the...Band members, we feel that a strong Native presence at the Olympics will not only heighten an international awareness of Canada's Native peoples, but also provide a forum for peoples such as the Lubicon to make their plight known. The Glenbow's exhibition and its adherent programs including lectures, films, open forums, and other public venues of response will emphasize the strength, vibrancy, and unique nature of Canada's Native heritage....

As we discussed with the Lubicon people, the Glenbow exhibition can be used to achieve a positive result as it pays tribute to a culture that is in danger of being destroyed.

At the conclusion of our discussions, we affirmed that both Glenbow and the Lubicon are working toward the same ultimate goal—a heightened awareness of Canada's Native culture which will ensure its continuance. The concept of the Glenbow exhibition is supported by Native groups across Canada and the idea in principle is supported by the Lubicon. They, however, object to its Olympic connection. However, I believe that it is this Olympic connection which will draw attention to the real concerns of Canadian Native peoples as it is in the context of the exhibition that the richness and depth of Canada's Native culture will be emphasized. And that is something we are all working hard to achieve.

I would ask you to reflect upon this when considering our loan request.⁶⁵

When I expressed a further interest in the meeting that Cameron and Harrison had with the Lubicon band members, and requested documentation of this meeting, Carter explained to me that the minutes of this meeting had gone 'missing.' As Cameron's interpretation of the meeting, described above in his form letter, and the Lubicon's understanding of the outcome of the meeting later appeared to differ, Carter stated that the loss of these minutes had caused the Glenbow staff much distress. The Glenbow's version of the

⁶⁵ This quote is taken from a form letter authored by Glenbow Director, Duncan Cameron and sent to international museums. This letter is dated 25 August 1986, with an earlier copy found in the files dated 11 August, Glenbow Archives. Unfortunately, a list of recipients did not accompany the copies of these letters.

meeting's outcome was that the Lubicon needed the profile of the exhibition in order to further their cause, and that the Lubicon had nothing personal or professional against the exhibition. Boycott supporters refuted Cameron's claim that they had 'agreed to disagree' at this joint meeting. Nevertheless, Cameron maintained that his interpretation was a truthful one.

Cameron's version, of course, was also the interpretation that was sent out in the above letter to international museums, accompanied by a selected chronology of the Lubicon land claim dispute prepared by the Glenbow's History Department, a statement from Bill McKnight, then Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern development, and a report by William Fenton on *The Spirit Sings*.

Fenton's report is dated 30 August 1986, and is an analysis of the Glenbow's ability to bring the exhibition to a successful conclusion. The report addresses issues of staff, funding and security and concludes that the Glenbow has the where-with-all to 'assure its success' and that the

confusion of associating the Shell Oil of Canada grant to Glenbow with the previous damage to the way of life of the Lubicon people attending oil exploration in Alberta is understandable, but logically the protest of the Lubicon...is unrelated to their unrequited land claim and has no bearing on the merits of the proposed exhibition....Museum directors of lending institutions should not be distracted by a red herring.⁶⁶

The Statement by Bill McKnight that was included in the package, suggested that the Lubicon were using the boycott to obtain a more substantial settlement of their lands claim.⁶⁷ In response to this entire package sent out by the Glenbow, the Mirmir Corporation (Lennarson) duplicated each item in the package and sent them, with a

⁶⁶ William N. Fenton, "The Spirit Sings: a report by William N. Fenton," 1986, Glenbow Archives.

⁶⁷ Bill McKnight [cited in] a transcript of a news report, 3 October 1986, TMC and Glenbow Archives.

critique of each one written by Fred Lennarson, to all members of their chain-letter network.⁶⁸

In spite of Lennarson's response, Cameron continued to reinforce the concept of the exhibition as a "socially positive act," and maintained that the Glenbow, being "non-governmental" had no role to play in the matter of land claims. He attacked and attempted to discredit the media's representation of the exhibition and the Lubicon land claim and continued to assure his colleagues that the Lubicon had not had any effect on the outcome of the exhibition. To add credence to his comments, Cameron also sent out to other museum directors a copy of an article printed in the *Calgary Herald* which was entitled "*Bands Aim Skewed.*" The author of this article claims that public sympathy for the Lubicon boycott "is waning" and that while the province's record on the issue is "shameful...the Lubicon would be wise to call off their boycott and let the justness of their cause speak for itself."⁶⁹

The External Affairs Department of the Canadian federal government continued to assist the Glenbow's counter campaign by distributing information packages similar to the Glenbow's that I have outlined above, and by encouraging Canadian diplomats stationed in foreign countries to lobby certain museums on behalf of the Glenbow and of course on behalf of the Olympics Calgary Olympics Committee. This involvement on the part of External Affairs is confirmed by Wendy Smith who quotes Brian Watson, Deputy Director of the Arts Promotion Department of External Affairs, as admitting that he "involved Canadian diplomats in several countries in a campaign to undermine the Lubicon Indian Band's boycott of the Glenbow Museum's 1988 exhibit of Native artifacts at the

⁶⁸ Fred Lennarson, remarks from a letter sent through the chain-letter system condemning both Fenton's report and the "Chronology of Land Claim" prepared by the Glenbow, 31 January 1987, TMC.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, "Bands Aim Skewed." *Calgary Herald*, 6 October 1986.

Glenbow's request."⁷⁰ Indeed, the Lubicon boycott issue ended up on the House of Commons floor on the 20th of November, 1986!⁷¹

The federal government's involvement in the ongoing debate is not surprising. *The Spirit Sings* was not just any Glenbow exhibition project, but one that was important to the Canadian government as an integral part of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Arts Festival. Accordingly, the government, but also the Glenbow, often presented their case for the worthiness of *The Spirit Sings* in the context of the Olympic enterprise.

In a letter dated 2 July 1986, sent by Duncan Cameron to Mr. Torben Lundbaek, the Chief Curator of the National Museum of Denmark, Cameron appears to be badgering the Curator into loaning the artifacts requested by the Glenbow. He explicitly links the actions of a museum curator to those of the state in which that museum resides—and by extension to international relations:

If the Government of Denmark should decide to boycott the Olympic Winter Games and the concurrent Arts and Cultural festival, I can understand why you might wish to adhere to this policy of your government to withdraw the athletes and loans to exhibitions including ours. If it is not a policy of your government then I would suggest that a withdrawal from a loan request by the National Museum of Denmark on the basis of communications from one of many hundreds of native bands, could be interpreted as the museum's decision to take a political position in relation to the domestic affairs of this country, which I am sure you and I would both agree would be inappropriate....

I am sure you are familiar with the problem which arises when well-meaning European North Americans become over-zealous in their support of a native problem, sometimes without a full understanding of the issues or the ramifications....

In the spirit of International cooperation inherent in the tradition of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Arts and Cultural festivals, I remain...,

⁷⁰ Wendy Smith, "Careful Investments Put Glenbow On Solid Ground," *Calgary Herald*, 21 November 1986.

⁷¹ CBC Radio News transcript, 20 November 1986, TMC. Photocopies of this transcript were distributed through the Lubicon chain-letter system.

[signed Duncan F. Cameron]⁷²

The involvement of External Affairs in Glenbow's counter-campaign may actually have backfired. The Lubicon took exception to the document in the federal government packages which outlined the Lubicon attempt to settle their land claims, insisting it was both biased and inaccurate. Moreover, museologists began to take offense and felt an intense discomfort when government officials, theirs and ours, began to interfere in their decisions as to whether or not they would commit to loan. Karen Booth quotes Anne Vitart-Fardoulis of the Museum of Man in Paris as saying:

The Canadian Embassy has been urging us to accept [the Glenbow's request] and although the chances were 9 1/2 out of 10 that we would reject, they kept on phoning and trying....⁷³

The *Montreal Gazette* reported:

...museums wavering on whether or not to honor the Glenbow's request are under pressure to comply from Canadian diplomats stationed abroad....Jorgen Meldgaard, a Curator at the National Museum of Denmark, said he's never seen such high powered lobbying."⁷⁴

Joan Ryan, a noted Calgary anthropologist and activist, who had been assisting the Glenbow with *The Spirit Sings*, resigned her position in protest. Ryan was highly critical of Duncan Cameron's contention that the Glenbow could not become politically involved with the Lubicon boycott, ironically noting that Cameron was not reticent about using political measures to pressure international museums to loan. She asks, "Are we to believe that his request to External Affairs and to Canadian embassies in not political action?" and cites a personal conversation that she had with Jorgen Meldgaard of the National Danish Museum, in which he told her that he might be 'forced' to send some things and he 'resented' the pressure from the Canadian government. In her letter of resignation from

⁷² Remarks from a letter sent from Duncan F. Cameron to Torben Lundbaek, Chief Curator of The National Museum of Denmark, 2 July 1986, Glenbow Archives.

⁷³ Karen Booth, "Boycott of '88 Show At Glenbow Expected," *Edmonton Journal*, 14 November 1986.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, "Indians pick up Support to Sink Olympic Cultural Show," *Montreal Gazette*, 27 December 1986.

the Program Committee, which was circulated by the Mirmir Corporation through their usual channels, published in full in the *Kainai News*,⁷⁵ and reported on in numerous other newspapers. Ryan contends that Duncan Cameron's tactics have:

escalated the political issues into the highest diplomatic arena thus leaving the Cree in the very center of a very powerful, reactive political pressure group consisting of External Affairs, Indian Affairs, The Alberta government, the Federal government, the oil companies, and now the Glenbow itself. The message is clear: save the show, never mind the people.⁷⁶

Ryan explains that her decision to resign is based on her support of the Lubicon people and her disappointment with the Glenbow. 'If all the influence of the Glenbow Board and the Program Committee with their corporate and political connections were brought to bear on the governments of Alberta and Canada, the Lubicon aboriginal claim could be settled in a month, the boycott would be off, the exhibition on. What a wonderful Olympic gift that would be.'⁷⁷

More reaction to the intense political pressure followed. Torben Lundbaek took Cameron's letter discussed above, to the International Council of Museums Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November of 1986. Both Cameron and Lundbaek were present at the conference and each was given the opportunity to state his case and explain his arguments. Cameron's performance at the conference appears to have been less than exemplary. It was later reported in ICME's newsletter that the 'intended exchange in views...was soon marked by the former's [Cameron] insulting and insinuating remarks against Torben Lundbaek and all those museums in Europe who think along the same lines. His [Cameron] uncompromising stand barred every discussion.'⁷⁸ As a result, the delegates to the Conference passed *Resolution No. 11: Participation in Ethnic Groups in Museum Activities* which recommends that:

⁷⁵ *Kainai News* is a small local paper published on the Blood Indian Reserve near Cardston, Alberta.

⁷⁶ Karen Booth, "Boycott of '88 Show At Glenbow Expected," *Edmonton Journal*, 14 November 1986.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, "Glenbow Employee Resigns," *Kainai News*, 27 November 1986.

⁷⁸ Anonymous, "ICME Conference--Buenos Aires," *ICME Newsletter*, no. 10 (1986):3. see also *ICOM News* 39, no. 4 (1986) for a report on *Resolution No. 11*.

Museums which are engaged in activities relating to living ethnic groups should, whenever possible, consult with the appropriate members of those groups, and⁷⁹

Such museums should avoid using ethnic materials in any way which might be detrimental to the group that produced them...⁸⁰

Resolution No. 11 offered museums a basis on which to decline loan requests. Felix Valk, Director of the Museum Voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam, sent Cameron a refusal to loan and expressed his concern that there was a risk for 'such an exhibition [*The Spirit Sings*] to be regarded as a kind of cover-up, a nice facade hiding the real world of today's native peoples.' Valk cited the outcome of the ICOM convention (*Resolution No. 11*) as the basis on which he would withhold a Salish rattle from the exhibition. Some museums that had previously agreed to support the Glenbow now rescinded on their loan agreements, citing various concerns including, their sympathy for the Lubicon land claims, fear for the safety of their artifacts in light of the boycott and/or their interpretation of *Resolution No. 11*, which some museums used to substantiate their claim that it would be unethical for them to participate.

In fact, the manner in which *Resolution No. 11* should be interpreted was not entirely clear. The *Edmonton Journal* quoted Herbert Ganslmayr, Chairman of ICOM's Ethnography Committee as saying, "Any museum that would follow this resolution would have to check their facts very carefully regarding the Olympic Exhibition at the Glenbow Museum" and ICOM President Geoffrey Lewis was similarly quoted as stating: 'he doesn't believe that the new code applies to the Lubicon boycott, which is [a] purely political matter.'⁸¹ In light of this ICOM resolution, the Canadian Ethnology Society met and drafted their own resolutions (#1, #2), and circulated copies to museum directors in

⁷⁹ Use of the term 'ethnic' in this resolution has a subtext: it excludes the consideration of the greater 'nation.'

⁸⁰ *ICOM News* 39, no.4 (1986).

⁸¹ Wendy Smith, "Reconsider the Olympic Show," *Edmonton Journal*, 21 November 1986.

the 'hopes that this information will be of value to you in making your decisions about lending materials to this exhibit under the circumstances.'⁴²

The Glenbow claims that only five museums declined to loan materials on the explicit basis of the Lubicon boycott. The Lubicon estimate that the total was closer to twenty-three. Dr. Christian Feest, however, points out that some of the museums on the Lubicon's list had not been asked to loan artifacts to the Glenbow in the first place. In any case, despite the boycott and the Glenbow's bitterly resented, political counter-campaign, *The Spirit Sings* went forward. The exhibition was the largest of its kind to have ever been mounted and it retains the notoriety of commanding the greatest attendance figures of any exhibition ever mounted at the Glenbow. Ticket sales far exceeded even the most optimistic of forecasts. If the public votes with their feet, then *The Spirit Sings* was a great success.

V Some Observations

Both boycott organizers and their supporters, and the Glenbow, its staff and their supporters appear to have felt justified in any and all actions they took. The staff of the Glenbow felt that both the exhibition and they themselves had noble intentions. The Lubicon were fighting for their lives.

Underlying the Lubicon boycott was an interesting common thread: the politics of oil. *The Spirit Sings* was sponsored by Shell Oil Canada, who had oil interests in the area which the Lubicon claim as their traditional hunting and trapping grounds. Eric Harvie, the founder of the Glenbow Foundation, and the endower of the foundation to the provincial government, had become wealthy through his oil ventures. This wealth afforded him the privilege of collecting cultural artifacts of Native peoples. The Glenbow certainly had and continued to benefit from those who made money from oil. On the other hand, when oil

⁴² Letter from Michael Asch to museum directors, 14 December 1987, Glenbow Archives.

was discovered in Lubicon territory, and through a series of incidents all hopes of a land claim for the Lubicon appeared elusive, the Lubicon realized 'just how far governments would go to destroy a people.'⁸³ The provincial government, who sold oil leases in Lubicon territory and provided significant funding to the Glenbow, was responsible for the appointment of nine out of fifteen members to the Glenbow Board. It seemed that no matter which way the politics of oil were examined, the Lubicon were losing from oil while the Glenbow was gaining.

Although the Glenbow proceeded with the inception of the exhibition according to the accepted museological practices of that time, they were not immune from the boycott's political agenda. Being a cultural institution did not protect that institution from political pressure or consequences; politics and culture are inextricably entwined. But, neither are the Olympics immune to boycotts or political activism. As Allen Guttman states:

Whenever the Olympic Games are threatened by political protests or disrupted by acts of terror..., the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and most of the world's sports writers lament the intrusion of politics into the domain of sports. Politics, however, in the broadest sense of the terms, has *always* been part of the Olympics.⁸⁴

With Guttman's quote in mind, I might ask if the incident of the Lubicon boycott and the attempt to block *The Spirit Sings* should be considered merely a predictable outcome of attempting to stage a cultural event within an Olympic context? The politics of culture have always been part of the Olympic Games. But to dismiss the importance of the Lubicon boycott and its attendant reverberations throughout the museological world would trivialize this event and the actions of all those who participated.

The Lubicon and the Glenbow each benefited from the stance of the other to some degree. Against the Olympic Games as a whole, a Lubicon boycott would have been singularly ineffective. The Lubicon had no athletes to withdraw. Their absence at the Games would

⁸³ Lennarson, interview, 8 October 1993.

⁸⁴ Allen Guttman, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 1.

have gone unnoticed and unmarked. But their boycott of the 'flagship' of the Olympic Arts Festival was a stroke of tactical genius. At no point would it have been in the Lubicon's interest to publicly 'agree to disagree' with the Glenbow. Even so, in the event that the boycott had been successful and the exhibition had folded, would the Lubicon cause have been as well served? As events transpired, the announcement of the boycott, and the reciprocal actions of museum directors and boycott organizers kept Lubicon issues in the international public eye for over two years.

The Glenbow also benefited from the publicity. Not only did every international museum know who they were and where they were located by the close of the exhibition, the Glenbow had mounted (in terms of both attendance figures and money recovered) a highly successful show. Neither party, the Lubicon or the Glenbow, could have purchased the publicity they received during the Lubicon boycott of *The Spirit Sings*.

The long term outcomes for each of the antagonistic groups, however, have been very dissimilar. The Lubicon land claim is no further ahead today than it was in 1988, but Canadian museology has been revitalized. Changes to presentation and consultation have led to significant improvements in how First Nations peoples are represented.

Previous to 1988, museum activities such as the collection and housing of First Nations materials, and their attendant exhibition and interpretation, had been a source of discontentment and growing concern to many First Nations spokespeople, and even some museum specialists. But discussion of these concerns was largely limited to professional circles. One enduring consequence of the 1988 dispute was the lively museological discourse it generated. Another byproduct was the provision of an occasion whereby museological practices regarding First Nations materials and cultures could be scrutinized and criticized—where opinions and views by those within and without of museums could be expressed in an open forum.

Anthropologists were keen participants in these discussions. Although museum and academic anthropologists have similar training and academic backgrounds, anthropologists in museums have responsibilities that are markedly different than those found in university departments. It will become evident from my discussion of the discourse which surrounded the exhibition and boycott, that museum anthropologists and academic anthropologists often held to differing opinions. Overall, university anthropologists who study First Nations people appeared to be more concerned about the 'Native' perspective and the continuance of cordial working relationships with First Nations. Museum anthropologists, while sympathetic, appeared to feel more responsible to their particular institutions, museums everywhere and the public at large.

In light of what seem to be opposing positions, it should be noted that university departments offer a somewhat 'sheltered' environment in terms of research, academic political autonomy and the public 'gaze.' Museum anthropologists are more vulnerable, and subject to more constraints than are those in universities. As individuals, museum specialists may be sympathetic to the claims of specific peoples and groups; but they must also be compliant with the mandates of their institutions, which, normally, are responsible to the public as a whole. Being very much in the public eye, museum anthropologists are far more politically exposed, less autonomous and, consequently, always aware of their institution's role and placement as a cultural body within a national realm. The majority of their work is directed towards public display with all of its inherent demands and constraints. Research of the caliber that is possible within a university context is considered a luxury within a museum which has tight budgets, limited time and a far less informed audience with whom to interact. Thus, in the discursive by-play surrounding the boycott, most university based anthropologists supported the Lubicon, while those in museums either did not support the boycott, or did so in a qualified fashion.

Most major museums have an obligation to a specific constituency. National museums, particularly, cater to the public in terms of majority values and beliefs—in national terms, Canadian values. The collections that they house are part of the nation's patrimony and

the way those collections are interpreted must be considered in light of their larger national mandate. The Glenbow is no exception. Due to the Olympic context of *The Spirit Sings*, much of the discussion took place on a public stage before the eyes of the international community. Therefore, an analysis and interpretation of this discourse offers far more than its effect on Canadian museology. It offers an articulation of the connections between culture and nation within the context of museology.

CHAPTER SIX: Methodology

I Introduction

In this chapter I outline the methods which I utilized in order to identify, collect, delimit and analyze the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings* and the Lubicon boycott. Because my purpose was to understand the 'nature' of the discourse which surrounded the exhibition, to determine the key issues that informed and fueled the controversies, and to identify how contributors to the discourse articulated their notions of museums, material culture, culture, heritage and Nation, I have chosen to combine a qualitative analysis with a quantitative one. My choice to do so was informed by my preliminary analysis of the discourse. I quickly determined that the issues embedded within the discourse were greatly intertwined and interconnected. In order to unravel the interpenetration of cultural and national concepts, I made use of several systematic organizing and coding techniques in my attempt to 'order' what appeared to be at times some rather chaotic groupings of ideas and assertions.

Later in this chapter I discuss the quantitative dimension of my analysis. Below, I explain in detail the qualitative reading that forms the centerpiece of the methodology I employed to analyze the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings*. Before I embark on this explanation, it is imperative that I define how I use the key term "discourse," found in my thesis title, as well as the theoretical concept, 'effective history' which informs and underpins my methods.

II Theoretical Concepts: Discourse and Effective History Identified.

Throughout this thesis my use of the term 'discourse' should be understood, sensibly, as meaning the "communication of thought by words" and the "discussion of a subject in

speech or writing.”¹ Yet I have not confined myself to dealing with mere words, at face value. In the ‘Foreword’ of *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*, Marcia Tucker explains that the articles found in that book focus on “conversational modes” of discourse including ‘monologues, dialogues, interviews, panels and symposia...[as]...these conversations are frequently more accessible than is generally the case with theoretical texts.”² Similarly Diane Macdonell in her study, *Theories of Discourse*, explains that discourse, verbal and non-verbal, is primarily “social” and takes many forms.³ Recent studies in discourse have gone beyond studying the vehicle or form of communication and have instead ‘turned [their] gaze upon...the discourses of knowledge” in an attempt to account for ‘those forces which shape our thinking and our knowledge.”⁴ Meaning, both in terms of what the discourse ostensibly refers to and what it may point to or signify, is of prime importance. Macdonell states: “Whatever signifies or has meaning can be considered part of discourse,”⁵ and through this statement she includes ‘any institutional practice and any technique ‘in and through which social production of meaning takes place’.”⁶

Macdonell’s study of discourse emphasizes that the boundaries of discourse are flexible and that any human social interaction can be considered discourse. Further, she relates specific types of discourse/knowledge as historically and politically connected, especially in her discussion of discursive structures as reactive and consequential. Of particular interest to my study, Macdonell finds that discourse “cannot exist by itself,”⁷ “that discourses arise out of antagonism and struggle,”⁸ and that discourses, like knowledge,

¹ *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1992).

² Marcia Tucker, “Foreword,” [in] *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction*, by (eds.) Russell Ferguson et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 1.

³ Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2: 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ A. Laclau [cited by] Diane Macdonell [in] *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction*, by (eds.) Russell Ferguson et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 4.

⁷ Diane Macdonell [in] *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction*, by (eds.) Russell Ferguson et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 68: 124.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

are not neutral.⁹ Her understandings of discourse are informed by the work of Michel Foucault, and, for me, are further clarified by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's study of museums, which also relies heavily on a number of Foucauldian concepts.

When I began my search for a methodology that would allow me to access concepts that were being articulated in the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings* and the paradigms of knowledge reflected in the diverse texts, I became acquainted with the work of Hooper-Greenhill. Hooper-Greenhill's research centers on the explication of how museums educate people who walk through their display spaces.¹⁰ It is only recently that museums have been analyzed as purveyors of specific paradigms of knowledge. Previous to her study, the 'educational' aspects of museum display had largely been taken for granted and very little research had been completed on the museum educational experience in order to ascertain if museologist's assumptions about how people learn and what people learn in museums are accurate. Hooper-Greenhill's study fills a need for analysis of the educational aspects of museums and is particularly appropriate to this thesis, as the educational value of *The Spirit Sings* was identified by museologists and others as a compelling reason to support the exhibition over the boycott.

The analytical method that Hooper-Greenhill employs in her analysis of the educational paradigms found in museums is one that she calls "effective history." I made the decision to utilize this concept as a key theoretical underpinning for the methodology that I would apply to the discourse that surrounded *The Spirit Sings*. Accordingly, I pause to discuss this theoretical concept in detail and subsequently link the idea of 'effective history' to 'discourse,' as it is to be understood in this thesis.

When utilizing 'effective history' as an analytical tool, the historian looks for "ruptures" rather than "links" in the structure of the texts. Hooper-Greenhill writes:

⁹ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰ Hooper-Greenhill (1992).

The basis of 'effective history' is an opposition to the pursuit of the founding origin of things, and a rejection of the approach that seeks to impose a chronology, an ordering structure, and a developmental flow from the past to the present. History must abandon its absolutes, and instead of attempting to find generalizations and unities, should look for differences, for change, and for rupture....The differences between things, rather than the links, become significant. The question to be asked, therefore, is not 'how have things remained the same?' but 'how are things different; how have things changed; and why?'"¹¹

Although I have gone to considerable trouble to chronicle the events before, during and after the exhibition and boycott as they transpired, my purpose through this study is to elucidate key notions of culture, people, nation and material things implicit and explicit in the eclectic texts. Effective history allowed me to take into consideration the political and economic conditions of the time of the exhibition, but also offered me a framework within which to focus on what Michael Foucault calls *epistemes*, or structures of knowing.¹²

To describe the context of knowing, Foucault offers 'us the concept of the *episteme*; the unconscious, but positive and productive set of relations within which knowledge is produced and rationality defined."¹³ According to Foucault, a culture can only operate with one *episteme* of knowledge at a time.¹⁴ As Hooper-Greenhill explains:

Foucault understands reason and truth to be relative, rather than absolute concepts, and he proposes that both reason and truth have historical, social, and cultural contexts. Rather than accept the traditional philosophical tenet that an absolute rationality exists, Foucault rejects the familiar rational/irrational split, and proposes that forms of rationality have a historical specificity. What counts as a rational act at one time will not so count at another time, and this is dependent on the context of reason that prevails.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

¹² Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974), 191.

¹³ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 12.

¹⁴ Foucault (1974), 168.

¹⁵ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 9.

In the complicated "archeology" of the human sciences found in *The Order of Things*, Foucault analyzes discourses which are contemporaneous with particular sciences from the Renaissance through to the modern age. His study is not a 'history' of the differing configurations of knowledge that gave rise to the diverse empirical 'sciences.' Rather, Foucault performs an "archaeological dig" of the epistemological field of Western culture, within which paradigms of knowledge are grounded.¹⁶ His analysis pays particular attention to the use of language.

Whenever we speak and write we must employ language. By reading 'what is said' and then placing those words within their cultural matrix, Foucault discovers that he can identify modes of thought or 'notions' by which a culture operates. Indeed, Foucault identified the fact that the structure of language, its syntax and grammar, also contribute to 'notions' of language as the 'rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse.'¹⁷ By performing an archaeology of language and language rules, Foucault exposes the layers of knowledge paradigms circulating within specific historical moments, and explores them within their cultural, social and historical context. Using this method, he is able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content of specific knowledge paradigms and the manner in which that content is informed by the epistemological field in which the culture operates.¹⁸

According to Foucault's analysis, the *epistemes* of Western culture have shifted dramatically from the Renaissance to the modern age. These *epistemes* are revealed in discourse. Foucault identifies and describes three major *epistemes*: the Renaissance, the Classical and the Modern, and asserts that "each of these had quite specific characteristics,

¹⁶ Foucault (1974), xxii. While it might seem so, Foucault explains that his study is not a "history" of the differing configurations of knowledge which gave rise to the diverse forms of empirical science from the sixteenth century to the modern age. Instead it is an "archaeology" of the epistemological field (pertinent to Western culture) in which knowledge was grounded.

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), xiv.

¹⁸ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 12.

and [that] the shift from one to the next represented a massive cultural and epistemological upheaval, a rupture that meant the complete rewriting of knowledge.”¹⁹

Foucault’s ‘data’ was a collection of discourse which he had compiled, each individual text was selected from a particular historical period. For Foucault it is not required that these writings exhibit the author’s awareness of the ideas that are being articulated with respect to historical concepts of ‘knowledge.’ Indeed, it is often the case that important understandings of thoughts about knowledge can be gained where these are implicit in a particular piece of discourse—where ideas about that particular knowledge are not being self-consciously explored. Foucault believes that individuals in cultures are very much unaware of the “laws” by which they operate and understand the world.²⁰

Foucault’s archaeology of the human sciences is the technique that informs Hooper-Greenhill’s effective history. Effective history is not used as a linear, chronological technique in order to delineate the key players who contributed to a historical moment, nor does it concentrate on their expressly articulated points of view. Rather, it is applied to the study of discourse as a tool to uncover ‘the fundamental codes of a culture...[which] establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home.’²¹ Foucault explains that every culture uses an ordering system, or an *a priori* core value set, which establishes humankind’s mode of being in that place and time.²² Hence, effective history attempts to uncover “on what basis knowledge and theory became possible” only to eventually wither away and be replaced with new modes of being, beliefs, rationales—a new *episteme*.²³ Effective history probes the layers of knowledge that are operating at given times in history.

¹⁹ Ibid., 12.

²⁰ Foucault (1970), xx-xxi.

²¹ Ibid., xx.

²² Ibid., xxi.

²³ Ibid., xxi; 387.

How precisely does the work of Hooper-Greenhill and Foucault relate to the present study? First, the concept of effective history allowed me to incorporate plural, and even potentially contradictory histories. The 'history' of the notions of culture, nation, multiculturalism, First Nations, and their interpenetration have been examined in a fairly linear historical fashion in the first four chapters. Rather than maintain this progressive story line in the analysis of a discourse that was sharply bounded in time, effective history gives me a 'tool' with which to explore some of the cultural, social, political, national and scientific elements in the discourse. Often, when conducting an analysis of discourse there is a proclivity to focus only on 'what is actually being said.' I wanted to augment my literal analysis of *The Spirit Sings* discourse with an archaeology of a historic event—the interpenetration of the Lubicon boycott and the exhibition. From the outset of this study it has been my intention to perform an archaeology of the discourse that surrounded the exhibition and boycott, to place the discourse within its cultural matrix, and subsequently to unwrap the notions regarding museums, material culture, culture, heritage and nation, which have informed this discourse.

The interpenetration of the exhibition and the Lubicon boycott are ripe for a Foucauldian archaeological dig. These events were impacted and informed by the multiple layers of meaning and understanding that presently inform the *episteme* circulating in Western society, particularly with respect to culture, nation and material culture. *The Spirit Sings* and the attendant boycott converged as a political and a cultural event. The backgrounds and the corresponding master statuses of the people involved differed radically; politicians, educators, 'preservers' of culture, scholars, human rights activists, the general public worldwide and specific groups at home, all had differing agendas and differing concerns. Their interaction is recorded in a tangible and accessible product: the discourse.

This discourse which surrounded a particular event in our 'recent' history challenged accepted 'ways of seeing' with respect to museums and First Nations, as will be shown. Multiple ideas, feelings and beliefs about museums, re/presentation, nationhood, First Nations and culture are explicitly articulated throughout the discourse. Effective history

permitted me to not only identify these explicit articulations, but to look for the notions/ideals informing paradigms of 'knowing' which inform these expressions. By contextualizing these ways of knowing within the political and social climate framing this historical event, I was able to connect the historical 'moment in time' to the larger social structures and ways of seeing which informed the cultural/political event.

The Spirit Sings was intended to be a smaller part of a much larger event, the Arts Festival within the 1988 Olympic Games. Through effective history I could ask: how did this larger event have an impact upon those persons who contributed to the discourse, or conversely, what impact did the Olympics have upon the exhibition; why does the discourse give evidence of such emotional and dogmatic opinions; what were the "cultural modes" by which the Glenbow and other museums were operating; what were the cultural modes by which the Lubicon and other Native individuals and groups were operating; are there differences between these modes that can be distinguished by 'digging through' the discourse; are the persons who contributed to the discourse operating within differing frames of cultural reference?

Historical moments are pluralistic events. The question to be asked, therefore, is not how have things remained the same, but how are things different; how have things changed, and why?²⁴ In my reading of the discourse I felt free to utilize varying frames of reference in order to interpret various possible world-views. In this sense, I was able to break away from a linear chronology. Discourse itself is not a given set of 'things said,' but rather an 'arrangement of knowledge' which can be deciphered and interpreted according to particular and varying frames of reference. Thus I grew wary of taking what was said at face value, and at all times I endeavored to dig beneath the words themselves to understand the notions that were informing the discourse. I attempted to go beyond looking for obvious relationships or trying to group the discourse solely into 'for' and 'against' positions, although these are elements which must also be dealt with. I continually asked, what seems *not* be here, what is missing from what is said, why might

²⁴ Hooper-Greenhill (1992).

this not be in evidence, and what implications for world-view and orientation do these gaps in the text point to?

I spent considerable time teasing out the less obvious relationships that were impacting the discourse. Although I was interested in who the voices belonged to, I was ultimately concerned with the constituencies a voice/voices claimed to represent and how these voices were empowered (or not). There is no doubt that the persons who contributed to the discourse were operating within particular frames of reference informed by particular arrangements of knowledge.

III Selecting the Discourse

Once I had chosen the theoretical basis for my methodology, I needed to set limits and boundaries on my data. What would constitute the discourse that I would study? Given the definition of discourse that I had chosen to work with, I decided that pretty much anything referring to the exhibition and/or the boycott found in print media (primarily newspapers) qualified. To this preliminary delimitation I added relevant contributions found in periodicals, magazines and newsletters. Next I identified and included a large and eclectic assortment of materials generated by the Glenbow, the Lubicon and the 'allies' of each, such as: internal memos; reports or studies for both internal and external use; and letters to specific people or to a blanket audience. This latter grouping includes a number of documents which at the time of the exhibition and boycott were accessible only to Glenbow staff. Only recently have *The Spirit Sings* files located in the Glenbow's archives been opened to the public. The value of these latter documents is that they are highly informative with respect to certain practical processes which led up to the opening of the exhibition, and they clearly indicate certain patterns of thought that informed the discourse in its early stages. Although the Glenbow staff's later, stated public position with respect to the exhibition and the boycott are related to these earlier documents, the newly accessible feasibility study prepared for the OCO, as well as internal memos, minutes of

meetings and copies of previously inaccessible correspondence, all contribute to an expanded understanding of the Glenbow staff's overall stance.

Other materials which I considered relevant for inclusion as discourse are in the form of speeches, audio media transcripts and reviews of the exhibition catalogue. Some select, specific materials immediately relevant to the discourse but published/generated prior to the exhibition's conception or following its closing I also included. While it is true that some of these latter materials are grounded in a different context from those materials generated concurrent to the exhibition and boycott, I deemed the earlier materials relevant because their content often informed (and was referred back to in) the media's coverage of the events after the boycott was announced. The materials generated after the exhibition closed I deemed relevant as they were rather reflective in nature, often reiterating the events, adding clarification, offering debate and to some extent a rewriting of the specific circumstances and attitudes. Thus, I found that the documents dated before and after the 'main' events provided an important check and balance system with respect to 'historical' progression and greatly assisted in the uncovering of the notions of knowledge which inform the discourse.

IV Collecting the Discourse

At the time of *The Spirit Sings* I was employed by the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, and in that capacity was preparing an Inuit art exhibit as an independent study project toward an undergraduate degree. I was of course aware of *The Spirit Sings* and Lubicon boycott controversy which was then filling the newspapers. I was also privy to many conversations between museum professionals regarding their personal views of the situation, as well as to press materials distributed to other museums and art galleries by the Glenbow. While the Glenbow was facing an enormous public relations challenge, I was for the first time experiencing the many backstage considerations and preparations which come into play when an exhibition is being prepared.

The Glenbow materials with respect to the exhibition and the boycott that arrived at the Lethbridge Art Gallery provoked both my interest and my attention. When *The Spirit Sings* opened I was there. I again visited the exhibition when it traveled to Ottawa. I purchased both exhibition catalogues and at a later date used them as resources when teaching Native American Art History classes. I also had the opportunity to visit the Glenbow's Ethnology department in order to purchase slides of artifacts shown at the exhibition in order to augment the University of Lethbridge Art Department's slide collection.

Accordingly, when I embarked upon this current study a few years later my topic was far from foreign and I had a good sense of where I needed to go to locate my basic research materials. I began with a search through my own files and personal library. Once I had identified a number of relevant documents among my own archives, I conducted computer searches by entering the appropriate headings into the Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA) database (available on CD-ROM) in order to locate listings of newspaper and periodical articles that were pertinent to the exhibition and the Lubicon boycott.

Next, I began to make phone calls to people who had participated in the preparation and execution of the exhibition. I learned from Ruth Phillips, one of the guest curators of the exhibition, that the Glenbow Archives offered extensive resources on the topic and that their *Spirit Sings* files had just been opened to the public. The Glenbow had elected to seal *The Spirit Sings* files for a period of time after the exhibition and the fact that they were now accessible was most timely for my research.

When I contacted the Glenbow I found the staff there most agreeable and cooperative. I quickly learned that the files had been prepared in duplicate. An exact copy of their *Spirit Sings* files are held by the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Glenbow staff provided me with an *Archives Directory*, which lists *The Spirit Sings* files housed in the Glenbow

archives, and they further granted me what I believe was full and unrestricted access to these files.

As I noted previously, Julia Harrison had been determined that the documentation gathered while preparing the exhibition would provide a lasting resource for researchers in years to come. As well, it is the Glenbow's practice to keep archival records on themselves. Accordingly, *The Spirit Sings* files that I accessed were conveniently grouped under topical headings. The materials that I selected, photocopied and transferred into my own files covered the following topics: the exhibition's content,²⁵ the design of the floor space and layout of artifacts,²⁶ background planning,²⁷ commentaries on the exhibition including those from the 'comment wall' at the Glenbow,²⁸ the exhibition catalogue's preparation,²⁹ reference material pertinent to the curators,³⁰ documentation on the opening celebration,³¹ and files on the Lubicon Indian band.³²

I cannot be certain if there are materials in the archives from which I may have been restricted. It certainly appeared that the files had been prepared in a manner consistent with the Glenbow's regular procedures and that they not been censored. However, the files to which I had access were prepared by 'Ethnology' only one of several Glenbow departments active in the exhibition's planning and implementation. I suspect that there is more material that could have been gathered into these files. There certainly does not seem to be a complete record of business matters pertaining to the exhibition in these files. Given my knowledge of the circumstances around the exhibition and boycott, I also must conclude that more correspondence between the Glenbow and others, such as letters

²⁵ Documented as file group "A. Exhibition" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

²⁶ Documented as file group "B.1. Design" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

²⁷ Documented as file group "B.2. Planning" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

²⁸ Documented as file groups "C. and D. Exhibit Commentary" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

²⁹ Documented as file groups "E.2. Catalogue" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

³⁰ Documented as file group "E.2. Reference Material" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

³¹ Documented as file group "E.2. Exhibit Opening" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

³² Documented as file group "F. Lubicon" in *The Spirit Sings Archives Directory*.

between the Glenbow and External Affairs, and the Glenbow and Shell, went on than is documented in these files.

A quick perusal through these materials left me with the impression that the Glenbow's aim was to understand as completely as possible, all aspects of the dilemma in which they found themselves with respect to the boycott. The files offer ample evidence that at least as much attention was given to preserving materials related to the controversy generated by the boycott, as was given to materials relating to the exhibition itself. Yet, given the interpenetration of the boycott and the exhibition, especially with regards to the need to borrow artifacts from abroad, this can hardly be seen as surprising.

The preservation of material relating to the Lubicon boycott included many of the materials that were generated by Lubicon supporters, especially letterhead embossed with the initials "TMC." Upon further investigation I discovered that the source of this material was The Mirmir Corporation. As mentioned, this corporation is owned by Fred Lennarson, who was and is a consultant to the Lubicon Lake Band. As I discussed in Chapter Five, Lennarson was an active agent in the boycott's conception and implementation and his role in the boycott's international success was pivotal.

I contacted Lennarson at his office in Edmonton. He graciously sent me a large package containing copies of the materials which had been generated and distributed by his business through the Lubicon support network which he calls the "chain-letter." I have previously explained how this chain-letter was conceptualized and distributed. This material, as noted in Chapter Five, was central to the Lubicon's boycott campaign.

Shell Canada was the corporate sponsor of the exhibition; it was at least in part due to their involvement that the Lubicon targeted *The Spirit Sings* as the focus of their boycott. Thus I considered their documentation important to this study. When I initially contacted Shell, they were less than enthusiastic about granting me any access to their archives. Shell representatives suggested instead that I list exactly what I was wanting to receive and that

once they had received my list, they would send someone into their archives to locate the material and forward it to me. This request by Shell posed some difficult parameters. I certainly did not know 'what I wanted to receive' before I had seen what they had in their files!

However, I decided to ask for as broad a range of materials as possible. I requested, in writing, copies of any communication regarding the Lubicon boycott between Shell and the Lubicon, the Glenbow or the provincial government. Additionally I requested that they provide me with all the details of their own media campaign. In response to my requests, Shell stated that no communication between themselves, the Glenbow, the Lubicon or the provincial government had ever transpired [!], but that they would send me some details on their advertising campaign. Just as I had given up hope of receiving anything from Shell, a package did arrive. The contents gave me a fairly comprehensive understanding of the media campaign which Shell had conducted, including the numbers of advertisements Shell had placed and where they were placed, press releases they had issued, and some of the costs their advertising campaign had incurred. The forwarded package also contained a copy of a speech delivered after the exhibition closed. The contents of this speech (to my knowledge) is the closest that Shell ever came to offering a public statement of their view of the whole exhibition/boycott affair.

Most of the materials which constitute my data, were surveyed, selected and physically collected over the spring and summer of 1993. To my good fortune, many of the articles which I found listed in the computer searches had been copied by the Glenbow and were in *The Spirit Sings* files where I had full access to them. Those articles which I could not collect from the Glenbow files, I solicited from the original source (periodical or newspaper) or I photocopied them from microfiche. Because the Glenbow and the Mirmir Corporation were actively collecting each other's materials and because both were actively collecting and filing media reports, I soon found that I needed to sort out many duplicated instances of discourse in my files.

During the time that I gathered the assorted materials that would later become my data, I roughly read, reviewed and categorized the material as it came into my hands. In May and June of 1993, I visited the Glenbow once or twice a week. I would thumb through a pre-selected grouping of files, photocopy materials that I considered to be “discourse” according to the broad definition I had accepted for this thesis, and then I would make notes on any documents which were not necessarily ‘discourse,’ but might offer pertinent information or historical background for my thesis topic. On the days that I was not at the Glenbow, I read each document closely. During this process I began to sift and sort the materials into the dominant ‘themes’ or ‘categories’ which I recognized as arising from the discourse.

I have mentioned that I was not a stranger to the story of the exhibition and the boycott, and that I had been party to numerous discussions about some of the issues which the boycott had brought to the attention of those engaged with museum display. Thus, I embarked on my study aware of the central concerns that had been expressed during the exhibition and boycott and had an idea of some of the themes I was likely to encounter and the types of materials of which the discourse consisted. My prior knowledge allowed me to do a fairly informed, though obviously ‘positioned,’³³ reading of the materials from the outset. For example, I paid attention to articles in the media which documented the plight of the Lubicon prior to the exhibition’s conception and categorized these articles ‘Lubicon in the media,’ and to my list of themes I added ‘Lubicon land claim.’ Other categories by which I initially organized and sorted the materials were: ‘Native art,’ ‘Glenbow’s counter campaign,’ ‘exhibition catalogue reviews,’ ‘current discourse—controversies expressed,’ ‘boycott’s impact on artifact loans,’ ‘Shell’s sponsorship,’ ‘Glenbow’s background exhibition plans’ and the ‘Lubicon boycott campaign.’

In the discourse I fully expected to find, and indeed found, materials addressing “the ethics of sponsoring cultural events,” “celebrating a historical culture” (derogatorily called “dead” by some), “repatriation or ownership of Native artifacts,” “politicization of

³³ In the Introduction of this thesis I explain my background and biases.

museums,” and the “interpretation of other cultures.” But although I expected to come upon explicit discussions on material culture, culture, and/or nationalism, I did not. Instead, I soon discovered that all three of these latter concepts, either singularly, or intertwined, only entered the discussions implicitly.

V Discourse Data: Establishing the Boundaries

Not all of the materials collected and reviewed during the data collection phase of this study were included in ‘the discourse’ as delimited for this study. During the time-period covered by the exhibition and the boycott, there were many informative articles written on such topics as the “Olympics” and the “Arts Festival.” These articles were utilized as background material to the cultural/political event with which I am concerned and I have quoted from many of them in this thesis in my earlier chapters. However, they did not play an active role in the discursive exchange that surrounded *The Spirit Sings*. These documents are therefore excluded from my data, or not considered as discourse. The “discourse” then consists of a selective grouping of materials. Below, I demarcate the boundaries I utilized to establish the parameters of the discourse.

During the initial collection phase, I was open and flexible about what could/would be considered “discourse” in this study. I was uncertain how far-reaching the topic had become within Canada or worldwide. Thus, I did not set rigid ‘location’ boundaries in place. I wished to include as much of the international discourse as possible. Because I am only proficient in my own first language, I hoped to be able to limit the data to discussions primarily conducted in English. As it turned out, limiting the discourse to English was reasonable. If pertinent discussions of the topic in French Canada or elsewhere took place, it was not collected by the Glenbow nor distributed by the Lubicon.

I also hoped to reasonably limit the discourse with two further parameters: [1] discourse set out in written form [2] within the country of Canada. Limiting the discourse to Canada

proved to be expedient; attempts to locate a large body of materials from other countries was unprofitable, with one exception. That exception was the discussions leading up to and later announcing ICOM's *Resolution No. 11*. Apart from these discussions, the only significant discussions that took place outside of Canada were primarily within rather private museum and collections circles. However, I have incorporated a few relevant articles and letters that originated in the United States and Western Europe which were triggered by Lubicon correspondence. All of these materials are in print format and were conducted in English.

Besides these two boundaries, English discourse and discourse drawn mainly from the Canadian stage, I also found that limiting the discourse to written exchanges was also reasonable. While there were certainly many audio news reports at the time, documentation of them is not readily accessible as television and radio news reports are not indexed by the CBCA. Fortunately, Lennarson included transcripts of some broadcast materials in his 'chain-letters.' Thus a small amount of the materials found in my data consist of transcripts of audio news reports and speeches.

At this point I had established basic boundary criteria for my discourse data through an explicit framework: the English language, Canadian, and written materials. I now turned my attention to possible topical boundaries. Initially I included all English, Canadian and written materials that addressed the exhibition, the Lubicon in general, the land claim, the boycott, and another issue that had arisen with respect to *The Spirit Sings* display: the requested removal of a Mohawk false face mask from the exhibition. Due to these latter inclusions my data had grown inordinately large and had become unworkable in terms of analysis. I decided that all general information on the Lubicon and the land claim would be removed from the materials designated for study if these articles were not couched in relation to the exhibition issue. Reluctantly, I also made the decision to remove all documents pertaining to the Mohawk false face mask issue; although some of these articles spoke to the concerns central to my thesis I had to make the choice to focus centrally on the Lubicon/exhibition interpenetration. However, I must qualify this

somewhat. The material which was forwarded to me by Fred Lennarson contained coverage of the false face mask issue. I have chosen to include these articles, as they were connected explicitly to the Lubicon boycott in the materials forwarded internationally by TMC.

I did not initially set about to limit the discourse by date. Rather, I found that there was a natural beginning and end to the discourse, as the Lubicon had begun to attract the media's attention just prior to the exhibition's conception. By the time the exhibition closed in Ottawa the whole affair had been dropped by the general press. Thus, the data included in this study ranges in dates from 1983 when the Glenbow was just about to conceive of the exhibition, to 1990 when the wounds had begun to heal.

Finally, the broad boundaries established by which to 'qualify' the diverse and eclectic materials that surrounded this historical event as "discourse," or data for the purposes of this study, I defined as: primarily but not exclusively to those generated in Canada; primarily but not exclusively to written texts; and exclusively to those expressed in English; topics pertinent to *The Spirit Sings* and the Lubicon boycott; articulated in the years 1983 through to 1990. While others may find materials that they would have included where I have not, and materials that they would have excluded where I have not, for the purpose of this study, I consider the final body of materials herein called "the discourse" to be an interrelated, interactive, and cohesive package.

VI The Data In Summary

The discourse consists of 282 documents. This figure needs a brief explanation. The actual final tally of individual writings considered data, numbers over 300 documents. In some instances, I found that for my purposes it was more expedient to consider a grouping of materials to be one document. For example, Shell's advertisements were so similar to each other that it was reasonable and efficient to treat a bundle of them as 'one' document

because they essentially carried one invariant set of messages. Thus I count several Shell advertisements as a single document. In contrast, I found it necessary to separate four documents that contained the views of other voices which diverged from the sentiments expressed in the 'main' document. Thus in four instances, one textual document became two, or in summary, four in this way became eight.

Again, the dates of these documents range from 1983 to 1990. Understandably, 46% of them date from 1988, the year of the exhibition, while only five documents are post-1988; this particular discourse died quickly. Of the total database, 41% of the materials were located in newspapers (including letters to the editor), 18% in other periodicals and 17% were letters addressed to specific persons. In only 7% of the newspaper articles did the author express an explicit point of view; the others focused instead (in common news reporting fashion) on the explication of who, what, where, when, and why. Forty-six percent of the discourse that I analyzed was distributed through the Lubicon chain-letter network, with 47% of that material consisting of photocopied newspaper articles.

The backgrounds and statuses of the contributors to the discourse were quite varied. Still, since the most frequent type of discourse was newspaper articles, it is understandable that 50% of the direct contributors are news reporters. Second to news reporters are professional anthropologists whose contributions constitute 15% of the total database.³⁴ Julia Harrison of the Glenbow's Ethnology department and the coordinator of *The Spirit Sings* is included in this category. Anthropologists Bruce Trigger and Michael Arnes were also dominant contributors. Lubicon representatives writing directly constituted 9%; museum directors/curators, 8% and other representatives of First Nation's organizations, 5%.

³⁴ The anthropologists were divided almost evenly between being situated in a university or museum. Twenty-two items were representative of those in a university and 21 of those based in a museum. It should be noted that duplicate contributors are involved—not 43 separate anthropologists—and that their views were pretty much confined to periodicals and letters to specific persons.

Letter writing was very active and I believe a central part of the discourse. Eighty percent of the contributions by museum director/curators in my data are in the form of letters and 75% of the discourse contributed by Lubicon representatives in my data are likewise in the form of letters. As for anthropologists, 38% of the discourse that was contributed by anthropologists based in museums are letters, and 29% of the discourse that was contributed by anthropologists based in universities are letters.

It is important for me to identify the voices found in this discourse beyond profession. Who was speaking for whom? As far as I was able to determine, only 11% of the discourse was generated directly by persons claiming First Nations descent; compare this total with 64% by persons who were clearly non-Native. Although 25% of the contributors are not distinguishable in terms of ethnic background, I find it likely that most of this undetermined number are non-Native. In terms of who spoke for whom, this was a discourse about Native people and Native things, generated chiefly by 'others.' Direct Native representation was largely private; of the thirty documents that are authored by Native voices, seventeen are letters to specific persons, three are periodical articles and four are newspaper articles.

First Nations voices do appear more frequently than these numbers might indicate, but their voices are mediated by others. There are in fact many examples in the discourse where Native words appear as selected quotes within articles that are authored by others. Of 116 articles that quote other voices, 54 cite a person of First Nations ancestry or a representative of a Native organization.

It is also important that I identify the positions taken toward the boycott and the exhibition by the contributors.³⁵ Twenty-five percent of the contributors in my database unambiguously expressed favor for the boycott, 21% favored the exhibition, 47% were neutral. The question of position (for, against, neutral) appeared not to be applicable in 20% of instances.

I defined the contributor to the discourse as the author of a particular text. My definition accounts for the large percentage of neutral votes. As I have noted, 50% of the discourse was constituted by newspaper articles written by authors who attempted to maintain a neutral stance. The people quoted in their articles, however, may have expressed opinions which are not accounted for in this survey. In most instances, it was not difficult to determine the contributor's position toward the exhibition or boycott, given the parameters I had placed on the possible answers: for boycott, for exhibition, neutral, non-applicable. Those writers who had an opinion to express were often bold in the statements they made. I did not come across an article where the contributor was "for" or "against" both the exhibition and boycott simultaneously.

It was in the area of correspondence (letters) where I found it most difficult to ascertain which position the author of a letter had taken toward either the boycott or the exhibition. Letters from museums to the Glenbow requesting more information or declining loans often appeared purposely soft peddled. In these instances the intended action expressed in their letter cast the vote. For example, if in the letter it was announced that the museum did *not* choose to loan their artifacts, for whatever reason, I considered them in essence to be supporting the boycott.

³⁵ In order to be counted as a supporter, the contributors had to be clear about their stands. If their stand was ambiguous, as was most often the case with news reporters, or if it was difficult to determine, they were considered neutral. A press release from the Glenbow was considered a vote for the exhibition. An advertisement of the exhibition prepared by Shell was a vote for the exhibition. A letter which declined to loan artifacts to the exhibition was a vote for the boycott. The kinds of materials that were found non-applicable are those where the question just did not apply, such as articles written prior to the boycott announcements.

VII Data-Discovery Techniques

Although my essentially qualitative central analysis offered a great deal of insight to the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings*, I decided that a limited quantitative support methodology would enrich my findings, and help confirm that my informal readings of the discourse were appropriate. The question: "What are the cultural notions that inform the discourse" becomes complex when dealing, as here, with significant disjunctures: multiple cultures and claimed nations within a nation; Native people and their representatives; variously positioned professionals; etc. I felt that it was imperative to be able to isolate 'who' it was that spoke of culture or nation and their attendant viewpoints. In other words, who understood First Nations as nations, who spoke for First Nations as part of Canada, and to what, if anything, did these connections point? I decided it would be reasonable and profitable to survey the content and demographics of the discourse. Taking advantage of modern technology, I designed a computer program to facilitate this survey. I began by preparing several broad questions, surveying the discourse by manually reading for the answers to these questions, and then testing these same questions on the computer program and comparing my results.

My preliminary questions were grounded on observations I made while conducting a close reading of the materials that comprised the discourse. I have noted that as I read each document, I recorded the concepts that were discussed and the themes that they fell into. This preliminary categorization of the topics allowed me (of course, from my particular position) to assess the main threads that ran through the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings*. As I continued to read, I attempted to record the authorial voice—who spoke, as well as the author's stance in relation to the boycott and *The Spirit Sings*, as well as each author's background. Through this reading and recording process, I was attempting to tease out connections between concepts of nation and culture, voice, stance, and background. As time passed the whole process became bulky and unwieldy. I turned to my computer program in attempt to maintain order in a potentially chaotic collection of findings.

It quickly became evident to me that many of the questions I posed could reasonably be answered by setting up 'a set' of multiple choice variables. In example, for the question "what is the author's profession?" a list of possible answers such as (a) anthropologist employed by museum (b) anthropologist employed by university (c) museum director or curator (d) artist, etc., could be set up in the computer program from which I could then select. Here I designed the computer program to be flexible so that as I re-read each individual text, asked the survey questions of it and recorded the answers, I could add more variables if required. I refer to the questions that could be answered through variable sets as the 'multiple choice' portion of my survey.

However, other questions that I had decided to ask of the discourse were not as simplistic to answer. For more complex questions, I decided that the answers could be handled effectively if I allotted enough space for a short answer or a sequence of text. Thus I added a component to my computer program that would allow me to enter text containing longer descriptions or explanations. Although this decision encumbered the program to some degree (complicating the printing process), it later turned out to be an advantage as it was possible to enter textual quotes while conducting the survey that could later be retrieved during the actual writing of the thesis.

All of the questions were designed to lead to a basic cataloging, accounting and reporting of the form and content of the many and varied materials. In effect my computer program provided me with a detailed and comprehensive categorization and classification of discursive statements and subsequently, through the longer text entries, of divergent views. The results of my data survey thus offered me a far more extensive breakdown of the discourse—one that would not have been possible through reading and informal comparison alone.

The computerized survey proved to be an invaluable augmenting tool in analyzing the discourse. Each answer to a question was assigned a field in the program. This system

permitted me to electronically enter information, then sort, count, compare and retrieve any data pertinent to my study. Eventually, this program allowed me to support my qualitative conclusions with quantitative indications of frequency. But more importantly, the program provided me with the ability to test certain possible associations between concepts—research that may have proven too unwieldy if performed manually.

As I conducted the survey, I assigned a number to each text in the discourse which corresponded with 'its' answers to the survey questions as entered into specific 'fields' in the computer program. For example, I questioned the author, title, publisher, journal number and date of each text and entered the appropriate information into separate and specific fields. I also documented the individual texts by 'type' such as newspaper, periodical, letter, report, press release, exhibition catalogue review, book, advertisement, transcript, speech, interview or other. Accessory information about the texts, such as the use of photographs, if the article was an exhibition review, or if the article was redistributed in an alternative manner, I also noted. The professions of the authors or the groups that they represented I recorded, as I did whether the author was Native, non-Native, or if this was unknown, and the position of the author regarding the boycott or exhibition where this could be discerned.

Through the questions I designed, I focused on the articulations, explicit and implicit, of the concepts of culture and nation and the relationships, if any, that these concepts have to material culture. I was careful to incorporate questions that would expose the power structures inherent in these ideals and their relationship to another. While some of these questions were easily accommodated by the computer program and multiple choice variables, others required longer explanations, so I accommodated them through the text entry portion of the program. The survey questions are presented in the Appendix. The results of the analysis are discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Culture and Nation

I Introduction

Both my qualitative and my quantitative methodologies exposed diverse articulations of culture and nation in the discourse that surrounded *The Spirit Sings*. In this chapter I present my findings and discuss the multiple understandings of culture, nation and material culture implicitly and explicitly articulated in the discourse. Subsequently, I discuss each concept in terms of its discursive relationships to Canada and to First Nations.

Using the analytical tool 'effective history' which I presented in the previous chapter, it quickly became apparent to me that the context in which *The Spirit Sings* was presented played a pivotal role in the discourse, albeit often an implicit one. Therefore, I begin this chapter with a discussion of this context: *The Spirit Sings*, an exhibition prepared by the Glenbow museum as the 'flagship' of the 1988 Olympic Arts Festival.

II The Olympics: Cultures and Nations

The Olympics is a worldwide event based upon ideal principles of international peace and cooperation and is designed to afford nations an opportunity to present their athletic and cultural achievements. The Arts Festival is an integral component of the Olympics, and any country hosting this event is expected to offer the visiting nations a cultural extravaganza which parallels the athletic competitions.

Susan J. Bandy dates the ideal of blending arts and athletics in the modern Olympic Games to their initial establishment in 1896, and the vision of one romantic idealist, Pierre de Coubertin, "a French educational reformer and founder of the Games, [who]... sought to establish fine arts competitions to be held in conjunction with the Games," was the

recipient of an elite education based on the classics.¹ In his youth, Coubertin became “enamored with Greek philosophy and the Greek ideal of the triumvirate of mind, body, and spirit.”² Inspired by romantic notions of Greek philosophy, Coubertin’s dream to revive the Olympic Games was also fed by feelings of nationalism. Like many of France’s citizens, Coubertin had been disappointed and chagrined by his nation’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. His exposure to the English school system introduced him to the importance of competitive sports and physical education in the ideal formation of strong healthy citizens of the (English) state.

Bandy argues that Coubertin’s exposure to English schools reinforced an already firm belief in the Greek ideal of the unity of body, mind and spirit, as expressed in the classical Olympic Games. She notes that “unlike other cultures that had preceded it, the Greeks argued for the importance of the [male] human being in the world” and that such “importance placed upon the human being resulted in a philosophy and cultural ideal that influenced all aspects of Greek life.”³ Greek cultural ideology encouraged male elite individuals to strive for excellence in all aspects of the human dimension including the “intellectual, moral and the physical.”⁴ Ideally, a “harmoniously educated man” was the result of studies which combined sport and art: “Gymnastics trained the body, and music...trained the mind.”⁵ “With this unified view of [male] humanity,” Bandy claims, “the ancient Greeks established the union of all aspects of human expression and thereby granted sport a place among the other forms of artistic expression.”⁶ To the Greeks, then, sport was an art form, but one in which winning mattered to the individual participants, to the audiences, and especially to the home city represented by each participant.

¹ Bandy (1988), 163.

² Ibid., 164-165.

³ Ibid., 163.

⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Coubertin's vision for the modern Olympics was a romantic, nationalistic and highly idealized revival of the ancient Olympic Games which he visualized as being the "salvation of France."⁷ His dream for the Olympics included the arts, which he felt would ennoble the Games. In May 1906, he organized a conference and invited representatives from around the world to come and:

study to what extent and in what way art and literature could be included in the celebration of the Modern Olympiads and be associated with the practice of sport in general so as not only to benefit from it but at the same time ennoble it.⁸

In 1912 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) accepted his proposal and formulated rules for Olympic competitions in the arts. But the blending of arts and sports in a competitive context was not without problem. Over the years various Olympic organizers realized difficulties regarding the logistics of judging the arts and of the non/professional status of the artists. In the aftermath of the nationalistic excesses of World War Two, the nature of the "Pentathlon of the Muses" was changed from one of competition to that of exhibition and display only (in 1949). International art exhibitions were staged inconsistently, however, over the ensuing years (the art component was completely eliminated from the 1951 Games). Eventually, as Bandy explains, in 1949 it was decided that the format of the arts in conjunction with the Olympics might better be changed to that of a "cultural festival" and in 1969 the IOC further "amended the rules and regulations to recommend that cultural exhibitions be limited to national rather than international perspectives." As she states the "union of sport and the arts that was [ideally] recognized in ancient Greece and desired by Coubertin for the modern Olympic Games" has never been realized.⁹

⁷ Ibid., 165.

⁸ Pierre de Coubertin [cited in] "The Olympic Celebration of the Arts," by Susan J Bandy, [in] *The Olympic Games in Transition*, by Jeffrey O. Segrave and Donald Chu (eds.) (Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1988), 165.

⁹ Ibid. All of the quotes in this paragraph are found on page 167.

Nevertheless, the Arts Festival has remained a priority on the Olympic agenda. This is understandable when we consider Handler's assertion that nationhood is substantiated through the culture a nation projects. Cultural projections can take the form of the dramatic reenactment of histories and traditions; celebrations with traditional foods; cultural displays of handicrafts and dress; and through the archiving of monuments and artifacts—all of which not only witness a nation's history and heritage, but assist in preserving it. Displays of art, music and theater are compatible with any wide-ranging arts festival and a museum exhibition outlining a nation's history is, certainly in Western cultures, widely considered to be a reasonable venue through which to share one's culture with the world.

There are several deep implications for the connections between culture and nation within the Olympic vision. The premise that underlies the Olympic Arts Festival, is that nations can be distinguished from one another by cultural characteristics. These cultural characteristics are conceptualized as tangible. They can be visually, audibly or textually captured and transmitted to others through an arts festival, as if there is, indeed must be, some essential 'uniqueness' that can be put on display.

But in reality, many pluralistic industrialized nations such as Canada are not easily or significantly distinguishable by a common national culture. There is not one all encompassing coherent Canadian culture to which all Canadians relate. Canadians also appear to have a less than holistic 'symbolic package' of the type that Handler posits is required to objectify a culture, to speak coherently about it, and to identify with it as peculiarly 'Canadian.' Perhaps the singular most unified 'belief' about Canadian culture is that it is multicultural. So the problem arises: if Canadian Olympic organizers follow popular conceptions about culture, and find it 'natural' to think of the Canadian nation as having an essential culture, and if they are required 'naturally' to represent Canada, and in particular the *(multi-)cultural character* of Canada for a world audience, what are they going to show? How are they going to show it?

The Glenbow made the decision to represent Canadian culture, not through a multicultural display or historical chronology of the nation, but rather through the material cultures of Canada's First Peoples—both Indian and Inuit—at the 'time of contact.' In taking this route the Glenbow was not unusual, nor were they breaking new museological/national ground. Many colonially formed states select key symbols of the culture of their indigenous colonized peoples to represent themselves to themselves and to others, especially if the indigenous peoples in question have not been defined as a degraded other.¹⁰

There are several obvious consequences of choosing this type of indigenous/colonial combined representation. For one, the presentation of First peoples as part of the current nation historically legitimates the present state's nation and culture by linking them symbolically to peoples and cultural traditions that go back 'forever.' Another well recognized consequence of this type of linkage is the economic spin-off for the state; indigenous people are often a tourism resource. Also, this facilitates the citizens of a nation being able to identify their fundamental uniqueness as a nation—both in terms of nationalist sentiment and nationalist pride. Fundamental uniqueness when elicited and projected through symbolic cultural markers, defines, adheres and solidifies a state. All nations wish to distinguish themselves positively from others. The Glenbow presented Canada as a fundamentally unique nation through an exhibition (*The Spirit Sings*) of the material cultures of First Nations.

III Articulations of Culture and Nation in the Discourse

The implicit notions of culture and nation contained in the discourse which surrounded *The Spirit Sings* are as important and significant as the explicit articulations. My

¹⁰ Thus this has been a popular practice in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand in this century, but not in Australia or South Africa until very recent times. Contrast, for example, displays in major state museums in Australia and New Zealand; the latter fully incorporate Maori into the history of the nation, while the former isolate Aborigines in ethnographic sections.

preliminary readings of the discourse left me with the impression that there was a lot of 'talk' about culture and nation between the participants. The rich cultural traditions of First Nations peoples, for example, was a reoccurring theme. However, once I began to analyze the discourse more closely, both my qualitative and quantitative findings led me to the conclusion that assertions and assumptions that were being made about culture and nation were not straightforward.

(A) Notions of Nation

Following the discussion of nationalism in Chapter Two, I want to emphasize that Anthony D. Smith¹¹ takes exception to the 'modernist' position of nationalism which claims that nations are recent constructs. Smith posits that this definition of nations tends to limit the concept of 'nation' to modern industrialist states; more importantly it negates the importance of 'pre-modern ethnicity.'¹² In reality, "we find two overlapping concepts of nation, civic or territorial and ethnic or genealogical" in the modern world.¹³ The 'civic,' or 'territorial,' concept is a Western concept, wherein the nation is composed of a well-defined population which inhabits a specific, bounded territory and possesses common institutions: political, economic, legal and education systems. The alternative concept, an 'ethnic,' or 'genealogical,' nation is constituted by a unit of socially linked people. The unity between these linked people is maintained through symbolic signifiers such as common ancestry or genealogy, history, tradition, language and/or culture. Smith states that "any useful definition of nation must do justice to both ethnic and territorial conceptions" in order to respect and legitimate the "historical and present situations in which so many find themselves."¹⁴

¹¹ Anthony D. Smith (1988), 1-26.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

Since Canada is a nation which is comprised of many ethnic groups and indigenous peoples, Smith's theories seem particularly relevant to this study. As I proceeded to conduct my survey of the discourse I particularly focused on teasing out the notions of nationhood that had penetrated the discourse, according to my understanding of nationalism as discussed throughout this study. To this end, I searched for any direct allusions to, or assertions about, the term 'nation,' and for any conversations which expressed indirect concepts of nationhood. I complemented my manual search through the discourse with my computerized survey. Informed by Smith, I generated a (multiple choice) list of the possible characteristics of 'nation' and/or 'nationhood' that might be expressed through the discourse being studied. Then, I entered the information (into the appropriate fields) as to whether or not the author of each single text was addressing the concepts of nation and/or nationhood directly. If the concept was addressed I recorded whether his/her articulation was consistent with Smith's Western/civic definition of a nation or his definition of the ancestral/indigenous/ethnic concept (as outlined above). I also identified and recorded (in the text entry fields) any expressed or implied characteristics of nationhood peculiar to a particular author.¹⁵

Although the Olympics provided a context for the discourse—a context in which an outpouring of national pride had characterized media reports—and although the Lubicon, by way of the boycott, were making powerful nationhood claims, I found only a few examples in my data in which the concepts of nation and/or nationhood were *directly* addressed. Nor was there any evidence of direct discussion about what a nation 'is,' how Canada defines itself as a nation, or if First Peoples are nations. In other words, no one directly asked the core question: *how are notions of nationhood affecting the dynamics of the exhibition and/or the boycott?*

¹⁵ The procedure of reading each text, asking the survey questions of this text and entering the appropriate answers into the correlating fields supplied by the computer program was duplicated throughout this study. Each 'individual' text was subjected to the same process.

I do not mean to imply that the term 'nation' was not used. It was in fact used extensively, but typically without any kind of definition or qualification. A reading of the discourse conveys the impression that the authors of particular pieces saw no need to define 'nation' or 'nationhood.' The reader is left with a feeling that the authors of the discourse conceptualized these terms as 'self-evident' in meaning, implying a belief in an obvious, widespread collective understanding of a nation.

Seventeen of the 282 records surveyed explicitly expressed general nationalistic concepts. Of these seventeen records, the majority implied that they conceived of a 'nation' in terms of Smith's definition of the Western/civic ideology of nation. Two of these seventeen records explicitly articulated an ancestral/indigenous/ethnic concept of nationhood. Among the seventeen identified articulations, there were a number authored by a 'Native' voice. These voices spoke of 'nation' in terms of Smith's Western/civic definition of nation.

However, when I began to 'read' for implicit themes found in the discourse rather than explicit articulations, both of the concepts of nation/nationhood that Smith identifies were present. The articulation of a nation as a group inhabiting a demarcated territory was a commonly found theme, whether that territory was Canada or the bounded territories of Native groups. Canada was the dominant nation referred to. The consciousness of belonging to a particular nation or being citizens of a nation was very high, due likely to the discourse's Olympic context. Articulations of nation thus stressed territory; only brief mention was made of the core attribute of the Western/civic definition that a nation has common political, economic or legal systems.

Those authors who spoke of the bounded territories of Native groups as nations, likewise spoke of a nation as a unit of population with a specific territory, but they included the identification of a common ancestry, history, traditional culture, and specific languages as part of First Nations national attributes. For example, in a review of the exhibition's catalogue, Christopher Hume stated that "Above all, *The Spirit Sings* is a portrait of a

nation of peoples who lived in complete harmony with their environment,"¹⁶ and in an editorial, Tom Hill defined First Nations as "a group of people with a common language, culture and history."¹⁷ Articulations of nation within the Western/civic paradigm rarely expressed any notions of collective traditionalism or collective culture, although membership was sharply distinguished: speaking often of Canadian citizens as "we" (for those who are not Native) and using the appellative "them" for those who are Native. These differing discursive concepts of Nation and 'us' and 'them' become more profound when the discourse spoke more specifically to the idea of the Canadian nation.

(1) Notions of the Canadian Nation

As an industrialized nation, Canada fits within the parameters of Smith's definition of the Western/civic concept of a nation. Canada's boundaries are specific and well defined, its citizens are described as 'Canadians,' implying unity, and the country's economic, legal and educational systems fit the civic conception of a nation. The notion of a shared culture is considered a pivotal factor in unifying a nation. As Brass and Elliott so adroitly point out and as discussed in Chapter Two, political elites throughout history have manipulated cultural symbols relevant to specific cultures in order to rally mass citizen commitment, and/or to adhere to or form nations. What 'symbols' define Canadian statehood?

Of the records in the discourse that spoke of Canada or of Canadians, 93% referred to Canada as a place or territory and 52% spoke of citizenship. The concept of a nation-place and the concept of citizenship are, of course, intricately interwoven. Only 6% of the texts refer explicitly to Canadian culture or life-ways as the defining characteristic of the Canadian nation. A superficial reading of the fact that cultural definitions of Canada were absent from the discourse might indicate that culture was marginal to the discussions. In

¹⁶ Christopher Hume, "Celebrating a Destroyed Culture," *Toronto Star*, 24 January 1988.

¹⁷ Tom Hill, "First Nations and Museums: Editorial," *Muse* 6, no. 3 (Fall/October 1988): 2.

fact this is partially true. Contributors to the discourse were primarily speaking of Canada and Canadians in passing, as part of the context of discussion rather than its core.

Most of the references to Canada as a nation were simple, 'distinguishing' intimations. The author was merely being explicit about the fact that he/she was referring to the country of Canada, rather than to some other nation. Dr. Christian Feest's statement, "the idea that countries around the world would join in true Olympic spirit to temporarily repatriate some of Canada's Native heritage to its country of origin made sense,"¹⁸ is a prime example of this sort of usage.

Although I found only a few descriptions of what life in Canada is like, most of these texts, particularly those by authors who were speaking for Native rights, strongly portrayed Canadians (and hence themselves) as living in a culture dominated by Western/European values and surrounded by people who were white and Anglo-Saxon. Speaking in favor of the boycott, Keith Spicer describes Canada as not only a white nation but as still very colonial, stating:

What most jars with the white winners of old colonial wars is seeing and hearing beaten peoples standing up to dissociate themselves from history's white-flattering celebrations.¹⁹

Closely allied to observations of colonialism, were those comments that referred to the fact that Canadian political, economic and cultural systems had originated in Europe, and generalizations that Canada's non-aboriginal citizens were 'European.' For example, Bruce Trigger stated that "Native people have been confronted by a chronic White people problem" and that our/Canadian museums "are run by Euro-Canadians" and that an important cultural segment of Native "cultural heritage is now controlled by Euro-

¹⁸ Christian F. Feest, "The Glenbow Incident: The Spirit Sinks," *European Review of Native American Studies* 1, no. 1 (1987): 61-63.

¹⁹ Keith Spicer, "Listen to the Native Protesters," *Spectator*, 23 January 1988.

Canadian anthropologists and museologists.”²⁰ Adjectives used in the discourse to describe the Canadian nation were often revealing. Trigger referred to Canada as “a society in which we live,”²¹ “colonial,”²² “Euro-Canadian” and “ethnocentric.”²³ Several reporters envisioned Canada as a generalized ‘homeland’ for all peoples. For example, Richard Woloshen, writing for *Alberta Report*, bylined his article, “Despite protests, organizers bring Indian art back home”²⁴ But as Chief Erasmus (and others) asserted, it is also a “homeland” for First Nations.²⁵

It is of considerable interest to note that descriptions of the Canadian nation usually neglected to represent Canada as being officially or even informally multicultural or bilingual. One exception was Frank King, the Chairman and CEO of OCO, who remarked in the exhibition’s opening ceremony that Canada has a rich heritage consisting of 125 different backgrounds.²⁶ Discussions of language or language as a national marker were remarkable by their absence from the discourse. The ‘125’ different backgrounds were consistently lumped together as Euro-Canadian, even though the 125 figure is preposterous and many are Asian, etc.; the only groups singled out for discussion were those of First Nations ancestry.

Before turning to my discussion of the discursive characterizations of First Nations found in my data, I want to qualify some of the above assertions and draw attention to one topic which may at first seem an aside. The discourse that I researched was an interactive, fairly bounded grouping of materials selected for a specific analytical purpose. There were many

²⁰ Bruce Trigger, comments following address by Chief Bernard Ominayak at McGill University, 13 November 1987, from the private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University Of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Bruce Trigger, “Who Owns the Past?” *Muse* 6, no. 3 (1988): 13-15.

²³ Bruce Trigger, “Reply by Bruce Trigger,” *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 9.

²⁴ Richard Woloshen, “The Spirit Sings in Calgary,” *Alberta Report*, 15 February 1988, 41.

²⁵ Chief George Erasmus, comments from a press release issued by the Assembly of First Nations, 27 April 1988, TMC.

²⁶ Frank D. King, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

discussions on other related topics that ran parallel to the exhibition/boycott discourse. In particular, visible posturing and image-making that related to the concepts of nation, culture and nationalism was evident in a number of linked venues. The Olympics were understood as Canada's time 'to shine'; more, it was also Calgary's. Several articles addressed the valorous growth of Calgary from a "bow town" to a modern city populated by people widely recognized for their tenacious ability to get things done. Politicians from all levels of government were interested in projecting an upbeat image of Calgary, Alberta and Canada, as responsible, ethical, highly contemporary and worldly.²⁷ Joe Clark, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, spoke at the opening ceremony describing Canada as "a country able and expected to be a leader in the world."²⁸

Nations are continually creating and recreating images and stories of and about themselves and key public Canadians did so extensively during this time, taking advantage of the world-wide arena provided by the context of the Olympics.²⁹ The Glenbow staff were no exception. Acutely aware of the huge audience provided by Olympic media coverage, Glenbow staff consciously constructed and modified their public image, both in terms of the public at large and to accommodate the gaze of other museum professionals. Although the conscious image-making of Canada, Calgary and the Glenbow had political overtones well before the announcement of the Lubicon boycott, the political manipulation of images became even more prominent after the boycott was announced.

(2) *First Nations Within a Nation*

I constructed my survey questions with respect to First Nations and nation to highlight any distinctions drawn between the Canadian nation and First Nations, and to indicate how

²⁷ See in particular *Maclean's* 15 February 1988 and *Maclean's* 22 February 1988.

²⁸ Joe Clark, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

²⁹ Many Olympic ceremonial venues were rife with national symbolism. For instance, the opening and closing ceremonies of the Calgary Olympics were so rich in national, cultural and ethnic symbolism, that a thesis length treatment would be required to adequately address them.

such differing concepts of nations or nations within a nation were grounded. I also noted any explanations that were given by authors for these distinctions. For example, were these distinctions rooted in cultural, racial/ethnic, economic, political, or historical explanations? I also thought it important to identify the terminology that was utilized when First Nations peoples were referred to, and to note the tense (past, present, future) utilized by authors when they spoke of Native peoples.

The topic of 'aboriginal peoples who live in Canada' comprises the largest topical grouping in my data; 90% of the records refer explicitly to this theme. How they referred to them is of interest. While contemporary terms such as 'First peoples' and 'First Nations' are found in the discourse, my final tally shows that these words are present in only 3% of all various references to First Nations peoples. This is in marked contrast to the term 'Native,' which was used 58% of the time. 'Indian' and 'Inuit' comprised the second largest grouping of terms at 33%. It was the Glenbow's staff and agencies who claimed to represent First Nations, who consistently employed the terms 'First Nations/peoples.'³⁰

The use of the terms 'First peoples' and 'First Nations' signifies a sharp symbolic distinction between specific groups of people and the rest of the general Canadian citizenry. As a term of reference, 'First Nations' has a long history as outlined in Chapter Three. It did not become a general blanketing term until the beginning of serious negotiations concerning aboriginal self government in the late 1980s. Thereafter, quickly exploited by Native leaders and spokespersons, it has become a highly potent political term expressly designed to conjure up an image of civil nationalism—of distinct, sovereign entities. As Houle and Podedworny note, it has 'become the term of preferred usage today. The recent adoption of 'First Nations' is a conscious political decision by peoples who have been forced, since the arrival of the Europeans, to assume and accept marginal

³⁰ In the letters that Native groups authored to museums (in soliciting support for the boycott) it is surprising how often they referred to themselves as "Indian" rather than the more contemporary term "First Nations."

status in society.”³¹ First Nations is also a term which overtly highlights the constellation of meanings and associations concerning the nation typically used by status nations. Indeed, it is this overlap in meaning which imbues the term ‘First Nations’ with political power when it is used in discussions of land claims and/or self government.

Tom Hill offered the only explicit definition of First Nations in the discourse by stating:

First Nations...means a group of people with a common language, culture and a history who identify with each other as belonging to a common political entity. It does not have separatist connotations.³²

The first part of Hill’s definition of First Nations reflects Smith’s ancestral/aboriginal/ethnic definition of a nation through its stress on the commonality of language and culture. But Hill’s statement appears to incorporate elements that are central to the civic concept of nation as well: ties of common historical experience and emphasis on ‘common political entity.’ How does Hill mean us to interpret this? Certainly, First Nations peoples can be said to have certain common historical experiences (the ‘contact’ with whites being one element), and First Nations do sometimes act as a ‘common political entity.’ However, his final assertion, ‘it does not have separatist connotations’ seems to suggest that both the historical continuity and the common political entity may be intertwined with the Canadian state. This mix of understandings arises often in the discourse that surrounded *The Spirit Sings*.

The labeling of a segment of society or a social group as ‘first’ immediately suggests the possession of a different history, perhaps one with some natural ‘first’ priority. The data appears to support this connection. The most commonly asserted difference between First Nations and other Canadians was the assertion that First Nations had a different and much longer history in this land. Joe Clark called them ‘Canada’s oldest citizens.’³³ Frank King

³¹ Houle and Podedworny (1994), 69.

³² Tom Hill, “First Nations and Museums: Editorial,” *Muse* 6, no. 3 (Fall/October 1988): 2.

³³ Joe Clark [cited in] “Glenbow Show Superlative,” by Stephanie Kerr, [in] *Calgary Sun*, 15 January 1988.

recognized them as the ‘first people’³⁴ and Ralph Klein, then Calgary’s mayor, said ‘they are the first and most ancient Canadians.’³⁵

At the other end of the ‘First Nations within a Nation’ spectrum were those authors such as Julia Harrison of the Glenbow, who emphasized a shared heritage between First Nations and Canadians. Harrison contributed amply to the discourse and her remarks are very consistent in tone throughout the period covered by my survey. In each article she authors and in each quote she gives, she leaves the impression that she is vitally aware that Native peoples have a different heritage, noting often that they were once ‘contacted’ by culturally different ‘Europeans.’ Yet Harrison also conveys that she equates First Nations heritages with ‘ours’ (something which could certainly be argued as appropriate). In an issue of *MUSE* she lists the themes of the exhibition, articulating the prominent theme: ‘to present the richness, diversity and complexity of *Canada’s* Native cultures as they were *witnessed [by Europeans] at the time of contact.*’ She further explains the importance of the exhibition stating: ‘But most critically the exhibition could serve as an important vehicle to educate the *Canadian* population about the Native heritage *of this country.*’³⁶ From her statements we are led to read her position as: yes, there are Native heritages, but the country to which they are related is Canada, and these Native cultures are Canada’s.

On the other hand, James G.E. Smith claimed that he could see no significant relationship between Canada and its culture and First Nations and their cultures. In a letter to Dr. Christian F. Feest in which Smith outlines why the Museum of the American Indian is supporting the Lubicon boycott, he states ‘It has never been clear to me of what relevance

³⁴ Frank D. King, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

³⁵ Ralph Klein, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

³⁶ Julia Harrison, ‘Coordinating Curator’s Statement.’ *Muse* 6, no. 3 (1988): 12-13. My italics.

early—or even late—historic Indian culture has to Olympic Games, or to the Canadian heritage,” essentially discounting the exhibition’s theme.³⁷

Various assertions of the difference and/or the connections between Native and Canadian heritages and history fell between these two polar views, with most of the authors favoring Harrison’s dual premise. Of thirty-three relevant records, twenty-three noted historical differences and distinctions between Canada and First Nations, four noted racial distinctions/differences and five records made reference to economic disparity. One third of these records understood the key differences between Canada and First Nations as cultural. This overlaps with the claim made by exhibition spokespeople that ‘Canada’s Native peoples have a view of the world distinctly different than that of Europeans who later settled here.’³⁸

Other distinctions between First Nations and Canada were also expressed. Economic disparities were an important component of these discussions, particularly where the Lubicon issue was prevalent. For instance, it became evident to me from my readings that some authors conceive of Canada as a country that is composed of two segments of society: the haves and the have-nots. Some authors felt that Native peoples, as archetypal have-nots, are treated as if they exist outside of mainstream Canadian society. These authors simultaneously and ironically appeared to express that First Nations, as Nations, have a right to full autonomy (*contra* Canada), yet as a particular class of Canadian poor people they have the right to greater state assistance.

In particular, Marybelle Meyers drew attention to economic conditions of First Nations by restating claims made throughout the exhibition that First Nations are ‘disinherited,’ not only from their own country, but from their cultures and histories as well. In her review of

³⁷ James G.E. Smith, letter from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye foundation, to Dr. Christian F. Feest, curator, Museum Für Völkerkunde, Austria, 20 June 1986, Glenbow Archives. In this letter, Smith is obviously unaware of Feest’s involvement with the Glenbow. It is reasonable to assume that other museums received similar letters from Smith wherein he urges them to consider his museum’s position as they come to their own decisions.

³⁸ Julia Harrison, “The Spirit Sings,” *Glenbow Report* (1988): 7.

the exhibition/boycott affair, she admits “my sympathies on these issues are clearly with the protesters.”³⁹ Meyers outlines the Lubicon conditions leading up to the protest and the museological issues raised during the boycott. She quotes Trigger as stating, “It is unacceptable that attempts should be made to continue to subject these people to a paternalistic regime in which non-native Canadians decide what is in the best interests of native people” and herself asserts that the Glenbow might have opted to “assist the Indians in telling the *whole* story of contact.”⁴⁰

Also addressing the disparity in economic conditions of First Nations peoples, university-based anthropologist Bruce Trigger wrote that Canada is dominated by a “Euro-Canadian orientation” and he adds that “all too often Natives are treated as if they exist outside the Canadian mosaic rather than as an integral part of it.” Again, Trigger calls this a “chronic white people problem” where Natives have not been able to obtain economic and political control of their lives.⁴¹ University of Calgary anthropologist, Joan Ryan, implied that Natives are regarded as being in Canada rather than of Canada, in her political and economic critique:

the multinationals and [the] Province [of Alberta] are anti-Indian [and] the Lubicons are doomed to cultural extinction.⁴²

Ryan, like James G.E. Smith, also claimed to find little connection between the exhibition and contemporary Indians, but for different reasons. As I continued my readings of the discourse, I began to wonder if many of these assertions of ‘wrongful’ white/colonial/Euro behavior could be interpreted as saying that the Canadian state and people had not been interventionist enough, or perhaps interventionist in the wrong kinds of ways in support of ‘its’ Native citizens: unwilling to provide adequate economic, social and health services,

³⁹ Marybelle Meyers, “Editorial,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-16. My italics.

⁴¹ Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

⁴² Joan Ryan [cited in] “Appropriation: A Case in Point,” by anonymous, [in] *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 33.

unwilling, in fact, to take 'adequate' responsibility. Ironically, despite the centrality of economic activities to notions of culture from Tyler on, Native post-contact economic conditions and experiences somehow stood outside Native culture in these texts—as something that threatened culture, but not 'as' culture.

In review then, the most significant distinction identified between First Nations and Canada was articulated through assertions that First Nations peoples are Canada's oldest citizens and the First Canadians. As Canada's oldest 'citizens,' references to Native peoples were often characterized by terminology such as 'Canada's Natives' and their artifacts were labeled 'Canadian Native' materials. These terms that are used to describe First Nations peoples and their material cultures are pregnant with signification; the possessive incorporation of Native peoples and Canadian Native materials legitimates the notion that Canada has always been Canada, even if we might rationally know different.

This type of possessive rhetoric claims Natives for Canada and Canada for Canadians. Interestingly, 14% of the 90% of the records which referred to First Nations, referred to First Nations as 'Canadians,' while 11% of the records referred to Native peoples in the possessive sense: Canada's or ours. It appeared to me as I studied and surveyed the discourse that this possessive tone was established by Glenbow staff in the early planning stages of the exhibition and that this tone was quickly duplicated by the media. For example, Glenbow's feasibility report (prepared prior to the exhibition's confirmation) reports that their proposal is to "search the world for *Canada's* Indian and Inuit treasures" and that visitors would be able to see "the roots and the legacy of the *Canadian* Indian and Inuit heritage," and also that the exhibition would bring together in one place "*Canada's* national treasures."⁴³ Indeed, one of the main themes of the exhibition, a theme which was reiterated throughout the discourse, was to present "the richness, diversity and complexity of *Canada's* native cultures" and the final title selected for the exhibition included the phrase "*Canada's* First peoples."

⁴³ *Glenbow Project OCO '88* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives, all quotes in this paragraph are taken from this feasibility study. My italics.

Matching phraseology was prevalent in Glenbow's promotional materials, and this material too, appears to have infiltrated the media, especially the press releases from Shell Oil Canada. In the full color fold-out pamphlet distributed in Shell's press packets I found the following phrases: "This is your opportunity to enter the world of *Canada's* Native cultures and traditions;" "the early artistic traditions of *Canada's* First peoples was spread around the world;" "there is a great diversity among cultures of *Canada's* Native peoples."⁴⁴

The media followed suit. For example, The Edmonton *Sun* paraphrased Shell's and Glenbow's press releases stating, "The artifacts...celebrate the diversity and cultural traditions of *Canada's* native Indians and Inuit."⁴⁵ *Maclean's* coverage of the opening of the exhibition and the attendant demonstration stated that the exhibition "celebrates the rich artistry of *Canada's* aboriginal people."⁴⁶ Bob Blakey, Calgary *Herald* staff writer, commented that the artifacts "had been plundered from *Canada's* original inhabitants."⁴⁷ Marjorie Halpin recalls in her exhibition review how she and others had 'reverently' viewed 'Early Native *Canadian* Treasures...[the] material expressions of *Canada's* first peoples."⁴⁸

In other texts the authors were less direct, using inclusive language to conceptually pull Natives into the Canadian collective. For example, Julia Harrison claimed that Native heritage is an important aspect of Canadian history and "the exhibition could serve as an important vehicle to educate the Canadian population [*both Native and non-Native*] about the Native heritage of this country."⁴⁹ Comments in letters to newspaper editors from

⁴⁴ These quotes are from materials contained in a press packet which was sent to me by Shell from their archives in Calgary, no authors or dates are specific to these samples from their advertising campaign. My italics.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Native exhibit opens," *Edmonton Sun*, 14 January 1988.

⁴⁶ John Howse, "Haunting Relics from the Native Land," *Maclean's*, 25 January 1988, 54-55.

⁴⁷ Bob Blakey, "Glenbow project recovers native history," *Calgary Herald*, 2 February 1986.

⁴⁸ Marjorie M. Halpin, "Museum Review [of *The Spirit Sings*]," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 89-93. My italics.

⁴⁹ Julia Harrison, "The Legacy of the Spirit Sings," *Glenbow (Special Edition 1988)*: 7. My italics.

visitors to the exhibition often suggested that Native heritage is "our" heritage. For example, one visitor claimed that due to Native history "our" culture goes back several thousand years like the Europeans and that even though it is a different culture, it belongs to both Native and non-Native Canadians. In a letter to the *Canmore Leader*, Ruth Oltmann wrote:

Many European visitors tell us our culture is too young to be meaningful. Now we have the means to tell about our culture which goes back several thousand years, as does theirs. It is a different culture, but it is a long one and it is ours. I say ours because it belongs to both the native and non-native Canadian. Neither of us had any say in where and when we were born. What our ancestors did is not our responsibility, but we are here in Canada together, and together we can share our appreciation of this truly amazing exhibition. We can then pass on this appreciation to our European visitor and tell them the part their ancestors played in our cultural history.⁵⁰

Another visitor's letter to the editor called the exhibition a "valiant attempt to demonstrate this country's heritage for Indian and Native cultures and immigrant cultures alike" and that through the experience of the exhibition we can "hear and feel the essence of our creative, intelligent and spiritual forefathers."⁵¹

There was a tendency on the part of authors in this discourse to paint and valorize an ideal image of 'traditional' Native cultures, often using these potent images as critical, ironic contrasts to the contemporary life of many First Nations peoples. Indeed, one of the complaints directed at the exhibition, and one that certainly added fuel to the boycott, was that representations of ancient Native culture (interestingly, never critiqued by anyone as presenting an ideal or romantic image) were being celebrated at the same time as contemporary Natives were pushed, or held, to the margins of society. Meyers interpreted this incongruity for her readership by stating:

Although their boycott of the sacrosanct Olympic games has generated some resentment, Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak explains that their

⁵⁰ Ruth Oltmann, "Magnitude of The Spirit Sings Cultural Display Boggles Mind," letter to editor, *Canmore Leader*, 18 February 1988.

⁵¹ Gerald J. Gongos, "Visitors feel Essence of Culture," letter to editor, *Calgary Herald*, 25 January 1988.

problem is 'not with the athletic competition or with cultural displays, but rather with that small group of wealthy and powerful interests in Alberta who are trying to wipe us out.' He considers that these people are using the Winter Olympics and the Olympic arts Festival to achieve credibility and legitimacy, and that it is hypocritical of the Glenbow Museum to be announcing that it is showing the world 'the richness and continuity of Canada's native cultural traditions': while ignoring the fact that the present-day culture is in crisis and may not survive."⁵²

While 93% of the time Natives were spoken of in the present tense, contrasted with 8% which spoke only of Natives in the past tense, not one record referred to Natives in the future tense. Native artists have often complained that their culture and peoples were being treated as stereotypical and dead cultures, but from my survey statistics it is obvious that the contributors (and therefore the reading public) were very much aware of living Natives. But these statistics do not contradict the complaints of First Nations artists. While the focus was on contemporary First Nations people, commentators from every point of view strongly associated the historical cultures exemplified by the objects placed (or not) in the exhibition with contemporary Native peoples. There is a clear association in the discourse between past material cultures and present First Nations cultures and the importance of historical artifacts in contemporary life. I received the impression that Native peoples, who were said to 'possess' these cultures, were portrayed by many authors (in this admittedly united venue) as unchanging, or fundamentally unchanging. Hence, even though Euro-Canadian society had imposed colonial restrictions on these societies and had stripped many of them emotionally, spiritually and materially, there is a sense that underneath, these cultures are fundamentally as they were before. There is some evidence in the discourse to suggest that First Nations cultures are conceptualized as 'unchanging,' and as unchanging cultures they are 'authentic.' It is this 'writing' of Native cultures which Native artists struggle to resist. It is interesting to note that when it came to culture few authors addressed (or were questioned on) how Canadian culture is expressed; but seemingly everyone was conversant with Native cultures and/or their signifiers.

⁵² Marybelle Meyers, "The Glenbow Affair: When the Cree Protested the Funding Source of The Spirit Sings They Stirred Up a Hornet's Nest," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1988): 13.

(B) Notions of Culture

My survey questions directed at 'culture in general' were structured in order [a] to determine if any statements directly defined culture as a term, and [b] to identify any concepts (or aspects) of culture that informed the discourse. Thus I initially investigated if an author was addressing the area of culture directly or indirectly, and then I attempted to define whether that author was identifying cultural concepts with an Anglo/Western culture or an ethnic/indigenous culture. Last, I identified the concepts being expressed.

As considered in Chapter One, Kroeber and Kluckhohn⁵³ summarized their now-historical study of culture by reviewing "certain general features or broad aspects of culture." From their review we learn that at the time of their writing, culture and its manifest forms are understood as integrated wholes; that culture is understood as subject to historical interpretation and context; that there are no "constant elemental units like atoms, cells, or genes" found within culture; that there is thought to be "some degree of circular causality" in that people create culture and culture in turn shapes people; that values are significant to culture, yet these values are variable and relative; that the objective literal comparison of whole cultures is not really possible; and that "it is...proper to speak both of culture in general...and of particular cultures."⁵⁴

I have argued earlier that many of these elements of culture that are mentioned by Kroeber and Kluckhohn have become part of the general public culture lexicon and associated with 'the nation.' For example, the convictions that common values and beliefs stem from a shared historical source; that these beliefs and values are transmitted through enculturation and socialization; the belief that cultural manifestations should be protected through societal (state) institutions; the conviction that cultural values and beliefs are incorporated

⁵³ Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), 311-354.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 366-367.

into those institutions; and the conviction that peoples are strongly and emotionally identified, by, through and in 'their' cultures, are all threads in the interwoven tapestry of the cultural and national discourses that surrounded *The Spirit Sings*. ---

Within the discourse there was but one explicit attempt to define culture and no attempts whatsoever to debate what it is. Rick Hill, a Mohawk artist and curator from the Tuscarora Indian Reserve in Sanborn, New York, offered the only explicit definition stating, 'Culture is a living daily activity manifested in human relationships, in dance, in ceremony.'⁵⁵ However, two other texts contain statements which I interpret as implicit definitions of culture. Without expressly stating that 'culture is such and such,' each of these statements gives a clear indication of the author's concept of culture. In the first case, James G.E. Smith, Curator at the Museum of the American Indian, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Mulroney. In his letter, he decries governmental treatment of the Lubicon, and asserts that 'a society is an organized entity, consisting of social institutions mutually adapted to and reinforcing one another,' emphasizing through this statement his view of the social, interdependent/organic nature of social life and culture.⁵⁶ In the second implicit definition of culture, the author of the Glenbow's feasibility report emphasizes cultural identity: 'A people's sense of identity is expressed in their attitude toward the natural environment and their social milieu.'⁵⁷ Interestingly, all three of these expressions/definitions of culture were given in the context of a discussion of First Nations cultural/national/material issues.

Otherwise, like nation, culture was treated as a given, and no one spoke of how general notions of culture were impacting the exhibition, the boycott, or even the discourse

⁵⁵ Rick Hill, "Sacred Trust: Cultural Obligations of Museums to Native People," *Muse* 6, no. 1 (1988): 32-37.

⁵⁶ James G.E. Smith, draft of a letter from Smith to Prime Minister Mulroney, November 1989. It is not clear if this letter was actually mailed to the Prime Minister. A copy of this letter was distributed through the Lubicon chain-letter system 24 May 1990, along with a report on Smith's dedication to the Lubicon people and a brief overview of his memorial service, following his untimely death 2 April 1990.

⁵⁷ See *Glenbow Project OCO '88* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives.

around either. Like nation, culture was treated as natural, as a general category of nature, and expressly of human nature.

Sixteen records in the discourse evoke culture as an entity—as something objective and concrete. Of these sixteen records, I classified fourteen of them as indirect expressions. Through tone and content these records conveyed to me how an author was conceptualizing culture. In the above quote from the Glenbow for example, I interpreted the words as an indirect expression of a cultural concept—as a shared human experience tied to place and land and learned through a social system. I categorized the sixteen records as being evenly divided in their references to Anglo/Western culture and ethnic/indigenous culture. However, conceptions of cultures in the discourse *in general* share many common attributes.

First, in 75% of the texts in this discourse, culture is presented as a shared human experience of values and beliefs. I derived this conclusion from the oft-expressed idea that the culture of a people can be displayed through exhibition format and can be discussed as belonging to a group of people. Both of these notions appear time and time again. The discourse also offers evidence that some of the authors firmly believe that ‘we’ can come to understand groupings of peoples, their values and beliefs, through exhibition displays. For example, *The Spirit Sings* was said to display the cultural character of Canada and to increase an understanding of contemporary Canadian Natives.

Second, in 63% of texts culture was understood as ‘something’ which can be expressed through the arts. I derived this conclusion from my data by focusing on the descriptions of the Olympic Arts Festival, *The Spirit Sings*, and the theater, dance and music productions conceived and performed according to Western tradition as a ‘cultural extravaganza.’ I also noted the fact that in the context of the exhibition, Native artifacts were considered and spoken of as artistic expressions of Native cultural traditions. The phrase “cultural traditions” was often utilized as a catch-all term which incorporated the ways of life and

the beliefs of First Nations peoples, the manufacture of ancient artifacts, and the practice of contemporary artistic traditions which were evidenced by dance and song.

Third, in 50% of texts culture was discursively constructed as the background and ancestral heritage of a peoples. My rationale for this interpretation is based on the fact that within the discourse it is implied that the original European roots of settlers were a large factor in determining the nation's culture today. This conception holds even though 'settlers' in Canada have been in continuous residence in some parts of the country for over 350 years, and in spite of the fact that some people of ultimate European origin may now have to go back ten generations to find a lineal ancestor who was an immigrant. Canadian culture and Canadian values were continually highlighted as evidence of a European heritage by terms such as 'Euro-Canadian' and 'White Anglo-Saxon.' In short, the discourse offered little recognition of the evolution of shared autonomous Canadian culture arising from people long residing in a common state; ultimate roots were emphasized instead. The discourse around Native peoples also stressed 'ultimate origins.' Everyday contemporary Native cultural lives were muted, or as in the case of issues relating to disempowerment and poverty, deprecated and placed outside culture. Continuity with long dead ancestors and an idealized image of First Nations cultures were emphasized.

Culture was conceptualized as being vulnerable in 44% of the texts. I have noted in Chapter Two that ethnic or indigenous nationalism often emphasizes cultural vulnerability as part of a rationale for political autonomy. But concern for cultural vulnerability is often also voiced with respect to indigenous or ethnic cultures by the official representatives of states and their funded re/presenters in museums, archives, national media and the arts. This concern was reflected in the discourse. It was strongly implied that certain extant conditions left cultures at risk. The Lubicon issues of losing an historically viable economy, their land, and hence their traditional way of life, were important instances of the connections between lost/losing culture and the disappearance of a peoples.

Strangely, as the connections between culture, custom and tradition are explicit in the popular culture lexicon, only 31% of texts evoked these connections in the discourse. Correspondingly, while the connections between the Lubicon's loss of land and their loss of culture were clearly articulated, these connections were not expanded beyond the immediate Lubicon situation. Thirty-one percent of the records, then, address these explicit connections between a culture and a place or land. Throughout the discourse, I found references to the fact that territorially bounded nations have cultures, and that they have cultures which *are* representable; they *can* be put on display or exhibited. Native cultures, in particular, were conceptualized as evidencing an intimate connection between people, nature and environment.

In only one quarter of the texts were cultures spoken of as the responsibility of the nation-state. Canadian culture was spoken of as being under the protection and control of the Canadian government. When First Nations were conceptualized within the discourse as nations within a nation, they were discursively awarded the same kind of protection over/for their cultures. In this scenario, the First Nations within the nation were seen as having the same cultural rights and privileges in connection with, or allied to, the Canadian nation.

Culture was spoken of as 'owned' or 'ownable' in one fourth of texts even though the authors of the discourse did not often stress that culture was signified by material objects. However, authors clearly articulated a concern over the fact that today's Native cultures are at risk, or at least disadvantaged, because an inordinate amount of their relevant, historical material culture is housed in (owned by) institutions to which contemporary Natives, in practical terms, cannot gain access. Museum personnel often spoke of this material culture as theirs, as for example when speaking of their responsibilities to protect 'their' objects as part of the patrimony of the larger nation. Thus the connections between material culture and the tension over ownership were palpable in the way issues of ownership were addressed, in the terms that were used to describe ownership, and through the backgrounds of the authors who spoke.

The idea that culture is transmitted and learned through socialization, and hence forms an integral part of an individual's identity, was addressed marginally (in about one-eighth of texts). I had expected to find some comments on how the culture of Native people is transmitted through their social systems and through the generations, especially in relation to material culture issues, and suggestions that culture laden objects can be used to transmit/signify values and beliefs. The false face mask issue spoke somewhat to these concerns. However, the discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings* addressed this issue in only two instances.⁵⁸

Last, language and religion were only marginally discussed as relevant to culture (in 6% of my texts). There was only muted, implicit recognition that language and formalized religion significantly interpenetrate a culture. Language issues that are highly publicized in other venues, such as the preservation of Native languages and their importance to the preservation of the culture, were rarely found in this discourse. The only instance where religion implicitly arose as a topic was in connection with Native culture. It was suggested that Native beliefs constitute a spiritual view of the world. The most direct connection between religion and culture came in the form of a statement which specified that some Native historical artifacts are considered sacred today and therefore should not be on display.

(1) Canadian Culture

My findings with respect to the questions I posed in order to discover 'what is Canadian culture' in this discourse, indicate that concepts of Canadian culture are strongly linked to

⁵⁸ Later, upon reflection, I realized that I could also have searched the data for allusions to learning *about* culture (or cultures) through social systems. Had I taken this route, I could have included all of the rhetoric in which it was claimed that the exhibition was an unprecedented opportunity to learn about Native culture. If I had formulated questions on this hypothesis and considered museums as agents of a social system, the statistics for 'discourse relating to learning through/about social systems' would certainly be much higher.

what were described as European and/or Western modes of thinking and values. Descriptive terminologies such as Euro-Canadian, Western, dominant, Anglo, and white, were often used to refer to Canada and Canadians. When the Lubicon and/or their boycott were the topic of discussion, the use of this type of terminology to refer to Canada and Canadians was frequent. For example, in many of his contributions to the discourse, Bruce Trigger reminded his readers of Canada's colonial past and criticized the nation of Canada for what he considers to be its present colonial attitudes, contributing, as he points out, to an 'us' and 'them' situation. In an essay titled "A Present of their Past?" he states:

At present Native People are alienated both from the material vestiges of their past that are kept in museums and from anthropology, which remains the study of Native People by EuroCanadians.⁵⁹

In an interview with Peter Gzowski of the CBC, Trigger clarifies the close associations between many governments and oil companies, and pointing to their dominant power he states that "they are destroying the way of life of native people at the present time."⁶⁰ In further comments that he made to a group at McGill University following an address by Chief Bernard Ominayak, Trigger challenged Canadians to think about the kind of society they want to live in by stating:

When we ponder how the Lubicon people should be dealt with, we ask nothing less than what sort of society we want to see in Canada as a whole. Is it to be a society built upon justice or injustice?⁶¹

Not all associations with a supposed European heritage were negatively framed. Canada's beginnings are an historical fact. The stories of colonization and the interaction of colonial and First Nations peoples were an integral aspect of the exhibition's theme. In a press release dated 18 March 1987, the Glenbow announced:

⁵⁹ Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 71.

⁶⁰ Bruce Trigger [in] "Share The Blame," with interviewer Peter Gzowski, *Vanguard* 17, no. 2 (April/May 1988): 15.

⁶¹ Bruce Trigger, comments following address by Chief Bernard Ominayak at McGill University, 13 November 1987, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

The exhibition will show to Canadians, both native and non-native, the finest surviving art objects from the time of early European contact to the period when European influence became pervasive.⁶²

Proponents of the Canadian national image at this time of Olympic celebration shied away from projecting the negative images of colonization, indeed from framing these historical events as colonialism at all. Instead, they engaged in the reconstruction and re/presentation of history. Beth Carter of the Glenbow for example, when discussing the interaction of Natives and Europeans at the time of contact, referred to the agents of colonization as “*early visitors* to North America [who] took away with them *mementos* of their travels in the form of objects made by Native people.”⁶³

Since the Canadian population is now a composite of the descendants of these First Nations, the European ‘visitors,’ and many other ethnic groups, and since multiculturalism is an official Canadian policy and law, I found it interesting to note that Canada was only marginally described as a ‘multicultural’ nation in the texts. The exception is constituted by Frank King’s previously mentioned opening address, which was the most direct expression of multicultural sentiment found in my data.⁶⁴

Canadian culture as a focal subject comprised only a small fraction of this discourse. In only 5% of the entire discourse were aspects or concepts of Canadian culture addressed. All of these I classified as being indirect. As I previously mentioned, these records contained an occasional or muted reference to multiculturalism as an official ‘Canadian policy’ and a ‘fact of Canadian life.’ For example, Dr. Feest observed for his European readership that “*The Spirit Sings* serves as a symbol of the ultimate integration of Native Canadian traditions into the polyethnic Canadian national identity.”⁶⁵ It seems ironic that a

⁶² Press release issued by the Glenbow, 18 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

⁶³ Beth Carter, “A Romantic in the Wilderness,” *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 9. My italics.

⁶⁴ Frank D. King, remarks from his speech at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

⁶⁵ Christian F. Feest, “The Spirit Sings: The Last Song?” *European Review of Native American Studies* 2, no. 1 (1988): 52.

direct reference to the polyethnic fabric of Canadian life should come from a European author.

Other discussions of Canadian culture were very similar to those relating to culture as a general concept. So rare were direct expressions of Canadian culture that I derive the following conclusions not from the minute examples which addressed this topic explicitly, but from my overall readings and impressions of the discourse. I therefore am less certain about my conclusions here than in any other area. In my view, Canadian culture appeared to be characterized and described by the derivations I discuss immediately below.

First and foremost, Canadian culture 'is' the nation. The logic behind this linkage appears to run along these lines: since this is Canada and we are Canadians, our culture is of course Canadian. Second, Canadian culture can be expressed or/and observed through the arts. Jane Edwards for example, spokesperson for the organizers of the Arts Festival, explained that they sought the advice of professionals from the community of Calgary and 'from across Canada, to help us plan what would be the best of our arts.' Their goals according to Anne George, writer for *Edmonton*, were to place an 'emphasis on homespun talent' allotting 40% of the budget to "spotlight Alberta artists."⁶⁶

The Glenbow, in designing their exhibition of "artistic traditions," was working with a mandate to represent Canadian culture through the Arts. This was clearly articulated in the parameters the Glenbow received from the OCO committee when they asked Duncan Cameron what he could do for them. Both the Glenbow press releases and the press releases from Shell Oil Canada give evidence of advertising campaigns that were grounded in interesting and pervasive analogies between the performing arts, Canadian cultural heritage, and artists. Shell Oil Canada refers to their corporate organization and Canadian art and artists as Canadian "natural resources." In the Special Edition of *Glenbow* (1988),

⁶⁶ Ann George, "Home Fires," *Edmonton* 9, no. 9 (January 1988): 28. George states: "What they devised was tantalizing enough to OCO that the \$3 million originally designated for the festival swelled to \$5 million, then to the current \$10 million."

Shell's two-page advertisement reads: "We support the performing arts because the cultural talent of Canadians is as much a natural resource as oil and gas and is of vital importance to the future of this country."

Canadian culture is also spoken of as a 'shared experience,' and there are implicit indicators that some Canadians deny or separate themselves from any allegiance to an ancestral heritage, specifically European. There is a clear sense of struggle with respect to the Canadian identity found in the discourse of some of the (white) Canadian authors in this discourse. While they may have European 'roots,' they do not understand themselves as Euro-Canadian, and distance themselves from a European connection. They see themselves as Canadian, and they critique themselves and others as Canadians, but they never explain, or attempt to explain, what the Canadian identity might entail. Christopher Hume, writing for the *Toronto Star*, offers evidence of the tension inherent in Canadian identity when he criticizes "European" stating, "the European arrival had a profound (and deadly) impact on native cultures" and he condemns Canadian citizens for what he refers to as the "hypocrisy of a society that celebrates a culture it has all but destroyed."⁶⁷

Canadian culture is described as 'ownable' or 'ours.' The above analogy made by Shell, which claims culture as a natural resource, is a striking example of the ownership of culture, and not incidentally of cultural objectification. Culture is a commodity. But not only Shell conceptualized Canadian culture in this way. Other phrases indicated that both heritage and art objects, signifiers of the essence of culture in this discourse, could be owned. Trigger indicates that he believes that culture can be owned when he argues that Native culture, along with the physical evidence of that material culture, belongs to Natives.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Christopher Hume, "Celebrating a Destroyed Culture," *Toronto Star*, 24 January 1988.

⁶⁸ Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta

But more often than not, Native history and heritage were considered to be part of the larger Canadian body, and claimed for Canada. This sentiment was clearly expressed by Joe Clark in his speech at the official opening of the exhibition:

Canadians wrongly think of this country as unformed and without history, but *The Spirit Sings* reflects the long history of the Native people. We're proud of the Native history in Canada, and it's very important that Canadians generally interested in the roots of this country come to see the exhibition.⁶⁹

Some of the concepts clearly articulated in connection with culture as a general concept were only marginally linked to Canadian culture. Elements of culture, such as its transmission through social systems, the importance of material objects as cultural signifiers or the significance of place or land, were not articulated as aspects of Canadian culture. There were also no expressed concerns of Canadian culture's (potential) vulnerability, no connections between language and Canadian culture, no links to custom/tradition or religion, and no-one expressed the notion that Canadian culture was the exclusive preserve of a small elite.

(2) *First Nations Cultures*

In 29% of the texts authors articulated concepts of Native cultures. Contrast this figure with the 5% of texts which contained discussions of Canadian culture. Not only was Native culture a popular topic in this discourse; comments in this area tended to be more explicit than were discussions of culture in general and of Canadian culture. I classified 13% of the total articulations of Native cultures as direct and 87% as indirect.

No explicit definitions of First Nations cultures were ever given, although Rick Hill's definition of culture certainly pertains to Native cultures.⁷⁰ Descriptive phrases of the

⁶⁹ Joe Clark, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, [in] *Glenbow* (Spring 1988), 20.

⁷⁰ Rick Hill, "Sacred Trust: Cultural Obligations of Museums to Native People," *Muse* 6, no. 1 (1988): 32-37.

cultural characteristics of First Nations were, however, abundant. These descriptions appear in fifty-seven records, or 20% of the discourse. First Nations cultures were repeatedly described as having a spiritual basis and characterized as being in harmony with nature. Harrison described their world as ‘integrally linked to the world of the spirits’⁷¹ and Hume explained that ‘above all’ the exhibition was ‘a portrait of a nation of peoples who lived in complete harmony with their environment.’⁷² Notions of wholeness and completeness, balance, unity with both secular and spiritual realms and therefore the universe and the immediate environment, figure prominently in these conceptualizations of First Nations cultures.

Statements made with reference to First Nations artifacts reinforced these ideals as illustrated in this descriptive statement by Ottawa *Citizen* staff writer, Nancy Baele:

they all believed in a world where humans and animals lived in harmony and where shamans used their power to invoke spirits. They shared a common outlook of a balanced universe where every living form and element was an important part of a harmonious whole. Instead of paintings and sculpture in the European tradition, visitors [to the exhibition] see clothing, weapons, tools, baskets, canoes—all rich in decorative significance, all designed to unite man with his environment.⁷³

In this same article, Shell spokesman Tony Stikeman is quoted as stating on behalf of his corporation:

We feel proud to be part of this show....Many who visit the exhibition will see the resilience, the spirituality and the harmony with nature that is part of the native people’s culture.⁷⁴

As these quoted passages illustrate, the discourse contains a strong sense of Native cultural-ecological integration, clearly stereotyping a distinction between holistic Natives and modern individualized Euro-Canadians. These passages further illustrate the oft

⁷¹ Julia Harrison, “The Spirit Sings,” *Glenbow Report* (1988): 7.

⁷² Christopher Hume, “Celebrating a Destroyed Culture,” *Toronto Star*, 24 January 1988.

⁷³ Nancy Baele, “Three Centuries of Native Culture,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 July 1988.

⁷⁴ Tony Stikeman [cited in] “Three Centuries of Native Culture,” by Nancy Baele, *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 July 1988.

expressed notion that First Nations cultures are continuous and that Native peoples have a distinctive set of admirable values and beliefs, which in their place were often spoken of as superior to Western culture.

Further evidence of the implicit admiration some authors felt for First Nations cultures I gathered from the adjectives they used to describe these cultures. Words such as rich, diverse, adaptable and resilient were commonly used to describe Native cultures and Native cultural traditions. This type of terminology was, in fact, first introduced into the discourse by the Glenbow when it outlined the themes of the exhibition:

- to present the *richness, diversity and complexity* of Canada's Native cultures as they were witnessed at the time of contact;
- to explore the common threads that link these cultures together to create a *distinctive world-view* and
- to emphasize the *adaptability and resilience* of these cultures in the face of the dominant influences of European cultures.⁷⁵

The 'ownership of culture' is another theme which arose repeatedly in the context of discussions of Native cultures. Parallel to those discussions that conceptualized First Nations as part of the Canadian nation, were those that spoke of Native cultures as being the heritages and cultures of both First Nations and of Canada. Stikeman, again speaking for Shell, poignantly captured Native history and culture for the Canadian nation when he explained, "We feel proud to be part of this show. We feel we are teaching part of our country's history that was unknown."⁷⁶ Frank Jones's title of his article, "Native Art Represents our Heritage"⁷⁷ conveys sentiments similar to Stikeman's.

The notion that First Nations cultures are expressed and expressible through the 'arts' dominated this discourse, being expressed in 54% of the texts. 'Arts' in this context should be understood as a general term and is inclusive of all kinds of artistic materials

⁷⁵ Julia Harrison, "The Legacy of 'The Spirit Sings.'" *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 7. My italics.

⁷⁶ Tony Stikeman [cited in] "Three Centuries of Native Culture," by Nancy Bacle, *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 July 1988.

⁷⁷ Frank Jones, "Native Art Represents Our Heritage," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1988.

produced through all historical periods. Certainly the artifacts in the exhibition were read as art and as concrete evidence of past and present 'continuous' Native artistic cultural traditions.

Contemporary First Nations art and artists, however, were not part of this discourse. The fact that there are many artists who claim First Nations ancestry producing works of art in Canada today in what would be considered the tradition of Western art, such as oil painting and sculpture, is muted in these texts. Instead, exceptional craft-like activities with symbolic ties to original cultures are placed in the forefront. Such things as moccasin making, quill design, tipi design, jewelry design, and beading; performances such as dancing and storytelling; and demonstrations such as food preparation, soapstone carving and mask making, were lined up for the *Celebration of Native Cultures*, Glenbow's answer to the participation of living Natives in the exhibition.⁷⁸ These events and their venues were well advertised, with the promise that "Native groups will present a variety of performances, demonstrations, and films interpreting their cultures and traditions."⁷⁹

The 'vulnerability of First Nations cultures' was another oft expressed notion, being present in 40% of the texts. It was evident to me that *The Spirit Sings* exhibition and the *Celebration of Cultures* performances were not widely accepted as testimony to the strength, resilience and adaptability of Native culture, despite the rhetoric surrounding both. Hume called the exhibition a celebration of "a culture...all but destroyed."⁸⁰ David Oancia, who reviewed the exhibition catalogue, stated: "This sumptuous book is a graphic, gratifying—and heart-rending—offering of relics of cultures that may well be on

⁷⁸ At least as far back as June 1986 it was recognized that Native involvement was necessary. In memos sent internally, Harrison and Hugh A. Dempsey discussed this need and wondered how best to implement such involvement. Eventually, that involvement came in the form of a liaison committee (made up of Native persons) which was set up to advise the Glenbow in the early stages. In a memo to Dempsey dated 9 June 1986, Harrison writes, "I think that the time has long passed when exhibitions about native peoples can be done without balancing the commentary and interpretation done by the curators with the commentary of native people themselves." However, these opportunities can hardly be considered as equal or even adequate opportunity to "interpret" their cultures and traditions in relation to the interpretive powers of the Glenbow and the guest curators of the exhibition. Memo found in Glenbow Archives.

⁷⁹ See anonymous, "A Celebration of Cultures," *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 20-21.

⁸⁰ Christopher Hume, "Celebrating a Destroyed Culture," *Toronto Star*, 24 January 1988.

the way to oblivion,"⁸¹ and John Goddard, also by way of catalogue review, poignantly wrote "the photographs and text bear no apparent relation to any living people."⁸²

That Native cultures are intricately interwoven with place and/or land (37%) and that cultural traditions linked to the land were passed on through the ancestors (32%) were also common themes. *Macleans*' reported that the exhibition "illustrates the historic attachment to the land shared by Canada's diverse aboriginal peoples."⁸³ An editorial in the *Calgary Sun* claimed "it reveals...the soul of the native community."⁸⁴

Tradition (27%), religion (16%) and the idea that culture is a shared human experience (24%), also factored more highly in discussions of Native cultures than in discussions of concepts of culture in general. Frank Jones, of the *Toronto Star*, spoke of one particular artifact (a woman's dress) as evidencing "a great artistic tradition" that "springs from a whole way of life that was magnificently in tune with nature." He not only found Native heritage to be composed of shared Native experiences, but he envisioned their "story" as significant "for the whole story of our human origins."⁸⁵ A school teacher whose grade four class visited the exhibition wrote to the *Calgary Herald*:

Their culture was the most religious and faithful in human history....We saw the traditions and masks, and amulets, that probably had been used, many years ago, with faith and sincerity....The hour sped by, and although we had not seen it all, we tasted that long-lost spiritual life the natives led. It was like magic.⁸⁶

The notions least expressed concerning First Nations cultures in the discourse were statements that connected these cultures to specific social systems (6%), that they were/are exclusive or elitist (5%) and/or that they were/are language based (5%).

⁸¹ David Oancia, "A Celebration of the Spirit," *Telegraph-Journal*, 16 January 1988.

⁸² John Goddard, "Forget Not My World," *Books in Canada* 17, no. 4 (1988): 20.

⁸³ John Howse, "Haunting Relics From the Native Land," *Macleans*, 25 January 1988, 54-55.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, "Glenbow Triumphs," *Calgary Sun*, 15 January 1988.

⁸⁵ Frank Jones, "Native Art Represents our Heritage," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1988.

⁸⁶ Erin Dudley, "Spirit Sings Touched Class," letter to editor, *Calgary Herald*, 22 February 1988.

Authors often appeared to be aware of the fact that there is not and never was one homogenous Native culture across North America. Of the eighty-two records which expressed concepts of Native culture, thirty-nine noted distinctions between Native groups. In contrast, only twenty-one spoke of an all encompassing, generic, Native culture.

It is important to note that the Olympic context of the exhibition, and the fact that *The Spirit Sings* was a presentation of Native cultures and artifacts, highlighted textual connections between culture and nation while simultaneously muting other concerns with respect to First Nations peoples. In particular, it is quite possible that the reason Native cultures were articulated as forms of artistic expressions was due to the context of the exhibition itself. Indeed, the Glenbow established the tone of a good portion of the discourse through their use of romantic and captivating phraseology to describe the exhibition from the planning stages to its inception. As previously mentioned, the media often followed suit, expanding and broadening the themes established by Glenbow staff.

Glenbow staff, for example, introduced the phrase “artistic traditions” in the title of the exhibition and then claimed that the exhibition would teach us about the cultures of Native peoples. Expanding this idea, the media then began to speak of “their cultural traditions.” Often, information put out in press releases by the Glenbow can be found repeated almost verbatim by reporters in their articles. Notice the similarity in the following passage from *The Art Post* to the Glenbow’s exhibition themes, themes that were rehearsed throughout all of their press releases and advertisements: “The exhibit celebrates the richness, diversity, and continuity of Canada’s native people, and also documents its resiliency.”⁸⁷ Native culture was often described in the discourse through the terms “rich” and “diverse,” both similarly initiated by the Glenbow.

⁸⁷ Pat Fleisher and Andrew Williams, “The Spirit Sings at the Glenbow,” *Toronto Art Post*, no. 1, 1 January 1988.

While it is true that many contributors to the discourse agreed with the notion that Native world-views are distinct from those held by other groups, the claim that First nations are “resilient” and “adaptable” met with mixed reaction rather than being taken as a given. Authors commented extensively on the fact that Native cultures are vulnerable and at risk, “all but destroyed” and “on the way to oblivion.” Authors’ perceptions that First Nations cultures are vulnerable, and stated opinions such as “all but destroyed,” point to the success of the Lubicon boycott in raising public awareness concerning the current realities experienced by First Nations. Mark Tait for instance, a staff writer for the *Calgary Herald*, reported on the findings of an interdenominational Christian lobby group that threw its support behind the Lubicon and their boycott. In his article, Tait quotes conference organizers of the “first annual policy conference of the Alberta branch of Citizens for Public Justice” as stating that the exhibition is intended to show Alberta’s

concern for and promotion of Native culture. At the same time, Alberta’s government rejects the Lubicon Lake band’s request for a reserve with an adequate land base to support their community and way of life, thereby contributing to the cultural genocide of the Lubicon band.⁸⁸

Recall that the vulnerability of nation and culture, particularly a nation’s culture, is extensively discussed by Richard Handler in his study of nationalism in Quebec. He examines the power of metaphoric language which describes a nation as a “living creature.” Handler posits that these metaphoric links between an inanimate concept and an animate body serve to establish the nation as a “living individual” and that once this transition in conceptualization is made,

it is possible to impute to it various attributes and actions. The nation can be shown to build, struggle, and create; it can be said to have a soul, a spirit, and personality; it can be treated as a friend or a parent. Most important, the metaphorical individual can be discussed in terms of its freedom to choose and its ability to control its own destiny.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Mark Tait, “Church Lobby Backs Lubicon Muscum Fight,” *Calgary Herald*, 26 April 1987.

⁸⁹ Handler 1988, 41.

Handler asserts that the tendency to anthropomorphize cultures and nations is a very general one. This conceptualization of nations as individuals is understandable in light of some of the central themes found in the *episteme* of Western knowledge. The concept of the individual and the individual's autonomous right to choose and right to achieve is powerful in Western thought and philosophy. Linking the concept of individual rights to a social structure through metaphor, powerfully imbues the social system with the same rights as those accorded to an individual.

If the concept of individualism is then combined with the deeply ingrained and dialectically constructed belief that a social system/culture deeply impacts the individual, in fact that in a sense an individual is his/her culture, and that a culture is the individuals who construct it, the metaphor, the body of (a) society becomes a powerful signifier of the bodies within that society. Thus, when a culture/social structure is spoken of as sick, dying, achieving, or striving, the individuals signified by that society may also be envisioned as sick, dying, achieving or striving.

Descriptions of First Nations cultures and life-ways in the discourse contain these metaphoric elements. As living entities, the potential fate of the nations and their cultures, their immanent danger and possible death, paralleled the fear that the Native peoples themselves could disappear. The term 'cultural genocide' used so often in the context of the Lubicon is such a metaphor. What this metaphor addresses is not only the ultimate demise of a society, but the deaths, the systematic murder of the individuals, with all the agony that that may entail. The threatened demise of the Lubicon culture, so integral to the lives of the Lubicon peoples themselves, threatened the simultaneous extinction of an entire group of people.

In a 1983 letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, The World Council of Churches makes the connection between the death of the culture and the deaths of individuals explicit when they state that continued oil exploration "could have genocidal consequences" for the

Lubicon due to the disruption of "their traditional lifestyle." The letter pointed out that the situation was:

desperate, crucial and urgent [as]...They know no other way to live. They have no money...many neither read nor write....Those who try to pursue a different lifestyle will both deny their heritage and break their traditional bond with the land....They are literally in a struggle for their very existence.⁹⁰

James G.E. Smith, long time advocate of the Lubicon, also argued in a 1987 article that the Lubicon's ability to maintain their traditional economy and their links to their land was essential to their survival. He stated, "The Lubicon Lake band...is facing destruction [because their]...traditional culture has a well defined environmental adaptation."⁹¹ In a letter supportive of the boycott he told his colleagues "The Band has become an 'endangered species.'⁹² Similarly, Bruce Trigger, speaking of First Nations, argued that Native peoples in Canada have limited ability to control their lives and destiny. "As a whole" he stated, "they remain the most deprived people in Canadian society."⁹³

Impassioned speeches, such as the above quote by James G.E. Smith, often described the vulnerability of Native cultures through the use of environmental metaphors. Smith states that the Lubicon Band has become an "endangered species" and Trigger affirmed that "Like beavers and pine forests, they are still regarded as something that was here before Canada began and that had to make way for the creation of the Canadian nation."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Dr. Anwar M. Barkat, Director, Programme to Combat Racism, letter from the World Council of Churches to Rt. Honorable Pierre Trudeau, October 1983, TMC. The date 'October 1983' is hand printed at the top of the first page. This organization has been a strong source of support and a vital lobbying force on behalf of the Lubicon. It appears that this letter in whole and in excerpts has made its rounds through the chain-letter system. It reads in part: "In the last couple of years, the Alberta Provincial Government and dozens of multi-national oil companies have taken actions which could have genocidal consequences."

⁹¹ James G.E. Smith, "Canada—The Lubicon Lake Cree," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1987): 61.

⁹² Memorandum from James G.E. Smith to R.W. Force, June 16 1986, Glenbow Archives.

⁹³ Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

⁹⁴ Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past?: Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 74.

These environmental metaphors, which are often found in conjunction with statements about the vulnerability of First Nations cultures, are also linked to Native spirituality. Writing for the Anglican publication the *Canadian Churchman*, Arnold Edinborough discerned many spiritual themes in *The Spirit Sings*.⁹⁵ In his exhibition review he spoke of Native cultures as cultures intimately linked to their land, their peoples dependent upon the land both for economic and spiritual sustenance. He called the exhibition a ‘hymn of praise’ exalting the ‘artistry and imagination of Canada’s Native peoples.’ Edinborough commented on the functional nature of Native artistry, noting that the carvings, clothing and jewelry on display were manufactured from elements found in their natural habitats and that the decoration and fabrication of the artifacts, while beautiful, also indicated ‘statements of rank and importance’ in the societies.⁹⁶ Like many authors in the discourse, he drew a close connection between Native culture, the spiritual world and nature, speaking of a ‘brooding power’ exuding from the artifacts and a ‘brooding presence of the Native spirit of this vast land.’

For native people [he continued], the land, its animals, its plant-life are all part of a cosmic wholeness. Some plants nourish, some plants cure, some plants kill. The same with animals. The properties of each have to be understood and a proper balance established between human needs and ecological continuity.⁹⁷

Due to the close connections drawn in the discourse between nature, the environment, culture and First Nations peoples, it is understandable that an imbalance in nature or the environment was understood as having dire consequences on a group of Native peoples and/or their culture. These linkages came across strongly in the discourse that surrounded the Lubicon boycott: the Lubicon land had been violated by oil companies and denied to them by governments; the Lubicon were thus at risk as their traditional practices of hunting and trapping had been stymied; the Lubicon were at further risk because they had

⁹⁵ Arnold Edinborough, “Exhibition an Exaltation of Native Artistry,” Toronto *Canadian Churchman*, 15 May 1988.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

been alienated from their land. Hence, the Lubicon people were vulnerable to extinction. A publication of the McGill University Faculty of Law reported that ‘Dozens of multinational oil companies moved in force into the area and deliberately sought to undermine the traditional economy’ and quoted Chief Ominayak as stating, ‘Oil companies have turned hunting and trapping trails into oil roads and posted no trespassing signs. Needless to say the game has been scattered and the resultant toll on the economy, diet, and health of the Lubicon is devastating.’⁹⁸

This manner of speech, in the discourse, serves to imply that a delicate balance exists between Native cultures and nature, especially where a deeply felt spiritual relationship with the land is spoken of, and presents Native cultures as being vulnerable in ways that Western culture are not. Neither concepts, ‘spirituality’ nor ‘harmony with the elements of nature,’ were connected with Western culture in this discourse. Certainly, no sense was given of Western society experiencing any sort of ‘balance,’ least of all with the environment.

This is an interesting disparity. I connect the above stated distinctions between First Nations and Canadian culture/nation with a number of popular culture perceptions of Western humankind and their environment. Special interest groups, particularly those that focus on current environmental issues, maintain that we live in a culture/nation which constantly negates the pressing issues of animal extinction and the depletion of our natural resources. Scholars like David Suzuki have repeatedly charged Western governments with turning a blind eye to the needs of this planet. Western technology is said to impose its cultures on nature; in other words, to subdue and control nature. Nature then, is vulnerable and at risk from cultures which impose themselves on it. Canada as a technological nation, and oil companies as instruments of technology, impose their culture on nature, controlling it, subduing it, and hence continually threatening its survival. In contrast, First Nations are said to live in harmony with nature. If First Nations cultures are represented as part of nature, then they, like nature itself, are vulnerable. Like nature, they

⁹⁸ Christine Dcom and Martha Montour, “Modern Genocide,” *Quid Novi*, 30 November 1987, 4-5.

are susceptible to the impositions of a dominant power. Conceptualizations of nature integrate the idea that nature is interdependent—just as the elements of original Native cultures are conceptualized as integrated and interdependent. These popular culture conceptions play an important role in the perceptions of, and linkages between, nature, spirituality and vulnerability.

Within the discourse, changes within cultures were often conceptualized as instruments of eventual destruction. Anthropologists have written that Native cultures, through their contact with Europeans, had experienced drastic changes that undermined their religions, kin systems and/or economies. Changes in any aspect of their social system triggered a chain reaction whereby the entire social system/culture was undermined and vitally altered. Elements of a culture, then, can be lost or altered when members of one group absorb, or more importantly are changed by, elements from another group of people, particularly when these absorbed elements are forcibly imposed. Then change occurs far too quickly. In the discourse, the survival of Native people through the colonial periods of rapid change (the historical period covered in the exhibition) was sometimes framed as 'adaptive,' but also as an alienation from their own 'true' culture. From this frame of reference Nancy Baele wrote:

Walking through the exhibition, it becomes apparent that as European contact increased, it became increasingly difficult for native artists to keep their art tied to their own beliefs. They began using sacred symbols to decorate tea cozies, or cigar cases. They sold miniature models of their boats to Europeans.

Artifacts throughout *The Spirit Sings* tell a story of power shifts, of acculturation as the Indians converted to Christianity and sent votive offerings to Chartres, France. There are many examples of native adaptability. They used white man's materials of wool and beads and made clothing in their own styles or decorated gunstock clubs with visionary images. The text panels tell grim tales of tribal decimation. The Beothuks were wiped out. Their pitifully few artifacts record how poor they were in the end."

"Nancy Baele, "Three Centuries of Native Culture," *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 July 1988.

Many of Canada's citizens have joined groups that are actively campaigning to force corporations and governments to take measures to preserve and protect the environment and to force them to exercise and impose controls over its use and management. The representation of Native cultures as environmentally linked has also led to suggestions that Native cultures are at risk and in need of preservation and protection. The need for the preservation and protection of Native cultures was articulated in a number of diverse ways in the texts. It was argued, for example, that Native people need more control over their cultural materials and that they should be able to prevent others from using their artifacts without permission. Likewise, the point was made that Native peoples should be able to prevent, or at the very least contribute to, the interpretation and exhibition of their cultures, cultures which are all too often re/presented from an outsider's frame of reference. The assertion was also made that Native peoples need more direct physical contact with their historical cultural materials, now often contained in public and private collections.

Rebecca Belmore's visual demonstration spoke louder than words. A performance artist of First Nations' ancestry, Belmore is known as an advocate for the revival of Native culture and spirituality. In an act of political performance art, Belmore hung a numbered artifact sign from her body and placed herself in the center of her artwork under a sign which read: "Glenbow Museum presents." Thus presenting herself as a display sponsored by Shell. Her overt message could be clearly read: if the destruction faced by the Lubicon did not stop, in the future the only way we will know Native people will be through museums.¹⁰⁰ But Belmore's performance also addresses distinctions that are made between ancient and contemporary Native cultures. Ancient Native cultures can be seen in museums; they are interesting and fascinating, they bring crowds to museum displays, they are noticed and validated. Contemporary Native cultures, however, are not noticed; they are muted, silenced, and exist on the margins of society. The cultures of the past overshadow the peoples of the present. In order to be noticed, Belmore's performance

¹⁰⁰ A photo of this performance entitled "High Tech Teepee Trauma Mama" can be seen in *Muse* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 20.

points out, they must be historically and artistically validated. While everyone was noticing the First Nations in the museum, what about the people outside? What about, for example, the Lubicon?

Belmore's political performance, and the distinction that she draws out between ancient and contemporary Native peoples, are mirrored in the discourse. My early readings revealed that the discussions around Native cultures contained some interesting interpenetrations of ancient Native cultures and contemporary Native cultures. Since the exhibition focused on Native artifacts produced in the early period of European contact, and conversely because the boycott focused on Native peoples who were very much alive, I thought it would be advantageous to formulate some survey questions that would distinguish between the conceptualizations of ancient and contemporary Native cultures expressed within the discourse. I soon discovered that it was impossible to explicitly distinguish between these two concepts; in many texts the authors spoke of both cultural periods simultaneously, indeed, often as the same cultures. However, my intention to distinguish between these concepts and my efforts to do so did reveal some interesting patterns. Below, I draw attention to and discuss some of my findings.

Eight-two records addressed concepts of either ancient Native cultures or contemporary Native cultures. Of these records, thirty-three addressed Native cultures explicitly, twenty-two addressed contemporary Native cultures and twenty-seven addressed both. It became unambiguously evident that ancient or traditional Native cultures were, as Belmore's performance stated, descriptively valorized. It was these ancient Native cultures that were portrayed as connected and grounded and described as rich, diverse, complex, adaptable and resilient. In contrast, contemporary Native cultures were often portrayed as disconnected and close to a state of ruin.¹⁰¹ Chief Bernard Ominayak¹⁰² recognized this

¹⁰¹ In all fairness it must be noted that most of these latter records included the Lubicon as a topic so are perhaps specific to one Native cultural situation.

theme early on in the Glenbow's preparations and drew the public's attention to contemporary culture loss by reflecting Belmore's performance in his statement: 'They come into our area, destroy our livelihood and then tell the world about rich native culture.'¹⁰³

Within the discourse there is both explicitly and implicitly expressed concepts of Native cultures which appear to evidence some historical biases on the part of the authors. Striking relationships are drawn between Native cultures and their historical time period, specific to artistic manifestations. Of the records that specifically addressed ancient Native cultures (thirty-three), most (79%) saw those cultures as integral to their art related traditions; only a few (10%) considered contemporary Native cultures to have an intimate relationship with their arts.

The ideology expressed in Belmore's performance, that contemporary Native cultures are muted, is explicitly articulated in a brochure which outlines the Lubicon struggle. It states: 'We can go to museums or libraries and reminisce about Native cultures and history, or we can help to preserve these cultures WHILE they are here.'¹⁰⁴ The Canadian *Tribune* also pointed to the ancient/contemporary disparities inherent in the exhibition/boycott situation when it stated:

The slick radio promotion for *The Spirit Sings* claims the exhibition is 'an exploration of the spiritual strength of Canada's aboriginal people.' The ad

¹⁰² Wendy Smith, "Glenbow Museum Faces Lubicon Boycott," *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986. Smith quotes Ominayak as stating "The irony of using a display of North American Indian artifacts to attract people to the Winter Olympics being organized by interests who are still actively seeking to destroy Indian people seems painfully obvious." On 15 July of that same year Lennarson sent photocopies of that article through the chain-letter system along with his own comments which stated in part, "the interests behind the Calgary Winter Olympics are the same as those aggressively seeking to destroy the Lubicon Lake people...That's how things are done in Alberta, all nice and civilized, by people with culture." Cover letter for chain-letter, signed by Fred Lennarson, 15 July 1986, TMC.

¹⁰³ Bernard Ominayak [cited in] "The Glenbow Affair: When the Cree Protested the Funding Source of *The Spirit Sings* They Stirred Up a Hornet's Nest," by Marybelle Meyers, [in] *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1988): 12-16.

¹⁰⁴ Brochure, "The Lubicon People," appears to have been written and distributed by the Committee Against Racism, Calgary, TMC.

is inadvertently correct—the past strength is to be found in the museum, the contemporary strength exists in the protests taking place outside.¹⁰⁵

Yet despite all the publicity given to the contemporary cultural demonstrations and exhibition, most of the discourse associated artistic expression with the more historic time period represented in the exhibition. Harrison herself noted that the exhibition was intended ‘to show Native cultures in a particular time period, to reveal the roots to those traditions and to show Native cultural diversity within Canada. This will give visitors a direct link to Canada’s continuing Native traditions that survive today.’¹⁰⁶

My survey indicates these ‘continuing traditions’ were spoken of in both the context of ancient (23%) and contemporary Native cultures (36%). Thus more than one-third of these references to continuing traditions were with respect to contemporary cultures. This referential disparity may result from a general agreement by authors that the artifacts on display had been created by the ancestors of present First Nations, or because the exhibition itself aligned the artifacts with ancient Native cultures. When Julia Harrison wrote ‘These objects reflect clearly the Native view of the world,’¹⁰⁷ she went on to suggest that we could understand ancient Native cultures through the artifacts. She connects both the contemporary and ancient views of the world through the artifacts on

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, “Sharing the Shame,” *Canadian Tribune*, 25 January 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Julia Harrison [cited in] “Appropriation: A Case in Point,” by anonymous, [in] *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 31.

¹⁰⁷ Julia Harrison, “The Legacy of ‘The Spirit Sings’,” *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 7.

display. Many people who viewed the exhibition claimed on the 'comment cards' and elsewhere that they could now do just that.¹⁰⁸

But why were continuing traditions seen as less of an aspect of ancient cultures (24%) than of contemporary (36%)? This may be because in the discourse it was often suggested that contemporary Native people retain some values and beliefs that are more than mere remnants of the historical past, in fact that the past nourishes the present. Professor John Clark of the University of Lethbridge wrote in his review of the exhibition:

If *The Spirit Sings* succeeds as an important research project, it is also successful in showing the variety of work from the cultural areas and stressing the consistency and continuity of belief of Canada's native people.¹⁰⁹

Some participants to the discourse acknowledged that cultures change over time and that this change is not necessarily one that implies degradation or elimination of a culture.¹¹⁰ However, the impetus for change is almost always articulated as an external element; there

¹⁰⁸ These anonymous comment cards have been retained in the Glenbow's archives. Due to a variety of reasons I did not elect to include them as 'discourse' for the purpose of the survey, but did go through a sampling of them. Harrison, on occasion, quotes from these cards as she did in: Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings: The last Song?," *The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 7, no. 4 (December 1988): 354-363. In this article she quotes one visitor as stating "If we were to live among all the people of the world with respect, we need understanding of other's cultures past and present. Thank you for one small step." And she quotes a Native person as writing "I am a Mohawk from Akwesasne and I enjoyed learning about other native peoples." Of interest is a student paper found in the Glenbow Archives which apparently surveyed and evaluated 520 of these cards. The author of this paper claims that of these, 56 claimed to have "an increased appreciation for native people and their situation" and that 56 claimed "I gained a greater appreciation for native people and I felt some sense of shame regarding our treatment of them." Angela Brayham, "The Controversial Spirit of the Glenbow Museum's Exhibit of Native Artistic Traditions," (student paper, 20 June 1988) Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁹ John Clark, "Spirit Sings Captures Close Link to Nature," *Calgary Herald*, 18 January 1988.

¹¹⁰ For example when Harrison was asked in an interview to comment on the accusation that the Glenbow was glorifying a dead culture she explained: "Fundamentally, what we hope to do with the exhibit is to show Native cultures in a particular time period, to reveal the roots to those traditions and to show Native cultural diversity within Canada. This will give visitors a direct link to Canada's continuing Native traditions that survive today." see anonymous, "Appropriation: A case in point," *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 31.

is no discussion of change which may arise from within a culture.¹¹¹ The Glenbow included the following statement in a press release on 19 November 1986.

This material has never been brought together before and will be an unprecedented opportunity for Canadians, Canadian native peoples, and visitors to the Olympics, to see the material evidence of native culture before excessive European influence.¹¹²

This statement released by the Glenbow articulates one of the basic tenets of the exhibition: that it was intended to provide evidence of the cultural exchange between First Nations and Europeans. While the statement gently implied that change in First Nations cultures had occurred due to contact and that there is a distinguishable difference between the past and present cultures, they chose to focus on these facts by presenting this theme as a positive look back, and linking this positive past to a progressive present. The suggestion is clear that First Nations peoples and cultures were strong and adaptable and that they had survived despite the influx of Europeans and European's ways.

In this same Glenbow press release, this idea of strong and adaptable peoples is clearly expressed through the metaphor of survival: "those cultures have survived into the present, to enrich Canadian life, in spite of what might be considered overwhelming obstacles." Overall, though, some authors questioned this survival both as a theme and as a past and present reality. Authors were far more commentary on the vulnerability of contemporary Native cultures (59%) than they were about ancient Native cultures (21%).¹¹³ It is of interest to note that almost all of the participants to the discourse assumed core sets of values, beliefs and behaviors respecting historic Native cultures. Moreover, these beliefs, values and behaviors are assumed to have been always there—

¹¹¹ This was certainly the case when discussing the Lubicon. Smith was very strong in his contention that their situation was the result of a discontinuance of their isolation due to resource extraction activities. For example he stated "The isolation that preserved the band ended when the Alberta provincial government...granted exploration and drilling leases." see James G.E. Smith, "Canada—The Lubicon Lake Cree," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1987): 61.

¹¹² Press release issued by the Glenbow, 19 November 1986, Glenbow Archives.

¹¹³ Perhaps this is because contemporary culture was seen as not having access to its artifacts. In the discourse ancient Native culture was asserted to be upheld by cultural objects in 24% of instances and contemporary in only 10%.

unchanging—as if during the thousands of years First Nations have occupied this continent their cultures have remained static and unchanging. There is almost no discussion of internally generated changes in historical Native cultures, or changes wrought by contact with other historical Native cultures.

Both ancient and contemporary Native cultures were conceptualized as intimately linked to place and/or land. Land was emphasized more strongly in connection with contemporary Native peoples. This reflects, of course, that ancient pre-contact peoples had full access to their lands, that they could carry out their economic, religious and other beliefs without interference, and it also reflects the fact that the Lubicon boycott was grounded in a land rights issue.

Ancient cultures were observed far more often to be comprised of several distinctive culture groups (or tribes) than were contemporary Natives (42% to 18%). This public awareness of there are many diverse ancient Native cultures may reflect that fact that the exhibition was categorizing the artifacts by tribal affiliation and by the geographic area assigned to those tribes, or subcultures. It may also reflect the fact that contemporary Native groups were at this time bannings together, presenting a unified front with respect to the Lubicon boycott. Individual Natives and Native organizations (local and national) across Canada joined hands and spoke in one First Nation's voice.

It also appears that artifacts and art forms are clearly distinguished as historical or contemporary in the discourse. Artifacts were linked to ancient cultures, while dance, art and craft were linked to contemporary Native cultures. Articles and advertisements which announced the exhibition, sharply distinguished between these sets of cultural markers. The exhibition was spoken of in the media as a celebration of Native cultures and a tribute to their resilience, while the artifacts on display were presented as concrete material evidence of the historic period of early contact. On the other hand, the media noted that five Natives would be in attendance to demonstrate their present culture. Mark Lowey of

the Calgary *Herald* clearly reveals the distinctions being drawn, in this discourse, between ancient and contemporary artifacts and art forms, writing:

The resilience of these Native cultures as they confronted European explorers, fur-traders, missionaries and settlers is portrayed through a carefully chosen collection of Indian and Inuit *artifacts*....

Complementing the show is a festival of contemporary native *art, crafts, dance and literature*...reflecting the creative expressions of native people today.¹¹⁴

The *Art Post* announced in the same vein with the same explicit distinctions:

The *art* [meaning the objects on exhibit] subtly reflects the unbalancing influence that Europeans had upon the long-standing harmony between the Indian and his natural and spiritual worlds....

[T]here will be a *Celebration of Culture* with performances and demonstrations by participating native groups and additional commemorative items such as *posters, pins and present day Native arts and crafts* will also be available at the Glenbow.¹¹⁵

The distinctions between past and present were thus clearly drawn: artifacts/art represented the past and were valorized as art and cultural markers of harmony, resilience, subtlety and spirituality, while song, dance, arts, crafts, posters and pins were presented as contemporary crafts; no valorizing or validating adjectives are applied to the latter grouping. But some of the contributors to the discourse seem to suggest that these later expressions of culture were nevertheless a *continuation of* historical cultures, thereby extending the Glenbow's notion of the resilience and continuity of Native cultures. Lowey does this by telling his readers that:

Visitors will be treated to dance, song, fashion design, games and story-telling. Demonstrations include *traditional* native food preparations, moccasin making, beadwork, quillwork, teepee design, soapstone carving,

¹¹⁴ Mark Lowey, "Native Legacy Comes to Life," *Calgary Herald*, 23 January 1988. My italics.

¹¹⁵ Pat Fleisher and Andrew Williams, "The Spirit Sings at the Glenbow," *Toronto Art Post*, 1 January 1988. My italics.

spruce root weaving and basketry, mask making, contemporary art, music and films.¹¹⁶

Anyone familiar with the artifacts on display at the exhibition would easily associate these modern demonstrations and displays with the more ancient cultures. More, they would link contemporary Native cultures and the demonstrated methods of artistic manufacture to the past, considering them to be remnants of a cultural past, which is what the Glenbow subtly intended.

A few contributors to this discourse spoke of distinctions between contemporary and ancient Native cultures in a different light. Specifically, Joan Ryan pointedly remarked that "Ancient artifacts tell nothing about contemporary cultures." To clarify the context of her remark let me explain that in her opinion, the 17th, 18th and 19th century artifacts gathered together by the Glenbow 'have no context any longer because they're so far removed from contemporary cultures.' She credited the Glenbow with providing an opportunity to see "some nice artifacts" but said that she herself found it hard "to see how contemporary Indians would link into this unless...[documentation on the pieces]...was available....Indians, like ourselves," she concluded, "like to look at beautiful things. I've talked to a few people who said they may come because they're interested in seeing what some of the old objects looked like and how they were made. So they are looking at the exhibit as 'objects,' not as parts of their own cultural context."¹¹⁷

While Ryan voiced a minority opinion, she was not alone. Recall that James G.E. Smith told his colleagues that he could "see no relevance between this exhibit and the Olympic games"¹¹⁸ and John Goddard claimed that the material in the exhibition catalogue bore "no apparent relation to any living people...[because]...the pictures and descriptions of exotic

¹¹⁶ Mark Lowey, "Native Legacy Comes to Life," *Calgary Herald*, 15 January 1988. My italics.

¹¹⁷ Joan Ryan [cited in] "Appropriation: A Case in Point," by anonymous, [in] *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 33.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum sent from James G.E. Smith to R.W. Force, 16 June 1986, Glenbow Archives.

clothing, tools, and artwork tell of a past, not of a present or future."¹¹⁹ But these views were certainly not representative of the discourse in general.

Distinctive Native cultures were linked to specific places and historical times throughout this discourse. Native cultures at the time of contact were associated with conditions, values and circumstances that contrasted sharply with those of contemporary times. This notion was first initiated by the Glenbow, who focused their story line on Native cultures at the time of contact, then claimed that Natives have distinctive world-views. They subsequently set forth to educate the public through their (Glenbow's) perspective. Some of the distinctions and similarities between ancient and contemporary Native cultures brought out by other authors reinforced the Glenbow's positions. But although the Glenbow continued to romantically connect the ancient and contemporary Native cultures, and to present contemporary Native lives as remarkable survivals from the past, the disparities in the contemporary lives of some First Nations peoples blocked an overall acceptance of the Glenbow's positions.

Distinctions convey powerful meanings through contrast. Gaps in this discourse invited the drawing of distinctions between Native cultures (past and present) and contemporary Canadian culture. The force of the distinctive differentials between these cultures centered on spirituality. Native cultures were portrayed as spiritually grounded, rooted in their deep reverence for the land and the environment. Even the material/concrete worlds of Native cultures were considered spiritual—the material worlds of the ancient First Nations were described as worlds of spirits, a notion certainly reinforced by the exhibition's title. This spiritual aspect of Native cultures was often sharply contrasted with the more concrete and pragmatic world-view of today's Canadians.

This idyllic view of ancient Native spirituality and cultures was injected into the lives and cultures of contemporary Native peoples. Similarities and parallels drawn in the discourse connect ancient and contemporary Native cultures. These connections paint a picture of

¹¹⁹ John Goddard, "Forget Not my World," *Books in Canada* 17, no. 4 (May 1988): 20.

essential continuity. Stated concepts of continuity assert that while Native cultures have superficially changed over time, have adapted to the negative stresses of contact, they have heroically survived in spite of tremendous odds—essentially they are the same cultures today. Today's Natives have, stated Cameron, "deeply rooted cultural traditions."¹²⁰

The criteria set out by the Glenbow for the orientation film (which could be viewed by visitors prior to entering the exhibition space) indicate that the Glenbow had planned early on to develop this concept of cultural continuity. From internal memos dated 15 July 1986, I learned that recommendations regarding this film suggested that its content include:

- Aspects of contemporary Native life and narrative of how Native people are generally viewed.
- European contact and domination.
- Archaeological evidence of Native origins in Canada [and]
- Native theories (through legends) of their origin.¹²¹

Mark Lowey reported on this film (as the exhibition space was being prepared by the Glenbow's chief conservator, Fred Greene) and provides a vivid description of its overall content. Lowey writes:

In the film, a grandfather talks to his grandson about Napi, the Old Man of Blackfoot legend who created man and woman from earth. The young Indian boy journeys into the wilderness on a vision quest, searching for gods to guide him through life. Then white men come from across the sea and change his world. "We adapted to these changes, but our ways and beliefs are still with us," says the grandfather.¹²²

Such content was designed to link the past continuously with the present. The Glenbow further strengthened their emphasis on the continuation from past to present through their

¹²⁰ Wendy Smith, "Glenbow Museum Faces Lubicon Boycott Threat," *Calgary Herald*, 17 May 1986.

¹²¹ Memorandum from Olympic Exhibition Working Group (Julia Harrison and others) to Duncan Cameron, Hugh Dempsey etc., 15 July 1986, Glenbow Archives.

¹²² Mark Lowey, "Experts Start Installing Flagship Exhibit," *Calgary Herald*, 5 December 1987.

presentation of *A Celebration of Native Cultures*, which took place within the Glenbow's space. This presentation was run as an adjunct to *The Spirit Sings*, and visitors to the exhibition and its historic artifacts could choose to view contemporary First Nations artistic expressions and traditions either before or after they visited the exhibition. Through this interpenetration of the ancient and the contemporary, visitors could experience these diverse 'worlds,' freely drawing their own comparisons and conclusions. As I noted above, the Glenbow advertised *A Celebration of Native Cultures* by stating that: "Native groups will present a variety of performances...interpreting their cultures and traditions." Any visitor hearing or reading this statement before viewing the exhibition would be predisposed to conceptually link the past and present and see relationships within them.¹²³ Again, due to the stress the Glenbow placed on the theme of cultural continuity, there is ample evidence in the discourse that the Glenbow intended for such relationships to be drawn. In the *Heritage Link* article, I picked out the following statements:

- The relevance of this material today—to Canadians in general, and to the descendants of the people from whom this materials was collected—was the impetus behind the idea to do an exhibition...of native materials.
- Their cultural traditions have survived in some areas after 400 years of extensive contact.
- These objects reflect clearly the native view of the world.
- There is now ready access to the records of this important part of Canadian heritage for Native and non-Native scholars alike.¹²⁴

Other authors contributed similar notions to the discourse. John Clark told readers that the exhibition was successful in showing the "consistency and continuity of belief of Canada's native people."¹²⁵ *Kainai News* reported that the exhibition "was a tribute to Native people" and that some natives now "wished they had taken in the displays and learned a little more about their own roots and their own people."¹²⁶ The *Stettler Weekly* reported

¹²³ See anonymous, "A Celebration of Native Cultures" *Glenbow* (Special Edition): 20.

¹²⁴ Anonymous, "The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples," *Heritage Link* 3, no. 1 (January/February 1988): 11-16.

¹²⁵ John Clark, "Spirit Sings Captures Close Link to Nature," *Calgary Herald*, 18 January 1988.

¹²⁶ Marius Dahin, "Spirit Sings - a Tribute to Native People," *Kainai News*, 17 May 1988.

that the exhibition was a celebration of “the richness and diversity of Canada’s Native cultural traditions” and that the “resilience of these Native cultures as they came under the influence of European colonization is portrayed through the rare Indian and Inuit art objects” while the “vibrancy of [traditional and contemporary] Native artistic expressions” could be viewed by taking in the *Celebration of Native Cultures*.¹²⁷

Thus, although distinctions between the past and present cultures were certainly brought forward, Native artifacts were seen by many contributors to the discourse as integral to Native cultures and definitely relevant to contemporary society. Contemporary Native “artistic expressions” such as “dance, design, clothing, food preparation, and literature” were linked by some authors to traditional Native heritages.¹²⁸ Ruth Phillips, one of the guest curators, made such a connection when she explained her view of the scholarly contribution the show would make toward the study of Native art:

The exhibition shows us how many similar practices there are now in contemporary art. In Native art there was body painting, decorated costumes and appeals to the senses through the sound of rattles on moccasins. There are many connections with performance artists today.¹²⁹

IV First Nations Material Culture in the Discourse

Now I must consider how the artifacts were treated within the discourse. I structured my survey questions relating to the artifacts to determine just how (or if) Native material culture related to the concepts of nation, First Nations within a Nation and culture. I began by devising questions that would allow me to distinguish between objects that were referred to as art and those that were termed material culture. Next, I attempted to identify whether these art objects or material cultures were understood as signifiers of Canada’s heritage or the heritages of First Nations. Last, I structured the survey to uncover any

¹²⁷ Anonymous, “The Spirit Sings: Largest Ever Exhibit Presented - Glenbow,” *Stettler Weekly*, 23 March 1988.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Ruth Phillips [cited in] “The Spirit Sings, a Discordant Voice,” by Nancy Baele, [in] *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 January 1988.

additional themes and topics that were directly associated with the artifacts and to identify how the artifacts were described.

(A) Material Culture: Signifiers of Nation and National Culture

In 37% of the discourse, the historic objects that were solicited for loan by the Glenbow, or the actual artifacts that were on display at *The Spirit Sings*, were the topic of discussion. Of the records that spoke about these artifacts, 63% referred to artifacts as cultural material and 30% referred to them as art. The art versus craft debate has become a topic of serious contention in art and museum circles. It is not an objective of this study to contribute to that debate to any large degree; nor will I focus on whether the materials should be labeled art or craft. Rather, my objective is to discuss how these artifacts were referred to and how they were described in this discourse.

First let me explain how I drew my distinctions. It must be admitted that my criteria are arbitrary and to a large extent informed by definitions generally accepted by Western art and ethnographic scholars. As many of the authors to this discourse were museologists, artists, anthropologists or media critics, I felt that these definitions could be discerned as underlying much of the discourse. Thus I feel that my use of them to distinguish between art and material culture aligns with the underlying notions discernible in the discourse itself.

Accordingly, I decided that when an author spoke of the artifacts using the term art and/or was concerned centrally with the artifact's physical appearance, medium, shape, color and form, that I would consider this a reference to the artifacts as art. When an author spoke of an object or objects according to their context in Native cultures, their function or meaning or as tools/signifiers in understanding Native cultures, I considered this type of reference as part of the category I had labeled (ethnographic) cultural material ('craft' in some circles).

The Glenbow described the artifacts that would be on display at *The Spirit Sings* as art from the planning stages of the exhibition to its conclusion. In the exhibition design proposal, dated 21 August 1986, I found the following statement:

The installation will be kept simple. Objects will be exhibited essentially as 'art' objects in neutral settings (non-distracting) allowing the objects to demand all the attention of the visitor.¹³⁰

In a press release the Glenbow again identifies the artifacts as art by announcing that the exhibition:

will open with fanfare on January 14 with 665 rare Indian and Inuit art objects from collections around the world.¹³¹

The Glenbow designed the exhibition space and display cases in a 'formalist style,' the kind of display that is commensurate with styles utilized in fine art galleries. Objects were placed so that they could be viewed 'in the round,' and the use of subtle lighting techniques accented their aesthetic features. As noted in a study by Lis Stainforth,¹³² the Glenbow combined this formalist technique with aspects of the type of contextualist displays usually found in anthropological museums. The exhibition staff appended text panels and labels around many of the artifacts. In many cases they also utilized a diorama type of display, reminiscent of the styles first advanced by Franz Boas. Through the use of color, light and sound, the Glenbow staff attempted to re/create in the museum an environment reminiscent of the natural environments, or the context in which the objects had originated.

These combinations of traditional art and ethnographic display techniques created a hybrid display environment which contextualized the artifacts being viewed as both art and cultural material. The discourse parallels this simultaneous understanding of the material

¹³⁰ Internal report titled "The Spirit Sings: Exhibition Design Proposal," 21 August 1986, Glenbow Archives.

¹³¹ Press release issued by the Glenbow, 18 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

¹³² Stainforth (1990).

cultures on display. While some authors focused on the aesthetic qualities of the artifacts, many of them also linked these art objects to Native cultures and values. Nancy Baele did this when she observed:

Never before have curators had the luxury of being able to choose, from all over the world, pieces that are so aesthetically fine.¹³³

In this statement Baele conditions her readers to conceptualize the artifacts as art by noting the curator's concern with aesthetics. But as she continues she intertwines their artistic qualities with their cultural value:

In addition to being beautiful the objects tell the history of the people, of what they did before they came into contact with the white man and how their art changed after the Europeans came.¹³⁴

Paula Gustafson, who has made a career of studying and writing about Native art and craft, was adamant in her review of the exhibition that the objects be considered art and their creators, artists. While in the survey I categorized her article as conceptualizing the artifacts on display as art, she does not separate the artistic quality of the objects from their cultural relevance and utility. In the concluding remarks of her review she stated:

Everywhere we look throughout this historical collection—from the sleek lines of the canoes and kayaks to the versatility of the ulu knife—we marvel at how each item reflects a designer's hand adapted to both culture and homeland. In the process of making the skill became an art form.

Perhaps we are a little surprised to admit what fine sculptors, designers and craftsmen native artists were—are.

The two Northwest Coast stone masks—one all-seeing, one blind—are qualified proof of native artistry. Between them they express the totality of life; complex, mystifying and durable.¹³⁵

In actuality, as the quotes above clearly reveal, it is extremely difficult to separate art from function, utility and historical relevance, particularly when objects serve as simultaneous

¹³³ Nancy Baele, "The Spirit Sings: A Discordant Voice," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 January 1988.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Paula Gustafson, "Baskets and Bags," *Calgary Herald*, 9 January 1988.

signifiers of art and culture, or, as here, artistic culture. Drawing distinctions between art and craft becomes highly relevant when it comes to placing a market value on artistic materials and when interpreting them for display purposes within the Western system of art appreciation and art history.¹³⁶ But when it comes to their role as signifiers of national culture in the context of this discourse, I am not convinced that distinctions between art and craft/material culture (the category under which ethnographic items often fall) were relevant.

Handler¹³⁷ points out that all kinds of cultural materials are utilized to evoke a sense of identity or community within a cultural group. Tangible artifacts of human manufacture that are symbolically imbued can be as diverse as fine art such as paintings or sculpture; architecture in the form of a peasant's cottage or public monuments skillfully designed by trained architects; or factory-manufactured kitsch and handicrafts. Intangible cultural manifestations, such as traditions, beliefs and standards and semi-tangible signifiers such as festivals, foods, dance and song combine with tangible artifacts to become cultural markers which validate a nation. As Handler notes, no one object is intrinsically more or less worthy or able to serve as a signifier of a nation. That some objects are conceptualized by an elite 'other' as more representative or more worthy to represent the 'other' is the result of the interaction of beliefs and values between the culture being signified, the signifier (object) and what the signification means to the viewer (those who gaze), who in many cases not only looks, but buys.

No participant in the discourse questioned the worthiness of the material cultures on display as cultural markers. Controversy arose over their signification. While many authors agreed that the artifacts signified the Canadian nation, Canada's 'right' to use them was questioned. I had anticipated that at least one author in the discourse would have posed the pertinent question: 'are Native artifacts markers of First Nations national

¹³⁶ Should the reader wish to pursue these distinctions see: Duffeck 1987; Harrison 1987; Hill and Nicks 1992; Lippard 1990; Martin 1991; Mullin 1992; Phillips 1993; Stanley 1989.

¹³⁷ Handler (1988).

consciousness or of Canadian national consciousness?" But this question was never directly posed. Even so, the discourse offers clear statements that will allow me to discuss whether the artifacts on display were conceptualized as signifiers of the Canadian nation and national culture.

(1) First Nations Material Cultures and the Canadian Nation

The theme underlying *The Spirit Sings* was one of metaphoric repatriation: to bring First Nations material cultures 'home.' It is not surprising, then, that the artifacts on display at the exhibition were often identified as belonging to both Canada's heritage and to First Nations' heritage in the discourse. Indeed, as my analysis proceeded I found it difficult to distinguish whether or not an author conceptualized the material cultures on display as signifiers of the Canadian nation or of First Nations. The artifacts were repeatedly spoken of as 'Canadian Native materials.' Julia Harrison established this phrase by stating that Glenbow proposed "to ensure the exhibition includes all aspects of Canadian Native traditions."¹³⁸

As closely as I could determine through my survey, 29% of the time the cultural materials were asserted to be Canadian. Cameron, for example, referred to the artifacts as 'Canada's national treasures' when he explained to the curatorial team that the exhibition would provide an opportunity "that Canadians had never had...to view [these materials]...all in one place at one time."¹³⁹ Sixty-eight percent of the time the cultural materials on display were spoken of as First Nations' materials. Moira Farrow, writing for *The Vancouver Sun* spoke of them as "Native Indian art objects."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Julia Harrison [cited in] "Old Treasures Coming Home for Olympic Arts Fest," by Patrick Tivy, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 1 March 1985.

¹³⁹ Duncan Cameron, remarks recorded in the minutes of a meeting held 17-18 October 1983 in Ottawa, [in] *Glenbow Project OCO '88* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁰ Moira Farrow, "Boycott Fails to Stop Stunning Display of First Peoples Art," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 January 1988.

In this portion of my thesis I am interested in discussing the material cultures represented within *The Spirit Sings* in terms of re/presentation and as cultural markers, rather than in terms of ownership claims—a discussion I leave for Chapter Eight. The artifacts on display were often spoken of as Canadian signifiers and were used to discursively symbolize and portray the Canadian nation's lively history and its rich and diverse culture. In the planning stages, Harrison clarified for the curators that in the context of the Olympics "the exhibition would reflect an aspect of the national character of the country and would appeal to an international audience." The minutes of this meeting read: "it was pointed out that art created by the native peoples of Canada is unique and makes a significant impact when exhibited internationally."¹⁴¹ This unique exhibition, then, was clearly designed to illustrate the fundamental uniqueness of the nation of Canada, and to show the visiting Olympic nations the cultural uniqueness of Canada through an exhibit which "makes a significant impact." Recall that Frank King's (Chairman and CEO of OCO' 88) remarks at the exhibition's opening clearly indicated that he also considered the artifacts as representative of Canada and its culture when he stated:

We wanted to show the rich cultural heritage of this great country which extends—it's not a surprise to any of you I know—to over 125 different cultures and backgrounds that are active and enriching our community everyday.

It would not have been possible to have reflected this rich cultural past had we not done something which displayed the history of the first people—the native people of our country.¹⁴²

Shell followed suit and again conceptualized the First Nations artifacts on display as signifiers of the Canadian nation. Their early press release¹⁴³ stressed the historical aspects of Canada's past and validated Canada as a nation whose historical roots extend far back in time thanks to "Canada's first peoples," as did their later media campaign materials:

¹⁴¹ Julia Harrison, remarks recorded in the minutes of a meeting held 17-18 October 1983 in Ottawa, [in] *Glenbow Project OCO' 88* (1984), Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴² Frank King, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴³ Press release issued by Shell, Shell press packet, n.d., Glenbow Archives. This particular release was included in the materials that Glenbow distributed to museums throughout the country.

The exhibit will give Canadian and international visitors a chance to go back in time to the world of Canada's first peoples, the world that existed when Europeans first arrived.¹⁴⁴

As illustrated, the material cultures on display at *The Spirit Sings*, while acknowledged to be First Nations cultural materials, were conceptualized as being brought 'home' and as signifiers of the Canadian nation and the historical/cultural and national roots of "125 different cultural backgrounds"¹⁴⁵ by many of the contributors to this discourse.

(2) Material Cultures and First Nations

As my analysis of the discourse proceeded there was no question in my mind that the artifacts on display were understood by many of the discourse participants as signifiers of Native cultures, and often as emblematic of a First Nations' collectivity. I have summarized three important signifying themes that surrounded the cultural materials on display: [a] physical evidence of (ancient) First Nations peoples, [b] validation of (especially ancient) First Nations cultures and [c] identification of First Nations cultures.

Native artifacts were often directly asserted to be physical evidence of the existence of Native culture. In fact, as the survey indicates, in half of the texts that centered around Native artifacts there was some implication that Native cultures were validated by or identified with the objects on display. Harrison nicely sums up the interpenetration of the signifying themes: evidence, validation and identification. She clearly indicates that the artifacts on display are direct physical evidence of the existence of First Nations cultures and states:

This exhibition tells of the richness and diversity of native traditions in this country.[validation]....And it points out that there is no one (native) culture but many cultures.[evidence, identification]. We also want people to recognize the adaptability and resilience of the native cultures. [validation,

¹⁴⁴ Shell Oil Canada, two page advertisement found in the center of *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988).

¹⁴⁵ Frank King, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

evidence] Early on, there was an adaptation to the European influence, but there was never a loss of their own sense of identity." [validation, identification].¹⁴⁶

The theme of validation is an important one, not just for First Nations people but for the linkages made between the Canadian nation and First Nations material cultures. In order to create a Canadian history *through* the histories and cultures of First Nations peoples, the need to validate the histories and cultures of First Nations is of paramount importance. Citizens of a Nation want to point to their past as not only unique, but as something special. The textual creation of the continuity of a Canadian nation *which arises* from the pasts of First Nations, necessitates that the past can be shown as historically present, as continuous, as validated and as identifiable.

The discourse also offered evidence that 'lots' of material artifacts = lots of culture = advanced/vital/artistic cultures. Conversely, the lack of cultural material highlighted a temporal decline of Native peoples and culture, emphasizing again the importance and significance of material objects to cultures. Indeed, one particular adjective, 'surviving' was applied to both Native cultures and artifacts. The theme that the surviving artifacts were evidence of (ancient) Native cultures—cultures which, indeed, survive *through* those same artifacts—metaphorically paralleled the theme that the First Nations peoples who had created them had also survived to today. Themes parallel to these arise and then diverge within the aforementioned theme, historical continuity. Basically the premise running through this discourse is that past artifacts have survived into the present and that the rich traditions of the past can be seen as rich traditions today. Therefore, the First Nations peoples who had created these artifacts have also survived, *but their cultures, while adaptable, had changed*. In this light, the rich and creative artistic traditions of the past were often seen in contemporary terms as depleted. This distinction between contemporary and ancient Native peoples, drawn through signifying artifacts framed within the themes of survival and historical continuity emphasizes the distinctions that were being drawn between past and present First Nations peoples.

¹⁴⁶ Julia Harrison [cited in] "Native Exhibit Opens," by anonymous, [in] *Edmonton Sun*, 14 January 1988.

These parallel themes were introduced by the Glenbow within the framework of historical continuity. In fact the themes of historical continuity and the continuity between First Nations groups were central to all of the Glenbow's press releases and in the correspondence Glenbow staff had with the media and with other museums and colleagues. For example, Glenbow staff stated that the exhibition would:

explore the common threads that link these cultures together which create a distinctive world-view, and to emphasize the adaptability and resilience of these cultures in the face of the dominant influences of European cultures.¹⁴⁷

Harrison explains that the *Celebration of Native Cultures* was organized to "complement this historical focus" by allowing 'native peoples to present a variety of contemporary cultural expressions to the public,' thereby connecting the past to the present.¹⁴⁸ The Glenbow also announced in at least one press release that the exhibition would show:

the finest surviving art objects for the time of early European contact...[and that].... The exhibition celebrates the continuity of native cultures.¹⁴⁹

The survival/historical continuity theme, both with respect to artifacts and First Nations peoples, was quickly adopted by the press. Statements such as 'Canadians and visitors from around the world will have the opportunity to view the finest surviving Indian and Inuit art objects' introduced the exhibition and the concept of surviving artifacts, and metaphorically First Nations, to the public.¹⁵⁰

When a large number of Native organizations threw their support behind the boycott and participated in a media and letter writing campaign against the exhibition, they claimed to

¹⁴⁷ The reader may notice that this is from the three themes of *The Spirit Sings* that Harrison explains 'evolved' as the exhibition plans were made. see Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings and the Future of Anthropology," *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 6-10.

¹⁴⁸ Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings and the Future of Anthropology," *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 6-10.

¹⁴⁹ Press release issued by the Glenbow, 18 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Ruth Saari, "The Spirit Sings," *Vernon Canadian*, 1 December 1987.

represent First Nations peoples on a national basis. The Assembly of First Nations, for example, issued a press release which referred to the artifacts as “our art and sacred objects,” and that:

in every region of Canada, First Nations lands and jurisdictions still face serious threats from vested economic and political interests. We have solutions, but what we desperately need are the opportunities to present them. *The Spirit Sings* is a national embodiment of our concerns, and therefore a legitimate vehicle for expression and discussions.¹⁵¹

As the Glenbow holds in their collections artifacts which derive from many First Nations groups, and as *The Spirit Sings* was an exhibition which displayed ancient artifacts from most well known First Nations groups, it is understandable that contemporary First Nations peoples responded as a group with a common and united front (which solidified their international stance). Spokespeople from these alliances, and people, either singly or representing other organizations, took the position that Native peoples should be able to exert a measure of control over their own cultural materials—sometimes at a pan-Canadian level.

Bruce Trigger took this position in his letter of resignation from his position as honorary curator of ethnology at the McCord Museum. He addresses his concern that the McCord Museum (and others) had made the decision to honor the Glenbow’s request to loan First Nations artifacts despite Native requests to the contrary, stating:

If the treasures of the past mean so much to museums, the welfare of their creator’s living descendants should mean no less.¹⁵²

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) attempted to deal with the ethics of material culture displays that re/presented a still living and vibrant peoples. ICOM’s *Resolution No. 11* stated that “museums should avoid using ethnic materials in any way

¹⁵¹ Press release issued by Assembly of First Nations, 27 April 1988, TMC.

¹⁵² Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta

which might be detrimental to the group that produced them.”¹⁵³ Their resolution seemingly suggests that there is an improper way to display cultural materials and that doing so has the potential to do irreparable harm to the living representatives of those who made any such artifacts. ICOM’s resolution stopped short of the identification of what would constitute harm; by default lack of definition left the interpretation of the resolution to their (individual) membership. The Canadian Ethnology Society attempted to remedy this definitional gap, and provided an expanded version of *Resolution No. 11* for their members. They directly related *Resolution No. 11* to the Lubicon “struggle for recognition” and decided that as an executive they, and by extension their membership, stood in opposition to *The Spirit Sings*.¹⁵⁴

In the discourse it is clear that the cultural materials on display were integral to, and were often thought to signify, Native cultures as a whole. At times this connection of artifacts to culture contributed to the notion of First Nations as a collective identity, or ‘a’ nation. The artifacts/cultural materials thus assisted in establishing the image of First Nations as distinct and autonomous (within the larger Canadian state) by providing visual and cultural markers of a nation. It is interesting to note that in this historical event, the material cultures which signify the ‘roots’ of the Canadian nation are the same material cultures which signify First Nations as a Nation(s) within a nation.

V Some Observations

At times, due to the context of the Olympic Games, a strong nationalistic flavor permeates this discourse. Each participant to the discourse was seemingly aware that an international

¹⁵³ Anonymous, “Resolutions of the XVth General Assembly of ICOM,” *ICOM News: Bulletin of the International Council of Museums* 39, no. 4 (1986): 15.

¹⁵⁴ President Michael Asch, form letter from CESCE addressed to museum directors, 14 December 1987, TMC. Of interest, Michael Ames took great exception to this action and wrote to Asch, noting that the society’s interpretation was not the same as “the president of ICOM nor the chairman of the International Committee of Museum Ethnology (ICME)” and that in fact “the chairman of ICME has loaned...artifacts from the museum he directs in Bremen, West Germany.” Letter from Michael Ames to Michael Asch (President of CESCE), 5 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

audience was at hand; participants often seemed to be aware that they might be participating in a historical moment—writing history.

The Olympic context and the nationalistic emotions it often elicited makes my analysis of the concepts of nation and culture even more interesting. In hindsight, it may seem staggering that no one thought to ask how notions of culture and nation were having an impact upon the discourse as it was developing, but this only serves to reinforce the extent to which both concepts were treated as natural and taken as axiomatic givens.

Even so, from the information I have provided I can certainly make some observations about the way that culture and nation were understood. First of all, as I have indicated, the participants to the discourse did not find it necessary to discuss or even ask what Canadian culture is, even though it was the Canadian nation which was said to be displayed through First Nations material cultures. Through these discussions it became obvious that the contributors to this discourse, and by extension perhaps Canadians in general, consider 'culture' as something which we all have, don't identify, but do and can possess.

The participants, however, did discuss in some detail the aspects and merits of Native cultures. Themes of survival and historical continuity permeated the discourse. Cultural markers, especially *The Spirit Sings* artifacts, were identified as signifiers of Native spirituality, evidencing a close connection to land/place and the vulnerability of First Nations peoples.

Throughout this discourse 'change' is identified as a threat to vulnerable cultures. The notion that cultural change is threatening caused some of the authors to suggest that some cultures or groups (especially First Nations) within Canada need protection and preservation. Even though there were suggestions in the discourse (particularly by the Glenbow) that cultures inevitably experience change over time, this 'inevitability' was not portrayed as a natural occurrence but rather the result of harmful external influences. The Lubicon issues reinforced the conviction, held by some of the authors, that external,

imposed change was a causal factor in cultural deterioration and that either external intervention or withdrawal of the causative factor (in this case governments and oil companies) was required to restore a social/cultural balance.

Certainly in this discourse, culture is conceived of as something which signifies who we are both to ourselves and others. In this event signification took place through symbolically meaningful cultural markers which were displayed to the self and others. In general these cultural markers took a wide variety of forms: from material culture/artifacts to demonstration/performance, from beliefs to values. These markers not only signified or represented the nation and culture, they also assist in perpetuating national and cultural ideas/ideals. There was no question that through displays 'we' reinforce an image of 'us' as a collective or group and thus validate our larger imagined human community, whether that community is a political, bounded nation or an ethnic/indigenous one.

Through the Olympic Arts Festival, Canada was presented as a fundamentally unique nation by way of the material cultures of the First Nations. It appears clear from the discourse that Canadian identity is something which is difficult to define. It is equally obvious that most of the participants to the discourse conceptualize their roots as Canadians, not Europeans, but grounded in *this* country of Canada, and hence with/in First Nations groups. First Nations historical cultures were essentially co-opted and claimed as Canada's heritage and culture—a shared heritage.

Contemporary Native cultures were sometimes grouped together and described as being in a ruinous state, or as pale images of original cultures, even though there is much evidence to the contrary. The state of contemporary cultures reinforced the claims of participants who advocated that controlling measures should be taken (by the state) in order to protect cultures and peoples. This opinion, that some cultures and peoples can be and should be state-protected, reinforces the popular view of culture as something over which we can exert some measure of control, something which in fact can be owned. Obviously, this

concept permeates our paradigms of culture and nation. In the next chapter I focus on many of these above concepts as they related to issues of ownership and control.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Owning and Controlling Heritage

I Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the concepts of the ownership and control of heritage which were expressed in *The Spirit Sings* discourse. I interpret these notions within the context of the wider discourses on nationalism, culture and the representation of culture in museological contexts. Subsequently, I draw attention to the symbolism inherent in the concrete practical control of artifacts and discuss the power hierarchies embedded in both 'talk' and decision making.

A persistent question arising from *The Spirit Sings* discourse concerns the ownership of a culture or a heritage. Are nations, be those nations actual or imagined, politically recognized or linked by ethnic/indigenous bonds, said to have certain 'rights' to their culture(s)? In particular, are nations asserted to have the right to exercise or impose measures of control in cultural areas? Bruce Trigger and other participants in the discourse argued that First Nations within Canada should have the right to determine how 'their' cultural materials are used and that institutions should recognize that right by accommodating First Nations' interests. Trigger's assertion draws out the question: 'Who owns culture?' Specifically, in this discourse, who owns First Nations cultures? As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, First Nations' cultures, heritages and histories were claimed for Canada by a significant (and powerful) number of diverse bodies.

As I paid attention to the question of control as it was articulated in this discourse, I quickly noticed that notions of control surfaced on at least two levels. I have chosen to call these two levels, 'symbolic control' and 'practical control.' Practical control refers to the concrete ability of a person/institution which holds or 'owns' cultural objects [1] to govern the access of others to these objects [2] and to utilize the objects as they see fit. In Canadian society, and under Canadian law, ownership carries with it an explicit bundle of

rights. However, decisions that are made with respect to the use and ownership of cultural objects, that is how practical, concrete control is implemented, carry deep symbolic implications. On the symbolic level, those who own or hold material cultures also, indirectly, have power over the associated cultures. Museums, for example, have the power to determine how 'their' objects will be interpreted and re/presented and to make many other kinds of decisions respecting the cultural artifacts in their collections. All of these activities and decisions can be made regardless of their source culture. Given the close association of material culture and the culture of a people, this power over artifacts can easily be equated with having power over the culture which the artifacts represent—and by extension the peoples themselves. In fact, it quickly became apparent that in this discourse institutional governance over objects symbolized a type of paternalistic domination over the descendants of the peoples who had created the artifacts on display at the Glenbow. The association between certain cultural objects and specific cultures appeared so strong, and carried such emotional overtones, that the ability of an individual or institution to deny access to these material cultures was equated with curtailing access to the culture itself. Such conceptualizations on the part of authors and the corresponding concrete struggle taking place (due to the boycott) for actual and symbolic dominion over the artifacts destined for loan, ensured that debates with respect to the ownership of heritage took on strong emotional overtones.

In the discourse, material cultures were spoken of as something over which people, institutions, groups or the state can/do have some measure of control, underlining once again Handler's point that cultures are objectified. Seventy-one percent of texts addressed issues of ownership and/or control, from a number of diverse perspectives. But the primary focus with respect to ownership and control was on the artifact/art pieces under discussion. Opinions with respect to the ownership and control of artifacts were often informed by notions linked to the vulnerability of cultures and potential culture loss.

Of the texts that addressed issues relative to the ownership and control of heritage, 68% also included the Lubicon boycott of the exhibition in their discussion and 41% exchanged

views on the rightful access to artifacts. Smaller in number, but equally important, were those texts that questioned the appropriate interpretation of cultures within a museological setting (25%). These latter documents often raised the issue of who had the right to speak for whom. The politics of sponsoring cultural events were discussed in 21% of the texts.

Issues of ownership and control were associated with a number of important other themes, the Lubicon land claim in particular. The Lubicon's rights to control their own destiny and to limit resource extraction from their land were often metaphorically linked with the rights of First Nations to govern their own cultural resources and to participate in the interpretations of their own cultures. As the discussion over rights of control and ownership continued, it quickly became apparent to me that the conflicting claims of ownership and control of the artifacts were deeply interpenetrated by discussions of power relations generally, and of conflicting value systems. For example, Glenbow staff who claimed rights of ownership over their artifacts and partial rights over 'Canadian' objects in international museums (through the metaphoric theme of repatriation) came into conflict with international museums, who similarly claimed rights of ownership over their artifacts, in particular the right to decide if they would or would not loan them. First Nations spokespeople asserted symbolic ownership of all of these artifacts, whether in Canadian or international hands, and they activated their claims to rights of ownership (or co-ownership) by asking international and national museums not to loan any artifacts for the purpose of the exhibition.

Decision makers and spokespeople for all of these groups rather uniformly asserted that they had the right to make decisions with respect to the artifacts in question. The fact that ownership of the artifacts was backed by possession, particularly with respect to the museums involved, resulted in frequent discussion of the right to exercise ownership and control. In this case, those who monitored power and control understood the issues and aligned their loyalties around the exhibition and the boycott quite differently from those who were struggling for power, control and access.

II Articulation of Ownership and Control of Heritage in the Discourse

(A) Whose Artifacts are They?

When the French and British governments were in the process of colonizing what is now Canada, objects highly relevant to Native material cultures were collected and taken to many parts of the world. Few of these early objects remain intact; some were of fragile manufacture and others were not preserved properly or entirely lost. The objects that now remain to represent the very early phases of contact are primarily in the possession of Western European collections. As Harrison observed, many of these objects found in overseas collections are not duplicated in Canadian collections, which were generally founded at later dates.¹

The Spirit Sings' story line was conceptually rooted in the metaphoric 'repatriation' of early objects of First Nations manufacture from foreign museums back home, to Canada. Therefore, the exhibition was founded on, and dependent upon, artifact loans in order to play out its selected theme. The temporary loan of artifacts by international museums was thus imperative to the exhibition's success. The recognition on the part of other states that these artifacts are in some way relevant to 'Canada's heritage' clearly facilitated the loans process. Seeing themselves as cultural guardians, museologists are normally extremely reluctant to let their most prized 'possessions' travel—especially to another continent. However, in the spirit of Olympic cooperation and under mutual recognition that these First Nations cultural artifacts were, in fact, part of Canada's patrimony, the international museum community was, initially, very open to lending their artifacts to the Glenbow.

It is important to note that the First Nations artifacts requested by the Glenbow were also spoken of as part of the *loaning nation's* patrimony. In this regard, it must be stressed that these objects also signify aspects of the histories of the lending nations, which in turn often point to important aspects of their national identities. For those nations that took part in

¹ Julia D. Harrison, "Across the World and Back," *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 13.

the colonization of Canada, the objects in their museums tell stories about their historic past. Therefore, museum representatives in other countries could, and did, claim strong ownership over the artifacts which the Glenbow had requested to loan. Ironically, these nationalistic ownership claims were founded on the same logical formula—nations = their cultural objects—that Canada and the Glenbow were using to establish a parallel (albeit metaphorically cloaked) connection to these same artifacts.

Under the spirit of the Olympics which professes international cooperation, international museums recognized Canada's parallel claim to their Native American Indian holdings. In the early stages of the exhibition's preparations it appeared that their cooperation with the Glenbow would be quickly forthcoming, unless a very significant mitigating factor figured into the decision making process. This mitigating factor arose when the Lubicon boycott was announced. International museums instantly found themselves in a position where they had to make decisions relating directly to the validation of First Nations' claims with respect to First Nations' artifacts—claims parallel to those made by Canada. First Nations spokespeople asserted that the objects held in international museums were in fact first and foremost First Nations' patrimonies. Therefore, they could legitimately ask the international community not to lend them. In these requests First Nations asserted that their ownership/control claim should take precedence over Canada's, in essence requiring international museums to make a choice with respect to the issue of patrimony: who had 'more' rights to these artifacts? Whose patrimony deserved greater recognition?

Not only international museums were faced with this ethical and moral decision. Canadian museums also received requests from First Nations groups asking that they not participate in loaning artifacts to the Glenbow. At the time of the exhibition and boycott, Bruce Trigger had just been appointed as honorary curator of the McCord Museum. He claimed to have resigned from this position when he could not reconcile his conscience with the McCord's decision to honor their loan agreement. In his letter of resignation he explained his own position and validated First Nations claims:

In coming to my decision to resign I strongly reaffirm my belief that museums play an important role as the custodians of a major segment of our common national heritage. That means however, that museums are not merely the custodians of objects but have a sacred responsibility to ensure that they are not used in ways seen as harmful or prejudicial to any group whose heritage is in their custody (this conforms with the 1986 ICOM resolution that ethnic artifacts should not be used against the interests of the ethnic groups that produced them). Above all, in the words of Ross Langford, an Australian Aborigine, museologists must not treat the heritage of such groups as their "playground." There is no way in the modern world that a museum can claim immunity as a cultural institution from the political implications of its policy decisions.²

Throughout the discourse, Trigger argued exclusively on behalf of what he perceived to be Native interests. Through his arguments and appeals, he clearly illustrated that he believes that honoring Native interests would lead to both a more enlightened museology and a better, more inclusive Canada. Trigger takes the position that the artifacts on display at the exhibition are integral to past Native cultures and that as integral aspects of those Native cultures, today's Native peoples should have the last say in how those materials are used. "Native people," he stated, "cannot be expected forever to stand at the end of the line; their interests to be considered when everyone else's have been satisfied."³

Trigger pointed out that the First Nations have rallied in support of the Lubicon, and have openly declared their position to honor the boycott. Given this widespread support, the decision to honor the First Nations request *not* to loan artifacts to the Glenbow seems straightforward to Trigger. In expressing his rationale he noted the inequities of Canadian society and the lack of autonomy that today's "First Peoples" have over their lives, and not incidentally, over their material cultures:

Sensitivity to the use that is made of the heritage of the Native Peoples of Canada is especially important. If the treasures of the past mean so much to museums, the welfare of their creators' living descendants should mean no less. It is a national disgrace that almost 500 years after the first Europeans

² Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

³ *Ibid.*

explored the shores of Canada, the descendants of its first inhabitants should remain more marginal to our our [*sic*] national life, more politically powerless, and more impoverished than any other ethnic group...[W]hen native organizations representing the vast majority of Native People across Canada support the Lubicon Band in their request that museums around the world boycott this exhibition, I believe that it is the responsibility of museums to take this request seriously. If so many representatives of Native Peoples are united about this issue, it is surely the duty of museums to respect their judgment and honor their request for a boycott. It is significant that many museums in the United States and Western Europe have already decided to withdraw from this exhibition. By joining them Canadian museums can take a positive and wholly appropriate step in helping to end the colonial relationship that disgracefully continues to characterize Canada's treatment of its Native Peoples. Doing this will help to promote the spirit of "national reconciliation" that is proclaimed as a current goal of Canadian political life, but which was not extended by the Meech Lake Agreement to embrace our country's Native People.⁴

In response to Trigger's letter of resignation, the McCord Museum's directors outlined their position and explained their rationale for supporting the exhibition. Their statement, which reflects the sentiments expressed by other institutions who supported the Glenbow, reads in part:

The Board reaffirms that the McCord is a strictly cultural institution, and it is inconsistent with its mandate to take political stands on specific disagreements between or among various groups, governments or specific segments of society.⁵

The McCord Museum Board took the position that they act as guardians of 'all' cultures, thus they could not align themselves with the politics of special interest groups. In the following statement they expand and reaffirm their vision of the responsibilities of their role:

The McCord Museum of Canadian History is a cultural institution devoted to the preservation and study, diffusion and appreciation of Canadian history.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ McCord Museum, statement by the McCord with respect to Bruce Trigger's letter of resignation, 28 October 1987, from the private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University Of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

An important part of its mandate is to make available to the general public and specialized researchers its collections of artifacts and documents which record a very broad spectrum of Canadian history.⁶

The McCord thus took the position that the artifacts in their possession are the patrimony of Canada and that they are its 'keepers,' with full authority to make decisions with respect to its 'collections of artifacts and documents.' The constant references in this statement to their mandate: preservation, study, diffusion, appreciation, artifacts, documentation, are all made in connection with Canadian history.

They further commented on their position with respect to the boycott and their commitment to loan to the Glenbow:

The Board is satisfied that the lending of 34 artifacts by the McCord to the Glenbow-Alberta Museum is entirely within the normal procedures and operations of the Museum, and that such loan was arranged within the usual procedures of the Museum, and within the normal activities of the curatorial staff of the McCord. The participation of the McCord in the exhibition "The Spirit Sings" is consistent with its mandate, and in no way implies a bias in the outstanding land claims disputes.⁷

The McCord Board explicitly enters an 'apolitical' and 'non-partisan' plea through their claim that the loan of their artifacts "in no way implies a bias in the outstanding land claims disputes." Their stance is in fact naive. By loaning First Nations artifacts to the Glenbow, the McCord Board re/asserted their power over past First Nations material cultures, and in so doing lent strong support to Trigger's claim that the past "is the possession of those in power."⁸

Trigger's position is a very comprehensive one. He attempts to make it plain to museologists that they control the histories, the interpretations, and the physical

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 71-80.

dispositions of the physical, material cultures they hold, and that, therefore, they hold symbolic power over the descendants of these peoples. Through museological re/interpretations, museums staff re/possess the present through the past; they wield the power of narrative construction. Expounding on this power relationship, Trigger cautioned museologists that "the role of museums as depositories of Native cultural heritage must be rethought," and asked:

How can museums which are run by EuroCanadians claim to be the custodians of Native heritage on behalf of the entire Canadian nation so long as Native People are excluded from proper membership in that nation and have not even received full recognition of their inalienable aboriginal and treaty rights?⁹

Trigger pointed out that "conservative professional attitudes," such as the one taken by the McCord Museum, are rationalizations which maintain the status quo and that such a "position does not satisfactorily resolve the issue of what the relation should be between Native People and the surviving material heritage which has been alienated from them by anthropologists and museums."¹⁰ He emphasized his own position by quoting Tony Hall, stating:

I would assert today...that colonization requires the return of the management of that heritage to Native People, whatever the consequences. No matter what is their ontological status, it is wrong to underestimate the importance of old ceremonial objects in giving a sense of legitimacy to contemporary political processes. As Tony Hall has eloquently pointed out in a recent letter to me: "*If Aboriginal organizations cannot even exercise a degree of jurisdiction over the material culture that remains to reflect the course of their own history...what kind of real possibilities do they have to exercise their own self-government? Seen in this way, old items created by Aboriginal artists and artisans could have great significance in helping to add a sense of legitimacy and continuity with the past, in the decision-making processes of contemporary organizations.*"¹¹ The repatriation of Native culture is a demand that may win widespread public and ultimately government support, long before there is such support for

⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁰ Bruce Trigger, "Reply to Michael Ames," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 87.

¹¹ Tony Hall [cited in] "Reply to Michael Ames," by Bruce Trigger, [in] *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 88. My italics.

significant enhancement of political and economic rights of Native People. Under these circumstances, it is not merely "another form of colonial appropriation" to encourage the curatorship of existing collections by Native People.¹²

Throughout the discourse, Trigger continued to maintain that Native peoples are the only ones who can authentically decide whether the exhibition is in their best interests or not, writing:

There is a growing realization that only Native People can speak for Native People and that only Native People have the right to decide what is in their own best interest.¹³

But there were others in the discourse who claimed to know First Nations interests better than did First Nations peoples themselves. This certainly seemed to be the Glenbow's position. Throughout their press releases and in their correspondence with other museums, Glenbow staff members repeatedly stated that the exhibition would be 'good' for Native peoples and for Canadians, especially in their description of the merits of the educational aspects of *The Spirit Sings*.¹⁴

There can be no question, then, that the exhibition was repeatedly said to be serving Native interests, even if many Native peoples themselves thought otherwise. The Glenbow presented the exhibition as a medium through which to increase Canadian's awareness of Native peoples and their cultures, which in turn it was claimed would lead to greater cross-cultural understanding. In their approaches, politicians and museologists appeared to be of like mind. Ralph Klein, then mayor of Calgary, was quoted in a Calgary newspaper:

¹² Bruce Trigger, "Reply to Michael Amos," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 87.

¹³ Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 76.

¹⁴ Such views were in marked contrast to those of Bruce Trigger. see Rachelle Henderson, "Museum Won't Back Boycott: Native Expert Quits In Protest," *Montreal Gazette*, 29 October 1987. Here Trigger is quoted as saying: "The only people who can honestly decide whether that particular exhibit is or is not in their interests are the native people themselves." see also: Mark Lowey, "Boycott rejected; Curator Resigns," *Calgary Herald*, 29 October 1987. Here Trigger is quoted as stating: "I think that native people themselves can be the judge of whether (artifact) material is being used in their interest."

those who argue against the exhibition are missing the fundamental point....The show will help Calgarians, Canadians and international visitors to the Olympics appreciate the rich diversity and resiliency of native cultures....To see is to know and to learn and perhaps to understand.¹⁵

The Mayor seemed to have no second thoughts about why an exhibition of First Nations artifacts should be utilized to help "Calgarians, Canadians and international visitors," rather than the First Nations peoples or the Lubicon. In his speech at the exhibition's opening he reiterated his sentiments, and this time extended them to include his opinion that the ancient artifacts 'bring with them the present-day potential for one culture to better understand another.'¹⁶

In a form letter to museum directors, Duncan Cameron urged them to quickly negotiate their loan agreements, stating that the 'exhibition and its adherent programs including lectures, films, open forums, and other public avenues of response will emphasize the strength, vibrancy and unique nature of Canada's Native heritage...[and] it pays tribute to a culture in danger of being destroyed.'¹⁷ Like many others similar to it, this statement implies that the exhibition will 'help' cultures 'in danger'—vulnerable cultures. The statement also implies that the Glenbow 'knows' how to help these vulnerable cultures, even if those connected with these cultures do not necessarily recognize or want this help.

In the discourse references to the 'uniqueness' of Canadian Native heritage, as in Cameron's above, carry important significations. First, they serve to co-opt Native culture for Canada, as I have discussed. Second, claims of uniqueness are a prerequisite to establish a distinctive set of roots for the Canadian nation (having co-opted First Nations) that can be shown to international visitors. Third, they imply that there is but a single First

¹⁵ Mark Lowey and Wendy Dudley, "Indian Chiefs Show Anger at Opening," *Calgary Herald*, 15 January 1988.

¹⁶ Ralph Klein, remarks from his speech given at the official opening ceremonies of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

¹⁷ Form letter from Cameron to museum directors, 25 August 1986, Glenbow Archives.

Nations culture—one that can be easily absorbed into the Canadian state. This tendency to lump diversity into a singular ‘other’ is common in nationalist discourse.

Further, claims of uniqueness emphasized the importance of the exhibition to Canadians and the importance of the artifacts to the exhibition. Cameron drew upon these and a number of popular conceptions regarding culture, particularly emphasizing Native cultures’ vulnerability and emphasizing that the artifacts were unique cultural symbols of the Canadian nation. Through his stress on these themes he warned museum directors that the decision of museums not to loan would simply result in the Glenbow’s selection of another theme for the exhibition and the loss of an opportunity to ‘help’ vulnerable cultures. He wrote:

If the Glenbow Olympic exhibition was changed from a focus on Canada’s Native cultures to an exhibition of contemporary art, for example, the absence of a Native-oriented exhibition would go unnoticed. An opportunity to draw attention to Canada’s Native people would be lost. As we discussed with the Lubicon people, the Glenbow exhibition can be used to achieve a positive result as it pays tribute to a culture that is in danger of being destroyed....[The exhibition’s Olympic connection] will draw attention to the real concerns of Canadian native peoples as it is in the context of the exhibition that the richness and depth of Canada’s Native culture will be emphasized. And that is something that we are all working hard to achieve. I would ask you to reflect upon this when considering our loan request.¹⁸

George MacDonald, Director of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, found the exhibition just ‘too important to respect a native boycott,’ and therefore felt he could not support the Lubicon/First Nations. He told one reporter that although he ‘believes that natives [!] should have the right to determine what is portrayed about their cultures and should be full partners in the preparation of any exhibition using their artifacts...the importance of bringing a show like this does not allow us to have one group speak for all native peoples of Canada.’¹⁹ Of course, one group alone was not speaking for all groups

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ George MacDonald [cited in] ‘‘Museum Head Rejects Boycott of Aboriginal Artifacts Show,’’ by Wendy Smith, [in] *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 April 1988.

here, as umbrella organizations like the Assembly of First Nations had already announced their full support. In essence, MacDonald seems to be stating that while he believes that Native peoples should be ‘full partners,’ in his view museums have the final say. MacDonald also seems to imply that he knows what is good for First Nations peoples in spite of what any one group of them might say.

For Shell Canada it was the ‘strong educational and cultural program incorporated as part of [the] exhibition’ which attracted them as a sponsor, as they expected it would ‘lead to greater public awareness of Canadian Native heritage and as a result, a better understanding of the contemporary Native issues in our country.’²⁰ Canadians would be ‘richer...as the result of this display.’²¹ By implication, any museum holding-out was socially irresponsible and blind to the fact that by continuing with the exhibition in spite of the boycott the Glenbow was contributing to the greater good of First Nations.

Reporter Mark Lowey describes the conditions surrounding the loans of artifacts and the Lubicon boycott, then allows his readers to assess the importance of the exhibition through quotes from Glenbow staff. In this article Duncan Cameron is quoted as stating, ‘This is an exhibition of great international importance and artistic significance,’²² while Julia Harrison affirms that ‘she hopes that visitors will gain greater insight into the Native view of the world...[and] come to appreciate that difference.’²³

In a press release dated 18 March 1987, Cameron establishes the Glenbow’s position and strongly asserts that the exhibition ‘is the most ambitious and complex museum exhibition project undertaken in Canada in recent decades’ and that he regrets that ‘an exhibition

²⁰ Jack MacLeod, Shell Canada’s President and CEO [cited in] a press release issued in Ottawa by Shell, June 1988, Shell Archives, Calgary.

²¹ Frank King, Chairman and CEO of OCO’ 88, remarks from his speech given at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

²² Duncan Cameron [cited in] ‘Native Legacy Comes to Life,’ by Mark Lowey [in] *Calgary Herald*, 23 January 1988.

²³ Mark Lowey, ‘Native Legacy Comes to Life,’ *Calgary Herald*, 23 January 1988.

which we see as socially responsible and important to a better understanding of Canada's native cultures has been caught up in a political dispute between a native band and governments."²⁴ Whatever the merits of his educational claims, his assertions concerning the impropriety of mixing museum work and the "political" are rife with irony. The very existence of publicly-funded modern museums is based on political and historical decisions which designated these national institutions as the keepers of a nation's patrimony, and hence of important cultural signifiers. Moreover, all significant representational activities involving peoples, cultures, nations and types of people have the potential to affect those peoples' lives. As such they are eminently political.

As I have previously discussed, the moral and ethical issues surrounding the exhibition, the boycott and the loaning of artifacts provoked many assertions of distress in the international museum community. Recall that Torben Lundbaek of Denmark brought the matter before the XVth General Assembly of ICOM (International Council of Museums).²⁵ It was not the question of the ownership of cultural materials that was addressed by ICOM, perhaps because that would have created significant political repercussions throughout the world. Instead, discussions of the boycott and the exhibition were limited to the issue of adequate interpretation or re/presentation.

The ICOM's response to this whole political matter was to partially validate First Nations ownership claims, and to partially confirm First Nations' need to have some governance over their material cultures. *Resolution No. 11* states that the manner in which cultural materials are used or presented by museums must not be offensive to the living cultural representatives of those materials. The fact that the issue was discussed at the ICOM conference at all, indicates that some international museum representatives found the ethical and moral issues posed by the exhibition and boycott deeply troubling. The resolution acknowledges that First Nations (and of course other living cultural groups) do

²⁴ Duncan Cameron [cited in] a press release issued by the Glenbow, 18 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

²⁵ Documented in: anonymous, "ICME News Conference Buenos Aires 1986," *ICME Newsletter*, no. 10 (1986): 3.

have symbolic claims to their cultural materials and that museums must take those claims into consideration.

Even so, while *Resolution No. 11* granted this acknowledgment of symbolic First Nations claims, it simultaneously reinforced museum control over the cultural materials that they hold. In particular, the resolution validated the role of museums as cultural caretakers, albeit caretakers who should exercise a little more sensitivity than before. However, the resolution also reinforced the rights of museums to make their own decisions in matters of representation and maintained the *status quo* regarding museum stewardship over cultural materials. What the resolution did provide was a basic guideline which museums could use to measure their possible reactions to Glenbow loan requests. Museums whose sympathies lay with the Lubicon could claim that the Glenbow was intending to use the materials in manner prejudicial to the peoples being re/represented and thus could utilize *Resolution No. 11* to reject/deny/renege on Glenbow loan requests.

Museums retained practical, concrete control over their holdings. They alone made the final decision regarding loans. Moreover, none of them wished to address the politically laden issues of ownership and control directly. To do so would have brought the role of museums everywhere into question. While some museums were prepared to recognize the symbolic ownership claims of First Nations, the avoidance of the contributing issues of concrete ownership and control to this discourse on the part of museologists was true even of those whose institutions chose to honor the boycott.

As previously mentioned, it was the Museum of the American Indian under the advice of their curator James G.E. Smith, who first announced their support for the Lubicon boycott and declined the Glenbow's request to loan their artifacts. Smith's decision was based on his concern over the serious decline of Lubicon culture. Roland Force, representing the museum stated, 'When we discovered that the sponsors were the government and Shell Oil, and that they are among those primarily responsible for the plight of the Lubicons, we

felt we had to honor the boycott.”²⁶ Other museums, particularly those in Europe that chose to follow the example set by the Museum of the American Indian, claimed the boycott was the primary reason for their refusal. However, these museums also expressed concern for the safety of their artifacts which “are among the most valuable and old in our collection,” a sentiment expressed by Peter Bolz on behalf of several European museums in a telephone interview with the *Edmonton Journal*.²⁷ Apparently, to some of these museums the potential for violence appeared very real.

There also appears to have been some question as to whether or not their artifacts might become the target of repatriation claims. Tom Svensson, acting director of the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo, listed two reasons in a letter to Cameron for regrettably canceling the former agreement to lend six Inuit artifacts: [1] *ICOM Resolution No. 11* which “makes it difficult for us to comply with our former agreement when several organizations representing native peoples of Canada...maintain that to carry out such lending of ethnographic artifacts would be against their interest” and [2] “when a controversy with such far reaching implications connects to a particular exhibition it seems that the original purpose of the exhibition has been lost.” In addition, Svensson notes that “the controversy has also created a new problem as far as security is concerned, which differs from the original situation known to us when the agreement was made.”²⁸

The Société du Musée et Vieil Yverdon, in their letter to Chief Ominayak from Switzerland, expressed sympathy for the Lubicon arguments and informed him of their

²⁶ Roland Force [cited in] “Culture and Conflict,” by Pamela Young, Marc Clark and John Howse, *Maclean's*, 9 November 1987, [?].

²⁷ Peter Bolz [cited in] “Germany Joins U.S. in Artifacts Boycott,” by Karen Booth [in] *Edmonton Journal*, 3 October 1986.

²⁸ Letter from Tom Svensson, acting director of the Ethnographic Museum University of Oslo, to Duncan Cameron, 27 October 1987, TMC. Svensson reneges on former promise to loan artifacts based on *Resolution no. 11* and the “controversy ...connect[ed].” Here he states the well quoted phrase, “it seems to us that the original purpose of the exhibition has been lost.” see also: Cathy Lord, “Oslo Joins Museums’ Boycott,” *Edmonton Journal*, 4 September 1987; Pamela Young, Marc Clark and John Howse, “Culture and Conflict,” *Maclean's*, 9 November 1987, [?].

decision not to send artifacts to the Glenbow.²⁹ This action, a direct letter to Ominayak, is an eloquent expression of the fact that in the eyes of the Société, First Nations' had control and ownership claims over their material cultures and had the 'right' to ask them not to lend. The Berne Historical Museum, in a letter to Cameron, announced '[we are] compelled to withdraw our agreement for a loan [due to] feeling uneasy about the planned boycott [which] may be justified or not, they are threatening the safety of the agreed loan of *our precious objects* from historically important collections."³⁰ In this same letter the authors take the liberty of informing the Glenbow that other lending institutions in Switzerland and Italy have drawn the same conclusions and that the Glenbow will be hearing from them. The Museum of Pennsylvania concluded 'our collection would be in jeopardy' but noted that their refusal to loan ten items should not be interpreted as support for the Lubicon boycott.³¹ Berlin's Museum für Völkerkunde stated that their decision not to loan was based upon concern for 'the protection of the objects, and also for the political matter of the boycott.'³² Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, also partially validated First Nations' ownership and control, when they too wrote to Ominayak to tell him that they "will not extend the requested loan" of twenty items to the Glenbow, "in light of the injustices to the Lubicon Lake Cree community."³³

Torben Lundbaek, Chief Curator of the National Museum of Denmark, also chose to write to Chief Ominayak in order to inform him that he had written to the Glenbow 'to say that the National Museum will not be able to contribute to the exhibition' but he did not explain his rationale for denying the loan.³⁴ However, he had been outspoken on behalf of the Lubicon at the ICOM conference in which *Resolution No. 11* had been adopted after

²⁹ Anonymous, "Lubicon Say Museum Boycott is Growing," *Calgary Herald*, 8 October, 1987.

³⁰ Letter from Dr. Ernst J. Klay, Head of Ethnography, Berne Historical Museum, to Duncan Cameron, 5 August 1987, TMC. My italics.

³¹ Mark Lowey, "U.S. Museum Rejects Glenbow Plea for Artifacts," *Calgary Herald*, 23 May 1987.

³² Karen Booth, "Germany Joins U.S. in Artifacts Boycott," *Edmonton Journal*, 3 October 1986.

³³ Letter from C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Director of the Harvard Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology to Bernard Ominayak, 26 November 1986, TMC.

³⁴ Letter from Torben Lundbaek, Chief Curator of the National Museum of Denmark, to Chief Ominayak, 28 November 1986, TMC.

his request that the topic become part of the agenda. He is later quoted in a Calgary newspaper as citing the resolution which he helped draft making it “impossible to agree to Glenbow’s request for rare Indian and Inuit cultural objects while the Lubicons and several aboriginal organizations oppose the move.”³⁵

Stockholm’s Ethnographic Museum also found it “not possible” to loan, listing three concerns: [1] conservation, [2] the boycott “which could lead to such a tense situation that the safety of our museum objects could not be guaranteed” and [3] *Resolution No. 11*.³⁶ The Director of Rotterdam’s Museum Voor Volkenkunde, in a much quoted from letter to Cameron, accused the exhibition of being a “nice facade hiding the real world of today’s native peoples”³⁷ and withheld a requested Salish rattle. The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania wrote to Cameron that they would withhold the loan of ten items “until this dispute [is resolved] to the satisfaction of all parties.”³⁸ The Royal Armory, Stockholm, explained to Cameron that their decision not to loan was based on their “discussions with the Ethnographical Museum in Stockholm,” concerns for “security and safety” due to the boycott, and “ethical” reasons that in their opinion coincided with *Resolution No. 11*.³⁹

In contrast to the above refusals, the Smithsonian, the national American museum, agreed to loan their materials on the basis “that it was a legitimate request from a legitimate museum for a legitimate exhibition and we could not deny the loan on the basis of political considerations [as to do so] would set a dangerous precedent.”⁴⁰ Since *The Spirit Sings*

³⁵ Torben Lundbaek [cited in] “Denmark Museum joins Lubicon Boycott,” by Wendy Smith, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 6 December 1986.

³⁶ Letter from Ulla Wagner, Museum Director, Stockholm Ethnographical [this is the spelling on the letterhead] Museum, to Cameron, 6 December 1986, TMC.

³⁷ Letter from Felix Valk, Director, Rotterdam Museum Voor Volkenkunde, to Cameron, 2 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

³⁸ Letter from R.H. Dyson, Jr., Director, The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, to Duncan Cameron, 27 March 1987, Glenbow Archives.

³⁹ Letter from Agneta Lundstrom, Director, the Royal Armory, Stockholm, to Duncan Cameron, 19 December 1986, TMC.

⁴⁰ Wendy Smith, “Smithsonian Will Ignore Boycott,” *Calgary Herald*, 4 November 1986.

exhibition did proceed this appears to have been the expressed sentiment of the majority of museums. It is ironic that now, in 1995, we have before us a vivid instance of a politically-besieged Smithsonian, furiously backtracking on the format of a proposed display of the World War Two plane that bombed Hiroshima, the *Enola Gay*. The Smithsonian discovered that they had to respond to political pressure when those applying the pressure were powerful.

Besides the sentiments expressed in the Smithsonian's letter, the fact that many museums did comply with the Glenbow loan requests may also be due to the wording of ICOM's *Resolution No. 11*. As I have discussed, this resolution was open to multiple interpretations. Herbert Granslmayr, chairman of the International Council of Museum's ethnographic committee, stated that "Any museum that would follow this resolution would have to check their facts very carefully regarding the Olympic exhibition at the Glenbow Museum," while ICOM council president, Geoffrey Lewis said in a telephone interview from England that 'he doesn't believe the new code applies to the Lubicon Boycott, which is 'purely a political matter'."⁴¹

Even though these sharply opposing positions surfaced with respect to the rights of First Nations' symbolic ownership claims, and/or the rights of Canadian symbolic ownership claims as presented by the Glenbow, it is obvious that museums continued to assert full concrete/practical control over the artifacts requested for loan (and loaned). While some symbolic control was relinquished, or perhaps shared, museum directors, boards and staffs were the ones who decided how they would interpret and respond to the boycott and ICOM's resolution. Some statements in this discourse suggest that the safety of 'their' artifacts could have been a factor in their decisions. Others were clear that they had decided not to loan because they supported the Lubicon position; some of them wrote to Ominayak to inform him of their stance. Museum responses to the moral and ethical

⁴¹ Herbert Granslmayr and Geoffrey Lewis [cited in] "Reconsider Olympic Show," by Wendy Smith, [in] *Edmonton Journal*, 21 November 1986.

museological dilemmas posed by the boycott were based on their own answers to the question: “Whose material culture is it”?

(B) Whose Culture Is It?

Native artifacts within the discourse are conceptualized as integral to Native cultures; having appropriate artifacts was concrete proof of having culture. Indeed, 51% of the texts that addressed Native artifacts indicated that they were evidence of, or symbolically linked to, Native cultures—almost always in a highly laudatory fashion. The artifacts/cultures were spoken of as being magnificent in their own right, as priceless objects of creativity, as ‘sacred items’⁴² and as treasures and souvenirs which signified cultural authenticity, adaptability, diversity and resiliency. It was in and through the artifacts that ‘the’ Native world-view was illustrated. The objects were imbued with essential qualities, including the ability to tell stories to viewers about Native histories and cultures.

In this respect the words ‘tradition’ and ‘traditional’ were deeply embedded in the discourse where they were continually linked to contemporary issues of control which addressed the intrinsic validity and vulnerability of cultural heritages, and the right of a people to possess ‘one’ and defend ‘it’ against loss. Native traditions were thus closely connected with Native cultures. Twenty-five percent of texts made a connection between the artifacts and Native traditions. It was the preservation of tradition, particularly a traditional lifestyle, that became the central focus in press reports of the Lubicon boycott. Both the press reports and discussions of the Lubicon suggested that their traditional culture was under stress. In these texts it was continually stressed that it was due to the impact of oil companies on their traditional land that had caused the Lubicon’s inability to maintain their traditional ways; the Lubicon therefore had been put under great duress and had resultantly experienced a sharp downward spiral in their cultural well being. The

⁴² They were asserted to be precious and important to both Native and Canadian culture but sacred only to Native culture.

Lubicon and the threat being posed to their vulnerable culture became deeply symbolic of all First Nations cultures, past and present, which had 'survived' and/or faced similar challenges.

How was this symbolic link constructed? None of the artifacts requested by the Glenbow were documented as being of Lubicon origin; only a few were Cree. There were no specific artifacts on display at *The Spirit Sings* that were *direct* signifiers of the Lubicon people. And yet connections between Lubicon traditions under threat and *The Spirit Sings* artifacts were frequent, and made by people from all 'sides' in the dispute. Let us consider the exhibition displays for a moment. Among the cultures represented, the displays of Beothuk artifacts were surely the most poignant, and they evidently affected many viewers of the exhibition in very powerful and emotional ways.⁴³ Hunted and hounded into extinction, the Beothuk offered an eloquent (and blatant) testimony through their artifacts: cultures are extinguished; not all cultures survive; cultural 'death and genocide' has happened in this country; there are precedents.

The First Nations groups which supported the Lubicon cause were explicit about the common themes which unite First Nations peoples. All of their cultures are vulnerable, all of their (past) material cultures are in the hands of the 'others' who hold control over them, and many of them face, or have faced (partial) extinction.⁴⁴ Coupled with the examples of vulnerability in the exhibition, the current threat to the Lubicon became symbolic of past and present 'power over' patterns affecting all First Nations people. The material cultures on display which offered testimony of the effects of 'power' in the past, combined with the effects of 'power over' in the present—the power of oil companies and

⁴³ In particular see: Frank Jones, "Native Art Represents Our Heritage," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1988. Jones' article is especially poignant with respect to the Beothuk peoples. His observations (i.e. "hunted into extinction," "white people's gifts...decimated and destroyed native societies," "So many of the names, the meanings, the stories disappeared, and the only clues were artifacts gathering dust in European museums") mirror a number of other author's sentiments expressed in various articles, letters and comments found throughout the discourse.

⁴⁴ Consider, for example, the very real death and ongoing threat of extinction with respect to First Nations languages. Languages are an integral part of the world-view of a group of peoples.

governments to effectively strip a vulnerable culture. Autonomy over artifacts became symbolic of autonomy over culture, control over cultural traditions, and control over land and other resources.

Over the past decade we have witnessed what Anna Laura Jones calls a “growing chorus of criticism and controversy over the treatment of non-Western art and material culture in museums.”⁴⁵ The way in which museums and galleries of art perform their functions is no longer immune from effective external critique. Attempts at realignment began in the 1980s. The Museum of Modern Art’s (MoMA) 1984 exhibition, *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern*, “traced the influence of African and Oceanic art on early modern art” in the works of artists such as Picasso, Giacometti, and Klee.⁴⁶ While that exhibition was greeted by some critics with enthusiasm, others considered it co-optive or appropriative.⁴⁷ *The Spirit Sings* followed in 1988. *Into the Heart of Africa* prepared by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in 1989, provoked a boycott, a public riot and cancellations by other museums that had been scheduled to receive the traveling exhibit. Today, any aware curator realizes that his or her work can be called into question at any given moment.

In light of the frequent involvement of professionals in *The Spirit Sings* discourse, it is perhaps not surprising that Jones notes, “Many authors see this as a rift between museum anthropology and academic anthropology.”⁴⁸ However, to reduce the themes within this discourse to one of ‘academic difference’ mutes the voices of many participants, and in the long run is insupportable. The issues inherent in the discourse speak to fundamental rifts not only in museology but between First Nations and the Canadian nation. It is also

⁴⁵ Anna Laura Jones, “Exploding Canons: The Anthropology of Museums,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, no. 22 (1993): 201-220.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴⁷ Some of the discourse which surrounded the MoMA exhibit has been brought together in a book edited by Russell Ferguson et al. (1990), previously mentioned in this thesis. In particular, see the essays under the section titled “Doctor Lawyer Indian Chief,” which includes the reviews of Tom McEvilley, William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe and “Histories of the Tribal and Modern,” a review by James Clifford.

⁴⁸ Jones (1993), 202. see also: Ames (1992) Chapter Four.

important to recognize that First Nations' mounting dissatisfactions with the manner in which they are represented in museological display, and the manner in which their material cultures are treated and interpreted, were, through *The Spirit Sings* and boycott issues, brought to light and at least to some degree legitimated.

Today, there is consensus that museum displays and story lines have all too often been developed from perspectives which validate the Western interpretations of histories, and which reinforce Western values, systems of classification and authority. At the time of *The Spirit Sings* Michael Ames took the position that museums were, and should remain, 'apolitical.' Only in a 1991 article did Ames state that recent controversies have woken up anthropologists to the reality that 'museum policy can no longer make undisputed claims for the privileges of neutrality and universality [is this the voice of experience?].'⁴⁹ Representation is a political act. Sponsorship is a political act. Curation is a political act. Working in a museum is a political act."⁵⁰

(1) Interpretive Dialogues

In the Fall 1988 edition of *MUSE*, The Canadian Museums Association focused specifically on the museological issues which arose during that year. Tom Hill,⁵¹ editor of this edition and Director of the Woodland Cultural Center, recognized that some museums in Canada were trying to 'improve their working relationships with First Nations by using them as advisors and trying to involve them in public programming.' But he advocated that entirely new working relationships should be structured, and he spoke out against (his image of) 'the establishment,' noting that Canadian museums were largely associated with

⁴⁹ I have quoted from Ames' material quite often in this thesis. The careful reader will note that at the time of *The Spirit Sings*, Ames was firmly on the 'side' of museums; notice particularly his responses to Trigger in this regard. By 1991, Ames sounded quite a bit like Trigger. His recent collection of essays are informed by his experience with *The Spirit Sings*. see: Michael M. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Michael Ames [cited in] "Exploding Canons: The Anthropology of Museums," by Anna Laura Jones, [in] *Annual Review of Anthropology*, no. 22 (1993): 211. see also: Ames (1992), 13; Ames (1991), 7-15.

⁵¹ Hill is a Seneca from the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario.

the dominant culture of this nation, and were manifestations of colonial society and colonial ideologies. He writes:

One could easily argue that museums are doing the best job possible in this era of dwindling resources; however, if we are going to overcome future confrontations far more vigorous action is required. Museums have been manifestations of a colonial society for too long. It is in the best interests of all museums in Canada with First Nations collections to open their boardroom doors and provide opportunities for creatively exploring and expanding new relationships.

Museums can usher in a new humanism and harmony which will not only set the cultural heritage of First Nations in motion once again but could lead the way in determining a new ideology for all Canadians.⁵²

Bruce Trigger echoed Hill's sentiments by counseling anthropology in general and museums in particular to go beyond using Natives and live Native activities as entertainment surrounding their projects, or as consultants during the planning stages of those projects. He advocates a position that envisions museums involving First Nations in museological fields, opening up opportunities for "Native Peoples" to receive the academic qualifications and subsequently, the employment positions that would give them the sort of status necessary to be considered colleagues. Trigger notes that past anthropologists have been presumptuous about their ability to

represent Native People to the world at large. There is now a growing realization that only Native People can speak for Native People and that only Native People have the right to decide what is in their own best interest.⁵³

The notion that only First Nations peoples can speak for First Nations' interests, reflects a growing acceptance by scholars such as Trigger that legitimate nationalist/cultural ideologies inform First Nations claims and rights.

⁵² Tom Hill (1988), 2.

⁵³ Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 76.

Tom Hill, in an Ontario newspaper article⁵⁴ covering a workshop entitled 'Sharing our Native Culture' (held in May 1988) addressed this same issue: 'who has the right to speak for whom?' In his discussion of *The Spirit Sings* Hill comments: 'You always interpret a culture from what you already know,' which can lead to mistakes when people not of First Nations ancestry try to interpret Native collections. Through interpretation and re/presentation of the 'other,' Hill notes, museums often 'perpetuate stereotypes' as museum staff are often only secondarily aware of (past and present) Native cultures. Hill also explains that since museum staffs are perceptually linked to Western art and culture the problem of mis/representation is exacerbated. He recommends that museums rely less on their own understandings and perceptions of First peoples, and more on consultations with First Nations persons.

On an analytical level, there is an underlying theme which resurfaces in these claims that only the 'self' can authentically re/present the 'self.' To some extent these assertions appear to imply that there can be an ultimate, privileged and 'right' reading of an artifact and that this reading must come from 'within the source culture.' The connection between this argument and the corresponding claim, that only contemporary descendants of a historical culture can generate these readings, is often used to validate both nationalistic claims and assertions of concrete and symbolic ownership and control over material cultures.

Bill Fox, a senior archeologist with the heritage branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, reiterates Triggers plea for more trained Native specialists in the fields of anthropology, but explains that 'Native philosophy' deters students from moving this direction. He notes that there are no fully accredited Native archeologists in Canada and that 'deterrents to native students in the past have included the native perception of archeologists as simply grave robbers' and that in the past they have not had access to 'the lengthy formal schooling necessary.' Fox, like Hill, asserts that when interpretations

⁵⁴ Tom Hill [cited in] "Native People Urged to Become Involved in Artifacts Displays," by anonymous, [in] Brantford *Expositor*, 30 May 1988

of Native artifacts are necessary, a Native person raised in a Native community and well trained will probably "do a better job" of interpreting Native artifacts than someone who was raised in the city.⁵⁵ In this last statement Fox illustrates that he, again like Hill, gives credence to the idea of 'right readings' deriving authentically only from the source culture in question.

These underlying assertions about 'right readings' reflect on a theme that arose in the discourse around the exhibition and the boycott. Could the Glenbow have avoided its problems by consulting with Native informants beforehand? Such individuals would presumably have been able to present a 'more authentic,' Native-grounded story line for the exhibition. In my opinion however, this was a side-issue, particularly because no Native organization (and that includes the Lubicon) indicated that they found any substantial fault with the exhibition's theme or story line. The assertion that the Glenbow actually mis/represented First Nations does not find its way into the discourse at all. In fact, some First Nations groups were explicit that they did not have any quarrel with the exhibition or the Glenbow *per se*, but that they felt their allegiance lay with the Lubicon. Chief Jim Bear, for example, representing the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Center of Manitoba stated:

Under normal circumstances, such an exhibition would be of professional interest to us, and probably would be helpful in our work. The Glenbow museum in particular has also been a useful source of information to us in the past and we have no complaints against that institution as such. However, we have decided to support the Lubicon Band in this matter.⁵⁶

What Native groups did take sharp exception to was their perception that the Glenbow was celebrating their past on one hand, while disregarding their present realities on the other. As Native artist Rebecca Belmore noted "When it comes to dealing with real native

⁵⁵ Bill Fox [cited in] "Native People Urged to Become Involved in Artifacts Displays," by anonymous, [in] Brantford *Expositor*, 30 May 1988.

⁵⁶ Letter from Chief Jim Bear of the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Manitoba to H.R.H. Prince Charles regarding support of the boycott, 12 November 1986, TMC.

people, its a different story.”⁵⁷ This same sentiment came across strongly in a letter authored by Ted Moses, Grand Chief and Chairman of the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, to the Ulster Museum soliciting their support for the boycott. He explained:

The fact that this exhibition is financed by Shell Oil and that the membership of the Board of Directors of the Glenbow Museum includes the same oil company lawyers, is an affront to our sense of justice and denigrates from the struggle of the Lubicon Lake Band and all Indian people who struggle against the intrusions of major industrial development interests into their traditional territory....

We urge you to join with us to ensure that the future of the Lubicon Lake people does not languish on a museum shelf to be brought to life only when their artifacts are exhibited.⁵⁸

The suggestion made by some authors, that it was the ‘interpretation’ of the artifacts which contributed to the boycott/exhibition controversy, may have detracted the public’s focus away from the event that actually spurred the boycott organizers to target the Glenbow’s exhibition: the announcement of Shell Oil Canada as the corporate sponsor of the exhibition. Shell Oil’s involvement with *The Spirit Sings* did not only arise in this discourse with respect to the Lubicon boycott. Their sponsorship of the Glenbow exhibit brought out penetrating and pertinent questions and comments with respect to the issue of academic freedom. The perception that the Glenbow had taken a certain position with respect to the boycott due to the (necessary) financial involvement with Shell was strong. There is of course always a risk, or a perceived risk, of ‘tainted’ grant money when a corporation with specific interests backs a costly exhibition. This money *may* have ‘strings attached.’

⁵⁷ Rebecca Belmore [cited in] “Our Native Land,” by anonymous, [in] *Humanist* (Spring 1988): 21.

⁵⁸ Letter from Ted Moses, Grand Chief/Chairman, Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) to the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 21 September 1986, TMC.

(2) Sponsorship and Ownership, Freedom and Control

As economic stresses increase, cultural institutions become critically dependent upon sources of income other than government funding. Institutions that wish to remain viable have turned to the private sector for financial backing. For corporations the advantages of sponsoring cultural events are twofold: they can write off part of the cost as a tax deduction, and they can increase their public profile and reputation with the positive image created through publicly announcing their philanthropy. Normally, it is the sponsor who is concerned with the appropriateness of the sponsored cause; in the case of *The Spirit Sings* Shell Oil was considered by some to be an inappropriate sponsor.

Claims that Shell Oil was a poor choice for a corporate sponsor seems to have been formulated only after the Lubicon boycott drew the public's attention in their direction. Prior to the boycott the association of the Glenbow and Shell typically was referred to as a natural tie-in between a Calgarian cultural institution and a Calgary-based corporation. Once Chief Ominayak had announced that a cultural event celebrating the heritage of First Nations was being sponsored by the same interests that were actively trying to destroy the Lubicon, Shell's association with the exhibition appeared distasteful to many onlookers.

Due to this negative association, the Glenbow was challenged to give up Shell's donation by a number of anthropologists. Michael Ames turned the tables and demanded that before academic anthropologists in universities make the Glenbow a "sacrificial lamb," they should set the pace. Ames writes:

So why should only the Glenbow be ordered to refuse this 'tainted' money? Let the professors who support the Lubicon first persuade their universities to renounce monies received from governments and oil companies before they call upon a museum to renounce its support. If money is tainted, that taint runs through society and is not restricted to those locations which advocates find expedient. A call for double standards is not a convincing moral argument.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Michael M. Ames, "Boycott the Politics of Suppression," *Muse* 3, no. 3 (1988): 15-16.

The Glenbow and some of its supporters claimed that asking them to give up Shell's donation infringed upon their academic freedom. They asserted that if they took a political stance with respect to the boycott it would set a precedent whereby cultural institutions everywhere would become the dupes of the political climate—an interesting point, considering the marginal status of museum-based professionals in the larger academic community. Cultural institutions must remain apolitical they claimed.⁶⁰ In a paper presented at the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) Annual Meeting in June 1988, Harrison explained:

In a project as large as *The Spirit Sings* there will always be many voices offering opinions as to what could or should have been done. The problem that the Glenbow faced was whose advice should be listened to. Special interest groups were quick to criticize and yet unwilling to talk directly to the Glenbow to understand what its objectives, commitments and responsibilities were. The Canadian Museums Association remained silent on the issue of the boycott. The Canadian Ethnology Society (composed largely of university anthropologists) took a stand (sadly in support of the boycott), but at least they considered the issue important. The potential politicization of museums is a critical development for the entire community and I would hope that the Canadian Museums Association and other professional associations would actively work against anything which seeks to deny museums the continued right of freedom of expression and scholarship—rights which are fundamental to the very nature of the society in which we live.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid., 15. On this topic Ames stated "To assert that all actions are 'political,' is not to say that we should all act as if we are politicians, that all actions are equally political, or that all must serve the same political ends, or even in the same manner. The Lubicon called for a boycott of the Calgary Olympics, including *The Spirit Sings*, in an attempt to gain political advantage in their negotiations with the federal government. According to Lubicon chief Bernard Ominayak, 'Our problem is not with cultural displays but rather with that small group of wealthy, powerful interests in Alberta who are trying to wipe us out.' Thus the Lubicon wanted to hold the exhibition hostage to get at other people who control the lands they claim. That may have been a useful political tactic for them—it certainly gained wide publicity—but it is not ethically or professionally justifiable for museum or university personnel to conspire in this act of hostage taking of their own colleagues."

⁶¹ Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings: The Last Song?" *The International Journal of Museum and Curatorship* 7, no. 4 (1988): 361.

But Trigger did not see the issue of Shell's sponsorship of *The Spirit Sings*, and the suggestion that the Glenbow refuse the grant, as one of academic freedom. Instead, he claims that:

The argument is not really over academic freedom at all, but about who has the authority to grant access for research and educational purposes.⁶²

Thus Trigger sees the issue as one of power; who has the right to access material cultures. He notes that the rights of First Nations have, in this respect, been largely ignored. On the subject of academic freedom, Trigger states that "academic freedom will have real meaning when it does not clash with the really important freedom of native peoples to manage their own cultural heritage."⁶³ Clearly, it was his position that academic freedom (as it then stood) was itself an ideology of ownership 'over' certain cultural representational activities.

Marybelle Meyers, in a retrospective article, succinctly reviewed the issues of sponsorship and academic freedom which were brought out during the discourse. She notes that for cultural institutions it is a question of compromise:

Canadian museums and public galleries are having to turn, with increasing frequency, to the private sector for funding, and the worry, as with all academic research is that the trade-offs might be unconscionable. Just as there is no such thing as completely objective research, seldom is there squeaky clean funding, whether from the public or private sector. How credible would research on the causes of lung cancer be, for example, if it were funded by a tobacco company? But, purist arguments aside, there are acceptable levels of compromise. Research on the etiology of lung cancer would not suffer any significant loss of credibility if it were funded by Air Canada. The principle behind the Lubicon boycott is not basically different from Canadian and American consumers boycotting Japanese products because of Japanese perseverance in commercial whaling in spite of the threatened demise of some species of great whales (a well-publicized environmental issue not too many years ago). In the case of the Glenbow, it

⁶² Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 74.

⁶³ Bruce Trigger, "Reply by Bruce Trigger," *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 9.

accepted funding from the agency the Cree say is causing their demise, making the museum a logical target for protest.⁶⁴

Harrison and the Glenbow administration agreed with Meyers that it was a matter of compromise. Weighing their decisions carefully, they maintained that museums must remain apolitical and non-partisan. Although Harrison concedes that cultural institutions may be fair game for strikes or boycotts by specific groups, she asserts that museums cannot give into this type of pressure and chose 'sides.' She writes:

while it might be legitimate to mount political action around any activity undertaken by a public institution, it would destroy the legitimacy of those institutions if they were forced to espouse the political causes of one pressure group after another. Museums are expected by their constitutions to remain non-partisan.⁶⁵

Throughout the articles and speeches written and delivered by the Glenbow's staff, there appears to be an implicit tension. I want to consider this for a moment. What would the Glenbow's position have been if the Lubicon had been able to offer them 1.1 million dollars to mount the exhibition, and if Shell had mounted a boycott against them because the Lubicon were 'causing them trouble' in the courts and in the north? Given the connections between Shell, the provincial governments, the Glenbow board, and the relevant Olympic committees, this question must be assessed in terms of power. Had the Lubicon the wherewithal to wield this kind of clout, would they still have stood alone with the First Nations and their sympathizers against the very powerful and dominant regime of governments, oil companies and Olympic committees? Is it cynical to suppose that given this scenario, *The Spirit Sings* would have been 'shut down?' Certainly, power relationships must have been a factor behind the scenes at the Glenbow. The pressure on Glenbow staff must have been enormous.

⁶⁴ Marybelle Meyers, "The Glenbow Affair: When the Cree Protested the Funding Source of *The Spirit Sings* They Stirred Up a Hornet's Nest," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1988): 13.

⁶⁵ Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings: The Last Song?" *The International Journal of Museum and Curatorship* 7, no. 4 (1988): 353-363.

If Duncan Cameron had said, as Joan Ryan wanted him to, ‘No, the Lubicon are right, we are not proceeding until this is resolved,’ what might have transpired? Ryan believed that the pressure would have been on the provincial and federal governments to settle the land claims, and to settle them quickly in order to avoid international embarrassment and the problems of finding a new ‘flagship’ at short notice. But is this belief a bit naive? It is unlikely that Shell Oil wanted the lands claim settled as they had much to lose. The provincial government’s traditional sympathies with oil interests would not rock this relationship. Thus, even if Cameron had taken a stand he would have been under intense pressure from the OCO, both governments, and the board of the Glenbow (itself permeated by oil interests) to comply with their interests and mount the exhibition. Likely, it would have been far simpler to fire Cameron and replace him with a ‘malleable’ director than to settle the land claim dispute. Given the passionate belief in and dedication towards the exhibition evident on the parts of by both Harrison and Cameron, we can posit that they may have felt that by complying and staying they could at least mount the exhibition with sensitivity and style. While we may never know, the tension in the public statements by Glenbow staff, as well as Cameron’s performance at the ICOM conference, appears to offer evidence that everyone at the Glenbow was under intense pressure which they did their best to contain through claims of being apolitical and non-partisan.

The position of Native associations who supported the boycott was that the Alberta government and Shell Oil were attempting to enhance their image with the public and add to their respectability and credibility by associating with *The Spirit Sings*—a positive cultural event positioned at the forefront of the Olympic Arts Festival. Lubicon supporters planned to tarnish those images by causing the province and Shell to receive some bad press. By way of the boycott—due to the publicity that it would receive world-wide—they hoped to basically shame the Alberta government into settling the Lubicon’s land claim.

I found nothing in the discourse that would indicate that the province was overly concerned with its image, given the boycott. They certainly were not shamed into settling the land claim in dispute. It was, of course, for image reasons that Shell agreed to sponsor

the exhibition in the first place, and image was of primary importance to the Glenbow. But one image that the Glenbow did not want to portray was that they were servitude to the province or their sponsor. Cameron clearly asserted that although Shell was the sponsor, and although Shell might conceivably gain in public stature through their association, the Glenbow was not being exploited by the oil company as the museum “controls the content, the interpretation and presentation [as well as]...owns the rights to the intellectual property and international copyright to the show.”⁶⁶...We can’t be influenced by OCO, Shell or a government,” he claimed.⁶⁷ Actually, it is unlikely that Shell had any interest in exerting influence over the content of the exhibition. What they were interested in was their own agenda *vis a vis* creating a particular public image of themselves.

Shell was very conscious of the public exposure they would receive due to their association with both the exhibition and the Olympics. The stated objectives underlying their sponsorship commitments were to:

- Enhance Shell Canada’s reputation with its stakeholders in a manner which would contribute to the company’s credibility, integrity and computability with the communities in which it operates.
- Demonstrate Shell Canada’s commitment and value to Canada and Canadians.
- Provide a vehicle for community involvement and promotional opportunities for Shell Canada products.⁶⁸

In all press releases and advertisements pertaining to *The Spirit Sings*, Shell Oil Canada Limited was listed as “the exclusive corporate sponsor of the art exhibition” and everywhere that the Glenbow’s logo appeared Shell’s logo accompanied it, often along with other logos representing various Olympic organizations. The analogies that Shell drew between themselves and culture were laden with symbolism espousing the unique

⁶⁶ This is an interesting instance of an explicit ownership claim of a cultural product, specific to the discourse.

⁶⁷ Duncan Cameron [cited in] “Appropriation: A Case in Point,” by anonymous, [in] *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 32.

⁶⁸ List taken from an outline of a speech entitled “Sponsorship and the Arts: Business to Business Marketing and Strategic Philanthropy,” given by Elaine Proulx, Manager, Community Affairs, Shell Canada Limited, to Financial Post Conference, Toronto, 18 May 1988, Shell Archives, Calgary

values of Canadians and of the Olympic spirit. On one sheet in the Glenbow's press packet the phrase, "Sustaining the Spirit," appears printed above the exhibition's brightly colored logo,⁶⁹ headlining Shell's "continuing commitment to Canada":

Our business is finding and developing oil and gas. But the wealth of a country is made up of other resources as well. Amongst the greatest of these is the vitality of the human spirit. The arts are an expression of this spirit and Shell Canada is pleased to have a part in sustaining them.⁷⁰

Shell is then announced as the exclusive corporate sponsor of this exhibition which "will be a tribute to the spirit, values, and cultural traditions of Canada's first peoples."⁷¹

In the advertisements found in newspapers and magazines, Shell's name is often accompanied by photographic images of Native artifacts. The thrill of victory and accomplishment which surrounds Olympic competition are invariably linked to the artistic and cultural accomplishments of the nation. In a Shell advertisement we read:

Your mind's eye creates visions of a figure skater carving an outside edge with perfect balance and grace. Of a hockey player, head down, arms and legs moving like pistons. Of a downhill skier tucking at a frightening speed in pursuit of the 100th second. These are part of the Olympic vision. But the Olympic vision in Calgary is more; it is a vision of art, of culture and of history.

⁶⁹ Ruth B. Phillips, "The Public Relations Wrap: What we can Learn from The Spirit Sings," *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Spring 1990): 13-21. The story of how the design for the logo came about is interesting in the context of control, for it illustrates clearly just how much ownership museums actually have over the Native cultural materials in their possession. In this case the original source of inspiration was an Ojibwa shaman's drum. Phillips explains that this central image was simplified and then combined with other well known artistic designs created by other Native groups. These included quill work typically associated with the East Coast, Woodlands, Plains and Subarctic groups, as well as a sun image strongly associated with many Native groups but specifically taken from a "Plains Indian feathered-circle design from a man's buffalo robe." The intention was that the logo, one image, would at once represent the artistic traditions of several Native groups. That the museum was able to create such an image so definitely inspired by Native artistry, and do so uncontested, is rather puzzling in hindsight. From our present position, it seems that it may have been more appropriate for a Native artist to have been commissioned to design an original logo rather than reduce such sacred images to crass commercialism. As stated in Phillip's article under a photo of the logo—"The Spirit Sing; logo: a sacred object transformed into a secular and anonymous image." quoted passages found on page 17.

⁷⁰ Statement contained in a press release issued by Shell Oil Canada, n.d., Shell Archives.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Just as the discovery and development of Canada's natural resources are at the heart of Shell's business activity, the discovery and development of Canada's cultural richness and diversity are at the heart of our community investment program. *The Spirit Sings* is Shell's unique investment in the Olympics and in Canada's heritage. It is part of Shell's ongoing partnership with the people of Canada.⁷²

[Due to Shell's] community investment program...Canadian and international visitors [can] appreciate the distinctive cultures of Canada's Native peoples [and]...discover the Indian and Inuit world first encountered by Europeans. A world rich and diverse in character, the heritage of today's vibrant Native peoples.⁷³

Shell calls their combination of community investment and advertising, "strategic philanthropy." The corporation claims that their association with the Olympics and the exhibition caused, "Shell dealers and customers [to] become much more aware of our corporate commitment to Canadian heritage and culture, certainly a long term benefit in building loyalty to Shell and enhancing Shell's reputation at the pump where the action really is."⁷⁴ Elaine Proulx, Shell Oil's Manager of Community Affairs, stated that Shell's commitment to the Glenbow was "tested many times" by the Lubicon Lake Band's boycott, but that they "would not step back" from a project which they found "just too significant culturally and socially, and had too much educational merit to abandon."⁷⁵ Considering Proulx's speech to the Financial Post Conference, in which she expands positively on the many benefits Shell had received from their association with the Glenbow, it is also likely that these benefits played a significant role in their 'commitment' to continue with their sponsorship.

⁷² As evident from the materials I received from Shell, they placed this and similar advertisements in several major Canadian magazines. As previously mentioned in Chapter Six, select materials were forwarded to me from Shell. These included photocopies of advertisements. It also included a schedule of their placements as outlined in a letter from Anne McConachie, Media Planning Director for Garder Gray Advertising Inc., of Toronto, to Mr. R. Derrick, Advisor, Public Policy, Shell Canada, in Calgary, 20 November 1987, Shell Archives.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Elaine Proulx, speech given at Financial Post conference, 18 May 1988, Shell Archives.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Christian Feest, the Glenbow's European advisor and curator of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna, points to the fact that Shell had nothing to lose and everything to gain, and that it was the Glenbow and the Lubicon themselves who had the most to lose through the exhibition and boycott. Feest is quoted in the Edmonton *Journal* as stating that he considered the Lubicon boycott "a complete failure" and he asks why it was that the two weakest components of the debate—the museums and Indians—"are being used." Feest explicitly states that in his opinion, it is the oil companies who are doing the 'using' and that the media focus on the Glenbow and the Lubicon had been misguided; the role of the oil companies deserved further investigation.⁷⁶

Following the exhibition, Feest brought another perspective to the sponsorship debate by noting that "the oil companies will laugh all the way to the bank at the recollection of the droll dog-fight between the little ones: the Lubicon Lake Cree and the museums" and he asks a very pertinent question: "*Why should possible allies seemingly end up on opposing sides?*"⁷⁷

Feest's observations are astute. The Lubicon still have not received a settlement of their land claim. Is this a repercussion of staging the boycott? The Glenbow, while it put on a 'successful' show, found itself with a demoralized and anxiety ridden staff. Museologists everywhere were left self-searching with respect to their life-work and their own positions *vis a vis* museum policies. On the other hand, Shell did not receive the kind of pressure and negative press that the Glenbow or the Lubicon experienced, nor were Shell's policies brought under public scrutiny. Shell continued to pump oil from claimed Lubicon ground; Shell received many benefits from their Glenbow association which resulted in enhancing Shell's "reputation at the pump."⁷⁸ Indeed, Shell must have "laughed all the way to the

⁷⁶ Christian Feest [cited in] "Lubicon Lake Olympic Boycott Throwback to AIM, Austrian Says," by Karen Booth, [in] *Edmonton Journal*, 18 June 1987.

⁷⁷ Christian F. Feest, "The Glenbow Incident: The Spirit Sinks," *European Review of Native American Studies* 1, no. 1 (1987): 63. My italics.

⁷⁸ Elaine Proulx, speech given at Financial Post Conference, 18 May 1988, Shell Archives.

bank.”⁷⁹ Throughout the debate Shell positioned themselves in ‘the middle,’ which according to Proulx was precisely their strategy: to position themselves in the middle and to stay there.⁸⁰ It is always calmest in the eye of the hurricane.

The Glenbow and the Lubicon were positioned at oppositional and adversarial poles in the discourse. It is true that Canadian and First Nations nationalist claims are in some ways inherently oppositional. It is also true that opposing claims of ownership over material cultures which symbolize these opposing nationalist and identity claims are sometimes opposed. But Canadian and First Nations claims are also often mutually-defining. Shell’s role drove the Glenbow and Lubicon positions further apart. But perhaps when museums are regarded as privileged signifiers of a state/nation and its histories, finding an institutional ‘middle ground’ is a daunting goal.

(3) Access to Artifacts

A primary function of museums is to house artifacts of human existence and to disseminate knowledge illustrated by those pieces. The artifacts of importance to this study were selected to illustrate a particular story line at a particular point in time. But as Fisher⁸¹ noted, these artifacts essentially told multiple stories of colonialism. Several authors claimed that the objects in question were, in fact, ‘stolen’ property. Other writers expressed their moral outrage over the past practices of political elite who had reaped harvests from fields planted by other cultures and in so doing had put those cultures at considerable risk. Native peoples were re/presented as disenfranchised from their cultures because they lacked actual physical access to their property. The term ‘repatriation’ has become associated with the return of cultural materials to their original or current ‘rightful’ owners—the named descendants of those who created the pieces. In this case

⁷⁹ Christian F Feesl, “The Glenbow Incident: The Spirit Sinks,” *European Review of Native American Studies* 1, no. 1 (1987): 63.

⁸⁰ Elaine Proulx, speech given at Financial Post Conference, 18 May 1988, Shell Archives.

⁸¹ Jean Fisher, “The Health of the People is the Highest Law,” *Third Text*, no. 2 (Winter 1987/88): 63-75.

however, spokespersons for two internally diverse groups designated themselves as named descendants and rightful owners—Canadians and First Nations.

Early on in the discourse, the artifacts were spoken of as items which were 'returning home' through doors that had been opened by the spirit of international cooperation and peace associated with the Olympics.⁸² This claim that the artifacts belonged to all of Canada was almost immediately challenged by Native organizations who, in support of the boycott, asserted symbolic control over the artifacts through their requests to international museums not to loan them "at this time."⁸³ The assertion of symbolic control over the artifacts by First Nations groups oppositionally highlighted the Glenbow's repatriation theme for the exhibition, and clearly articulated the political context of both claims.

In fact, these conflicting claims of ownership played themselves out on a symbolic plane throughout this discourse. Issues of concrete, practical repatriation were not welcome and had in fact been prepared for by the Alberta government. The Immunity from Seizure Act was made law prior to the exhibition. This act served to protect international artifacts from becoming the targets of ownership in court cases. As Cameron noted, the passing of this act was imperative. Without such protection, international museums would never have considered loaning their material.⁸⁴

When the Glenbow first announced the exhibition and its theme, Harrison conveyed that the museum was metaphorically "repatriating" Native artifacts (and therefore culture)

⁸² Patrick Tivy, "Old Treasures Coming Home for Olympic Arts Fest," *Calgary Herald*, 1 March 1985. Tivy writes "The Olympics connection has opened doors around the world for the Glenbow. Through a coincidence of history, many of the nations involved in the Winter Olympics are also the same ones with extensive collections of artifacts."

⁸³ Form letter from Bernard Ominayak, Chief, Lubicon lake Band, to museums, 21 April 1986, TMC. In this letter Ominayak requests that museums "support the Band's boycott by refusing to loan these artifacts at this time" and also asks for assistance in identifying museums that have been contacted by the Glenbow regarding the loan of materials for the exhibition. Christian Feest received such a letter and forwarded a copy to Julia Harrison at the Glenbow along with a cover letter explaining how he received it, 4 August 1986, Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁴ Mark Lowey, "Indians Want Artifacts Returned," *Calgary Herald*, 10 January 1988.

back to their Canadian 'homeland.' In subsequent discourse the term repatriation was quickly dropped. Instead, words and phrases like left, or removed from the country and returning, or bringing back home were used when discussing these materials—presumably in order to soften the negative claims that these objects were 'stolen' or 'taken' and should be returned to their rightful owners.⁸⁵ As Meyers noted, these soft terms are an 'example of false refuge sought in the argument that the artifacts were traded or given, which diverts attention from the conflict between the Indian and the state.'⁸⁶

First Nations organizations that rallied behind the boycott also stayed away from the politics of concrete repatriation, remaining focused on disrupting the loans process through their symbolic claims. George Erasmus, representing the Assembly of First Nations, explains their position on this issue in a letter to the British Museum:

This call for support [of the boycott] has also stirred a common theme among First Nations in regards to the *rightful ownership of the Indian artifacts*....While this is not the time or place to deal with that issue it would be a remarkable sign if your museums would respect the wishes of the First Nations as to the disposition of these artifacts.⁸⁷

However, once the exhibition opened, representatives of the Mohawk nation confronted the issue of 'concrete/practical' repatriation when they protested the display of a Mohawk false face mask. Through their protest they raised the issue of 'real' repatriation, thereby raising the issue of who owned the material cultures on display. In response to the Mohawk protest, many authors reiterated Trigger's position that Native peoples are the only ones who can decide if and how their cultures and materials are displayed. The claim that Native peoples had the right to decide and chose was based on their claimed ownership of the artifacts:

⁸⁵ Patrick Tivy, "Old Treasures Coming Home for Olympic Arts Fest," *Calgary Herald*, 1 March 1985. Tivy wrote "the important souvenirs will be the ethnological treasures that were taken from Canadian shores centuries ago by European fur traders, missionaries, soldiers, explorers and adventurers."

⁸⁶ Marybelle Meyers, "The Glenbow Affair: When the Cree Protested the Funding Source of The Spirit Sings They Stirred Up a Hornet's Nest," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1988): 15.

⁸⁷ Letter from George Erasmus, National Chief, of The Assembly of First Nations, to The British Museum, London, 25 September 1986, TMC. My italics.

the artifacts were produced by native people and belong to them. Traditionally they're ours and they were taken from our possession....Some were taken by force, that's without question.⁸⁸

But First Nations claims of symbolic and concrete rights to ownership were not only based on the fact that the artifacts had once belonged to First Nations peoples and had been wrongfully taken or stolen. They were also based on issues of re/presentation. Some of the objects on display at *The Spirit Sings* were or are sacred objects to specific Native bands. This issue was brought out clearly in a CFRN TV News Broadcast when reporter Russell Oughtred reported on the protest outside the exhibition on the day of its opening:

Nearby Indian leaders from across Canada were complaining that the exhibit contains sacred artifacts which should not be on display. One tribe is going to court.⁸⁹

Grand Chief Joe Norton of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake strongly articulated the First Nations position on these sacred objects when he stated:

There are various artifacts which museum curators and non-Indians in general call artifacts which to us are living spirits, which are national treasures to our various nations. And we intend to recoup those. We demand that they be returned to us.⁹⁰

Assertions of ownership and sacredness underlined the premise implicit in the discourse that many First Nations spokespeople felt that the Glenbow should have solicited permission, or at a minimum checked with First Nations groups, before their objects were displayed. Yvonne Gall reports:

While hundreds of invited guests attended the official opening of 'The Spirit Sings,' Canadian Native leaders were denouncing the Glenbow for staging an exhibition of Indian artifacts without the consent of Native people.⁹¹

⁸⁸ John Bud [cited in] "Indians Want Artifacts Returned," by Mark Lowey, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 10 January 1988. John Bud is a Mohawk Chief.

⁸⁹ Transcript of CFRN TV News Broadcast, Thursday, 14 January 1988, TMC.

⁹⁰ Transcript of CBC Radio News Broadcast, Thursday, 14 January 1988, TMC.

⁹¹ Transcript of CKUA Radio News Broadcast, Thursday, 14 January 1988, TMC.

The dispute over the Mohawk mask clearly reinforced a number of opinions that had arisen in the discourse with respect to museological validations of Western world-views and the concrete and symbolic power over others held by these institutions. Unarguably, the story line and theme of the exhibition was consistent with Euro-Canadian interpretations of history and conceptualizations of Native cultures. The fact that a sacred mask could be displayed, and continued to be displayed, even though the "living descendants of the people who had created it" (contrary by some author's interpretations to *ICOM Resolution No. 11*) protested against its public presentation, illustrates the power over material cultures that museums hold, and the symbolic power (which translates to practical and concrete power) over the living peoples a museum, and hence the state, holds.

The controversy over the Mohawk false face mask further reinforced Trigger's claim that First Nations are alienated from their own cultures because they have limited access to their own material cultures, and a limited role in the preservation of their own heritages. In Canadian society this is the role of museums. To alleviate this alienation, Trigger advocates the involvement of Native persons in the fields of museology and anthropology in order to ensure that First Nations peoples can gain control over their own histories. He writes:

What is called for is a government-funded program of affirmative action that will attract, train, and provide full-time employment for Indians and Inuit as curators and anthropologists across Canada. Only in this way can Canada's indigenous minority regain control of an important segment of their heritage, and anthropological collections cease to be relics of a colonial past. I have no doubt that an anthropology in which Native people play a significant, and perhaps a dominant, role would be radically different from the discipline as it is today and that creating it would be a painful experience for many who are currently in the profession. Yet I believe that it would be a more holistic and interesting anthropology. I also believe that museum ethnology departments that were mainly curated by native people would likely result in a better understanding of collections and in

exhibitions that are even more informative and more interesting not only for Native people but also for the general public than are current ones.⁹²

Rick Hill agrees with Trigger, and states that the need to restore First Nations material cultures into the hands of First Nations peoples takes precedence over the Canadian state's claim that these artifacts are part of the Canadian patrimony. In a critical review of the role of museums he outlines the irony inherent in museological claims of preservation from his Native perspective:

The museums and cultural institutions have defined that sacred trust in such a way that it often defeats the spiritual/cultural function of the very Native objects that it attempts to preserve. We cannot overlook the historical roots of museums and the policies of acquiring native materials, as they demonstrate the ethnocentrism of the white-dominated museum profession. This museum-myopia has the potential to actually destroy Native culture, rather than achieve the high-minded goals of preservation....

Just as Canada repatriated its own constitution in order to verify a unique Canadian consciousness, First Nations, which predate Canadian confederation, want to apply that same thinking for the sake of their future generations [and]...Although Native people agree that we have a common ground, the separate legal status of First Nations creates a need to recognize that each one has its own national patrimony and has a human right to define its group identity, cultural priorities and its national treasures on its own terms.⁹³

Although the issues of concrete/practical repatriation arose in this discourse, especially through the input of First Nations spokespeople, the topic was not taken up by many of the other authors, nor was it ever thoroughly explored. As I have noted, participants to the discourse preferred to discuss issues of ownership and control within the 'symbolic' realm. The role of museums as institutions that exercise practical/concrete power over material cultures, was never seriously questioned. This is an important point. Although Trigger is outspoken on behalf of First Nations ownership rights, it should not be overlooked that he does not ever call the very existence of museums into question, nor their connections to the state. While he wishes to change the museological mandate, he certainly believes that

⁹² Bruce Trigger, "Who Owns The Past?" *Muse* 6, no. 3 (1988): 13.

⁹³ Rick Hill, "Sacred Trust: Cultural Obligations of Museum to Native People," *Muse* 6, no. 1 (1988): 32.

cultures can be re/presented. Through his call for state-funded programs to provide educational opportunities in anthropology and museology for First Nations peoples, he reveals that he envisions both First Nations peoples and museums as part of Canada's patrimony. Thus the artifacts, in their signification, represent First Nations and Canada for Trigger—a shared patrimony. He believes that this aspect of our shared patrimony—First Nations material cultures—can be better utilized by First Nations and better interpreted and presented by First Nations peoples.

When discussing how the Native artifacts were spoken of in the discourse, I noted one of the signifying themes that I uncovered was that artifacts offer physical evidence of (past) Native cultures: they had (artistic) cultural objects, therefore they had cultures. Handler points out that the ideological 'culture = material cultures' connection flows inevitably from historically-generated connections between nationalism and culture.⁹⁴ It should not be surprising that some authors made impassioned and emotional appeals for this connection in reverse, by insisting that the loss of artifacts necessitated the loss of culture, and that contemporary Native cultures were at risk because they did not have access to their physical heritage. In these discursive instances culture and artifacts are spoken of in overlap: both were pillaged and stolen. For example, Oancia refers to the artifacts on display as 'relics of cultures that may well be on the way to oblivion.'⁹⁵ Thus, the distancing of Native people from their artifacts became symbolic of distancing them from their culture. Considering these deep issues, Trigger explicitly stated that control over material cultures was symbolic of control over First Nations own past and destiny when he stated:

[M]y recommendations are based on the firm conviction that what is fundamental to human dignity in a class society is power and the control of resources. Symbols, while important in 'naturalizing,' perpetuating, and overcoming injustices, are not at the root of human struggle. Although anthropologists and curators are not in a position to rectify the vast array

⁹⁴ Handler (1988).

⁹⁵ David Oancia, "A Celebration of the Spirit of Canada's Natives," *Telegraph-Journal*, 16 January 1988.

of injustices under which Native People continue to suffer in Canada, they are at least in a position to try to put their own houses in order.⁹⁶

Reporter Frank Jones shared Trigger's views, drawing a poignant and pertinent analogy in his statement:

[T]here was no one to demand the return of the exquisite bone and ivory pendants, or of a child's moccasins, or of the fringe of a robe, all produced by the Beothuk people of Newfoundland. No one. Because...the original 'Red Indians' named for the ochre with which they painted themselves—were hunted into extinction by settlers.⁹⁷

Chief Norton also asserted ownership and nationalistic claims by forcefully declaring:

We will no longer be ridiculed and insulted by having our national treasures [specifically the false face mask] displayed....Those things were either stolen or were bought illegally.⁹⁸

Assertions that First Nations should be able to exert at least some measure of control over their cultural materials were couched in nationalistic rhetoric which continually drew out the fundamental question: who owns these material cultures and by extension, these cultures? The Canadian state and the Alberta government certainly acted on the premise that 'they' did. The Mohawk Council lost their petition in the courts with respect to the false face mask. The abilities of First Nations to actually reclaim certain cultural materials had been carefully prevented by the Immunity From Seizure Act. Reporter Mark Lowey quotes Cameron addressing this issue, writing:

'You can't repatriate something that's sitting in another museum somewhere....Legally no one can put a lien on anything in this exhibition.

If you were to take it to the extreme, if everybody around the world decided they wanted their own stuff back—all the Greek things back to Greece, all the Egyptian things back to Egypt—then in Canada we'd have nothing to look at but Canadian stuff."

⁹⁶ Bruce Trigger. "Reply to Michael Ames," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 87.

⁹⁷ Frank Jones. "Native Art Represents Our Heritage," *Toronto Star*, 10 March 1988.

⁹⁸ Joe Norton [cited in] "Mohawks File Suit for Spirit Artifacts," by Karen Booth, [in] *Edmonton Journal*, 15 January 1988.

This would destroy the whole idea of fostering international understanding through awareness of other cultures....

The Glenbow's collection is part of the public trust, "so this is where it stays."⁹⁹

Thus, despite all of the discussion about the importance of culture to a nation's identity, the state with all of its power defined the relationship between culture and cultural materials as relevant to the Canadian state, and took steps to ensure that practical control over their material cultures on the part of First Nations remained elusive. Cameron's sentiments, enforced by the legal system, certainly made it clear that objects in museums around the world belong to their respective nations and are to remain centrally symbolically representative of that nation, regardless of any claims by others to the contrary. The ideology consistent with this—that cultural institutions owe their allegiance to the larger, politically established state—definitely took precedence over any aboriginal claims, who, of course, have no state and no legal institution through which to represent themselves.

(C) Whose Nation Is It?

Museum personnel do not hold political office in any practical sense. But their institutions do represent certain dimensions of the prevailing political climate and configurations in a symbolic sense, and they are institutions which are often closely aligned to political power. In the modern world, culture and politics cannot be separated and we should not delude ourselves into thinking that they ever have been. As Joan Vastokas reflected:

The perception is common in the public mind that art works and artistic activity are harmless phenomena, belonging only as the outer fringes of 'more important' political, economic, and social issues. For many the arts are not a significant part of life and are often classified as 'leisure' or 'entertainment.' Yet history shows that the arts, both sacred and profane,

⁹⁹ Duncan Cameron [cited in] "Indians Want Artifacts Returned," Mark Lowey, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 10 January 1988.

have more often stood at the very eye of social, political, and religious controversy. Those who have sought to dictate and to control society, did not fail to take the arts seriously.¹⁰⁰

Hooper-Greenhill also clearly postulates that museums have long been products of, and agents for, nationalism. To illustrate her thesis she points to Napoleon's art collecting activities, which she characterizes as being essential nationalistic complements to his revolutionary warring exploits.¹⁰¹ By utilizing Foucault's concept of controlled space, Hooper-Greenhill analyzes the roles and duties of museums. She emphasizes that cultural materials are collected and named according to power relationships. How a museum visitor views and understands an object is dependent upon how that object is categorized, named and presented. Museums, then, assist the viewer in naming, categorizing and understanding his/her world, environment, and histories. By extension, national museums are cultural institutions which categorize, name and present objects on display in ways that will validate the nation. Most nation states allocate resources to museums to assist them to fulfill their duties. These museums receive government funding and must answer to funding agencies.¹⁰² The mandates developed by national museums reflect their sense of commitment, and their responsibility to their perceived image of the larger national public and their position within the overall national cultural framework. In this regard, it is interesting to note that museum personnel almost never poll their public constituencies directly. Indeed, they almost never investigate what people 'read' from their exhibits, although they sometimes collect basic information on the individual viewer's degree of satisfaction with an exhibit. This gives museums enormous latitude to construct an image of the public and what it wants and needs that is in accord with their own, other agendas.

These processes of image building and perceived public response are at work in museums which may not be national in scope, but are still expected to respond to a large segment of society. This was the case with the Glenbow. With respect to *The Spirit Sings*, the

¹⁰⁰ Joan Vastokas, "Mixture of Art/Politics Not New," *Native Art Studies Association of Canada* 2, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): 1.

¹⁰¹ Hooper-Greenhill (1992), 169-172.

¹⁰² In this sense then, their money could be understood as no less 'tainted' than corporate sponsorship.

Glenbow-Alberta Institute's constituencies were understood to be Calgary, Alberta, all of Western Canada, and through the Olympic connection of the exhibition all of Canada and the world. Duncan Cameron was not reticent in expressing the Glenbow's and *The Spirit Sings*'s importance—after all, the mandate given to the Glenbow by Olympic representatives was to reflect the “cultural character” of Canada.¹⁰³ The Glenbow's staff and associates were proud of their accomplishments. Following the exhibition Harrison reported:

The Spirit Sings was a significant milestone in the history of Glenbow. It was unquestionably the largest and most complex exhibition undertaken by the institution, and rivals any other major exhibition ever done in Canada. The Herculean effort on the part of Glenbow staff and administration to bring it together is a tribute to the spirit of Glenbow.¹⁰⁴

The Glenbow assumed their role of educator to the world on Native artistic traditions, and as the repatriator of Native material cultures, from the inception of the exhibition. Harrison wrote that although the exhibition was:

in part designed to bring the wealth of Canadian native materials held in foreign collections to light..., most critically it would serve as an important vehicle to educate the Canadian population about the native heritage of their country.¹⁰⁵

In a special edition of *Glenbow* magazine, which was dedicated to the exhibition, Canada is spoken of as the “homeland” of Native artifacts because, “many priceless objects created by early Indians and Inuit of Canada have returned to their homeland to be part of a major exhibition organized by the Glenbow.” The Glenbow goes on to praise itself for bringing some of Canada's heritage back to Canada by stating:

The Spirit Sings is an historic exhibition for Glenbow, for Canada, and for the world. It offers a rare opportunity to study material which documents the fragile transition period when Native cultures first came into contact

¹⁰³ Their mandate, discussed earlier in this study, is outlined in Glenbow's feasibility study: *Glenbow Project OCO '88* (Fall 1984), Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Julia Harrison, “The Spirit Sings.” *Glenbow Report*, (1988): 9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

with outside influences. By viewing these fascinating objects from the past, visitors may come to a better understanding and appreciation of the rich and lasting legacy of Native artistic traditions in Canada.¹⁰⁶

David Tavender stated that *The Spirit Sings* is ‘one of the most significant exhibitions ever mounted in Canada.’¹⁰⁷ In a large article, certainly authored by Glenbow staff (and more of an advertisement than an article), the museum is acclaimed for ‘returning [these] priceless objects [to] their homeland’¹⁰⁸ and for providing Canada with this ‘opportunity to highlight the rich and diverse Canadian Native heritage before an international audience.’¹⁰⁹

Cameron is quoted in many media reports as stating that the exhibition is the largest and most extensive in Glenbow’s history, and that it will be of great international importance and artistic significance. The following quote provides an example:

This is an exhibition of great international importance and artistic significance....Our excitement for *The Spirit Sings* continues to grow. The project has been in the works for five years, and we are eager to share our excitement with Calgarians, Canadians, and visitors from around the world.¹¹⁰

Likewise, Shell Oil Canada proclaimed the exhibition’s historical significance, adding that *The Spirit Sings*, ‘would lead to greater public understanding of Canada’s contemporary native community.’¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous, ‘An Introduction,’ *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 5.

¹⁰⁷ David E. Tavender, ‘Welcome to The Spirit Sings,’ *Glenbow* (Special Edition 1988): 4.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, ‘The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada’s First Peoples,’ *Heritage Link* 3, no. 1 (January/February 1988) 11.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, ‘The Spirit Sings Largest Exhibit Presented—Glenbow,’ *Stettler Weekly*, 23 March 1988.

¹¹¹ Shell President, Jack MacLeod [cited in] ‘Native Legacy Comes to Life,’ by Mark Lowey, [in] *Calgary Herald*, 23 January 1988.

The language that was used to describe the exhibition served to portray the Glenbow in a pioneering and avant-garde light, and conceptualized the museum as playing a national role. The Glenbow's association with an official national museum, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, cemented the image of the Glenbow as a 'national' purveyor of culture. The Canadian Museum of Civilization assisted the Glenbow in many ways, including financing and serving as the second venue of *The Spirit Sings*. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I consider the Glenbow to have taken on a role commensurate with the roles of other national museums.

A consensus expressed in the discourse and voiced explicitly by Bruce Trigger, was 'that museums conserve a national heritage that belongs to the Canadian people or to provincial and federal governments. The primary duty of museums is therefore to ensure the survival of these collections.'¹¹² But just which Canadian museums serve became a point of contention. When advocating his opinion that First Nations collections should be accessible to, and largely curated by, First Nations groups, Trigger notes that there is a perception by some museologists that:

if Native groups were to gain control of ethnographic collections they might disperse this material, damage it by returning religious objects to their original use, or even decide to destroy some of it.¹¹³

Trigger points out that there is a tendency in the dominant culture of Canada (which museums represent) to take a paternalistic attitude toward Native cultural materials for the good of Native peoples and for the protection of these materials. Through this exchange the role of museums towards Native cultural materials was questioned.

Addressing the topic of the cultural obligations of museums to First Nations, Rick Hill explained that First Nations have a consciousness of themselves similar to, but distinct from, the general Canadian consciousness with 'its own national patrimony and

¹¹² Bruce Trigger, "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People and Their Heritage." *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 74.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

[the]...right to define its group identity, cultural priorities and its national treasures."¹¹⁴ I have previously noted Hill's opinion that First Nations' need to access artifacts takes precedence over any claims that these objects are Canada's and therefore a shared Canadian heritage. Hill insists that First Nations peoples should have the right to their cultures on their own terms and he strongly suggests that while Canadians consider Native heritages as a part of the Canadian heritage, Canadians do not really 'know' Native peoples. He postulates that "we hardly ever think of Indians as a significant constituency of museums, we see Indians as suppliers of artifacts, crafts, paintings and an occasional dance or two." He contends that these discrepancies signify an underlying political struggle in which:

Native people have tried to get the international museum profession to address essential concerns of the ethics of the sacred trust that cultural institutions have to their public. That sacred trust is not only the legal obligation that museums have to make collections accessible, it is a moral imperative that Native people find lacking. Just as Indians attached spiritual significance to the treaties and agreements that were concluded between our governments, we also place a sacred trust in the idea that museums are intended to help our culture survive, and even grow.¹¹⁵

Political views such as Hill's interpenetrated the discourse around the Lubicon's struggle and their call for a boycott. Michael Ames and Julia Harrison specifically countered such political views, preferring to see museums as (at least ideally) apolitical institutions. Although both Ames and Harrison (like many of the other authors) expressed sympathy for the Lubicon cause, they decried the Lubicon's premise that museums could be used as someone's "political football"¹¹⁶ and insisted that it was wrong for cultural institutions to be held hostage for the political gains of a few.

¹¹⁴ Rick Hill, "Sacred Trust: Cultural Obligations of Museum to Native People," *Muse* 6, no. 1 (1988): 32. Note the nationalistic tone of this statement in light of my discussion around Anderson's, Brass' and A.D. Smith's contentions that ethnic groups within the nation can, under the right circumstances, establish an identity of themselves as a nation unto themselves.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Michael Ames [cited in] "Share The Blame," with interviewer Peter Gzowski, [in] *Vanguard* 17, no. 2 (April/May 1988): 17. "Political football" is Ames' term.

Both Ames and Harrison ignore that fact that the Glenbow could also have been perceived as a political football for Shell Oil. I have noted that Cameron continued to maintain throughout his public presentations, that the Glenbow had full and unrestricted control over the exhibition. Glenbow staff, then, presented themselves as in control and apolitical. The Glenbow's position 'that museums represent the larger public' remained consistent. In an interview on a CBC radio program Ames clearly defines his and the Glenbow's point of view:

Museums are public trustees. It's the people of Canada who own these collections, not any political interest group. We have an obligation, as trustees. When the government changes the law, and wants to negotiate ownership, then the materials go to whomever then owns them. As trustees, we have an obligation to consult with people who are represented, and to involve them in these decisions, and we do that, in exhibitions. We have been doing that for a long time, and I believe the Glenbow did it as well. So you develop a program, and years later someone else comes along and says, "Ah, I want to use you as a political football." Well, I'm not going to be a football for someone else. And I don't think museums should be.¹¹⁷

In this interview with Peter Gzowski, Michael Ames also insisted that one had to

apply the test of reasonableness, and I think in this case the Lubicon were not concerned with the content of the exhibit, but were using it as a political strategy for their own gain. I can understand that but I cannot support it. I think how you protest is as important as what you're protesting, certainly in a democratic society. To boycott a museum is equivalent to advocating the suppression of academic freedom and freedom of expression.¹¹⁸

Drawing upon the dearly held Canadian belief in the right of 'free speech,' Ames ignores the fact that the Lubicon are themselves exercising this right, emphasizing instead the political motivations behind the boycott and the selfishness of a special interest group who would challenge the academic freedom and freedom of expression found in museums.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

It must be noted that Ames appears to have weighed certain factors before taking his position. Evidently he considered the academic autonomy of museums to be of higher priority than the Lubicon boycott; but he also states that he took into consideration other Native groups' opinions and relationships to the exhibition and boycott. While Trigger took the position articulated by the larger First Nations community, Ames preferred to look at the positions taken by bands who were more local to the situation. He noted that the Treaty Seven Bands, "in whose traditional territory the Glenbow resides, participated in the Olympics and the exhibition, while also supporting the Lubicon land claim.... What sense does it make," he asked "for a museum to disregard the advice of those peoples in its neighborhood while acceding to the demands of a more distant group or political agencies who were only interested in using the exhibition as a bargaining chip in negotiations with other people?"¹¹⁹ Throughout the discourse, Ames continued to assert that "a museum is not to be a weather vane, to twist and turn according to who blows the hardest from one day to the next."¹²⁰

Besides the political positions of neighboring bands, and his position that museums must remain apolitical, Ames also addressed the social/educational aspects of the exhibition and finds that:

the ideological message *The Spirit Sings* exhibition intended to communicate [is]...an important one: contemporary native groups share a sophisticated, complex and diverse heritage that continues to be relevant to them and wider public understanding of that fact will help their cause.¹²¹

In contrast to Trigger, Ames appears to be sure that he knows what will help their (First Nations) cause. Harrison took a similar position. She explained that the Glenbow's stance with respect to the boycott was based upon weighing the consequences of closing the exhibition or continuing with it, and then opting to serve the greater good. She states:

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹²⁰ Michael Ames, "The Liberation of Anthropology," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 83.

¹²¹ Ibid.

[The] Glenbow undertook to be socially responsible rather than to be politically active [in that they chose to advocate a] better and wider understanding of a situation rather than one particular solution to it. While it may be legitimate to mount political action around any activity undertaken by a public institution, it would destroy the legitimacy of those institutions if they were forced to espouse the political causes of one pressure group after another. Museums are expected by their constitutions to remain non-partisan.¹²²

We cannot take these claims that museums are and should be apolitical at face value. In reality the Glenbow, in its counter campaign to the boycott, took actions which were specifically political. The Glenbow used its position as a cultural institution financially supported by governments to advance its cause. The Canadian Department of External Affairs assisted the Glenbow with loan acquisitions by opening the doors to museums around the world. Subsequently, the Glenbow solicited the aid of External Affairs in pressuring international museums to commit to loan. I have noted that these political acts, and the use of this political pressure were so offensive to Calgary anthropologist Joan Ryan, that she withdrew her support from the exhibition and resigned from her position on the Glenbow's Program Committee. In a later interview Ryan clarified her position, in answer to the interviewer's remarks that some bands, particularly the Inuit, did not necessarily support the boycott and wanted to see the exhibit:

Some of the treaty bands have actively opposed the boycott. Two bands have said they will remain "neutral," but the umbrella organizations have provided written support for the Olympic boycott. Duncan told the Europeans that they could ignore these letters because the organizations didn't represent anybody. How can a national organization not represent anybody? Can you imagine being a Dane or a Frenchman or an Austrian receiving a bundle of letters from IFN, IAA, AFN, the Metis Association of Alberta and Canada, etc. all saying we support the boycott and then you receive a letter from the Director of the Glenbow which says we have a strong local Indian support, ignore those letters, they don't represent anybody? That's what's unethical. Not that he's trying to put on an exhibit.¹²³

¹²² Julia Harrison, "The Spirit Sings," *Glenbow Report* (1988): 9.

¹²³ Joan Ryan [cited in] "Appropriation: A Case in Point," anonymous, [in] *Last Issue* (Autumn 1987): 33.

Like Ryan, boycott activists certainly did not accept the Glenbow's 'apolitical' stance. Lennarson's chain-letters powerfully pointed out the connections between the Glenbow, the federal and provincial governments, and the oil companies. Boycott sympathizers and workers had claimed that there was a false, jarring note in the exhibition because it glorified past Native cultures while the majority of contemporary Native peoples experience serious economic and political deprivation. Trigger, for example, strongly asserted that the Lubicon cause "warns all of us how ruthless our own governments and big business can become when they are not sufficiently held to account by a vigilant public" and suggests that we all need to ponder:

what sort of society we want to see in Canada as a whole....[T]he Lubicon people and their valiant resistance to exploitation have made them at this point in time nothing less than the conscience of our nation and a warning about the future that awaits us all if we stand by and do nothing.¹²⁴

The questions of where and how First Nations currently fit into the larger Canadian nation were addressed in this discourse in only a few, isolated instances. Steve Hume's review of the exhibition, however, dealt explicitly with these issues. His review focused on the deprivation of First Nations due to colonization. Powerfully affected by the artifact images of the Beothuk, and the extinction stories these artifacts signify, Hume found the exhibition offensive because it attempted to use these artifacts to instill a sense of Canadian identity and nationalism: "Who cannot feel appalled and shamed," he asked "that their memory should be evoked in the service of national pride?"¹²⁵

In the same vein, Keith Spicer was particularly unflattering of the Canadian nation. He states that the "Lubicon Indians are embarrassing Canada" and rightly so, for:

to some of these nation's predominantly white citizens, such party-dampening protests [he notes the "Aborigines are messing up Australia's

¹²⁴ Bruce Trigger, comments following address by Chief Bernard Ominayak at McGill University, 13 November 1987, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

¹²⁵ Steve Hume, "The Spirit Weeps: Power, Genius and Hypocrisy at the Glenbow Exhibit," *Edmonton Journal*, 14 February 1988.

bicentennial'] seem petty na-saying. If not ingratitude. But they carry rich insights into the meaning of roots, nationhood and civilized behavior.¹²⁶

Spicer likened *The Spirit Sings* displays to 'pinning dead butterflies under glass,' and through a discussion of nationhood he notes that this type of presentation, 'leaves the natives with a romanticized past, a stunted present, and no future. It leaves the white man with a monopoly of patriotism, as opposed to ethnic anger.' In essence he finds the whole affair to be "white-flattering."¹²⁷

It was Chief Erasmus, representing the Assembly of First Nations, who spoke most poignantly about First Nations and Canada. He describes the artifacts as "our art and sacred artifacts" and this place we call Canada as "our homeland," noting that although there are problems for his people in every region of Canada,

we have solutions, but what we desperately need are the opportunities to present them. 'The Spirit Sings' is a national embodiment of our concerns, and therefore a legitimate vehicle for expression and discussions.¹²⁸

He adds that, 'had the original situation been different, First Nations might be supporting the presentation....However [the concerns brought out by the boycott] outweigh any other considerations.'¹²⁹

Aside from these political issues which were seen by the museum community as having the ability to impact upon their scholarly autonomy, for participants like Julia Harrison the posited educational opportunities which the exhibition offered to all peoples outweighed all the other arguments. Throughout the discourse, Harrison suggests that the study of cultural materials is invaluable in gaining an understanding of histories and cultures: "these objects reflect clearly the native view of the world—a view distinct from that of

¹²⁶ Keith Spicer "Listen to The Native Protesters," *Spectator*, 23 January 1988.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Chief George Erasmus, comments taken from a press release issued by the Assembly of First Nations, 27 April 1988, TMC.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

mainstream Canadians.”¹³⁰ In her writings,¹³¹ she maintains that through the exhibition others would “come to understand native culture better” and she took pride in the fact that “more native peoples attended *The Spirit Sings* than any other exhibition that the Glenbow has ever mounted.” And while she recognized that not all people, whether they be Native or non-Native, agreed with the Glenbow or were pleased with the exhibition, she made it clear that many people were touched by the exhibition and that for Native peoples in particular, visiting the exhibition had been a rewarding experience. In the words of some Native visitors, which Harrison took from the comment cards, this is clearly the case:

- It makes me proud to be an Indian
- We are a proud yet humble people and our culture is so very important to us.
- I am one who had denied her Indian blood...[now] I feel proud and will stop my apologizing.
- This is truly an advance for the understanding of the cultural significance of various tribes.
- I can only hope that others appreciate the value that natives can give to Canadian culture.
- I’ve never been more proud of my ancestry than I am now.
- This exhibit should be seen by all Canadians.
- The complete show was very moving.
- This has been extremely important in linking up with our native past and present.¹³²

Many participants to the discourse, and many viewers of the exhibition, agreed that the educational component of the exhibition was one of its most redeeming features. The discourse is littered with comments made not only by Glenbow staff, but by Shell, other museologists and members of the general public, who insisted that exposure to, and information about, historical Native cultures would/did lead to a greater understanding of contemporary Natives on the part of Canadians.

¹³⁰ Julia D. Harrison, “The Legacy of *The Spirit Sings*,” *Glenbow*. (Special Edition 1988): 7.

¹³¹ Julia D. Harrison, “*The Spirit Sings*,” *Glenbow Report* (1988): 8.

¹³² *Ibid.* These diverse statements were taken from the ‘comments cards’ made out by visitors to the exhibition and placed on the ‘comment wall’ by Glenbow staff.

Halpin, Spicer and Hume seem to be the only participants to reject these statements of the exhibition's educational significance. In a review of the exhibition Marjorie Halpin finds not an educational experience leading to greater tolerance, but an "us" and "them" theme, with us defining them. This division of us and them, Halpin continues, is indicative of the power relationships that underlie the museological assumption of the "right to represent....Perhaps," she suggests, "it is past time for Them to define themselves."¹³³ Halpin also tackles the "myth" spread throughout this discourse that exhibitions of other cultures leads to increased tolerance towards the cultural descendants of these cultures on the part of the viewer, insisting that there is no factual data to support such doctrine.¹³⁴

I found it ironic that some critics of the Glenbow's actions and the exhibition constructed a far more sophisticated theory of re/presentation than did the Glenbow staff and its professional museum-based supporters. Positions in support of the Glenbow tended to emphasize the rather naive notion that information on historical Native cultures has no need of context, and that the meanings conveyed by the artifacts were somehow essential and 'in' the object itself. There was little recognition that objects gain meaning in context, and that artifacts offer multiple significations to diverse viewers. Critics of the exhibition largely neglected to point out that the way in which the artifacts were displayed and embedded in a mainstream Canadian cultural institution served to frame, limit and guide the interpretations of those who viewed them. The resulting significations were far from neutral.

III Some Observations

Despite some assertions within the discourse that First Nations and the Canadian nation share a heritage, it is immediately obvious from my analysis that practical concrete control over the artifacts is held by a small group of Euro-Canadians. While it would be wrong to

¹³³ Marjorie Halpin, "Museum Review of *The Spirit Sings*," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 92

¹³⁴ Ibid. Halpin states, "that museum visiting actually changes people's attitudes has, to my knowledge, never been scientifically demonstrated."

suggest that these individuals were close in proximity to the artifacts or that they all had the ability to touch or to handle them, it was their system of values and beliefs which essentially established just how close others, particularly Native Peoples, could get to the objects and determined their acquisition and use. Access, then, is controlled by a powerful few. But in essence so is interpretation in this case. The ability to interpret and present or display is also the domain of this same stratum. Museum staff, at the behest of the provincial and federal governments, backed by politicians, and funded by corporate money strongly aligned with these governments and the status quo, determined that the artifacts, while conceded to represent the cultural heritages of First Nations, were also the patrimony of the Canadian state. It was this powerful coalition, through their cultural arm, the Glenbow, that controlled the story line of how and why these two heritages linked together.

At no time did First Nations have the ability to make any of these determinations themselves, except symbolically through the doors opened by the boycott. The boycott gave First Nations a measure of power over the artifacts, but only as long as others supported their view, sympathized with their situation and agreed with their approach toward a resolution. First Nations power in this situation was fleeting and precarious, essentially at the mercy of other's judgments and values.

The story line of the exhibition was written from a Western Canadian-based perspective and the objects selected were ones that would validate this particular view of history. Therefore, the interpretation of the history of Canada's colonization remained within a framework to which First Nations had no access. When the Glenbow and others spoke of First Nations material cultures as their heritage and their artifacts and their culture, just how did they define 'their'? The term, their, certainly implies ownership, but that ownership remained symbolic. At no time were practical, concrete ownership issues addressed except by First Nations spokespeople.

The rights of First Nations, particularly the Lubicon, to challenge the exhibition with a boycott was never denied. As well, First Nations rightful places as descendants of the cultures from which the artifacts originated was acknowledged, albeit only on a symbolic level. Great and glorious descriptions of past Native cultures were conceptually linked to contemporary first peoples through a theme of 'survival.' Yet the objects themselves remained in a very defined and controlled environment in which Native persons could only gain access to them visually, through glass boxes, like the rest of Canadians and other visitors.

The Lubicon boycott offered museums world-wide an opportunity to validate First Nations' claims to their artifacts and through this, to validate them as nations. From the standpoint of the museum community, this decision of whether to validate First Nations' or Canada's claims was essentially unprecedented. Without a clear path to follow, some looked to ICOM for guidance. While *Resolution No. 11* offered First Nations some symbolic control over their material cultures, it did not essentially change the status quo. Issues of practical, concrete control were largely muted. At no time were First Nations granted any real, practical control; any ability that they possessed to determine the disposition of the artifacts was granted to them through the compassion of others. For example, the international museums who backed the boycott could have, at any time, simply reversed their decisions without serious repercussions. Essentially, First Nations at no point had any jurisdiction over 'their' materials. Most museums continued to serve the state and to protect the dominant culture—in this case, Canada's.

Throughout the discourse, the Glenbow maintained the rather paternalistic position that they were serving First Nations interests and that the exhibition, regardless of the opinion of First Nations organizations, would further an understanding of First Nations in Canada. Museum spokespeople are clear about the fact that they held and retained the rights to make any and all decisions with respect to the use, display, and representation of the artifacts and that while these materials are of First Nations workmanship, the material cultures on display no longer 'belong' to First Nations except symbolically. The

Glenbow's position remained eminently clear. While they were re/presenting First Nations, these nations belonged to the Canadian state (indeed signified the very beginnings of Canadian history), and the needs and interests of the Canadian state took precedence over the needs of any 'groups' within it.

CONCLUSION: Yours, Mine or Ours?

In a series of general points which appear below in italics, I conclude this study by summarizing the analysis I have presented in the preceding chapters. A concluding statement that attempts to identify themes in a discourse risks creating the impression that these themes are all encompassing, leaving little room for an exploration of the tensions between opposing views, or gaps in the overall text. Accordingly, in the discussion that follows I have paid particular attention to statements contested by the participants, and I explore the implications that arise from these opposing views.

The authors who contributed to this discourse did not appear to distinguish sharply between the concepts of nation and culture. All authors appeared to be working with the understanding that a nation, whether that nation is a recognized state or an ethnic/indigenous group, has culture. The connections between culture and nation were even more closely drawn than this: [1] a nation 'is' its culture, [2] distinctions between nations can be drawn on the basis of their unique cultures, and [3] having a 'unique' culture is a legitimate basis for nationalistic claims.

Cultures were also considered to be an integral component of the lives of all individuals. Participants to the discourse appeared to recognize that cultures are highly diverse and that the relationship between an individual and his/her culture is a deep and identity-forming one. This led some writers to the notion that acculturated individuals from differing heritages exhibit divergent world-views which are based on the culture that frames those individual's world-view. For example, ancient First Nations cultures were often spoken of as being deeply spiritual and closely connected to their land and environment. The characteristics ascribed to these cultures resulted in the assumption that both ancient and contemporary First Nations individuals were/are more spiritual and connected to nature than are Westerners, whose cultures purportedly do not have a spiritual connectedness to nature or the environment.

In general terms, the links that were asserted to exist between the identity formation of an individual and his/her culture inevitably led to the conclusion that people who share the same culture exhibit a unique group identity. This cultural-group identity distinguished a set of people as unique from others and is the basis for claims of 'difference' which was understood as the essential attribute for a (potential or state) nation. Distinguishing features of all sorts in the form of cultural manifestations such as actual physical artistic materials, traditions, beliefs and values were understood in this discourse as 'cultural markers.' These markers, which the individuals in the group understood and related to, served to signify (or mark) a group's unique identity and conceptually validate nationhood.

In specific terms, contributors to the discourse all agreed that First Nations cultures were 'unique' and 'different.' It was also agreed that this cultural uniqueness pointed to a divergent and often laudatory world-view; the descendants of these cultures 'saw' the world differently than, for example, Euro-Canadians. However, the significance of this difference was not agreed to by all of the authors, and this disagreement revealed a point of tension in the texts. Both spokespeople for the Canadian nation, and spokespeople for First Nations, claimed the cultural materials (artifacts) on display at the Glenbow as 'their' heritage and the markers of 'their' nation or nations. Through *The Spirit Sings*, the Glenbow, on behalf of Canada, used First Nations' artifacts to point to the Canadian Nation's unique history and its fundamental difference from other Olympic nations. First Nations on the other hand, identified these material cultures as their own cultures and as historically (and spiritually) significant First Nations cultural markers. Some authors in this discourse understood the artifacts presented through *The Spirit Sings* as both Canadian and First Nations cultural markers, whether they understood First Nations as separate nations from the Canadian state, or First Nations as politically and culturally autonomous within the Canadian state. Thus the various contributors were divided as to the rightful dispensation of the national and cultural significance of the artifacts. Some authors conceptualized them as 'Canadian,' some as belonging to and signifying First Nations

only, and other authors understood the artifacts as signifying a shared patrimony, but the markers of First Nations' difference 'within' Canada.

In this discourse both nation and culture were explicitly and implicitly understood as something which could be symbolically validated by another nation. When the Glenbow requested specific artifacts from international museums they did so on the basis of metaphoric repatriation claims which signified that the Glenbow, on behalf of the Canadian state, claimed a shared patrimony in the objects of First Nations manufacture which had been taken from the country at the time of early European contact. International museums who agreed to loan their artifacts to Canada, did so on the basis that the request was a legitimate one from the Canadian state which had a symbolic interest in these early artifacts; the artifacts were seen as somehow Canadian. It is very unlikely, given that Harrison thoroughly explained the metaphoric theme of the exhibition to international museum directors/curators, that international museums would have agreed to loan these objects if they had not seen a connection between the material cultures they held and the Canadian state.

When the organizers of the Lubicon boycott and organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations made direct requests to national and international museums that they not loan their artifacts (their cultural markers) at this time to the Glenbow, museums were caught in a dilemma. Did First Nations have a greater 'symbolic' claim on these artifacts than the Canadian state? Many of these museums decided that the First Nations claims were fundamental, and through their decisions not to loan to the Glenbow they validated the symbolic claims of First Nations to the artifacts in question.

The Glenbow displayed and presented the First Nations artifacts in both artistic (formalist) and cultural (contextualist) display styles during *The Spirit Sings*. These display styles pointed the viewer in specific interpretive directions. First Nations cultural materials were presented, both historically and culturally, as Canadian and as signifiers of Canada's roots. The need to validate these Canadian roots, to present them as uniquely different and

proudly Canadian led to presentation styles that highlighted the exquisite nature of the artifacts on display. Not only did First Nations groups 'have' cultures, the displays seemed to say these cultures were unique, highly developed cultures we can all be proud of—and in many ways perhaps nostalgic, cultures we may all long to get 'back to.'

By linking past First Nations cultures to contemporary first peoples through the theme of survival, and by displaying contemporary First Nations cultures through the presentation of *A Celebration of Cultures*, Glenbow organizers constructed these cultures as valid through specific signifying styles and conceptualized them as visual aids pertinent to an educational forum. These artifacts could teach us something; we had something to learn from them that supposedly would lead to a greater understanding of today's First Nations peoples on the part of other Canadians.

The ways in which the artifacts were used, displayed and/or represented, caused tension among participants in the discourse. The artifacts were spoken of as signifiers of specific cultures, so discussions of the artifacts centered around their inherent signification. *Culture was conceptualized as something which can be objectively owned, and governance of cultural markers (artifacts) implied rights and privileges of ownership.* Coupled with the close connections that had been drawn out in the discourse between an individual and his/her culture, many authors like Trigger and Hill asserted that the well-being and survival of First Nations (as individuals and cultures) were closely linked to First Nation's ability to access and govern their own cultural markers.

I want to briefly distinguish the idea that culture is something which can be owned and controlled from the concept of ownership rights. The objectification of culture is a theme that has reoccurred repeatedly in this thesis. A concept used unofficially can obscure a number of important issues that arise from this discourse. It is true that culture was objectified as a thing which can be owned, controlled, lost or diluted. This discourse was largely concerned with the artifacts on display at the Glenbow: concrete, visible manifestations of culture. Thus it is not surprising that the discourse often speaks of

culture as a 'thing.' However, discussions of the Lubicon culture as lost, or in danger, or Cameron's discussion of the Glenbow's copyright on *The Spirit Sings*, are also examples of the objectification of culture. In the Lubicon discussions culture was conceptualized as an organism, in Cameron's as a commodity.

I want to note two specific things about these examples. First, where Native cultures are the topic of discussion, metaphoric references to culture as an individual, a natural organism or as part of the environment are abundant. Conversely, when these cultures are conceptualized as primary referents to Western/Canadian cultures, the metaphoric references speak of these cultures as commodities (Shell, Cameron), or as educational resources (Harrison, Cameron). These examples are important indicators of the intangible conceptualizations that are part of the framework of First Nations cultures.

Second, the metaphoric distinctions indicate variations of distance. While culture may be objectified, and while all participants to this discourse may speak of their cultures in objectified terms, referents to one's own culture are emotionally imbued. For example, while First Nations spokespeople may describe their cultures in metaphoric terms, they do appear emotionally distanced from the peoples, the life-ways and the ideologies these cultures represent. Similarly, those spokespeople who highlighted a Canadian patrimony also were not distanced from the concept of their own culture. It is important to note that while a people may know what the other understands as valuable, laudatory or significant about their culture, may indeed even promote these markers for political ends, there may also be strong emotional links between these markers and the people using them.

On the other hand, the viewer is quite often distanced from these markers. The usage of commodity and educational metaphors in the others' descriptions of First Nations cultures, illustrate the distance created between words, emotion, and real peoples. A strong tension exists between these conceptualizations. Indeed, this tension is exacerbated by the symbolic significance of cultural markers, emotional distance, metaphoric description and issues of ownership and control.

The tension over who had access to and control over the artifacts on display was central to this discourse and marks an important underlying theme. *Having control of a material culture implies that (at least symbolically) the living descendants of those material cultures are being controlled.* The ability of one group to access, interpret, display and re/present another through artifacts, often confers to the group in control the power to choose the stories that will be told about the group being re/presented. Symbolically this means, at least in this domain, that the re/presented groups have no real control over their histories, and no ability to tell stories from their own perspective.

But this issue of artifact ownership and control is not merely a symbolic one. A group that has no control over their past is often equally powerless to affect the present. In this discourse it became abundantly clear that the key, overlapping group in power, those with ownership of and control over the artifacts, assumed the right to make decisions with respect to the histories of the re/presented groups and their present day lives. First Nations spokespeople were eloquent in their assertions that the Lubicon boycott and the Lubicon cause would not be served by allowing Shell to sponsor an exhibit of First Nations artifacts. Even so, the re/presenters of these First Nations felt that the exhibit was ‘just too important to respect a Native boycott,’¹ that it would be “good” for First Nations peoples, and that the exhibit would “help” vulnerable Native cultures.² It is obvious that *some authors did not allocate to the heritage claims of First Nations (with the ownership and control rights heritage implies) equal validity with those proclaimed by the Canadian state.* The paternalistic position taken by the proponents of the exhibition seems to indicate that while they validated (ancient) First Nations cultures through descriptions of these cultures as “exquisite” and “spiritual”, it was, as Belmore suggested, a different story when ‘it comes to dealing with real Native people.’³ Ralph Klein pointed out that those

¹ George MacDonald [cited in] “Museum Head Rejects Boycott of Aboriginal Artifacts Show,” by Wendy Smith, [in] *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 April 1988.

² Comments by Cameron taken from a form letter signed, ‘Duncan F. Cameron, Director, Alberta-Glenbow’ which was mailed to national and international museum directors, 14 January 1986, Glenbow Archives.

³ Rebecca Belmore [cited in] “Our Native Land,” by anonymous, [in] *Humanist* (Spring 1988): 21.

'who argue against the exhibition are missing a fundamental point [and] *The Spirit Sings* will [help Canadians and others] to appreciate the rich diversity and resiliency of Native cultures.'" Thus First Nations peoples were spoken of as people who missed the fundamental point that the exhibition would help them, and also as misguided children who did not know what was good for them and were not thankful for the help they were getting.

Ancient First Nations cultures represented the very roots of Canada; contemporary First Nations cultures were the not quite grown up children of the Canadian state. In certain key ways within their power, re/presenters bypassed the rights and the wishes of First Nations peoples and made decisions with respect to current, hard, political issues that affected the lives of many contemporary First Nations peoples. These negations of First Nations' wishes was not only illustrated through the boycott issue, they were also clearly revealed through the discussions and actions that took place with respect to the Mohawk false face mask display. It is the lack of control of the 'bundle of rights' that has been historically asserted with the ownership of material cultures, which alienates a peoples from their heritage.

It is clear that decisions made by the groups in power with respect to the loan of artifacts for display, were made on the basis of a conviction that the artifacts were Canadian patrimony, or at the very most a shared First Nations/Canadian patrimony with the Canadian state taking on the status of an all-knowing and more sensible older brother. First Nations material cultures were assumed by the Glenbow to be the jurisdiction and the heritage of all Canadian peoples. The museum's mandate was presented as apolitical and non-partisan, yet responsible. As the keepers of Canadian patrimony, they were responsible first and foremost to the public-at-large. The rationale of Glenbow staff was that all Canadians should be able to access their heritage through 'glass boxes;' ⁵ in the

⁴ Remarks from a speech given by Ralph Klein at the official opening ceremonies of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives.

⁵ Ames (1992).

final analyses, First Nations have no more rights to these heritages than other Canadians. These assertions with respect to the Canadian patrimony and the artifacts on display at the Glenbow were hotly contested, as I have shown. Trigger, for example, continued to maintain throughout the discourse that the material cultures on display were First Nations' cultural materials, and that access, control and interpretation should rest with First Nations peoples.⁶

Many participants to the discourse conceptualized the First Nations material cultures on display as a shared heritage. These assertions of a shared heritage were not made without reservation, and not without some resentment on the part of some authors. The concept of a shared heritage, however, appeared to be applied in only one direction. At no time in this discourse was the suggestion made that the First Nations share in a European heritage, except in a negative sense. In fact, the impact of European nations on First Nations at the time of contact was spoken of in revealing terms. First Nations were said to have survived the contact, to have adapted to European influence, to have retained their fundamental and unique Native world-view⁷ in spite of European influence. While it is true that the above terms indicate an admiring view of First Nations' resilience, we should not overlook the implicit self-congratulatory aspects of these words. The implication is clear that Europeans were powerful and forceful; First Nations must have been strong peoples indeed to overcome European influence at the time of contact.

These terms that refer both to First Nations strength and European power combine with the discussions of 'our shared heritage' in the discourse to point to a gap in the overall

⁶ See for example:

Bruce Trigger, "Reply to Michael Ames," *Culture* 8, no. 1 (1988): 87.

Bruce Trigger, "Reply by Bruce Trigger," *Anthropology Today* 4, no. 6 (1988): 9.

Bruce Trigger, letter of resignation from his position as Honorary Curator of the McCord Museum addressed to Dr. Marcel Caya, 28 October 1988, private archival collection of Dr. Tony Hall, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta.

⁷ Julia D. Harrison, "The Legacy of 'The Spirit Sings'," *Glenbow (Special Edition 1988)*: 7. Here, Harrison states, "These objects reflect clearly the Native view of the world—a view distinct from that of mainstream Canadians."

discourse. Canadians did not seem to be able to or desirous of describing or identifying their own cultural markers, nor could/did they articulate a clear sense of Canadian identity. Some authors appeared to agree that they could be described as Euro-Canadians, but many others were openly hostile to this description and distanced themselves from any European heritage. References to European power at the time of contact often disparaged that power, while remarks about the impact of European contact upon the first peoples during this historical period were explicitly derogatory. Instead of claiming Euro-Canadian roots, these authors defined themselves as simply 'Canadian' and their identities and heritage as inextricably entwined with the First Nations. They asserted that their loyalties were rooted in this country, not in Europe. They are Canadian.

But what is a Canadian? No answer to the question 'what is a Canadian?' was found in the discourse. The only attempt that was made to grapple with this query came through a discursive connection between Canadians and the Canadian state: this is Canada, we live in Canada, therefore we are Canadian. Beyond Feest's reference to Canada's polyethnicity, no cultural markers were identified. Instead, Canada was grouped into two cultural/national segments: First Nations and Euro-Canadians. Connections between Canadian citizens and Eastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, the Far East, the Caribbean, South and South-East Asia, India or Japan were all lumped together (with the exception of the fleeting reference made by King⁸ to 125 different backgrounds), as Euro-Canadian. And all of these Canadians were said to share in the heritage (or own the heritage) of First Nations cultures.

Rick Hill, on the other hand, asserted that First Nations have a different consciousness of themselves. He does not refer to First Nations heritage as shared, but as separate, unique and different from the larger Canadian patrimony. Hill explains that First Nations people

⁸ Remarks from a speech given by Frank King at the official opening of *The Spirit Sings*, 14 January 1988, Glenbow Archives. The reader will recall that King was Chairman and CEO of OCO' 88.

share in their own national patrimony with a 'right to defend their group identities, cultural priorities and national treasures on their own terms.'⁹

The Glenbow's mandate was to use *The Spirit Sings* to illustrate the fundamentally unique heritage of the Canadian people, and to display this heritage to other Olympic nations. The museum developed a story line for the exhibition that concentrated on the historical period when First Nations cultures and 'a' European culture met and 'shared.' The artifacts assisted in illustrating that although this contact resulted in some changes to First Nations cultures, with some losses and some gains for both cultures, the period from then until now is characterized by historical continuity. First Nations survived and adapted.

Historical continuity is not just thematically connected to the continuity of First Nations in this discourse. Because the Glenbow presented artifacts through a span of time in order to show the subtle European influence on First Nations artifacts, the artifacts also validate the historical continuity of Canada. Since the time of contact, this story ran, First Nations and (now) Canadians have shared a past in this land. This past, rooted in these early artifacts and signified by the impact of the European presence on Native art, constitutes the shared history of First Nations and the settlers of Canada. It links First Nations to Europeans in historical time, and thus extends Canadian history back 'forever' in a continuous line through First Nations peoples.

This romantic view of the shared history of First Nations and colonial peoples was challenged by the Lubicon boycott and their supporters. First Nations spokespeople did not appear to find the contact story as compelling as the Glenbow described it. Instead, they questioned its veracity and noted that the story line of the exhibition muted the contemporary lives of First Nations peoples. It must also be noted that the display constructions signifying 'time of contact' muted the realities of the lives of both the colonial and First Nations peoples at this historical time.

⁹ Rick Hill, "Sacred Trust: Cultural Obligations of Museums to Native People," *Muse* 6, no. 1 (1988): 32.

Lubicon boycott supporters also questioned the 'time of contact' as a cause for celebration, drawing out pertinent parallels between historical situations and the present plight of the Lubicon peoples brought out by contemporary contacts with oil companies and others. Separating First Nations heritage from the Canadian one in the Glenbow's story line, these supporters spoke instead of the material cultures on display as metaphorically representative of First Nations' struggles for autonomy and equality.

Because the artifacts were conceptualized as markers of First Nations, the Canadian state, or First Nations within a nation, all parties to these discussions were concerned with the future of the artifacts and symbolically with the future of the peoples these artifacts signify. *The posited dialectic relationship between a peoples and a culture resulted in a concern that the possible loss of cultures/peoples or the vulnerability to cultural change signified by the artifacts on display also signaled a very real threat to vulnerable contemporary First Nations, the possible loss of their cultures, and thus of them as unique peoples.* The connections between the vulnerability of cultures and the possible attendant loss of a group of peoples, were explicit in this discourse where the subject of the Lubicon arose. The Lubicon's economic crisis was linked to the vulnerability of a culture when external change is imposed upon that culture. The actions of the oil companies on Lubicon land had been the impetus for a drastic, downward spiral in their ability to carry on their traditional way of life, and grave concerns were expressed about the Lubicon's ability to survive. Through the media attention that was granted to the Lubicon boycott and to their endangered way of life, and through the very real signification of 'dead' cultures by the artifacts on display, the Lubicon became a symbol (living evidence) of the vulnerability of First Nations cultures in the discourse. By extension, the tension over artifact control symbolized the ability of First Nations to have, or to not have, autonomy over their own destinies, lands, resources, and cultures.

The conceptualization of culture as an objectifiable entity (on the part of many participants to this discourse) tended to obscure the very real issues and the very real threat to a peoples, as brought out by the Lubicon boycott. As Handler has pointed out,

and as I have previously discussed, culture is often metaphorically understood and described as a living 'thing,' an organism that is vulnerable, subject to contamination, dilution, loss or death. As an organism its attributes can be displayed or demonstrated.¹⁰ Earlier in this conclusion, I drew attention to the fact that metaphoric descriptions of First Nations cultures were differently couched by different groups. The initial media coverage and advertisements for the exhibition announced that Native Canadian cultures would be 'displayed' and 'illustrated'—that the exhibition would in fact be of educational value. Cameron spoke of *The Spirit Sings* as a copyrighted show—a commodity, while Shell commodified Native and Canadian cultures throughout their advertisements, linking cultures to sustainable development. Lubicon organizers, on the other hand, stressed the fragility of the cultural organism pointing to the vulnerability of cultures dominated by others who wield power over, and who profit from, them. Commodification and culture as an organism were thus diametrically opposed in these descriptions.

When culture is conceptualized as a teacher or as a commodity, the metaphoric connections of the bodies of individuals who live within the body of a society, are obscured. This removal of the personal from the political is particularly true of the statements made with respect to the educational function of *The Spirit Sings*. The language and the rhetoric that was used to discuss and explain the educational aspects of the exhibition creates a distancing mechanism through the use of abstract and analytical conceptual categories. For example, arguments that affirmed the apolitical and non-partisan stance of the Glenbow and glorified the educational benefits of the displays, obscured the fact that real vulnerable peoples were the basis of the boycott, and stressed instead a rather elementary and academic preoccupation with definitions such as of academic freedom, education, apoliticalness, non-partisanship, and social responsibility.

The tendency to linguistically gloss some of the issues remained inherent in the contributions of many participants. *Although the major contributors to the discourse were interested in finding practical and implementable solutions to the difficulties posed by the*

¹⁰ Handler (1988).

boycott, many contributors shied away from dealing with some of the fundamental questions that arose with respect to museums and re/presentation. In this discourse a number of important themes and concerns were exposed with respect to First Nations, museums, and re/presentation: [1] the identity of the Canadian nation and its (posited) links to First Nations cultural materials, [2] the identity of First Nations as nations and their rights to cultural materials, [3] museum re/presentation and its power over the peoples they re/present—both in symbolic and concrete terms, and [4] the roles and rights of museums within a nation and their links to the state.

Themes 1, 2, and 3 were explored in some detail in the discourse. Theme 4 was not. Theme 2, which deals with the identities of First Nations and their relationships and rights to their cultural materials was extensively explored within the parameters of the Canadian state and in connection with the roles and rights of museums. The reluctance of authors to discuss First Nations as political entities outside of the Canadian state, was paralleled by a reluctance to face the implications inherent in theme 4. Although discussions of the ideal apolitical nature of museums, and their responsibilities to the larger (Canadian) public did arise, the authors did not discuss whether or not museums, as institutions, were viable. It was largely accepted that the role of museums include: preserving history, interpreting culture, educating the general public, keeping and preserving the nation's patrimony. The ways in which these roles were taken and performed by museum staff came under fire for example by Trigger, who discusses the power over others exercised by museum personnel and the need for First Nations curators. But the questions of whether or not these artifacts should be in museums at all, or given to other owners, or whether there should even be museums, were largely left unaddressed.

Instead, most participants assumed that museums were a given, so exchanges with respect to practical, implementable solutions to the issues of access, control and ownership of artifacts, were framed within the problems inherent in museological re/presentation. The suggestion was made that the (possible) tensions in relationships between First Nations and museums could be alleviated through First Nations involvement in museology and its

related fields, not just as advisors but as full colleagues. This involvement by First Nations peoples would theoretically grant them more physical access and control over their material cultures as well as assure the museum viewer truer, more complete re/presentations of Native cultures. However, the posited museum display of First Nations' artifacts curated by a full First Nations staff, while addressing concerns of re/presentation, avoids a fundamental point of dissension: *cultural institutions play a role in validating cultural and national claims of nationhood*. What Nation(s) would such a First Nations display signify if not the Canadian nation; what do Canadians do for an identity?

Fundamentally, the concern that was not addressed by many participants to the discourse, is whether or not First Nations 'belong' in Canada, or if they are unique and separate from it. The few First Nations voices in this discourse asserted that solutions to the tension between First Nations and museums not only had to allow First Nations people far greater access, ownership and control over their material cultures, but also had to take into consideration the need for First Nations people to use these artifacts outside museum walls. These assertions were largely ignored. Participants did not engage in a discussion of what this type of museology might look like; no-one addressed what Canada might look like with First Nations as a separate political entity, or even as First Nations within a nation. Nor did participants discuss how Canadian museums would signify the state or tell the story of Canada's unique identity and roots if First Nations materials were given over to the posited First Nations states.

In this discourse, then, museums, whether they sided with the Lubicon or the Glenbow, maintained that the cultural artifacts in their possession were 'theirs' and symbolized Canada's national treasures. Through this position they negated and ignored a range of possible First Nations nationalistic claims. While Canada's First peoples could make certain requests and appeals due to their symbolic connections with the artifacts, they were at no time concretely granted jurisdiction or control over their materials by the Canadian status quo.

Raymond Breton has pointed out that 'apolitical' claims on the part of cultural institutions are unrealistic, as these institutions assist citizens in validating their national/cultural claims and facilitate an understanding of an imaged nation. He writes:

It is through and in relation to cultural institutions that individuals and groups pursue their symbolic interests....They provide a more or less munificent or limiting context for the shaping of social identities and the search for meaning to one's existence, and for the definition of one's role in the community or society. They are also environments within which individuals or groups seek recognition of their identity and their historical and contemporary contribution to society. Institutions and their authorities control symbolic resources and some means to attain them—that is, resources and means pertaining to the identity, meaning and recognition sought by individuals and groups.¹¹

Breton adds that 'societies...can be rich or poor in cultural meanings and identity.'¹² He identifies a lack of cultural symbols as the basis for this cultural poverty. Drawing on Klapp,¹³ he notes that 'symbolic poverty in Klapp's view is not a lack of factual information, but a lack of the kinds of symbols which make a person's life meaningful.'¹⁴ Breton explains that this cultural poverty results in 'alienation, meaninglessness, and identity problems,' for the individual in a culturally deprived society.¹⁵

Since it is through cultural institutions that individuals, cultures and nations are partly validated, Breton posits that when a peoples do not see themselves as validated by the social institutions found in the society in which they live, 'they will become resentful toward the institutions that fail to recognize adequately their identity, social roles and aspirations.' Symbolically disadvantaged groups (which usually face some 'real' disadvantages as well) frequently apply pressure upon these institutions for a 're-definition

¹¹ Breton (1986), 27-28.

¹² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

of the character of public institutions.” Breton understands this applied pressure as resulting in “social tension.”¹⁶

The discourse surrounding *The Spirit Sings* and boycott offers ample evidence that First Nations wish and need governance over their cultural materials, and that they feel symbolically deprived by cultural institutions, like museums, which do not recognize their “identity, social roles or aspirations.”¹⁷ First Nations are certainly in the process of applying public pressure to social, public institutions like museums in order to redefine their “public character.” Given the importance of cultural markers to the individual and hence to specific groups, and coupling this with Breton’s thesis that individuals who feel culturally deprived experience alienation, meaninglessness and identity problems, it should not be surprising that First Nations spokespeople strongly asserted that the objects on display at the Glenbow represented their cultures and were their artifacts.

Institutions must also reflect on Breton’s assessment. If they stand in the way of increased First Nations governance over their material culture they feed nationalist sentiments in a spiraling dialectic. First Nations’ claims to their material cultures are based on uniqueness, original ownership and cultural difference. Resistance to these claims ensures that the differences will be more vigorously conceptualized, and assertions of ownership and control will escalate. Can the spark of nationalism that has arisen in many First Nations peoples over the past few decades now be satisfied with access alone to their cultural artifacts, rather than their return? Will the education of First Peoples as curators and full colleagues be enough to answer the very real claims made by First Nations spokespeople with respect to ownership and control? These are two questions that remain unanswered in the discourse.

How the questions and debates that arose around the boycott and *The Spirit Sings* will affect future interactions between First Nations and museums remains to be seen. But

¹⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

there are other questions that remain unaddressed. As the exhibition closed, Harrison suggested,¹⁸ as did Feest,¹⁹ Ames,²⁰ and Halpin,²¹ that *The Spirit Sings* was likely to be the last of its kind; the last large global interpretation of an aboriginal people over an extended historical period. Apart from the political complications, the stipulations inherent in coordinating such a large endeavor, meeting the care and safety requirements of the artifacts and several other involved factors, now render the mounting of such an exhibit cost prohibitive. Given the present economic situation and the limited public support for the arts in general—particularly in this age of museum democratization, where what was once an ‘elite’ space must now cater and appeal to the average, common citizen—the financial factor has become particularly salient. Today, many specialists employed in a cultural domain realize that corporate sponsors are a necessary part of staying in business.

Since the exhibition, at least one conference,²² and one study, the Task Force report,²³ have addressed the many, diverse concerns articulated in this discourse. Reports submitted by both the Task Force and the conference indicate that a new museology may be in the offing, and that relationships between First Nations, scholars and cultural institutions are in the process of being redefined. This process of redefinition is the result of continued, applied pressure on public institutions by First Nations over a period of time, rather than the result of this one isolated incident, *The Spirit Sings* controversy. However, it certainly is responsible for the spirit of immediacy within which this process of change is taking

¹⁸ Julia Harrison, “The Spirit Sings: The Last Song?” *The International Journal of Museums and Curatorship* 7, no. 4 (1988): 353-363.

¹⁹ Christian Feest, “The Last Song?” *European Review of Native American Studies* 2, no. 1 (1988): 52.

²⁰ Ames (1991), 15.

²¹ Halpin (1988), 93. Of this condition Halpin remarks, “Because of the politicization of the museum object, the delicacy of old ones, and the great costs involved in borrowing and insuring them, we are not likely to see the likes of these in Canada again. Instead of being the last of its kind, however, had the Glenbow staff taken full advantage of the opportunity they created, especially by asking and training if necessary, Native people to be curators, it could have been the first of its kind. And, for certain, the political context would have, in that eventuality, been different. And equally certain, the native spirit would have sung a different song.”

²² Preserving Our Heritage - A Working Conference Between Museums and First Nations. Jointly organized and sponsored by the AFN and CMA, held in Ottawa, November, 1988. The Task Force was initiated at this conference.

²³ Hill and Nicks (1992).

place. Building their own museums and developing their own cultural programs is one aspect of this complex process of First Nations' reassertion of ownership and control over their cultural heritages.

In many ways, First Nations and the rest of the Canadian people do share a heritage. This shared heritage can be seen in many of our shared conceptualizations. Like many Canadian citizens, First Nations peoples understand their cultures as worthy of preservation and as integral to their national heritages and identities. First Nations have taken steps to exhibit and display these heritages and to protect them in cultural institutions of their own making.

I wonder if sometime in the future cultural institutions that have been designed specifically by and for First Nations will become the targets of dissatisfaction for future generations who, in turn, will claim that these institutions do not adequately represent them, only to be labeled in turn as reflecting special interest lobby groups with specific agendas. As the frameworks for identity formation change, so too will re/presentation. It would be natural for internal critiques to develop in First Nations museums. Internal critiques, like Boas' of Western museological methods early in this century, keep institutions vital and respondent to the needs of their constituents.

The collective energy and the nationalistic movement generated by First Nations and exhibited in this discourse, calls into question like nothing before it and perhaps nothing after it, the place and roles of First Nations within or without the Canadian state. First Nations have sent a clear message that they can and will act as a collective through a shared consciousness that is able to challenge any attempts by others to co-opt their heritages.

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APPENDICES

Survey of Discourse

Data Demographics:

Article Information - Section A:

- A010.00.00 Doc # _____ (6 characters of space in field)
- A020.00.00 Author _____ (60)
- A030.00.00 Title/Desc _____ (60)
- A040.00.00 Publisher (if not leave blank) _____ (60)
- A040.01.00 Journal #/p.p. _____ (60)
- A050.00.00 In my possession _____ (1 - answer Y/N)
- A060.00.00 Location _____ (20)
- A070.00.00 Date MM/DD/YY _____ (8)
- A080.00.00 Type of document __ (10 characters - choose one only from below)
- (a) newspaper article - W/W/W/W all seeing all knowing unbiased voice
 - (b) newspaper article - Critical reporting
 - (c) newspaper article - other
 - (d) internal document (memo, minutes, organizational material, educational material)
 - (e) periodical or newsletter
 - (f) letter - to specific person
 - (g) letter - Form letter
 - (h) letter - to editor
 - (i) letter - other
 - (j) report or paper for external use
 - (k) press release/statement
 - (m) exhibition catalogue review
 - (n) book
 - (o) advertisement or promotion
 - (p) transcripts of audio media (radio, TV)
 - (q) speech
 - (r) personal interview

(u) other

A080.01.00 Accessory information (10 - choose from below)

- (a) photographs of people
- (b) photographs of artifacts
- (c) distributed through alternate sources (other than TMC)
- (d) exhibition review
- (e) exhibition preview
- (f) distributed through TMC chain-letter system

Author information - Section B:

B010.00.00 Identify the author's profession __ (10 - from below)

- (a) anthropologist - employed by museum
- (b) anthropologist - employed by university
- (c) news reporter/writer
- (d) individual
- (e) museum director or curator (if not also an anthropologist)
- (f) representative/member of the Lubicon, their chief or their consultant
- (g) undetermined or not applicable
- (h) artist
- (i) art critic
- (j) representative of Shell Canada
- (k) representative of Glenbow
- (l) representative of government (prov/fed)
- (m) representative of a Native organization (e.g. AFN)
- (n) representative of Olympics (e.g. OCO)

B020.00.00 Identify the voice of the author __ (choose 1 only - from below)

- (a) Native
- (b) non-Native
- (c) not determined

B030.00.00 Are voices quoted within the document other than author ____ (1 - Y/N)

B030.01.00 Cross reference to a document number or list name _____ (40)

B040.00.00 Identify the position of author/article/quoted person within article (choose 1 only from below)

- (a) for boycott
- (b) for exhibition
- (c) neutral
- (d) not applicable

Data Content - Section C:

Hypothesis 1: *Differing notions of culture and nation inform the discourse; but participants in the discourse fail to address the ideological sources of these differences and neglect to deal with them on a concrete level.*

Through analysis I expect to find that we are dealing with two concepts of nationhood: (a) Canada as a whole nation, a sum of its parts one of those parts being Native (b) First Nations a reluctant nation within another nation, distinct and separate; but that in both cases culture and nation are intimately tied together.

Therefore by not addressing basic ideological differences both factions (speaking through the discourse) render natural nation and culture, which suggests that the Western constructs 'nation and culture' have been internalized and applied to aboriginal Canadians from within and without.

C010.00.00 If a definition for nation is offered - explain _____ (60)

C020.00.00 Are concepts of what constitutes nationhood "in general" addressed?
If yes __ (10 - from below)

- (a) directly
- (b) indirectly
- (c) civic/Western concept
- (d) ancestral/indigenous concept

C020.01.00 Identify nationhood conceptions expressed __ (10 - from below)

- (a) unit of population inhabiting demarcated territory (bounded geographically)
- (b) common economic/ production system
- (c) common laws with identical legal rights for everyone
- (d) mass education system
- (e) named human population claiming common ancestry (genealogy)
- (f) common customs, traditions, vernaculars
- (g) traditional culture
- (h) common native history
- (i) language

C030.00.00 If a description of Canadian national character is offered - explain ____ (60)

C040.00.00 Is the term Canada/Canadian used?

If yes how is it used __ (10 - from below)

- (a) to distinguish place
- (b) to distinguish culture
- (c) to distinguish citizenship

C050.00.00 Is a distinction drawn between First Nation's claims of nationhood and the Canadian nation?

If yes how is this distinction biased __ (10 - from below)

- (a) culturally
- (b) racially/ethnically
- (c) economically
- (d) politically
- (e) historically

C050.01.00 - explain _____ (250)

C060.00.00 Are aboriginal Canadians referred to?

If yes by which term/s __ (10 - from below)

- (a) Native
- (b) Indian/Inuit
- (c) aboriginal/indigenous
- (d) First Nations
- (e) they
- (f) possessive (e.g. our Natives, Canada's Native people)
- (g) us
- (h) Canadians (e.g. Canadian Indian & Inuit)
- (I) other than above (e.g. particular band, tribe, first people, your people)

C060.01.00 In which tense __ (10 - from below)

- (a) past
- (b) present
- (c) future

C070.00.00 If a definition for culture is offered - explain _____ (120)

C080.00.00 Are concepts of what constitutes culture "in general" addressed?

If yes __ (10 - from below)

- (a) directly
- (b) indirectly
- (c) Anglo/Western concept
- (d) ethnic/indigenous concept

C080.01.00 Identify the cultural conceptions expressed __ (10 - from below)

- (a) shared human experience
- (b) learned through a social system
- (c) determined by the nation
- (d) determined by ancestral heritage
- (e) expressed through arts
- (f) upheld by cultural objects
- (g) vulnerable

- (h) ownable
- (i) exclusive
- (j) language based
- (k) tradition/custom based
- (l) religion based
- (m) tied to place/land

C090.00.00 If a description of Canadian culture is offered - explain _____ (60)

C100.00.00 Are concepts of what constitutes the dominant Canadian culture addressed?

If yes __ (1 - from below)

- (a) directly
- (b) indirectly

C100.01.00 cultural conceptions expressed __ (10 - from below)

- (a) shared human experience
- (b) learned through a social system
- (c) determined by the nation
- (d) determined by ancestral heritage
- (e) expressed through arts
- (f) upheld by cultural objects
- (g) vulnerable
- (h) ownable
- (i) exclusive
- (j) language based
- (k) tradition/custom based
- (l) religion based
- (m) tied to place/land
- (n) multiculturalism as a Canadian policy noted
- (o) multiculturalism as a fact of Canadian life noted

C110.00.00 Is a distinction drawn between First Nations culture and Canadian culture?

If yes how is this distinction biased __ (10 - from below)

- (a) nationally
- (b) racially
- (c) economically
- (d) linguistically
- (e) artistically
- (f) territorially
- (g) geographically
- (h) ancestrally
- (i) historically
- (j) customs/traditions
- (k) religiously/spiritually
- (l) hierarchically

(m) world view

C110.01.00 If the needs of one take precedence over the other - explain ____ (30)

C120.00.00 If a definition for First Nation's culture is offered - explain _____ (60)

C130.00.00 If a description of First Nation's cultural character is offered explain _ (120)

C140.00.00 Are concepts of what constitutes First Nations cultures addressed?

If yes __ (10 from below)

- (a) directly
- (b) indirectly

C140.01.00 Which Native cultural period is addressed? __ (10 from below)

- (a) ancient
- (b) contemporary
- (c) both c & d

C140.02.00 Identify the cultural conceptions expressed __ (10 from below)

- (a) shared human experience
- (b) learned through a social system
- (c) determined by the nation
- (d) determined by ancestral heritage
- (e) expressed through arts
- (f) upheld by cultural objects
- (g) vulnerable
- (h) ownable
- (i) exclusive
- (j) language based
- (k) tradition/custom based
- (l) religion based
- (m) tied to place/land
- (n) all Native cultures treated generically
- (o) distinctions between the cultures of differing Native groups recognized

C140.03.00 If a distinction is drawn between ancient Native culture and contemporary Native culture -explain _____ (60)

C140.04.00 If similarities drawn between ancient Native culture and contemporary Native culture - explain _____ (60)

Hypothesis 2: *Within the discourse civic and corporate images (both positive and negative) were created or implied through associations with culture and nation: i.e. Shell drew analogies between extracting natural resources and sustaining cultural resources, while the Lubicon associated Shell's resource extraction with cultural genocide.*

C200.00.00 Note any associations in the discourse drawn on Shell, the Lubicon, Natives in general, or the Glenbow (or others whom seem connected to the story) wherein they associate themselves (or others associate them) with culture or nation. _____ (250)

Hypothesis 3: *Within the discourse Native artifacts are intimately tied to culture by both camps.*

C300.00.00 Are Native artifacts discussed?

If yes in what context __ (10 - from below)

- (a) art objects (shape, color, form)
- (b) cultural material (function, meaning)

C300.01.00 How are the objects identified __ (10 - from below)

- (a) according to collection/collector
- (b) by tribal affiliation
- (c) as Canada's heritage
- (d) as First Nation's heritage

C300.02.00 How are the creators identified __ (10 - from below)

- (a) by name
- (b) by tribal affiliation
- (c) as ancestor of contemporary Natives
- (d) no creator implied
- (e) Canadian
- (f) generic Native from the past

C300.03.00 Identify topics and themes associated with artifacts __ (10 - from below)

- (a) The Spirit Sings exhibition
- (b) the Olympics
- (c) the boycott
- (d) the Lubicon
- (e) loans process
- (f) repatriation of artifacts back to Canada
- (g) repatriation of artifacts back to Natives
- (h) ancient Native culture/traditions/beliefs
- (i) contemporary Native culture/traditions/beliefs
- (j) monetary value
- (k) ownership/control
- (l) ICOM resolution

C300.03.01 - explain _____ (60)

C300.04.00 Identify descriptor's of the artifact's characteristics __ (10 - from below)

- (a) rich
- (b) diverse
- (c) survivors/resilient
- (d) distinct
- (e) artistry
- (f) connected to traditions
- (g) connected to land
- (h) sacred
- (l) evidence of culture

C300.04.01 - explain _____ (60)

Hypothesis 4: Issues of control and ownership regarding Native artifacts, the interpretation of Native culture, the Lubicon land claim, and resource extraction are intertwined within the discourse. It appears that the hype surrounding one issue feeds another on a symbolic level.

C400.00.00 Identify any of the following topics discussed __ (10 - from below)

- (a) the Lubicon boycott's aim of crippling the exhibition
- (b) the Lubicon land claim
- (c) resource extraction
- (d) ownership, access or control of artifacts (Native or otherwise)
- (e) interpretation of culture (Native or otherwise)
- (f) sponsorship of cultural events

In reference to above:

C400.01.00 Note notions of "trade-offs" expressed whereby choices have to be made based upon comparing needs and consequences - explain _____ (250)

C400.01.01 Note consequences re compromising or not - _____ (250)

C400.02.00 If no "trade-off" is expressed how are 'rights' legitimized - ____ (60)