ABORIGINAL IDENTITY AND THE ONTOLOGY OF CULTURE

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Abstract

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This thesis is an investigation of Aboriginal self-representation. Anthropological literature on identity and authenticity is examined and used to argue that 'culture', which has been deconstructed by some anthropologists, is the very concept upon which many of these self-representations are based. This phenomena is studied 'in action' - at a site of identity - presentation of First Nations peoples. Interviews with visitors to this site are also conducted, in order to gain information about the reception of this identity. The site chosen is the Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario, where interviews were conducted with staff members as well as tourists visiting the on-site museum, and Niagara College teachers who participated in a workshop led by staff of the W.C.C. Common themes from these interviews are highlighted, and placed in the context of the anthropological literature on culture and identity. Finally, it is argued that, underlying both the interviews with tourists and teachers and the anthropological literature, there is a fundamental confusion and insecurity about the ontological status of 'culture'.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Although still a young discipline, anthropology has undergone some drastic changes in the past few decades. Post-modernism brought with it a profound questioning of the ways in which anthropologists construct their authority and represent other cultures. The effects of globalisation have seemingly reduced the differences between previously-isolated groups. In the search for 'untouched' cultures, anthropologists have necessarily come up empty-handed. The distinction between 'us' and 'them' is blurred. In short, the 'other,' that has traditionally been the focus of anthropology, is now as modern, or as entangled in modernity, as are we. Many of the groups for whom anthropologists have typically spoken (such as Aboriginal peoples), are now engaged in a process of *self-representation* , and these representations often compete with those of anthropologists - who no longer have the uncontested authority to represent others. These political and social changes of the past few decades have led to an unprecedented 'crisis' in the discipline.

While perhaps economic and technological globalisation have not resulted in a homogenous world, they have certainly resulted in an inter-connected one. During the last century, European colonialists turned many self-sufficient, isolated areas into 'satellites' of Europe. The influence of colonization has had a profound impact upon indigenous peoples all over the world - often irreversibly changing traditional cultural and economic patterns. More recently, the internet, late twentieth century capitalism and American T.V. and movies have penetrated even the most previously-isolated areas. Areas of *cultural overlap* and 'creolization' have replaced the isolated cultural groups that were the focus for anthropologists of the past.

At the same time that anthropologists are questioning their own authority to represent others, they are also questioning the concepts with which they have

done so. Anthropologists today are engaged in a process of deconstruction of the term 'culture' - a concept that has typically been the focus of anthropological research. Many anthropologists have criticized the way in which the use of 'culture' as a framework of analysis traditionally has implied that 'cultures' are homogenous, isolated and not subject to change and modernization. These criticisms are coupled with a heightened awareness of the ways in which the assertion of *difference*, in many cases, has precipitated violence and oppression. In order to avoid these dangers and at the same time look at the connections and similarities between peoples in an increasingly-connected world, some anthropologists are urging the abandonment of the term 'culture' altogether.

At the same time, many Aboriginal groups have become concerned with self-representation as a way of resisting the representations that others have created of them. Only recently have these groups gained the political power necessary to be able to speak about themselves on a global stage. Often, self-presentation is tied in with a wider process, in which Aboriginal peoples are engaged in land-claims or other political issues. Of course, many anthropologists belong to an Aboriginal group themselves, and their 'insiders' descriptions often challenge those of 'outsiders'.

Just as anthropologists are becoming profoundly insecure about the validity of 'culture', this is the very concept upon which many Aboriginal groups are constructing their own identities. In an effort to maintain their own distinctiveness, which they often see as having been threatened by the destructive influences of colonizers, many Aboriginal groups are asserting the uniqueness of their own culture. These groups often claim that, while their life-ways have been changed radically through contact with colonizers, authentic 'strands' of a pre-colonial culture still exist. The strengthening of these 'strands'

is often seen as an important part of the process of re-claiming personal and political power. This assertion can place Aboriginal peoples directly at odds with some anthropologists, who assert that many Aboriginal cultures are inauthentic, and 'constructed' in order to fulfill modern-day political goals.

So, anthropologists are in a unique position today: the 'deconstruction' of anthropological terms such as 'culture', can threaten the very foundation upon which many Aboriginal peoples are building their own identities. When Aboriginal peoples claim that they possess an essentially-different culture that has its roots in the past, they are often accused of participating in their own domination. This is partly because many anthropologists are all too aware of the damage that has been done in the past by the suggestion of essential differences between cultures. To them, difference necessarily suggests hierarchy.

I wished to study this problem 'in action' - more specifically, I wanted to find out what happens when Aboriginal peoples present a self-identity that is built upon '*culture* '. I not only wanted to examine the conceptualization of Aboriginal culture that underlies such a self-presentation, but I also wished to study the *reception* of this identity. I wanted to find out if the anthropological concerns about 'culture' are mirrored in the non-academic population. So, I chose to conduct research at a site of Aboriginal identity-presentation, at which I could interview the (mostly non-Aboriginal) visitors. I also used this setting as a 'springboard' for a more general discussion of the way in which non-Native Canadians conceptualize modern-day Aboriginal culture. This is an exploratory research effort attempting to identify some of the parameters of future research.

The research site I chose is the Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford. The centre is located near the Six Nations reserve, and serves as a resource-centre for materials on Canadian Aboriginal peoples. The Centre consists of

two buildings: one that contains staff offices, and another that houses a museum and gift shop. The Centre hosts numerous conferences about Aboriginal peoples, and the staff often travels outside the Centre to give and participate in workshops. In order to gain more information about the kind of images of Native identity that were presented at the Centre, I spent several weeks visiting the Centre and interviewing key staff members. I took guided and unguided tours through the museum - I also attended some workshops given there, and examined some of the printed material produced at the Centre, including newsletters and job descriptions. I used all of this material to learn more about the kinds of activities that take place at the Centre, and also to gain a more thorough understanding of the conceptualization of Aboriginal culture that underlies the museum and runs through the workshops and tours given there.

In order to find out about the *reception* of the information presented at the Centre, I interviewed two groups of people. One was a group of Niagara College teachers who had participated in a workshop led by some staff members of the Centre. The other group I interviewed were tourists who had visited the museum. I interviewed people from these two groups, as I felt it was necessary to examine the reception of both the visual and oral presentations of culture at the Centre. Although I did not specifically select these participants on the basis of their ethnicity, none of the participants in the study, excepting the staff members of the Centre, were Native themselves.

It is important to frame my findings within the anthropological literature on culture and identity - therefore, in chapter two I will discuss the elements of this literature that are relevant to my research. In chapter three, I examine the literature that is specific to the representation of Aboriginal peoples in museums - in particular, I discuss some of the criticisms that have been leveled against museum displays by anthropologists and Aboriginal peoples. Chapter four is a

description of my methodology. Chapter five moves to discuss the *visual* presentation of Aboriginal identity at the Woodlands Cultural Centre. It includes some general information about the Centre, as well as a detailed description of the museum display. Chapter five also includes summaries of the interviews I conducted with the tourists who had toured the museum. Chapter six deals with the reception of the *oral* presentation at the Centre. In order to frame my interviews with the teachers who had attended the workshop, I begin chapter six with three interviews conducted with different staff members of the Centre. These interviews point to some commonalties in the way the staff members conceptualize Native culture. My interview with Joanna Bedard, the executive director, is particularly relevant to the interviews with the teachers, as she was a speaker at the workshop they attended. Chapter six includes a summary of the responses of the teachers - to save space, this information has been summarized into tables. Chapter seven ties together the themes that are present in my interviews with both the tourists and the teachers, and examines these themes in relation to the anthropological literature discussed in chapters two and three. In the concluding chapter, I look to the ontological confusion about 'culture' which underlies both the anthropological literature and my interviews with the tourists and teachers - I also point to some of the dangers inherent in a position based upon the reduction and denial of cultural differences.

Chapter Two: Culture and Identity

The mass colonialism and industrialization of the last century have had a profound effect on cultures all over the world. The 'globalisation' of the world exploded with the mass colonialism of the last few centuries, although the contribution of colonialism to globalisation is slight when compared with the ways in which technology (including the airplane, telephone, computer) have connected previously isolated areas of the world. No longer are there separate and distinct 'islands of culture' - which have traditionally been the focus of anthropology. Although, of course, many areas of the world do not control enough political and economic resources to have access to much of this technology, there is no doubt that "we have entered into an altogether new condition of neighborliness, even with those most distant from ourselves (Appadurai, 1990, 2)".

This process of globalisation has not resulted in the resignation of anthropologists , although their subject matter has changed dramatically in the last few decades. Anthropologists today are increasingly turning to sites of cultural overlap - places in which 'cultures' are being negotiated anew. Anthropologists approach this subject in vastly differing ways, however, there is no doubt that "in the face of global creolization processes, there is renewed interest among anthropologists in such topics as ethnicity, race, nations, cultures (Marcus: 1992, 311)." However, the language that has been used by anthropologists in talking about cultures in the past is not really adequate now.

This globalisation process, (which includes not only world economies, but also technology such as the Internet which links some areas of the world in new ways) is not resulting in a homogenous 'world culture'. Instead, there seems to be a strengthening of diversity. For example, in the last few decades, Aboriginal

groups have begun to strongly assert their distinctiveness, although these identities take on different forms than they did when early anthropologists studied and represented them. In this era, "the globe is becoming more integrated and this is not leading to an easily comprehensible totality, but to an increasing diversity of connections (Marcus: 1992, 321)."

Anthropologists have increasingly turned to the sites of this identity - presentation by Aboriginal peoples all over the world. The literature surrounding this topic is diverse and conflicting - so, it is difficult to point to any central idea that governs much of the work in this area. I will, instead, discuss some of the themes which predominate, and which are most relevant to my topic. Firstly, I will examine the global forces which make such Aboriginal self-representation *possible* today - certainly, it was not so even a few decades ago. This will lead to a discussion of some of the central elements which are emphasized in the identity - presentations of both Hawaiian and North American indigenous peoples; in particular they have tended to stress a strong connection and continuity with the *past*. Finally, I will discuss 'authenticity' - undoubtedly the most controversial topic surrounding anthropological literature on identities. I will examine the differing poles of the controversy here, as well as their implications for Aboriginal peoples.

Globalisation and Western Hegemony

Aboriginal self-definition does not take place in isolation from global relations of power. In order to understand why these dual processes of globalisation and Aboriginal self-definition seem to co-exist today, it is necessary to look at the power relationship between the West and other groups. Different authors have dealt with this problem in somewhat opposing ways: Jonathan Friedman, for example, points to a *decline* in uncontested Western hegemony, that makes it possible for groups of people, who have previously

been represented by anthropologists and other experts, to represent themselves. Marianne Torgovnick (1990) differs from Friedman - she claims that Western hegemony is as uncontested now as it was in colonial times. Both arguments are compelling, however, Torgovnick's position fails to explain why, if there have been no changes or threats to Western hegemony, this increase in self-definition is occurring *now*. Because Friedman's argument answers this necessary question , it is to his analysis that I will now turn.

Friedman claims that this process of self-identification, "is a product of a crisis of fragmentation in the world system, one that is expressed in the decline of modernism and the polarization of identities in the centre of the system, as well as a combination of cultural renaissance and a cultural politics of dependency in the peripheries (Friedman: 1993, 739)". Friedman states that in the present, we are experiencing a 'decentralization' of capital accumulation - in other words, the centres of production are no longer North American and Europe - massive amounts of capital have been exported out of these 'cores', to the 'periphery'. As a result of this, "new small and rapidly expanding centres emerge, outcompeting central production, leading eventually to a situation in which the centre becomes increasingly the consumer of its own exported capital (1992a, 335)."

Thusly, industrial areas in the center tend to decline, and the capital that is gained through export is invested in areas such as real estate, the stock market, the arts and luxury goods. This leads to an appearance of progress and wealth because of the escalation of consumer and luxury goods. This, in turn, leads to an increase in stratification (through increased pressure on accumulation of consumer goods), which results in what Friedman calls the 'decentralization of hegemonic accumulation', which "implies increasing competition of capitals and a potential shift of hegemony (ibid., 355)".

This 'decentralization' according to Friedman, results in the waning of the hegemony of the West, which in turn leads to a situation in which other, small-scale indigenous groups now have the power to self-represent, in an unprecedented way. Friedman sees new self-definitions as a response to the previous paradigm of 'modernity', in which cultures were considered to be separate, homogenous, and only marginally 'tarnished' by the corrupting influence of the modern world. Friedman claims that some of the fundamental elements of the Western modernist view of knowledge are that "1. The Truth is singular. There is but one true version of the past... 3. The structure attributed to this past is the product of a specific kind of research carried out by those competent in the field... 5. All other structures or interpretations attributed to the past are, by implication, ideological in the sense of misrepresentations (Friedman: 1992b, 850)". For Aboriginal peoples, this paradigm of modernity has previously resulted in a devaluation of their own culture, because of the necessity of identifying with the dominant Western model.

According to Friedman, it is this recent shift in hegemony which has given rise to the cultural conditions that allow Aboriginal peoples space in which to create their own identities. Now, "the confrontation of anthropologists with Native self-defining groups is not a hazard of the ethnographic endeavor but a reflection of a deeper transformation of the world in which we live (ibid., 846)". In other words, Native self-definitions are now competing with contesting anthropological definitions of Native groups. There are also, of course, many anthropologists who themselves belong to a Native group - some of these anthropologists (for example, Trask - whom I will discuss later), have been highly critical of the way in which anthropology has traditionally represented Native groups. Today, the authority of the anthropologist to represent others is

highly contested - this is one of the reasons why many Western anthropologists are turning to Western society as a focus of study.

Before we look at some of the more specific elements of self-definition, it is necessary to discuss the ways in which many Aboriginal identities have been shaped through contact with other Aboriginal groups. It is easy to identify threads of commonalty in most Native identities - most stress a symbolic and spiritual relationship to the land and most emphasize core values of co-operation and interconnectedness. Whether this is because of similar historical experiences, or a similar interaction with the forces of colonialism, it is impossible to say. There have no doubt been points of contact between different Aboriginal groups. For example, "the Earth Mother now being appealed to in Aboriginal Australian political rhetoric may be less a direct reflection of western countercultural ideologies than a borrowing from Native American ideologies, born in struggles for land rights and cultural identity, that were much more directly in contact with the North American counterculture (Keesing: 1989, 30)."

We get a sense of this 'global Aboriginality', partly because Aboriginal groups now have a voice in the global arena - and are often making a conscious choice to ally themselves with other Aboriginal groups with whom they feel they have more in common than they do with Westerners. Appudarai points to this seeming contradiction - claiming that "the central paradox of ethnic politics in today's world is that primordia (whether of language or skin colour or neighbourhood or kinship) have become globalised (1990: 15)".

In North America, what results from this cross-fertilization is a kind of 'Pan-Indianism' - an over-arching 'Native identity', that applies here to *all* First Nations people, regardless of dramatic differences in the cultures of the First nations peoples. It is necessary to note here that this monolithic view of Native culture is one that is most likely to be held by people of European descent.

Native peoples themselves - while admitting to commonalties, tend to see themselves as belonging to distinct Aboriginal groups.

Many of the Aboriginal identities around the world are based upon a strong continuity with the past. This stress of continuity and connection with the past may be important to Aboriginal groups, who have usually seen their own distinctive culture profoundly disturbed by the influence of colonizers. However, this focus on elements of the past has opened them up to accusations of 'inauthenticity' from some anthropologists. It is to these issues which I now turn.

Self-Definitions and the Past

Anthropologists have become increasingly aware of the way in which their representations can distort time frames in order to construct the ethnographic 'Other'. Most notably, Johannes Fabian (1983) has discussed the ways in which anthropologists have traditionally represented their subjects as being distant in time, or as lacking coevalness. Anthropologists have tended to portray other cultures as being 'frozen in time' - or cut off from the influences of modernization that have so profoundly affected Western societies. A more complete discussion of Fabians's arguments can be found in the "Museums and Tourists" chapter.

It is important to state here that, while anthropologists are becoming more sensitive to the way in which their representations have often seemed to restrict Aboriginal peoples to the *ethnographic past*, many Aboriginal peoples themselves are emphasizing a strong continuity between modern - day culture and the past. It is necessary here to look at the ways in which this focus on the past is considered crucial by some anthropologists, and contested by others.

Much of the anthropological research of Native groups has centred around their responses to contact with Europeans. There is no doubt that European colonizers have had a profound influence on Aboriginal peoples all over the world. However, it is also necessary to take into consideration (as Friedman,

below, argues), cultural continuity - the fact that while the material and social contexts of Aboriginal peoples has been changed dramatically, there are still threads (recontextualised, to be sure) of cultural continuity that exist today. It is these threads that Aboriginal peoples wish to strengthen when they emphasize their connection to the past.

Edward Said (1978) claims that when entire periods of the history of the Orient are considered to be responses to the West this places the West in the position of the actor, while the Orient is the passive reactor. Lattas (1993) agrees with Said's position. He claims that when we say that Aboriginality is something that is constructed through European involvement, we run into trouble , and "what is often ignored is the sense of autonomy from the control of the 'Other' (247)". Lattas claims that it is crucial for Aboriginal peoples to have "an image of the past if one is to have a sense of ownership of oneself (247)". Yet he points out that "when Aborigines seek to give a mythological content to, or to reclaim a primordial past for themselves then they are accused of essentialism and of participating in their own domination (247)".

Keesing (1989) criticizes this strategy for being 'ahistorical'. He claims that when Aboriginal peoples present their cultures as being 'timeless' and strongly connected to the past, they are reproducing "anthropology's own conceptual simplifications onto contemporary political myths (23)". Keesing points to an earlier time in anthropology, when anthropologists went in search of pristine, eden-like cultures, and represented them as being ahistorical and existing in the past - outside the normal streams of history and change. So, Keesing sees in Aboriginal identities a reproduction of these simplifications.

Anthropologists have become highly sensitive to their representations of Aboriginal peoples - however, only recently have they also become sensitive to their representations of their *own* cultures. James Carrier (1995) claims that the

way anthropologists view 'The West', has a huge impact upon the way in which 'The Other' will be conceptualized. In response to Edward's Said's 'Orientalism', Carrier has suggested that we make 'Occidentalism' (explicit or implicit representations of the West in anthropological writings) the subject of anthropological study and 'deconstruction', in the same way that anthropologists have thoroughly deconstructed their representations of other groups.

Occidentalism

Ideas about 'the primitive' are inseparable from our ideas about our own culture. This conceptualization of western culture is known as 'Occidentalism', and it underlies much of the way we see the Other. Adam Kuper says that anthropology at the beginning of the 20th century "took primitive society as their special object, but in practice primitive society proved to be their own society (as they understood it) seen in a distorting mirror (1988: 5)". So, Aboriginal cultures come to represent everything that the West is *not* - if the West is heterogeneous, fractured, corrupted and modern, than 'primitive society' is homogeneous, pure, and 'unevolved'.

Carrier claims that some anthropologists who write in post-colonial times, tend to see western influence as homogenous and corrupting: "wage labour, missions, plantation, or mining projects are seen as tokens of a relatively undifferentiated and essentialized Western social life that will, if un-checked, displace a village life that is itself often seen as coherent and uniform (1995: 10)". The Other becomes as simplified as the Occident, and Aboriginal cultures are often seen as fragile and romantic. In this way, "Orientalisms of the 'noble savage' can be joined with occidentalisms of a violent, rapacious, heedless West in an effort to challenge existing Western practices and structures and advance new ones (ibid.: 10)".

Marianne Torgovnick (1990) asks "is the present too materialistic? Primitive life is not (8)". She claims that views of the primitive are used in a type of western self-loathing - the primitive is a stand - in for whatever our own culture lacks. Here, again, timelessness is an issue. There is a nostalgia for a mythical past - for a 'simpler way', for a time when life was not as complex and confusing as it today, and this nostalgia is projected onto the Other, which we perceive to have a closer tie with this past.

The conceptualization of the primitive may be a result of the fact that "modern people are alienated from nature, and the relations that are formed by social class, commodity production and market exchange (Taussig: 1980)". There is no doubt that many Westerners are dissatisfied with this alienation, and the other by-products of a modern existence. According to Torgovnick,

> "maybe what we are doing is handling by displacement, the series of dislocations that we call modernity and postmodernity - in the fears and hopes we express for them, the primitives, we air fears and hopes for ourselves - caught on a rollercoaster of change that we like to believe can be stopped, safely, at will. (1990: 245)".

Authenticity

Whenever there is a site of self-definition, there seems to be anthropological debate surrounding the 'authenticity' of the traditions that are being used as the basis of identity. Some Native anthropologists have objected to the way in which these anthropologists have declared themselves 'experts' and the most suitable judges of the historical validity of Aboriginal culture. I will examine the debate that seems to have sparked off this controversy - that between Keesing and Trask.

Firstly, though, underlying these arguments is the more fundamental one about the *locus* of culture. In other words, is Aboriginal culture located merely in the material artifacts and performance arts of a previous age, or does culture manifest itself in the social life and motivations of Aboriginal peoples? This

question is especially pertinent in today's context Aboriginal peoples live in the same kinds of homes as do other Canadians, eat at McDonald's, and watch the same American T.V. A brief discussion of the literature surrounding the location and nature of 'culture' is especially important here, as it is related to questions of authenticity, which surround discussions of Aboriginal self-definition.

Some anthropologists (for example, Keesing, 1989), have spoken of the ways in which it is often erroneously assumed that a 'culture' can be reproduced simply by 'collecting' artifacts, and performing ceremonies, dances, etc., from the past. Keesing claims that it is a false view that many of us hold, that "in presenting the material forms and performance genres of a people, one preserves their culture (34)" . Keesing is also one of the key figures in the debate surrounding authenticity.

It is easy to understand why Keesing is reluctant to believe that these material objects can be used to preserve culture - this is too similar to earlier 'salvage' anthropology, in which information about and artifacts of 'pristine' Aboriginal cultures were collected in order to preserve them, like specimens in a jar, frozen in time. It was assumed that once these specimens were collected, we would know everything about Aboriginal cultures that needed to be known - any changes in the lives of the people was a corruption of the earlier, more authentic culture.

It is understandable that Keesing is reluctant to place the locale of culture in material artifacts. However, as we will see in more depth later, he also seems to imply that an authentic Aboriginal culture, that is rooted in the past and continues today, does not exist - all that is left are these mainly fictive material representations of identity. Friedman counters to this that "with an artifact-based notion of what culture is all about, the question of continuity [this 'authentic' Aboriginal culture that is rooted in the past] cannot even be properly

addressed as a social phenomenon. This is because continuity, and therefore transformation of cultural form, is not comprehensible in terms of the forms but must be rooted in the motivations and strategies, the intentionalities of social subjects in time and space (1993, 760)".

For Friedman, culture and the material representations of it cannot be separated from the actor - and it is the motivation of the actor in the reenactment of the dance, or in the veneration of symbolic material objects, that is a more genuine location of culture. It is precisely this area of social life "wherein we find the shared experiences that enable models of reality to achieve an effective degree of resonance among their practitioners (ibid., 763)". Friedman objects strongly to the practice of questioning and deconstructing Aboriginal peoples' identities. Largely, he has shaped his argument in response to Keesing and Linnekin, to whom I will now turn.

Keesing's discussion of the Hawaiian Nationalist movement has caused much controversy. His premise is that the modern Hawaiian identity that is drawn upon by Hawaiian Nationalists, is actually a reflection and incorporation of Western thought patterns. He claims that, in the Hawaiian case, " the contemporary discourses of cultural identity derive from Western discourses (1989, 23)". There are several ways in which Hawaiian culture has unknowingly 'borrowed' from the West. Firstly, "assertions of identity based on idealizations of the ancestral past draw heavily on anthropological concepts - particularly ideas about 'culture' - as they have entered Western popular thought (23)". He also points out that, in some ways, these concept of culture are false - so where anthropologists got it wrong, Hawaiians also got it wrong.

Secondly, he points out that Native culture is often constructed in opposition to western culture, rather than by some reliance on a continuity with the past. He claims that "elements of indigenous culture are selected and valorized (at the

levels of both ideology and practice) as *counters to* or *commentaries on* the intrusive and dominant colonial culture(23)". For example, he says that an ideology of preservation of and spiritual connection to the land could only have arisen in a climate of contestation over land use.

Keesing feels that this 'pastoral' of culture that is being used by Hawaiians today, is based on half-truths. Here, culture is something that is used for political ends - in order to advance a specific political agenda. He does feel (unlike Linnekin) that there is a 'real' culture somewhere - he just does not feel that this 'real' culture is what is being espoused by most Hawaiians today.

In fact, Keesing argues that when Aboriginal peoples centre their identity around material and performance genres, it is an indication that 'real' culture' is being eroded. He says that when we put these cultural things 'on display' it is indicative of a denial of "alienation at a personal level, and a denial that cultural traditions are being eroded and destroyed in the village hinterlands(31)". Arjun Appadurai (1990) also contends that 'performance' culture can conceal the reality of a people who have lost their connection with their own identity, and who are under state control. He claims that the state "seduces small groups with the fantasy of self - display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage (13)".

Keesing offers a fairly pessimistic view of the Hawaiian's claim to an authentic, Aboriginal identity. He claims that a genuine cultural bedrock is being eroded at the same time that Hawaiian Natives are deluding themselves with a false reliance on external indicators of culture. In contrast, Trask's (1991) response to Keesing offers a far more positive discussion of Hawaiian Aboriginality. She starts out by pointing out the paternalism of trying to 'liberate' Natives from their pasts. She, (understandably), associates this type of anthropology with colonialism - what Keesing writes about Hawaiians is likely to have far more power and influence than what Hawaiians say about their own

culture. Because of this political fact, she claims that Keesing should have more carefully considered his position. When (mostly white) anthropologists make claims about the authenticity of Aboriginal identities, they threaten to take the power of self - representation from these groups. Trask is tired of anthropologists representing Hawaiians, and profiting from these representations - she wryly points out that "anthropologists without Natives are like entomologists without insects (162)". She says that Keesing has incorrectly taken himself to be an 'expert' on Hawaiian Nativeness, although he is not a Native himself, and does not appear to have included Native authors in his paper.

She also points out that he has confused what Hawaiian nationalists say about identity, with what the tourist trade has represented as 'Hawaiianness', including "hula dances, ukuleles and pineapples" (161). Trask sees accusations of inauthenticity, which involves the claim that current Hawaiian cultural traditions are not continious with the past, and therefore 'invented', as a way to suppress the increasing politicization of Natives. Some anthropologists have become involved in the relationship between Natives and the government - these anthropologists have argued, for example, that land-masses which are central to Hawaiian spirituality today, are not 'really' sacred. The government has then used the work of these anthropologists as justification for the take-over of sites that are meaningful to Natives.

At the heart of the confrontation between Keesing and Trask is a fundamental point of disagreement. To Trask, modern Hawaiian identity is genuinely rooted in a continuity with the past. While she does admit the obvious, that Hawaiian culture was dramatically altered upon contact with Westerners, she also contends that "remnants of earlier lifeways, including values and symbols, have persisted (165)".

To Keesing, the trappings of modern-day Aboriginal culture are not 'genuine' at all - they are reconstructions of Western ideologies that are being utilized for political purposes. However, there is some agreement here between the two: Keesing *does* admit that there is such a thing as a 'real' or 'authentic' culture that can be uncovered after filtering out Western influences - Trask and Keesing differ only whether or not this 'real' culture is what Hawaiians are practicing today.

Jocelyn Linnekin (1991), another prominent anthropologist in the authenticity debate, differs radically from both Trask and Keesing in that she posits that *all* culture is invention - there is no 'genuine' culture anywhere. So, to Linnekin, (and Arjun Appudarai), culture is a construction, that one may consciously choose to employ, for various reasons. Linnekin, in response to Hobsbawm (1983), asserts that :

> "symbolically constructed traditions are not inauthentic: all traditions - Western and indigenous, are invented - they are symbolically constructed in the present and reflect contemporary concerns and purposes rather than a passively inherited legacy (1991, 447)".

Here, Linnekin is similar to Arjun Appadurai, who also claims that culture today is an act of self-conscious choice, and associations with cultures are chosen according to their use-value. He states that

> " As group pasts become increasingly parts of museums, exhibits and collections, both in national and transnational spectacles, culture becomes less what Bourdieu would have called a habitus (a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions) and more an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation, the latter often to multiple, and spatially dislocated audiences (1990: 18)".

However, Appadurai avoids the area which proves problematic for Linnekin : he does not make claims as to the authenticity of these cultures, nor does he consider authenticity a relevant question.

Linnekin does criticize modern Hawaiians for the 'inauthenticity' of their self-definition - yet this implies that there is an 'authentic' culture somewhere against which such judgments can be made. This, of course is a contradiction in Linnekin's argument - if 'all culture is invented', than it becomes impossible to judge various manifestations of culture according to their 'genuineness'. The contradiction here is similar to the one Robert Young (in Carrier: 1992) finds in Edward Said's Orientalism (1978). Young criticizes Said for denying that there is a 'real' 'Orientalism' - or representation of the Orient, while at the same time, denying the validity of the 'Orientalism' that has been constructed by the West. In other words, if there is no 'real' Orientalism, how can Said claim that *any* representation is false?

Jonathan Friedman's (1993) position opposes that of Linnekin and Keesing. He points out that, while it is true that much of Hawaiian culture may have arisen out of confrontation with Westernism, this does not invalidate the former. He claims that structures that arise out of opposition are "just as deeply ingrained in Hawaiian culture as anything that may have existed prior to Captain Cook (742)". This is because *all* culture is created out of opposition - there is no pure difference, only *difference from something else*.

Friedman, unlike Linnekin and Appadurai, claims that modern Hawaiian Aboriginal culture has a strong element of continuity. In other words, there are 'traditions' that have survived from the past, and which help to shape the modern cultural context. He disagrees with Linnekin's point that elements of culture from the past and present are selected and combined in a self-conscious way, for a specific political purpose. He claims that, about the Hawaiian case, "there is plenty of evidence for a continuity of cultural forms in transformation, as well as a fundamentally authentic relation between the producers of cultural forms and their conditions of existence (749)".

He argues against the use of the word 'invention' at all, because invention implies discontinuity. The distinction that Friedman makes here is the difference between cultural *invention*, and cultural *transformation*. In other words, all culture is engaged in a continual state of transformation and re-contextualisation - but, particularly in the Hawaiian case, there is still a high degree of continuity.

This phenomenon of 'cultural transformation' is echoed by Rohatynskyj (1997), who points to the way in which the Omie of Papua New Guinea have 'refashioned' elements of their culture in order to suit a modern-day context. Included in this context is the new Omie knowledge of themselves as largely - powerless actors in the modern political arena. Rohatynskyj claims that the Omie have been forced to abandon certain cultural practices, and recontentextualise others, because of the "inability of Omie to maintain a self-centred understanding of themselves in the world, comparable to the self-view that had proved adequate for their political purposes less than a generation ago (450)". So, in response to their own, new self-awareness and changing political climate, the Omie have either adjusted or abandoned their cultural traditions. Rohatynskyj does not, however, claim that the newer cultural practices are 'inauthentic' and totally unrelated to the practices of the past. Instead, she suggests, they are 'transformations' of these earlier practices - altered in order to be "more in harmony with the larger context (450)".

When we accept that elements of *every* culture are transformed to fit a modern-day context, the issue of authenticity almost becomes irrelevant. However, it is important for anthropologists to have some way of assessing cultural models - otherwise, all representations of Aboriginal peoples would be valid - even those constructed by the dominant societal group. At the same time, the political repercussions of 'assessing' others' identities must not be

underestimated. Anthropologists, over the past few decades have become very proficient at deconstructing their own identities and ethnographic authority. However, when this critical eye is turned upon the identities of Aboriginal peoples, the results can be politically damaging.

Friedman proposes that there is still a way in which identities can be judged in terms of their authenticity, which is important, unless we are to accept *all* representations of Aboriginal culture, even those presented by the group in a position of power over Aboriginal peoples. Friedman proposes a mode of evaluation which is radically different than the way in which Linnekin uses the term 'authenticity'. He claims, instead, that a more appropriate term is 'existential authenticity. Cultures can be said to have 'existential authenticity' when "we find the shared experiences that enable models of reality to achieve an effective degree of resonance among their practitioners (763)". So, 'existential authenticity' is very much based upon the agreement of the members of a cultural group. According to Friedman, "inauthenticity would thus consist in the relative alienation from the cultural model, a lack of engagement, a social distance with respect to the values and categories embodied in the tradition or program of action (761)".

Anthropologists are in a unique position today - while the discipline has grown increasingly sophisticated about their own 'positioning' in anthropological texts, there is also an increased sensitivity to the way in which the deconstruction of *Aboriginal* identities can be harmful to the very people with whom anthropologists traditionally have been the most concerned. Underlying the arguments about 'authenticity', there is a more fundamental question about the nature of 'culture'. The use of the term 'culture' itself has been highly contested by anthropologists of the past few decades. We live in a world in which most peoples, superficially at least, seem to be becoming *less*

differentiated. Every traveler has some variation of a story about visiting a presumably 'untouched' group in some 'exotic' locale, only to find the villagers avidly watching 'Melrose Place'. What are anthropologists to do in the face of 'global creolization'? Are they to declare that 'cultural differences' have been smashed by the forces of globlisation - leaving all peoples of the world culturally undifferentiated?

It seems that anthropologists, on the whole, have not done this - in fact, there has been an *increased* focus on identities and cultures. However, there is no doubt that the idea of the homogenous, isolated, 'culture' is dead - cultures are now examined as they are engaged in a dialogical relationship with others, and with the forces of modernization. Anthropologists have had to surrender not only their key concepts (such as 'culture') to critical scrutiny, but also their own ethnographic authority - these are perhaps, the central themes of the 'post-modern' enterprise in anthropology. Perhaps it is possible to see the work of anthropologists who question the authenticity of other's identities (such as Linnekin), as an effort to re-claim ethnographic authority, and revive a 'modernist' approach in anthropology. Unavoidably, this bodes ill for Aboriginal peoples who have, only recently, acquired the power needed to present alternatives to the 'modernist' anthropologists' representations of them.

Because part of my research involves studying the reception to the *visual* (museum) presentation of Aboriginal identity at the Centre, in the next chapter, I will examine some of the literature that specifically concerns the representations of Aboriginal peoples in museum displays.

Chapter Three: Museums and Tourists

Museums, like ethnographies, have the power to represent other cultures. However, museums are attended by far more people than will ever read an ethnography, so their influence is potentially greater. Because the domain of museums is material culture - which appears to have an uncontested reality that can be apprehended with our senses, it would seem that museums are immune to the kinds of post-modernist criticisms which have been so prevalent in anthropology in the last few decades. However, criticism and debate about representation and authenticity also center around museum displays - often echoing the very arguments that are commonly leveled against ethnographies.

There are a number of aspects to this problem. Firstly, I will examine and discuss some of the criticisms of museum display - in particular, I will discuss the claim, made by Clifford (1988) and Riegel (1996) that museum displays embody hierarchies and tend to 'freeze' cultures in time. Along similar lines is the argument made by Graburn (1983), that the attraction of the tourist to the museum is a manifestation of the impulse to 'conquer', categorize and consume the Other. I will also discuss MacCannell's assertion (1976), that museums and other representations of identity can be used by their designers to pursue political interests.

I will also explore the issue of authenticity, which underlies these arguments. I will discuss the various definitions of and requirements for authenticity that have been suggested by a number of authors. Because museums are designed for the appreciation of tourists, rather than academics, I will also examine some of the anthropological literature on tourism; in particular, I will explore the issue of whether or not the tourists are concerned about the seeming authenticity of museum displays.

Finally, I will discuss the use of a 'relativizing epistemology' in the museum displays of Aboriginal and minority peoples. 'Relativizing epistemology' is taken to mean the position that all history is stories and conjecture, and the version of history that is presented as 'true', is done so to serve the political ends of those in a position of power. As an example of a museum display which employs a relativizing epistemology, I will discuss the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit of Aboriginal culture at the R.O.M. Gable, Handler and Lawson (1992) have argued that when museum displays represent minority and indigenous peoples, the presentation is more likely to be based on such an epistemology. I will suggest that presenting Aboriginal and minority history as 'conjectural' and 'constructed', as in the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit, may give tourists the impression that this history, (and also present-day identities), is 'made - up' or false.

Museums and the Power to Represent

It is easy to feel assured by museums. Usually, the buildings in which they are housed are impressive structures that imply that one is entering a hall of truth - a place impervious to politics or power - a place in which objects speak for themselves. Objects, it is thought, do not lie. For the museum directors, and the visitors to the museum, "old objects are endowed with a sense of 'depth' ... temporality is reified and salvaged as origin, beauty and knowledge (Clifford: 1988, p. 222)". Objects represent for us a link with the past. They have lives which "though finite, can be very much longer than our own. They alone have the power, in some sense, to carry the past into the present by virtue of their 'real' relationship to past events (Pearce: 1992, p. 18)".

While it is true that the objects themselves are not capable of making statements about cultures, the way in which they are presented - and, the

exclusion of certain objects, can make profound statements about cultures, as well as the political climate in which the collection was assembled. These things are largely in control of the museum director - a weighty task , considering not only the number of visitors to museums, but the way in which these visitors often look at such displays with an uncritical eye. The exclusion of certain groups (for example, the exclusion of any representation of the black inhabitants at Colonial Williamsburg which will be discussed later), the suggestion of hierarchies of development between cultures through the construction of classification systems, and contested ownership of artifacts are all criticisms which continue to plague museums.

Museum collections also have the power to misrepresent in another way - they can leave out the unpleasant - to make history "safe, sterile, and shorn of danger, subversion and seduction (Urry, 1996, p. 52)". In museum displays, as in ethnographies, chaotic and disharmonious elements of a culture are often downplayed. To give an example of the exclusion of an entire group of peoples from an exhibit, because their inclusion was testimony to an unpleasant period of American history, we can look to Colonial Williamsburg - a historic site in Illinois, which claims to be an 'authentic representation' of Williamsburg in the 1800's. Until the 1970's, any discussion of the presence of slaves and other African Americans was left out of the presentation of history there (Gable, Handler and Lawson, 1992). Until 20 years ago, museum officials had effectively made invisible one half of the population at Colonial Williamsburg. Museums don't privilege 'high' or 'low' culture - even the most mundane objects are on display, by virtue of their age. However, they do (as does the rest of society) "order phenomena in ways that privilege the coherent, balanced and "authentic" aspects of shared life (Clifford: 1988, p.232)".

In many ways, this criticism of museums has parallels in the criticisms that have long been made of structural functionalist ethnographies. As early as 1964, Edmund Leach claimed that British Social Anthropology had rested too long on oversimplified sets of assumptions, and had stressed equilibrium too much, at the expense of excluding more chaotic, disharmonious aspects of social life. Leach claims that early social anthropologists looked for societies which showed 'functional integration', 'social solidarity', and 'cultural uniformity'. Those cultures which did not clearly possess these attributes, were either ignored as subjects of anthropological inquiry, or were considered abnormal. According to Leach, the use of an organic analogy by structural functionalists, gives social categories the false illusion of stability. In other words, the facts of ethnography and history only appear to be systematic and ordered because anthropologists have imposed this upon them, in the same way in which museums have imposed organized systems of classification upon the material remains of past and present cultures.

Structural functionalist anthropology traditionally bounded social systems together into an organized set, and then termed this set a 'culture'. In this way, 'culture' implies self-evident boundaries, coherence, timelessness and discreteness. Many anthropologists, among them Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), have argued against the use of the term 'culture', pointing to the false sense of 'organic wholeness', which underlies both 'culture', and structural functionalist anthropology. As part of this process of 'writing against culture', Abu-Lughod suggests that the connections between anthropology and the community under study should be highlighted. In other words, anthropologists should explore how the group s/he is studying came to be constituted as the Other. Abu-Lughod suggests an anthropology that explores the *connections* between the anthropologist and the Other, as these are the very connections which are

downplayed in ethnographies, and in museums. Museum displays rarely include information on the relationship of the collector to the objects they have collected, or the relationship of the museum to the objects and people which it represents. We rarely ask how it is that these objects came to be part of a museum display, or on what criterion are they judged to be display-worthy. So, the way in which these objects come to be representations of the Other, remains uncontested.

Collections, very much like ethnographies, are inescapably political. The end result of a museum display will very much depend on the political currents of the time, as well as the interests of the museum itself. Again, like ethnographies, museum exhibits have had to change radically in the past few decades, in order to include the perspective of minority and indigenous peoples. We may say that, "where institutions like museums are concerned, the post-modern project involves admitting firstly that power play is implicit throughout the entire enterprise, past and present (Pearce, 1992, p. 232)". The representation of other cultures is no longer seen as unproblematic. Museum collections are "tied up with nationalist politics, with restrictive law, and with contested encodings of past and future (Clifford: 1988, p. 218)". The presentation of cultures in museums is unavoidably political, and these politically - charged presentations can have a profound effect on the things we believe about the past of other peoples, as well as their present-day identities.

Cultures Frozen in Time

Museums and ethnographies are charged with producing facts, abstracted from the fieldwork situation or the places and times from which objects are collected. It can be argued that, for this reason, museums are necessarily tied to modernity, which implies a "belief in overarching narratives which tell of the

reality of scientific reason, the value of past historical experience, and the conviction that there exist realities to know about (Pearce: 1992, 233)". However, the abstraction of facts or objects from cultures, and their placement in a Western scientific discourse, can have the effect of making these cultures appear to be 'frozen in time' - as opposed to Western culture, which is often presented as in a constant state of flux and change.

Ethnographies have also been charged with making other cultures seem distant in space and in time. This argument is made most exhaustively in Johannes Fabian's Time and the Other (1983). I will briefly condense his arguments here, as they apply equally to ethnographies and museum exhibits. Fabian claims that there are several ways ethnographies suppress 'coevalness' (the denial that the anthropologist and his/her culture exists in the *same time* as the culture which s/he is studying).

Firstly, according to Fabian, the use of the 'ethnographic present' (saying, for example, that the Bedouin practice polygyny) not only makes these statements appear to be especially true, but it also makes them seem especially true *for all time*. In a sense, museum exhibits also use the language of the ethnographic present in their representations of living groups of people. Very few museum exhibits (one exception being the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit, which will be discussed later on) present these cultures as having a present and future, which is subject to constant change and upheaval.

The classification systems that have been used by anthropologists and museologists can also be used to express temporal distancing. In ethnographies, classificatory terms such as 'kinship' can be used to construct scales or hierarchies (for example, by comparing the relative importance of kinship bonds in different societies, and then constructing developmental scales). Museums operate largely, and perhaps unavoidably, by classification

systems. Displays are classified according to age, ethnic and cultural groupings, geographical locations, etc. In fact, some of the critiques of museums (Riegel: 1996) stem from the fact that they control, interpret and impose classification onto other people's histories. Any system of classification, according to Fabian, operates to enforce separations that are hierarchic.

Finally, Fabian argues that the ethnographer tends to deny the dialogic nature of his/her fieldwork. In other words, the relationship between the ethnographer and the people s/he is studying is not explicitly revealed in the ethnography - although the outcome of the research depends so directly upon this relationship. This has the result of suppressing the fact that the information presented, like the ethnographer's visit, exist in a particular point in time. When anthropologists leave out a discussion of the autobiographical conditions of ethnographies, they also remove an important part of the ethnography from the arena of criticism. In this way, the ethnographer is constructed as the impartial 'observer', instead of an actor with the power to profoundly change and effect the very social processes s/he observes. Again, there are parallels here between ethnographies and museums. Museums almost never include information on how or by whom objects were obtained. Disputes over the ownership of certain artifacts - although an almost unavoidable by-product of museum displays, are never brought to the foreground. This has the effect of making the displays and the cultures they represent seem to be outside of modern realities and isolated from their political contexts.

Henrietta Riegel (1996) claims that the very position that the visitor occupies, that of the detached, observing eye, "excludes him/her from the order of the exhibit and emphasizes the separation of the exhibit from the reality it supposedly portrays (87)". This denial of shared communication creates a vast distance between the viewer and the viewed, and makes the viewed culture

seem alien - distant in time and place. The observing eye of the visitor here is very much like the observing eye of the ethnographer. While it is difficult for the ethnographer to remain completely detached from his/her host peoples during fieldwork, this is much easier for the museum visitor - who confronts material detritus, rather than actual people. Perhaps this is the allure of the museum; it allows visitors a chance to simulate ethnographic fieldwork, with the accompanying excitement of 'discovery'. At the same time, this experience is made 'safe' - the visitors do not have to contend with unpleasant political realities, or actual people. A museum experience offers a safe, voyeuristic experience - very much like peeking through the neighbor's windows when they are not home.

Clifford (1988) suggests that museum collections have parallels with 'salvage anthropology' - of course, many of the objects in museums are there because of the efforts of anthropologists who wanted to preserve indigenous cultures before their contact with Europeans made them 'disappear'. According to Clifford, "collecting, at least in the West, where time is generally thought to be linear and irreversible - implies a rescue of phenomena from inevitable historical decay or loss (231)". Therefore, 'culture' is seen as threatened by a host of modern 'outside' influences. In this sense, the task of the museum is to 'freeze' cultures in time, and to protect them from exposure to the West, which is characterized as rapacious and unstable. When the museum displays cultures (especially those of indigenous peoples) as being isolated, structurally simple, and ahistoric, these cultures also appear to be static, and less 'evolved' than the West.

Collection as Consumption

The desire to collect is everywhere in the Western world. Tourists proudly bring back souvenirs from their trips: masks, figurines, art work - the more

'exotic', the better. The same urge to collect, own, and categorize drives both the museums and the people who visit them. Visitors (usually white and upper-middle class) to the museum expect the objects there to be arranged in a tasteful, aesthetically-pleasing way, and museums seldom fail to disappoint. Clifford (1997) points out that "Museums routinely adapt to the tastes of an assumed audience -- in major metropolitan institutions, largely an educated, bourgeois, white audience. National sensibilities are respected, the exploits and connoisseurship of dominant groups celebrated (209)". So, although museums contain artifacts from many different culture, the displays themselves are designed to appeal to a specific group of museum-goers.

Part of the appeal of museums lies in the fascination we have with old objects - especially those from indigenous cultures. This fascination belies our general fascination with the 'primitive'. According to Torgovnick (1990), we see these objects as representatives of a 'primitive' culture, which we identify with "the "lower", the "irrational", the "instinctual" (80)", and, we can easily add, 'the sexual'. Torgovnick includes a discussion of the distinction the West makes between primitive 'artifacts' and 'art', which, because of space restraints, I will not discuss here.

Our impulse to collect objects (and to view such collections), according to Graburn (1983), is tied to our impulse to possess, and therefore, symbolically consume, the Other. According to Graburn, these impulses are the result of a "historical continuity with the exponents of the leading exploratory urges of the Post-Renaissance Western world, who in order to more fully understand the world, bring parts of the experience home to understand it and make it safe - in other words, the impulse to "conquer" the Other, whether it be space, the wilderness, foreignness, the past, and so on, to order, categorize, and consume it, and often to show it off in museums (18)". In the West, we exalt the romantic

idea of the explorer, the discoverer, the conqueror, often ignoring the impact of these pursuits on the explored culture.

Museum displays must be not only convincing, but also aesthetically appealing. They arrange beautiful things in a beautiful way, and often end with a gift shop, which satisfies the urge of the visitor to take some of the objects (replicas or not) home, and arrange them in a tasteful way. Even when we do not buy anything, we still feel like connoisseurs - we have perused the museum, and perhaps judged the relative beauty of various objects (Reigel, 1996). Exhibits of gems are always immensely popular at museums - although we know we will never own the things we see there, visiting a museum still feels, in some sense, like shopping.

Museum Displays as Manipulation

The way in which objects are presented, as well as the exclusion of certain objects, has a powerful impact on the messages that are presented about certain cultures and relationships. This message can be used to reinforce existing power relationships, or to de-stabilize and threaten them. Torgovnick (1990) gives an example of a display (at the Exposition Universelle, in Brussels), which serves to enforce hierarchical relationships. The "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit, at the R.O.M., is used by Riegel (1996), as an example of a display that challenges power relationships, as well as the traditional ways in which we view other cultures at a museum. The "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit will be discussed later in this paper.

Torgovnick describes several elements of the installation of Congolese objects in Brussels in 1897, that seems to have been designed to reinforce the validity of Belgian intervention in the Congo. Firstly, the African objects were arranged in a way that seems cluttered and disorderly. Spears and knives are

arranged in no particular order, a hut is out of proportion to figures in it, and a mummy, seemingly out of place, is in the foreground. According to Torgovnick, this "miscellany testifies to the casualness of museum displays of African objects toward the end of the nineteenth century (75)". Other, non-African displays were not so casual, which suggests that "African life was messy, chaotic, in need of Western order (76)".

Torgovnick also points to the most 'calculated' elements in the room, the murals, as a way in which the Belgian rule of the Congo is reinforced and validated. These murals, clearly labeled as depicting Africans and Arabs, show Arabs marching African men into slavery, as well as the despair of African woman at the abduction of their husbands. Torgovnick remarks that "taken as a whole, this room in the exhibition probably communicated a calculated message to its Belgian audiences, a message that made Belgian intervention in the Congo more palatable than it might otherwise have been. These poor savages, the display suggests, have no saving order in their lives. They are preyed upon, victimized by the Arabs, who rape their women and sell them into slavery. Compared to this, how mild and benign seems Belgian rule! (77)".

Museum displays of the past, as shown in the example above, often served to reinforce and justify colonialism. Many of the objects displayed in museums were the bounty of colonialism - Native Canadian religious objects were routinely on display in museums, despite the contestation of ownership. Museums have remedied many of these injustices, and most items that were obtained illegally or unethically, have been returned to their original owners. However, it must be acknowledged that museums, like anthropology, have a past connection with colonialism. It is a heritage that both are working to overcome.

Authenticity

We expect museum displays to not only inform us, but to *convince* us. The presentation of objects should be organized in a simple, coherent way - by time period, cultural group, or geographical location. We expect objects to look old enough, exotic enough - 'authentic' enough. We expect models (of people, buildings and animals from the past) to look like 'the real thing'. Museums employ many strategies to convince us of the authenticity of their displays. For example, at the Colonial Williamsburg historical site, care is taken to hide twentieth century objects (for example, a gasoline can) from the visitors. Bruner (1994) also points out that the houses at the site are aged to look old - whereas the original 1830's houses would not have looked old, as the site was abandoned within 10 years. The older-looking houses are more credible to tourists, but are a *less* accurate representation of the original 1830's houses. From this example, we can see that there is not a single definition of the term 'authenticity' - displays and reconstructions obviously must do more than just 'resemble the original' in order to be convincing.

Bruner suggests that museum professionals and tourists generally use one or more of four different meanings of authenticity. The first is 'historical verisimilitude' - or to make the copy resemble the original. This definition applies only to historical re-constructions - historic sites, or models of the past. Authentic in this sense means "credible and convincing, and this is the objective of most museum professionals, to produce a historic site believable to the public, to achieve mimetic credibility (399)".

The second definition of authenticity goes further than the first. According to Bruner, some museum professionals speak "as if the 1990's New Salem not only resembles the original but is a complete and immaculate simulation, one that is historically accurate and true to the 1830's (399)". In this, second

meaning of authenticity, the copy is seen as 'real', an *exact* reconstruction, rather than simply convincing.

The third sense of authenticity refers more to object-based displays, rather than reconstructions of the past. Here, authenticity means original, as opposed to a copy. Old objects are considered authentic because of their real connection with the past. These objects tend to lend authenticity to the entire display or site, "as if the luster of the few originals [has] rubbed off on the reproductions (400)". Bruner points out that if we take this definition seriously, *no* reproduction can be considered authentic, as the only authentic objects are the original ones.

The fourth definition concerns *who* has the authority to authenticate. In other words, who is in charge of the site - who has the power to tell the story. In the case of New Salem, the site is legitimized by the state of Illinois as the only officially reconstructed New Salem. To use another example, many historic sites and museums which represent Aboriginal peoples, (for example, the site of my research, the Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford) are designed by Aboriginal peoples, and use Aboriginal peoples as docents. Although it is doubtful whether only Aboriginal peoples can tell the story of Aboriginal peoples, their presence in the museum lends the displays *authority*. Visitors to the site feel reassured that the display has been legitimized by those with the authority to tell the story.

Bruner's fourth definition of authenticity is particularly fascinating. Who has the power and authority to represent themselves or others, has changed in the last few decades. If Aboriginal and minority peoples were portrayed at all in museum displays from earlier in the century, they were usually subsumed under the mainstream depiction of Europeans. More recently, there have been growing numbers of Aboriginal and minority groups who choose to represent and reclaim their own identities through museums and cultural events. These

self-representations have become, to Aboriginal peoples, an important part of the process of claiming their rights. However, because Aboriginal groups are not homogenous, representations of cultural identities may serve certain interests within the Aboriginal group more than others. Noel Dyck (1983) uses the Parkland Pow Wow as an example of this. Dyck claims that the Pow Wow was controlled by the powerful elite within the Aboriginal community, who used this cultural forum as a way of gaining more power. The Pow Wow, according to Dyck, "thus illustrates a case in which a set of actors strategically manipulate a cultural form to pursue political interests (183)".

Ironically, the recent concern and debate among anthropologists around issues of authenticity and the 'invention' of culture, "comes at a time when `minority' peoples are more intent than ever before on laying claim to the `possession' of a publicly worthy cultural `identity'. Thus we find that our best insights into cultural processes may offend the very people whom we have traditionally been most concerned to give voice to - or, at least, to speak for and about (Gable, Handler and Lawson: 1992, 791)". The fact that Gable, Handler and Lawson put the words minority, possession and identity in quotation marks is an indication of way in which most anthropologists retain a heightened skepticism about essential cultural differences. Unfortunately, this skepticism can be harmful to Aboriginal peoples, who often use the assertion of cultural difference in the process of claiming their political rights.

Authenticity and Tourists

Many authors (Linnekin (1884), Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Schieffelin (1985), among others) have suggested that distinctions between 'real' and 'invented' aspects of culture, are artificial, because all culture is invented. I will not explore this argument here, because of space restrictions,

and also because it is an academic debate, and one that I do not feel is echoed in tourist's attitudes. Whether falsely or not, I suggest that tourists*do* make distinctions between authentic and inauthentic elements of culture.

Dean MacCannell (1976) suggests that the search for 'authentic' experiences of another's culture is a fundamental part of our society. MacCannell claims that in the 'modern' West, social life is fragmented, and individual morality is "only indirectly linked to the solidarity of modern society (590)". Instead, for moderns, the functionally important relationships are among bureaucracies, communities and other complex organizations. Because of this, MacCannell claims, our lives are 'shallow', and our experiences 'inauthentic'. He finds parallels between the search for authenticity among moderns, and the concerns for the sacred in 'primitive society'. According to MacCannell, "the solidarity of primitives depends on every individual's keeping his place, and this is guaranteed by the sacralization of functionally important aspects of individual behavior such as gift exchange and mate selection (590)". Primitives need not be concerned with the authenticity of their rituals, as "the very survival of their society stands as internal proof of the victory of good over evil and real over false (590)".

It is not clear to whom MacCannell refers in his use of the term 'primitive'. Of course, the distinctions between 'primitives' and 'moderns' have blurred greatly in the last half century. MacCannell's discussion calls up the homogenous, self-contained, timeless societies of 'primitives' that were once described in structural functionalist anthropology. As in older ethnographies, members of small-scale societies are reduced to mindless robots - whose autonomy and free will are subsumed under unconscious rules of exchange and mate selection.

Today, the lives of 'primitives' are just as likely to be fragmented as those of moderns. Many 'primitive' societies have not survived particularly well into the twentieth century. In fact, I would suggest, because of the massive cultural changes that have rocked the lives of Aboriginal peoples since contact with European peoples, Aboriginal peoples have *more* reason than moderns to be concerned with locating 'authentic', elements of their own cultures, as a way to reclaim a sense of cultural continuity.

In contrast with MacCannell, Bruner (1994) finds that visitors to the New Salem Historic Site in Illinois, are not particularly concerned with the authenticity of the historical displays and their experiences there. Instead, Bruner found that the tourists at New Salem are "(1) learning about their past, (2) playing with time frames and enjoying the encounters, (3) consuming nostalgia for a simpler bygone era, and simultaneously (4) buying the idea of progress, of how far we have advanced. Finally, they are also (5) celebrating America, which at New Salem means the values and virtues of small-town America (398)". The tourists at the New Salem site, according to Bruner, are not necessarily seeking 'authenticity', but a sense of "identity, meaning, and attachment (398)".

Bruner's argument may not apply to tourists who visit historic sites and museums which represent Aboriginal and minority peoples. At these sites, it may be more difficult for European Westerners to find a sense of 'attachment' or 'identity'. Europeans may, in fact, be more concerned about authenticity when they visit these places. This suggestion will be developed more fully in further chapters. There does seem to be a gap here in the anthropological literature - there are very few studies of tourists who visit non-European historic sites and museums.

The Use of a Relativizing Epistemology in Museum Displays

A relativizing discourse in museum displays is based upon the 'constructivist' position in anthropology, otherwise known as the 'invention of culture' tradition. To put it briefly, the proponents of this position all agree that "socialization is at best an imperfect mechanism for cultural transmission, and that each new performance or expression of cultural heritage is a copy in that it always looks back to a prior performance, but each is also an original in that it adapts to new circumstances and conditions (Bruner: 1994, p. 497)". All anthropologists would agree that culture is always in a state of process and change. However, the constructivist position further implies that there is no authentic 'bedrock' of culture, upon which this change acts. Culture and history, in this sense, are constantly being created and re-created by those in a position of power, in order to suit modern-day situations and concerns. Essential differences between cultures are reduced, and history is seen as a collection of 'stories' each no more true than the other.

Colonial Williamsburg

Gable, Handler and Lawson (1992) use the historic site at Colonial Williamsburg as an example of the use of a relativizing discourse. Since the late 1970's, Colonial Williamsburg has been engaged in an effort to reconstruct the history that it presents there in order to include the previously-excluded black segment of the community. The Department of African-American Interpretation (AAIP) helped to develop a set of special programs, tours, and performances focused on African-American history. The AAIP also funded the construction of a slave quarter, in a conspicuous place, at Carter's Grove plantation. A great deal of care has been taken to re-include the previously missing 50% of the population at Williamsburg.

Citing their interviews with museum professionals at Colonial Williamsburg, Gable, Handler and Lawson claim that the dominant epistemology at Colonial Williamsburg is one of 'objective truth'. This is partly because of its reliance on 'authentic', old objects. Written "'facts' attest to the authenticity of those congealed facts: objects - of which museums are the specialized custodians. Museum professionals know that many documents are necessary to make objects tell a meaningful and truthful story. Nonetheless, museums privilege objects as being quintessentially real - matter-of-fact, we might say - and the public willingly accept this epistemology (794)". For the museum professionals at Colonial Williamsburg, history is the past - reconstructed with the proper arrangement of objects.

However, this view is not uncontested. Colonial Williamsburg historians "know, and they have trained their interpreters to recite to the public - that history is an interpretation of the facts. They understand that writing history or "doing" it in a museum involves active choices on their part - not merely judgments as to the reliability and significance of evidence, but the selection of particular facts in order to tell a particular story with a purpose 795)". So, there are in fact two competing epistemologies at Colonial Williamsburg. One that sees the displays there as unproblematically 'authentic', and a way to represent the objective truth about history, and another (a relativist epistemology) that takes a more constructivist view.

According to Gable, Handler and Lawson, the 'relativizing epistemology' at Colonial Williamsburg is more likely to be applied to the re-creation of slave life than that of the white, upper-class residents of Williamsburg. The discussion of slave life at Colonial Williamsburg, while based upon the same amount of material evidence as has been left by the white inhabitants, remains vague and 'conjectural'. Much care is taken to give white inhabitants individual

personalities, while slaves are never given such personalities, because museum professionals admit that they would only be 'guessing'. In one case, a cricket ball and bat and some crumpled paper on the desk of a white student are used to suggest to visitors that he was a less than assiduous student. The tour guides even add to the authenticity of this arrangement by pointing out that the cricket bat is real - not a replication. However, when asked where the slaves slept, a guide replies that "we assume that they slept outside, but we do not know where. In sum, the conjectures that created a student with a real bed and cricket bat are more mystified than the easily admitted conjectures of black history (798)".

Interpreters emphasize the conjecture in their presentations on the slaves at Williamsburg by "focusing on the absence of fact, the inability to know (801)". However, they do not admit that their presentation of white history at Colonial Williamsburg is equally based on conjecture. Instead, "at Colonial Williamsburg there is always the tendency to overlook, or even to mystify, the interpretive work that goes into the construction of mainstream stories. A congeries of facts is isolated - facts which can reasonably be taken to represent some aspect of the 18th century. These facts are assembled into tableaux, and the myriad choices about where to put which facts, in relation to other facts, are conveniently forgotten in favor of an over-riding faith in the facticity of each artifact or scrap of documentary evidence (803)".

Gable, Handler and Lawson claim that this bifurcation also occurs in anthropology. They state that the 'tools of deconstruction' have been unequally focused on the identities of minority cultures. In this way, only minority history and identity is relativized, while mainstream history is still based upon a 'naive objectivism'. Gable, Handler and Lawson claim that anthropologists often fail to acknowledge that mainstream history and identities are also 'invented'. While

the constructivist view may be a welcome reaction to 'essentialisms' of culture, it must be applied equally to European history and culture, and that of minorities.

Fluffs and Feathers

I will use the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit of Aboriginal cultures as an example of the use of a relativizing epistemology in museum displays. Although I have toured the exhibit myself, I will rely largely on Henrietta Riegel's (1996) analysis. The Fluffs and Feathers exhibit was at the R.O.M. in 1991 and 1992, although it originated at the Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford. The display uses examples from popular culture as a way to outline the way in which Aboriginal culture has been negatively stereotyped and essentialized. The exhibit challenges the ways in which Aboriginal peoples have been thought of and portrayed since their contact with Europeans. It also seeks to reduce the distance between the viewer and the display and the appearance of essential differences between Aboriginal and white cultures. It also subverts the traditional requirements for authenticity - the exhibit is missing the old objects that are usually present in museum displays. The display makes the point that history and identities are, indeed, 'invented' by those in a position of power. For these reasons, I consider the "Fluffs and Feathers" display to be based upon a relativizing discourse.

The impression that is created when first entering the exhibit is that the objects in it are haphazardly arranged. Many of the objects there belong to popular culture - sheet music, movie posters and postcards. These familiar objects stand out - they are not exotic, or obviously old, as is usually the case with museum objects. Many of the objects depict the stereotypical way in which Aboriginal peoples have been portrayed - 'Indians' were frequently used to advertise products in the forties and fifties. Riegel observes that the use of

familiar objects avoids 'exoticizing' Aboriginal peoples, and creating a "separation in time and space from white people (98)".

The exhibit also features some cardboard cutouts of 'Indian' headdresses and costumes, with a mirror so that visitors can try them on. Therefore, the visitor becomes 'part of' the exhibit, and must step out of the role of the impartial, disconnected observer. Riegel claims that this part of the display, in particular, shows "on an experiential level how stereotypes are created and what it feels like to have a negative stereotype applied to oneself (98)". The "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit does not construct whites and Natives as polar opposites - in fact, it tends to reduce cultural differences by showing the ways in which whites and Natives are connected. According to Reigel, "the issue of a true and authentic culture that is unique to Native people is avoided in the exhibition through the juxtapositions of 'authentic' and reproduced objects and through particular appropriations and reappropriations of popular culture (98)".

Unlike many museum depictions of the past, the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit avoids presenting Aboriginal cultures as stable, homogenous, and unchanging. The end of the exhibit includes some cases depicting 'traditional' handicrafts - among them is a set of beaded converse sneakers. This visual juxtaposition of the modern with the traditional serves again to blur the lines between 'our' culture and 'theirs'. The exhibit does not exoticize Natives - and "neither does it compare, through 'authentic' objects, Native cultures in the past to Native cultures in the present as if the present were somehow less 'real' due to its contamination with 'white' culture (98)". The exhibit is unsettling and exciting in its uniqueness. Its dialogical approach makes the 'fixed positions' of Natives and whites seem to disappear.

The representation of Aboriginal identity here is different than many other self-representations of the last few years in museums and other cultural forms.

The "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit seeks to reduce essential differences. It clearly makes the point that those differences are fabricated - constructed by powerful whites. Gone is the sense of 'rootedness' and connection to the past that is usually present in other museum exhibits and cultural performances. This connection to the past is often emphasized as an antidote to the forces of modernization, which many Aboriginal peoples feel threatens their traditional culture. The "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit is an example of a drastically different approach to representation. This approach, like the more 'objectifying' one that it replaces, is not without risks and pitfalls.

One of these risks is the possibility that visitors may see Aboriginal culture and identity as less 'real' than that of whites. The exhibit at the R.O.M. is surrounded by more 'objectifying' exhibits of other cultures, and by contrast, the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit seems more conjectural - more `made up' than the others. Because most of the anthropological research that has been done in this area focuses on tourists who visit European historical sites, there is no way of knowing what the tourist reaction to "Fluffs and Feathers" is. Because mainstream history is not presented in an essentializing discourse, the approach taken may seem confusing and unconvincing to those tourists not familiar with the criticisms of objectification and representation, to which the "Fluffs and Feathers" display is a reaction.

Conclusion

Arjun Appadurai (1992) has pointed to contradictory pressures which underlie the issue of museum representation. Some pressures are "toward fixing and stabilizing group identities through museums, and others that attempt to free and destabalize these identities through different ways of displaying and viewing objects (37)". Traditional museum displays sought to stabilize and 'freeze' identities of past and present cultures. One of the criticisms of this approach was that it essentialized those cultures and presented them as being isolated from modernity. Traditional museum exhibits were also criticized for the imposition of science - based classification systems, and the exclusion of the perspectives of minority and indigenous peoples.

We can say that the "Fluffs and Feathers" exhibit is an example of an attempt to make a representation which destabalizes Aboriginal identity. The display sets up a dialogical relationship between the viewer and the display, and therefore serves to outline the dialogical relationship between Natives and whites. However, some other presentations of Aboriginal culture (including the on at the Woodlands Cultural Centre) have chosen, instead, to emphasize the cultural 'rootedness' of their people - and it is this 'rootedness' and sense of connection to traditional ways that is missing from the exhibit. I suggest that this may give non-Native visitors to the display the impression that Aboriginal identities and history are 'made up', and not as 'real' as those identities of whites - which remain largely undeconstructed.

Anthropologists and museums have classically represented those cultures outside of the Western centre of power. Some of these groups have replied to and criticized those representations - and also made some of their own. Unfortunately, the recent deconstruction of such terms as 'culture' and 'identity' comes at a time when many Aboriginal and minority communities are using

these terms to assert a public identity of worth. The work of anthropologists in the deconstruction of ideas of 'culture' and 'identity' can be politically damaging to the very people with whom anthropology has traditionally been the most concerned.

In the next chapter, I will explain the methodology that was used in my research into these issues at a particular site of identity presentation: The Woodlands Cultural Centre.

Chapter Four: Methodology

After familiarizing myself with the literature concerning culture and identity, in particular the self-representation of Aboriginal peoples, I became interested in the way in which this anthropological debate would manifest itself in action. In other words, I wanted to study how Aboriginal self-representations were being 'read' by others - the ways in which the intended audience was ordering the information presented by Aboriginal peoples. I wanted to see what tourists are 'doing' at these sites of self-representation - whether they were confirming their previous ideas about Aboriginal cultures, or discovering new ones - and what this meant about the way some North Americans feel about their own culture.

I settled on the Woodlands Cultural Centre as the site of this research because of its proximity, and also because the presentation of Aboriginal identities there was unique. As I discussed in an earlier chapter, the museum display makes a special effort to emphasize the dialogical nature of the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. In the museum, Aboriginal peoples are not presented as being 'frozen in time', and isolated from the same historical processes that act on other cultures. The museum also included a special section on modern-day Aboriginal cultures. My original plan was simply to station myself in the Centre, and interview tourists who had toured the museum.

I soon discovered that the Centre leads special workshops on Aboriginal peoples at the Centre and other locations. The participants in these workshops learn about Aboriginal history and modern-day identities, with a special emphasis on racial equality and tolerance. After speaking with Joanna Bedard, the Executive Director of the Centre, I decided that I wanted to interview some people who had participated in these workshops, as well as tourists who had

visited the museum. I wanted to talk to people who had attended these two sites of identity - presentation to gain a more complete understanding of the work that is done at the Centre. I also assumed that my interviews with the teachers could be more in-depth, because they would have set aside time to speak with me in a private place, unlike the tourists who would be stopped on their way through the very-public museum. I was told that the Centre had traveled to Niagara College to give a workshop there, and I was given the names of some of the teachers who had participated in this workshop. Some of the teachers had also traveled to the Centre in Brantford with some students of the College. I contacted these teachers by phone, and set up meetings with them to discuss their responses to the workshop.

I wanted to interview some of the staff at the Centre in order to help me understand the Centre's position on Aboriginal identities. I interviewed Joanna Bedard - the Executive Director of the Centre, and also a speaker at the workshop attended by the Niagara College teachers. I also interviewed Alice Bomberry, the museum education director, and frequent museum-tour leader. Finally, I interviewed Joan Greenberg, a staff member who has fulfilled many positions at the Centre over the 25 years she has been on staff there. Besides these interviews with the staff, I also felt it necessary to explore the museum myself and to join in on several tours. I toured the museum twice with groups of school-age children, as well as several times on my own.

Although I asked the tourists and the teachers some specific questions about what they thought of the displays at the Centre and the workshop, I expected that many of the questions would be answered out of their own experiences and attitudes. I asked a mix of specific questions about the workshop and museum, and questions aimed at more general ideas. I asked the questions not only to elicit responses to the workshop and the museum - I

wanted to use the Centre as a springboard for exploring the participants' own thoughts about Aboriginal cultures and identities. As I will discuss at greater length in the next chapter, the participants seemed to answer even the specific questions about the workshop and museum on the basis of their own previously-held ideas and attitudes about Native peoples.

The Settings

The conditions under which I conducted interviews with the three groups - the tourists, the teachers, and the staff of the Centre, were vastly different. The tourists were interviewed in the museum, in a room at the end of the tour that especially represents modern Aboriginal identities. The room is not closed off from the rest of the museum - although the opening to the room is a small-sized door. On the two days in which the interviews were done, there was not a great deal of traffic through the museum.

The room was chosen because it is the final display room on the tour of the museum, and it is a somewhat darkened, private room that seems conducive to quiet reflection. I also chose this room because it focuses on modern Aboriginal identities, and I hoped it would stimulate the participants to talk about this aspect of the museum, rather than only the more historical displays. The room itself is somewhat sunken - one must walk down a pathway from the rest of the museum. In the centre of the room there are some comfortable benches upon which we sat during the interviews. Because the room is the last part of the tour, people tend to linger there rather than quickly perusing the displays and passing through. Although the room is comfortable and quiet, it is not private, and perhaps the tourists I interviewed felt somewhat inhibited about the possibility of other visitors, or the staff of the Centre, passing through during the interview.

Everyone that I approached in the museum was willing to be interviewed, but these interviews were generally shorter than the others, because all of the tourists seemed anxious to hurry through the interview. I was also less likely to stretch the interview out, for fear of imposing too much upon them. This problem did not exist with the other interviewees: the teachers and staff of the centre, because in every case I made an appointment before time. Often, these interviews went far beyond the time that was initially allotted when the appointment was made. The shortest interview with the teachers or staff was one hour - the longest , with one of the teachers, was nearly three hours.

In contrast to the tourists, the teachers I spoke with at Niagara College were interviewed in the privacy of their own offices. I set up the appointments over the phone and by e-mail, and then traveled to the College on several occasions to interview the teachers. All of the teachers had private offices, and they had all scheduled at least an hour to talk to me. The staff members of the centre also had private offices, and had scheduled time specifically to speak to me.

The College itself has a high percentage of Aboriginal students, and an Aboriginal student's association. Many of the teachers teach courses specifically for Aboriginal students, and so feel it is important to learn about issues specific to Aboriginal peoples. The teachers attended the workshop partly for professional reasons - because they wished to become better educated about a large part of the population at the College. The tourists, on the other hand, had various reasons for visiting the Centre - but, in general, their interest was more casual, not professional.

Sample

I interviewed fourteen people for this research. Six people were teachers at Niagara College, three people were staff at the Woodlands Cultural Centre, and

five people were tourists. Of the staff at the centre, I interviewed the Executive Director of the centre, as well as the Museum Education Manager, and the production co-ordinator of the newsletters and other printed matter. These interviews were approximately the same length as those of the teachers.

I did not purposefully exclude Native visitors to the Centre or participants in the workshops. It is purely coincidental that none of the teachers I interviewed at Niagara College or the tourists I interviewed in the Centre, were Native. Unfortunately, this gives the impression that there is a strict division between the staff of the Centre (Native), and the visitors to the Centre (non-Native). In fact, there are some non-Native employees at the Centre, and many of the visitors to the Centre are Native. It would have been interesting to compare the opinions of Native visitors to the Centre with those of non-Natives, but that was really not the purpose of my research.

Because of the small sample size and its non-random nature, my findings are not generalizable to the larger population of 'people who visit the W.C.C.', 'people who attend a workshop led by the W.C.C.', or, of course, Canadians in general. Even with a larger sample, it would be difficult to get some kind of generalizable sample of visitors to the W.C.C., because these visitors are so diverse. The centre is visited by teachers who come for seminars, tourists from countries all over the world who visit the museum and gift shop, Aboriginal peoples from Brantford, children who come with school groups, or academics from McMaster and other Universities. The number of these visitors tends to peak in June. The number of visitors to the Museum in June, 1993, was a little more than 1000. The only way to obtain some kind of generalizable sample of these visitors would be to circulate a questionnaire, and I didn't feel that a questionnaire would have been able to touch on the issues that I wanted to explore.

The participants must have already expressed an interest in Aboriginal peoples in order to be included in the study. People who would attend a workshop about Aboriginal peoples, or come to a museum run by, and about, Aboriginal peoples, would most likely already have an interest in and/or a sensitivity towards Canadian Natives. This may not be the case with the rest of Canadians. I did not set out to test any particular idea, or to make definitive statements about the way Canadians perceive Aboriginal identity and culture. This research is exploratory.

Confidentiality

I assured all the participants that I would not use their real names in my research. I did not ask the tourists whom I interviewed in the Centre their names at all - it seemed they were more comfortable with this - I was, after all, interviewing them *in* the Centre about their perceptions *about* the Centre, and I assumed they would feel more comfortable if they remained anonymous. I also explained to all the participants that they were not obligated to answer any questions that they did not wish to, and that they were free to terminate the interview at any time. I told them that although I was not working *for* the W.C.C., the Centre would have access to my findings. I also offered all the participants a copy of my notes from the interview, although no-one wanted one.

I assigned false names to the participants, except for the staff of the Centre, whose interviews will be discussed in a later section. These names were assigned during the data analysis stage of the research. I was uncomfortable with the de-humanizing effect of assigning the participants numbers.

Table #1: General Information About Participants

Table #1 gives an overview of the participants in the research. I will discuss my interviews with the staff of the W.C.C. in a later section that deals specifically

with the presentation of Aboriginal identities through the workshops and Museum at the W.C.C.

I have included in table #1 a category that lists the participants' ethnicities. Some of the participants took this to mean country of origin, some of them took it to mean ethnic identity. I asked some of the participants their age, and I have estimated the age of some others.

As I stated earlier, the names I have given are made up. I did, however, correspond the first letter in the made-up names with the first letter in the participants actual names - because this made it easier for me to remember which names I had assigned to whom. The ethnicities, ages and professions I have listed for the participants are not, however, false. I have not included a separate category that lists the genders of the participants - I assumed their names would make this obvious.

	Attended Workshop?	Visited Centre?	Ethnicity	Age (est.)	Profession
Teachers at N.C.					
Ted	yes	no	Irish/Canadian	40-50	C. and C. *
Andrea	yes	no	British/Canadian	30-40	Corr. S **
Barb	yes	yes	Canadian	40-50	C. and C.
Lori	yes	no	Canadian	40-50	Mathematics
Sarah	yes	no	Dutch/Canadian	30-40	Intern'l S.S.
Bill	yes	yes	Canada	40-50	Soc. Services
Tourists					
Jeff	no	yes	Scottish/Canadian	40	Factory Worker
Maria	no	yes	Scottish	34	Homemaker
Hans	no	yes	Canadian/Dutch	54	Retired
Susan	no	yes	Canadian	48	Homemaker
Jill	no	yes	Canadian	26	Waitress

* Career and College Opportunities
** Correctional Services

We can see from the above table that the participants represent a wide range of professions and ages. The teachers at Niagara College represent a variety of disciplines, yet there is not a wide range in ages - the youngest estimated age is 30, and the oldest estimated age is 50. The professions of the tourists, excepting the homemakers, are blue-collar jobs. The ages of the tourists show a larger range than those of the teachers.

There was some confusion around the question of ethnicity. Many of the participants wanted to know what I meant by this - if I meant their birthplace, or their country of residence. I assured them that by ethnicity, I simply meant what they consider their ethnic identity to be. In the cases where the participants have listed two ethnicities, I have listed the ethnicities in the order in which they were told to me. For example, Ted initially told me that his ethnicity was Irish, because this is where his parents are from. He later insisted that he is first a Canadian, and that although his parents came from Ireland, they also consider themselves Canadian, and "not different from other Canadians. They never wanted special treatment just because they were different." Andrea was born and grew up in

England, but she also made a special point of telling me that she loves Canada, and considers herself to be a Canadian. Hans and Susan are both Mennonites from Manitoba. Although Hans was born in Holland, the first, and, according to him, most important ethnicity he listed to me was Canadian. Jeff and Maria were both visiting the Centre from Scotland - Jeff was born in Brantford, but then moved to Scotland as a child. The participants who listed their ethnicity as only Canadian, also tended to tell me from where their ancestors came, but insisted that they are 'just Canadian'.

Methods

My set of questions changed slightly during the course of my research. I did some 'dry run' interviews before I started my research, with a neighbor and some friends, to assess which questions would be problematic. However, I found that when I started my actual interviews with the teachers and tourists, the questions still needed some adjustment. For example, my use of the term 'culture' became a problem. Of course, anthropologists have been debating the meanings and usefulness of the term 'culture' for many decades - I found that the term is also problematic outside of academic circles. Some participants took 'culture' to mean art. Others took it to mean history. I found I had more success when I used the phrase 'life-views and attitudes', although I was not sure if this was what I meant by 'culture'. In fact, taking a stand on what I meant by 'culture' was difficult throughout the research and writing stage of my research. I think this could be an indication of the ways in which this and other terms have been so thoroughly questioned, de-constructed and criticized by anthropologists. After immersing oneself in this kind of post-modern literature, it becomes clear that the concept is complex, and its meaning tends to be dependent upon the context - for both professional and non-professionals.

I asked the teachers and the tourists at the Centre approximately the same set of questions, while the three employees of the Centre were asked slightly different questions. I often had to ask the same question several different ways in order to elicit comparable data. I also found that when I explained the topic of my thesis to the interviewees first, the interviews went more smoothly. In some cases, the interviewees felt that I was going to 'test' them on their knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, and often expressed anxiety that they did not 'know enough'. Even when I reassured them that the interview was not a test, they still seemed concerned and embarrassed if they could not remember specific facts about Aboriginal peoples (like the names of certain bands), when these things came up in conversation.

I did not use a tape-recorder - instead, I brought a note pad to the interviews, and took notes during and after the interviews. I made this decision for several reasons. Firstly, I felt the transcription process would be too time-consuming, and I wanted to have a note-pad handy anyway, to jot down my own thoughts and impressions. Secondly, because I was interviewing the teachers after the workshop that the W.C.C. gave, they were somewhat concerned that I was, in a sense, working for the W.C.C. They were often worried about saying negative things about the workshop and the ideas presented there, for fear I would report these things to the W.C.C. I assumed that the presence of a tape-recorder during the interviews would heighten these fears. I didn't want to use a tape recorder for my interviews with the tourists for the same reasons, and also because I felt they were already somewhat uncomfortable about being approached by a stranger, so I didn't want to make my presence more intrusive by using a tape recorder.

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data by reading and re-reading my notes and then using a coding system to pick out certain themes which ran through the interviews. For example, at points in the interview when the participants seemed to be questioning the authenticity of an essentially different Aboriginal identity, I would put the abbreviation 'QA' next to this part of the interview. The coding system was useful in that it helped me to uncover commonalties in the interviews. However, past a certain point, the coding system became unwieldy. This was because so many of the codes needed modification, depending on the exact response of the participant. For example, when the participants only seemed to be questioning a particular aspect of Aboriginal identity, like an increased sensitivity to environmental issues, the code needed to be modified - I used 'QAENV'.

After some time, I had over 40 codes. Each code had subsets of several modifications. It became incredibly time consuming to hunt through my list of codes for the appropriate ones, and it seemed I had to invent new codes with each interview - my notes became a tangled mass of abbreviations. This problem with coding served to highlight the fact that, while there are commonalties in the interviews, the responses to the questions are as varied and individual as the participants.

It also seemed that the more I read the literature surrounding the topic, the more my codes changed, as I began to look for certain things. Although I had done quite a bit of reading before I started the research, I read literature throughout the process of my research. As time went on, my focus slightly changed, and my coding system began to reflect this.

The Questions

I had some difficulty in formulating questions that would 'get at' the complex issues I wished to examine. I assumed it would not be useful to ask questions such as "do you perceive Native peoples as being 'stuck in the past', and not as evolved as other Canadians?" The question, put like this, is prohibitively confusing. Also, I am sure that all of the participants would have answered this question vehemently in the negative, yet many of their responses to other, less direct questions suggested that in fact, this is exactly how they perceive Native peoples. So, I needed questions that would solicit this kind of information 'through the back door' - or in a less direct and simpler way.

The questions I asked of the Niagara College teachers were slightly different than for the tourists - this is because, as table #1 shows, all of the teachers had participated in the workshop, and two had also attended the W.C.C. The tourists had not participated in a workshop, but only visited the W.C.C. So, I asked the teachers some questions that were specific to the workshop, as well as the more general questions that I asked the tourists. I asked the staff at the Centre questions about their work there. I also asked more general questions about their own feelings about Aboriginal cultures and identities. The question I asked of the staff were slightly different, depending on the specific job held by the staff member.

My Own Position

I think it is important to discuss here my own position in the interviewing process. I am not an indigenous person myself, and this fact, I am sure, greatly affected the outcome of the research. I did make many efforts to make my position seem 'neutral' to the interviewees. For example, I identified myself as a student, and told them that, although I was not working for the Centre, the staff

would have access to my findings. I also tried to make the questions about attitudes as neutral as possible (although, as I will discuss later, this often meant that the questions were more difficult to understand). I also reassured all the participants (except for the staff at the Centre) that they would remain anonymous, and I offered them a copy of the interview notes.

However, it was not so easy to be ethnically 'neutral'. Although the issue of my own ethnicity was never directly addressed, I think that, because of my physical appearance, the interviewees assumed that I am not Native (except for one teacher at the centre who asked me directly if I am Native - she said she did not want to assume, because 'some of them look just like you'). Once I reassured them that I was not 'working for the Centre', the teachers and tourists I interviewed were quite open and comfortable discussing their views about Native peoples. Some of the interviewees expressed thoughts that, I am sure, they would not have felt comfortable expressing had they thought they were talking to a Native person.

This was also the case in my interviews with tourists at the Centre. The staff at the Centre are all Native; therefore, because of my physical appearance, I tend to not be associated with the staff members. Although I identified myself as a student immediately, I am sure that the tourists whom I approached to interview would have been more inhibited in their conversations with me had they assumed I was an Aboriginal person, and possibly, a member of the staff at the Centre.

My non-Nativeness worked in a somewhat different way in my interviews with the staff at the Centre. Although all of the staff members were exceedingly open and helpful in their conversations with me, I can probably assume that they would have felt more comfortable with some of the questions, (especially, for example, when I asked if they had experienced any incidents of racism at the

Centre) had I been a Native person myself. I did develop a good rapport with one staff member in particular, and she subsequently set up several interviews for me. I am sure that this connection helped to reassure the other staff members that my research was not potentially damaging to them or the Centre.

Many people (friends, fellow students and a few professors) tried to dissuade me from doing research that involved Native peoples. My neighbor, in particular (a former Master's student whom I had interviewed in my 'dry run' session) regaled me with nightmarish tales about her own research, which had involved staying in a small Native community in North Ontario. She told me that these people were inhospitable and hostile, and they delayed her thesis by months, because they refused to approve her findings. She received this treatment, she told me "even though my grandmother is probably Native". In other words, she felt that her *blood* association should have given her an 'in'. She told me that because I look so European (she thought my red hair would be a dead give-away), I would have no chance of gaining entry into this exclusive group.

When people voiced these concerns, I defended myself by pointing out that my thesis was really about *non-Native* Canadians, and their perceptions of Native identity. Still, I wondered about this blood rule. Obviously, in the case of my neighbor, being part Native was not enough to be granted an open-armed invite into the 'back stage' of Native life. If she (or I) had been *visibly* Native, would this have made a difference, and what does it mean to be 'visibly' Native, anyway? Some Native people I have met have similar coloring and features as I. The lines that separate the 'insiders' from the 'outsiders' are not so clear .

When I talked to staff members at the Centre, I made it particularly clear that my research really focused on European Canadians. This was because I was worried that they would see me as someone who wanted to study and represent

them, as so many anthropologists have done in the past. If I had been a Native person myself, I don't think I would have felt it so necessary to stress that the focus of my study was on Europeans - people like me - rather than Native peoples.

I was also concerned with the way in which I was going to represent the Centre and its staff in my findings. I knew it was going to be necessary to say *something* about the Centre - at least a description of the Museum and some interviews with the staff - but I was anxious about just what I would say, and how I would say it. I didn't want to make judgments about the Centre and its representation of Aboriginal identities. I didn't want to 'deconstruct' the museum, or say things about the Centre with an academic air of detachment and superiority. Maybe I wouldn't have felt so uncomfortable about this detachment, if I had been an Aboriginal person myself - maybe then I would have felt that my 'blood' was attachment enough. Maybe this is the legacy that my generation has inherited - a heightened awareness of the potentially damaging results of an 'outsider' who conducts research on Aboriginal peoples.

My perspective here changed somewhat over the course of the research. At first, I was mainly concerned with the ethics of my research. I didn't want my research to be damaging to the Centre in any way, and I tried to represent myself honestly, and be as clear as possible about the focus of my study. A little later, when I met some of the staff members, and developed a rapport with some of them, I came to realize that I really *liked* these people. They had become more than store-houses of knowledge, or 'informants' - I came to feel a more personal obligation to them. They had been so helpful - so welcoming, that I wanted my research to reflect how much I liked them and respected the work they do at the Centre.

Thankfully, still later, as I struggled with the theoretical issues, I came to realize that making value judgments about the Centre, or criticizing some aspect of the work they do there, was not *necessary* for my research. I realized it would be possible to talk about the Centre in a sensitive and positive way, and still be able to examine the issues I was interested in. But I am left with an uneasy feeling. Why was I not so concerned with how I would represent (however imperfectly) the teachers and tourists I interviewed? During the course of the interviews, I developed a rapport with them as well, yet, to be honest, I am not so worried about 'deconstructing' these interviews, or taking their words slightly out of context, or implying meanings where they may not have implied them. Again, I think this is the result of my own awareness of the troubled history between Native peoples and anthropologists. When I interview other European -Canadians as an 'insider', no such history exists. Whether my slightly differential treatment of the two groups is fair or not, I don't know - I only know that, unavoidably, the historical and political currents that run under my association with them are very different.

Chapter 5: The Woodland Cultural Centre

The Centre was established 25 years ago, with a grant awarded by the Trudeau government - it is one of the largest cultural Centres in Ontario. The Centre is located on Mohawk Street in Brantford, on a large piece of property that once housed a residential school. The previous purpose served by the building is not deemed irrelevant by the staff - who consider it ironic and symbolically-significant that the Centre, which serves the purpose of preserving Native culture, should be housed in a building that formerly existed for the purpose of destroying it.

There are two buildings on the site - the building that was formerly the residential school now houses the staff offices, while the museum and gift shop are in a separate, smaller building. The Centre is engaged in many activities - besides the running of the museum and gift shop. The staff of the Centre leads numerous workshops about Aboriginal peoples, and hosts conferences and special exhibitions about a variety of topics. There is also a large Aboriginal languages program at the Centre, and the staff collaborates with several school boards to re-design curriculum to include the Aboriginal perspective. Teachers groups from Brant County are frequent visitors to the Centre - many of them spend professional activity days at the museum, and attending workshops. The Centre also serves as a resource centre - it contains a large library, as well as a collection of audio-visual material about Native peoples.

There is an art gallery adjacent to the museum that exhibits the work of Native artists. There is also a special display room which joins the museum - the themes in the room change every few months, and are announced in front of the museum. For example, the special display for the months of November and December is entitled "Native Love" - it includes art and poetry on the subject.

Before this, the themes have been "Dwatgahnye: Let's Play", and "Godinigoha: Iroquois Woman's Perspective". The Centre often hosts conferences on the special display themes.

The Centre is a place where indigenous peoples from all over Canada can meet and discuss various issues. The staff of the Centre also travels all over North America to attend conferences at other Centres. This past summer, some of the staff members spent several days attending a workshop in Arizona. The Centre also has links with Aboriginal groups from other countries - for example, the Centre has hosted a Maori dance company from New Zealand several times, and last summer, was visited by a Brazilian martial art group (Wadrihwa: 1996).

Description of the Museum

The entrance to the museum is through a long, dark hallway - the walls of the hallway are painted with trees, and the ceiling is low. The effect this gives is that one is walking through a dark forest, with a clearing (the first exhibit room) ahead. I am also reminded of visiting 'haunted houses' as a child - that first dark hallway or tunnel always created a sense of anticipation and excitement, mingled with fear.

The first display room contains exhibits about pre-colonial Native life. The room is dark, but not as dark as the hallway that leads to it. Immediately in front of the eye are two life size models of an old woman and a young boy. The woman is crouched by the ground, holding a piece of pottery - the boy is playing with a bow and arrow. An inscription to the right of the scene discusses the gender roles of pre-colonial Native life. The room is followed by a hallway - glass cases in the hallway contain arrowheads and pottery.

The effect of the hallway and the first display room, is that of entering the primordial past. The long, dark hallway, and a plaque that announces "Your Journey Begins Here", all add to the impression that one has traveled back in time. When I first entered this beginning part of the museum, I assumed that the museum would follow in chronological time, ending in 'the present', which would be the most well-lit display room.

The next room one enters is announced with the heading "Contact". There is a large bench across from the display, presumably for those visitors who wish to sit and ponder the displays. A life size model of a priest is the first thing that is encountered upon entrance to the room. Beside the priest is a panel painting of some Native peoples assembled to greet colonizers. The description below the painting reads:

> "The Algonkian and Iroquoian Nations neither feared nor felt inferior to the Europeans arriving in the New World. The Algonkians enabled the early French explorers to survive and succeed. The New World and its inhabitants revolutionized the Europeans' world-view by becoming a symbol of hope for a Europe which was emerging from centuries of overcrowding, poverty and religious persecution." The description beside the model of a priest reads: "here, Daillon arrives in a village of Neutral-Iroquoians while Souhaissen, a powerful and respected Chief, steps out to greet these most unusual visitors".

Obviously, what is stressed here is the dialogical and symbiotic nature of the contact between Natives and non-Natives. The text beside the model of the monk invited the reader to envision the scene from the eyes of the Native peoples - who found the visiting colonists to be 'most unusual'. This reinforces the idea that Native peoples and colonizers met as equals - while colonizers found Native peoples strange and unusual, Native peoples felt the same way about colonizers. Native peoples are not merely portrayed as victims whose lifestyle and culture was impacted upon by Europeans - but as powerful peoples in their own right who influenced European culture, as well as were

influenced by it. As we will see, this is a theme which is repeated in the museum.

The next display room is entitled "Two Worlds Collide". The description at the entrance to the room reads:

"With the arrival of the Europeans, the prehistory of this area effectively ends and recorded history begins. The beliefs, customs and traditions of the Europeans and the First Nations differed dramatically. In spite of these differences, the First Nations taught Europeans many skills; herbal medicines, survival in the new land, the water routes, the art of canoeing and snow shoeing, and the cultivation of corn, beans, squash and tobacco. In return, the Europeans offered tools, weapons, cloth and beads. Agricultural pursuits were to change, encouraged by the newcomer's zeal to Europeanize the Native people's beliefs and customs, and to establish a new economy - the Fur Trade."

The display cases in this room hold tools - the text accompanying the cases describes how many traditional European tools were altered to suit First Nations preferences. Again, the way in which both cultures benefited and underwent changes through contact is emphasized here. We are starting to get a glimpse of the darker side of colonization, in the phrase "the newcomer's zeal to Europeanize the Native people's beliefs and customs", but overall, the portrayal of colonization is still largely positive.

Throughout the museum, 'scientific' historical categories are used to group the displays, such as " pre-history", and "pre-colonial". Initially, this surprised me - I was expecting a more radically-different representation of history - one that did not use historical categories referring to the dominant society (such as 'pre-colonial). It seemed to me later, that rather than trying to subvert and resist these categories, the museum uses them as a framework for describing Native peoples' experiences of these historical milestones.

After this room comes another hallway, lined with glass cases containing Wampum belts. The description at the start of the hallway reads:

"When the First Europeans arrived in North America, they found themselves dealing with powerful peoples - nations with fully developed governments and

laws, with council procedures that were designed to move toward consensus, full of allegory and symbol and continuity. For more than 200 years, treaty procedure was similar to Iroquoian council procedure. The British and the French would open councils with the ceremony of condolence, would exchange Wampum belts with Iroquoian and Algonkian Nations, and generally adapted themselves to the customs of the New World."

Again, the stress here is on the way in which First Nations peoples were possessed of a strong and 'democratic' society. It seems that this part of the museum makes a particular effort to portray early Native peoples as 'civilized', and as 'evolved' as Europeans.

At this point in the museum, the visitor walks up to another hallway - the lighting here is dark, and there are models of trees on the left - this gives the visitor the feeling of walking through a dark forest. It is a visually jarring contrast to the previously well-lit hallway. The subject matter here, too, contrasts somewhat with the preceding hallway. It contains descriptions of the wildlife and trees of the Eastern Woodland area - rather than a discussion of colonizers and the political structure of early Native life. This hallway is very similar to the one that marks the beginning of the exhibit - it seems out of place here to the visitor who expects the museum displays to grow increasingly lighter, and less concerned with 'nature', as they move from representing the 'primordial past', to the present.

The next hallway returns to a description of the political history of First Nations and European peoples. A large picture of Joseph Brant is the focus of the hallway, and the text beside the picture discusses the way in which, once the British gained control of North America from the French, the position of power of the Iroquois confederacy "began to wane." This hallway is well lit, and has no benches or seats for visitors.

This hallway ends at a small, well-lit room with tall glass cases containing beautifully - beaded Native costumes. There is a small case in a corner which

contains some old bibles. The description reads "Throughout the 19th Century, the Christian missionaries in British North America were encouraged by the colonial government to pursue an aggressive acculturation program. Christian churches and missions were found in every First Nations community, and the influence of the Church was considerable in all aspects of life, sacred and profane... this cultural borrowing gave way to an uneven relationship between the First Nations and the colonial government."

The discussion of religious oppression here contrasts significantly with the traditional, beaded costumes which are displayed in the same room. Also, a 'chronological' order is broken up - 'traditional' things are not all grouped together in the early, 'pre-contact' displays.

The next room in the museum is a re-creation of an Upper Cayuga Sour Springs Longhouse. It is one of the largest rooms in the museum, paneled with blond wood, and lined with wooden benches that surround an artificial wood-stove. There is a recording of animal calls and running water that plays constantly in the room. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene - during tours, the tour guides often pause here to discuss traditional longhouse culture.

Upon leaving this room one enters a hallway that provides a dramatic contrast to the peaceful atmosphere in the longhouse. The hallway is very well-lit and contains no benches - the largest object on the wall is a photograph of the Native Confederacy Council. The rest of the displays in the hallway are concerning the creation of reserves and the experience of Native peoples in residential schools. For example, there is a small, framed list of 'Regulations for Reserves', compiled by the Department of Indian Affairs. Among these regulations is the reminder that

"Teachers shall also, as far as practicable, exercise a general care over their pupils in and out of school, and shall not confine their instructions and

superintendence to the usual school studies; but shall, as far as possible, extend the same to the mental and moral training of such pupils."

Accompanying this document is a black and white school picture from a residential school. The children are not smiling and garbed in plain black uniforms - the school master looks stern.

Another framed document is a letter from the Department of Indian Affairs, dated

December 15, 1921. The beginning of the letter states:

"It is observed in alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department is putting forth to make them self-supporting."

However, on the other side from these disturbing exhibits, there are hand-made baskets and tools. There is also a picture of the Native Olympic runner, Tom Longboat and a framed crest, showing five clan symbols: the wolf, eagle, heron, turtle and bear - these things are given space equal to the residential school photographs and documents.

There are no benches in this hallway - which is, in many ways, the most powerful and disturbing part of the museum. The set-up encourages the visitor to walk quickly through and give the exhibits only a cursory examination. It seems as though the atrocities committed against Natives are downplayed - and juxtaposed with a more positive display of traditional Native handicrafts.

Upon leaving this hallway one enters the largest, and final room of the museum. A large sign announces "The 20th Century". The ceiling in this room is high - one has to walk down a ramp to reach the floor. The first picture, on the way down the ramp, is a painting of a Native construction worker, with an eagle behind him. Further ahead, there is a large tapestry of a tree, with long, visible roots. The room itself is split into three sections - one wall has displays on

modern Algonkian culture, the other Iroquoian, and third wall has a display entitled 'Pan-Indianism'. The displays present costumes and handicrafts from the Algonkian and Iroquoian nation - beside, a plaque reads:

"The rich cultural tradition of the Algonkian Nations persists today, revitalized by the increased interest in traditional environmentalism and spirituality - a growth in interest felt by the First Nations and non-Natives alike."

The 'Pan-Indianism' display discusses the way in which Native culture today borrows things from many nations, and shows photographs of cross-nation Pow-Wows.

Beside the Pan-Indianism display there is a description that finishes:

"to dress like an Indian today, is to wear a Sioux war bonnet, Navajo turquoise jewelry, beaded belts and Western styled jackets, trousers and skirts."

There is a large, double-sides bench in the middle of the room, and the lighting is

neither exceptionally bright, nor exceptionally dark. There is one small hallway from this large room, which leads into the special exhibition room. There is a plaque on the wall which signifies the end of the museum display. It reads:

"As you have seen, the contributions of the First Nations have been significant in the past and will continue to be significant in the future... Traditional religion, which was never lost, and its desire for co-existence with the natural environment has become even more relevant in the face of an increasingly technological world."

Discussion

In some ways, the museum at the Woodlands Centre seems to follow mainstream traditions of historical representation. For example, it uses Western scientific terms such as 'pre-colonial', and 'prehistory', rather than rejecting or subverting them. It also follows a somewhat chronological order; it begins with pre-colonial times and ends with the present. Because it 'fits' Native history into existing Western-scientific categories rather than challenging them, the museum cannot really be seen as an example of an *alterNative* to the

traditional ways Aboriginal peoples have been represented in museum displays.

However, at the same time, the museum does somewhat break up and subvert a strictly chronological/evolutionary model. Such a model would involve a strict progression from the pre-colonial, nature-based past to the modern, technological one - we would expect to see, as we 'moved through time', the increasing exclusion of displays on nature and traditional handicrafts, and a greater focus on 'modern' subjects, such as politics and the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government. The museum rejects this model by interspersing displays on these 'modern' subjects, with more 'traditional' displays of handicrafts and nature. This has the effect of constantly reminding the visitor of the survival of Aboriginal culture, even in the face of the oppressive policies of the Canadian government.

The lighting throughout the museum also suggests a rejection of an 'evolutionary' model. The lighting at the beginning of the museum is very dark - as if to evoke the mystery and danger of the primordial past. However, as the visitor moves through the museum, the lighting does not progressively grow lighter, culminating in the well-illuminated present. Instead, the lighting is random - the end of the tour is no lighter than the beginning.

There is no doubt that the museum focuses on presenting a *positive* representation of Aboriginal culture and history - one that does not directly threaten or challenge non-Native visitors. The solidarity and political and technological sophistication of early Native peoples is stressed. At the same time, the exhibits which deal with the oppressive policies of the Canadian government, as well as the injustices suffered by Native peoples in reserves are placed in a hallway that invites quick perusal rather than profound consideration. There are no benches or seats of any kind in the hallway, and

the lighting is bright and uninviting - contrasting with the darker, more peaceful atmosphere of other rooms and hallways in the museum. Presumably, the museum aims to downplay the 'darker' side of colonization -this disturbing material is also largely not commented upon. There are no descriptions of the exhibits in this particular hallway, whereas most other displays are accompanied by lengthy descriptions and explanations. This may be either because the museum director wished to allow visitors to formulate their own thoughts on these subjects, or because the displays are so powerful, that they stand alone.

Not only does the museum strive to create a positive and not-threatening representation of Native culture for Natives and non-Natives alike, but it also stresses the *continuity* of this culture. 'Cultural continuity' is a term that will be discussed more fully in following chapters - in short, it is the assertion that modern-day culture is built upon, and continuous with, Native culture of the pre-colonial past. The museum very strongly suggests that modern-day Aboriginal culture has a great deal of continuity with the past - it does this by interspersing displays of 'traditional' handicrafts, costumes, and tools throughout the museum, rather than confining these displays to the pre-colonial beginning of the museum. The assumption here is that, despite the destructive effects of colonialism, 'strands' of an authentic Native culture, developed long before the arrival of Europeans, still exist today.

A poem in the last room of the museum, makes this point explicitly. The poem is

entitled "Drums of my Father", and it reads:

"A hundred thousand years have passed
Yet I hear the distant beat of my Father's drums
I hear his drums throughout the land
His beat I feel within my heart.

The drums shall beat, so my heart shall beat,
And I shall live a hundred thousand years.

Shirley Daniels (Ojibway)

The assertion of cultural continuity is made very strongly in this poem. According to the author, although the strands of an Aboriginal culture (my Father's drums) are faint, they are still alive today, and will continue to exist in a hundred thousand years.

The Woodlands Centre Museum attempts to re-tell mainstream (European) Canadian history, while 'filling in the blanks' - supplying the perspective of Native peoples. The museum very clearly resists depicting Native peoples as being 'frozen in time', and isolated from the historical process that have affected other Canadians. It does this by emphasizing the dialogical nature of the relationship between First Nations and European peoples, as well as the way in which First Nations peoples have changed through time, while still preserving many of the fundamental aspects of their culture.

Tourist Interviews

I have used false names for each of the tourists, but none of the other information presented about them is false. The questions I asked the tourists are similar to the ones I asked the teachers. I first asked the participants some general questions about their age, ethnicity and reason for attending the Centre. Then I asked them what they thought about the museum - whether anything in particular stuck out in their minds or if anything disturbed or particularly interested them. I then moved to ask the tourists what they felt the museum presented to them about modern Aboriginal identities. After discussing the issues surrounding cultural difference, I finally asked the tourists what they felt the future holds for Aboriginal peoples - whether they felt Aboriginal peoples would be able to maintain some cultural distinctiveness over time, or whether

they would eventually be assimilated and subsumed under the larger Canadian culture, or if some mixture of the two options would be possible.

I have included only a few direct quotes. This is partly because I did not use a tape-recorder, and so extensive quotes would not have been faithful to the exact wording. Also, I didn't want to construct a facade of letting the participants 'speak in their own voice'. In truth, I searched for meanings and connections that the participants may not have intended, and, in some cases, I have taken 'their own words' out of context. The voice that speaks in this paper is very much mine. This fact cannot be offset by simply including many direct quotes.

Jeff

Jeff, a 40 year old factory worker and his wife, Maria, were visiting the Centre from Scotland. Jeff grew up in Brantford, and brought his wife back for a visit - he had never been to the Centre before but, passing by, they had been curious about it, and so stopped in on their way to see some relatives.

Jeff particularly noticed and liked the way the museum showed a "progression through time" - that moves from pre-contact to modern-day. He found this organization "interesting, and easy to follow." He was particularly surprised by the way in which early Native society was possessed of a "democratic structure", just like modern-day European society.

Jeff felt that the museum presented mostly the 'traditional' aspects of Aboriginal culture. When I asked him to elaborate, he told me that all the things that the museum presented - like traditional handicrafts and food-procuring methods, "don't exist anymore - the real differences today are so slight". He felt that the museum's emphasis on the traditional elements of culture is accurate "for the past, but today they're just like everyone else."

Jeff stated that the one thing that makes Aboriginal peoples different from European Canadians is the way in which historical events have more

profoundly impacted the lives and culture of Aboriginal peoples. He told me that "they have had to change more - change has been forced on them - they've had to change more than we have." He also pointed to the detrimental effects of racism and residential schools on Aboriginal peoples, as another difference in their historical experience.

He also told me that most Aboriginal peoples today "do not understand their own roots", and are just like everyone else. He also said that an interest in traditional things and cultural distinctiveness is "coming around again", and that people in all different cultures are trying to 'rediscover their past'. He questioned the authenticity of this renewed interest - to Jeff, we "can't turn back time" and get back aspects of the life that exists only in the past.

Jeff told me that Aboriginal peoples will have to 'assimilate', and 'fit in' with 'everyone else', in order to survive in twentieth-century Canada. He said that "they can not go back in time - they have to look towards the future, instead of the past." To Jeff, 'looking towards the future' means sacrificing cultural distinctiveness.

Maria

Maria , a 38 year old homemaker, came to the Centre with Jeff, her husband. She told me that she was curious about Canadian Aboriginal peoples because, living in Scotland, she knew almost nothing about them. Maria particularly liked the re-creation of a longhouse - she said it was nice to "feel like you're really there - to feel what it was like when they lived in a house like that." She, also, was somewhat surprised by the 'democratic structure' of early Aboriginal society.

She told me that the information that the museum presented about Aboriginal cultures is 'mostly historical', so it was difficult for her to answer my

question about modern Native culture (even though the room in which the interview was presented dealt specifically with this topic). Like her husband, she feels that there are no 'real' differences between modern-day Aboriginal cultures and European-Canadian culture. Maria told me that some Aboriginal peoples are "choosing to be different - and choosing to learn about their roots". She told me that people in Scotland are "also learning about the way things used to be - like the old clan structures", but she feels, similar to her husband, that this is artificial, and futile, because "the past is gone".

Maria told me that Aboriginal peoples will eventually completely lose their cultural distinctiveness - she felt that the current renewal of interest in aspects of traditional culture (like dancing, drumming and spirituality), is "just a trend", and can't last. She said that "people have to adjust to today - they have to adapt, otherwise they will not survive." She says she realizes that 'they' have already had to adapt more than 'we' have had to - but that this "is just the way things are".

Hans

Hans, 52, is a retired meat cutter from Manitoba. He is originally from Holland, but has lived in Canada for most of his life. He and his wife Susan have Native foster children, and he felt that he should learn as much about Native history as he can. He told me that he liked the Centre very much - in particular, he enjoyed making connections between the past and the present - for example, he pointed out that "long houses were like the first apartments - it's interesting to see how some things have really not changed much." He also liked the way it showed "people living off the raw of the land" - he found this particularly interesting, as he was once a farmer.

When I asked him about modern Aboriginal culture, he, like Jeff and Maria, answered from his own attitudes and feelings about Aboriginal peoples. He told

me that the museum was 'mostly historical', so it is difficult to ascertain information about modern cultures. He also pointed out that it is difficult to speak of a homogenous 'culture', as this is an individual thing. He said "they have different feelings - some don't want to be traditional - and some want to go back to the old ways. Some of them want nothing but the reserve, and some of them want more. It's an individual thing." So, according to Hans, it is impossible to speak of an Aboriginal 'culture', because 'culture' is individual. He told me that some of his foster children are very interested in learning more about their own Aboriginality, and some of them "want nothing to do with it."

He pointed to an increase in interest in 'traditional things', among all cultures - he told me that people are becoming nostalgic for the past, and a simpler way of life, but, he also feels that "you can't go back" - cultures have to move forward, otherwise they get stuck. He said that he recognizes the appeal of this - he, too, would like to live in an earlier time because there was a "more relaxed lifestyle" - however, he says "going back is impossible".

Hans "can't see the old ways continuing" - he says that many Natives have an "overly-romanticized view of the past", and have forgotten how difficult things were in the past, without 'modern conveniences'. He told me that he hopes Aboriginal peoples will stop "looking for handouts", and start to be treated like other Canadians. He told me that they "can't have it both ways - they don't want to live in a tent - they don't want to depend on fishing, but they want to be independent and not pay taxes." He said that Native peoples will have to recognize that "they have changed, and the world has also changed - you can't go back."

Susan

Susan, a 48 year old homemaker and Hans' wife, lives in Manitoba. She told me that her motivation for visiting the Centre was her Native foster children -

she wanted to "learn more about their culture". She and Hans had also "taken all the tours" in the area. She told me that what she particularly liked about the Centre was learning about the history of Native Canadians. She was also very impressed with the high level of skill shown in the artwork and crafts of an earlier time.

When I asked Susan what she felt the museum presented about modern Aboriginal culture, she, also, answered mainly out of her own feeling about Aboriginal identities. She pointed out that Native peoples "do not wear traditional costumes any more - they have changed a lot." She also told me that there are no major differences between Native and non-Native peoples - except for a few "superficial" ones. For example, "they are very artistic and skilled in beauty - they are in tune with Nature - more so than we are."

Susan also felt that many Aboriginal peoples have lost touch with their traditional culture. She said that "inner-city Native children" are not in tune with their cultural heritage - she says that the older members of the Aboriginal community are trying to keep the 'old ways' alive, but the younger members may not be interested in this. She does feel that the "older ones are very spiritual".

Susan, like Hans, Jeff and Maria, also felt that there is a 'cultural revival' happening now within Aboriginal communities, and, according to Susan, other communities as well. She said that all people are starting to look to the past for answers to the problems of the present. When I asked her why this 'cultural revival' is happening now, she told me that people are frustrated with the economy - there are few jobs, and people are beginning to realize that "there's more to life than 'things', to give you peace". She sees this era as a reaction to the excessive 80's - a time when "anything goes", and people lost sight of the

importance of family, community and spirituality. She sees Native groups as being forerunners of this revival of the 'simpler things of the past'.

Susan also told me that Aboriginal peoples will have to sacrifice their cultural distinctiveness in order to survive in the twentieth century. In fact, she feels that Canada is already "too multicultural", and split into separate groups. According to Susan, "everyone has to change - everyone has to adapt". She told me that she recognizes Native Canadians have already had to adapt more than the dominant culture, but she feels that this is a necessary part of "being part of a whole - being a Canadian".

Jill

Jill is a 26 year old waitress and homemaker. She told me that she was particularly interested in visiting the Centre because her husband is Aboriginal. Jill particularly liked the representation of a longhouse - she said that it was "very peaceful to sit there and think". She also liked the way the museum showed the history of Aboriginal peoples - she said "you don't see that too often - all we usually get is 'our' history". She told me that the museum was very educational, and she learned a lot.

Jill, felt that the museum was "more about history than anything else" - she also told me that Aboriginal peoples are more 'traditional', and find more importance in the past. She said "these traditional things, like sacred objects - they are very important to them - they see more value in the past than we do". Jill, much like the other tourists, answered my question about Aboriginal identities, from her own attitudes and experiences, rather than by reporting on what she had seen in the museum. She told me that some Aboriginal peoples are just the same as other Canadians so it is impossible to speak of a 'Native culture' that encompasses all Native peoples.

However, Jill does believe that what little cultural distinctiveness Aboriginal peoples have will have to be sacrificed in order for them to be successful in the 'business world'. She told me that her husband "listens to Native music and reads books about Native things like herbal healing at home, but when he goes out to work, he's pretty much like everyone else". Jill, like Hans and Maria, feels that "Canada is already too separate - we have to learn to come together more". Jill feels that Canadians from all different cultures should conduct their own cultural practices at home, and then abandon them "in public", for the well-being of Canada.

Themes in the Tourist Interviews

Several themes are apparent in the interviews with the tourists. Firstly, it is most obvious that the tourists answered all of the questions on the basis of their own knowledge and opinions about Aboriginal peoples - the actual museum displays seemed to figure in the answers very little. Although I did not ask the tourists questions before they went through the museum, had I done so, I think I would have found that the museum made almost no impact upon the tourists' pre-conceived ideas about Aboriginal peoples. Even though the room in which the interviews were conducted specifically featured displays about modern Aboriginal identities, none of the tourists referred to these displays in their answers.

All of the tourists spoke of the way 'culture' is a 'choice', they told me that those Aboriginal peoples who do not *wish* to be culturally different, are not. Jeff, Maria, Hans and Susan all told me that many Aboriginal peoples are not 'aware' of their own cultural identity, and, therefore, are not actually culturally distinct from other Canadians. For example, Hans told me that "some don't want to be traditional, and some want to go back to the old ways" - those who don't want to 'go back to the old ways', are just like other Canadians.

There was also the tendency among the tourists to locate 'culture' in material things. For example, Susan told me that Aboriginal peoples do not 'wear their traditional costumes anymore' - and so, therefore, are not really different from other Canadians. Jeff also said that traditional handicrafts and food-procuring methods do not exist anymore - when they disappeared, a distinct Aboriginal culture disappeared with them. None of the tourists, except Susan, located culture in feelings, values or attitudes. In other words, almost none of them told me that Aboriginal peoples are more spiritual, environmentally aware, etc. - responses that, as we will see later, figure prominently in my interviews with the teachers at Niagara College.

Almost all of the tourists mentioned that the museum was 'very historical'. Although, of course, much of the museum display does concern the past, none of the tourists mentioned the more modern displays. This emphasis on the past figured prominently in all of the interviews. All of the tourists spoke of the ways in which Native peoples were either 'more interested' in preserving their own history, or 'naturally' connected to the past. For example, Susan told me that Native people are 'leading the way' for other peoples who are nostalgic for a simpler time. For her, it seemed obvious that Aboriginal peoples would be the forerunners of a movement that looks to the past for answers to modern problems - Aboriginal peoples are, to Susan, 'naturally' connected to the past. Susan also felt that the repositories of knowledge about the past are the elders of the community - whom she sees as being the spiritual 'anchors' of the Aboriginal community.

Almost all of the tourists also told me that Aboriginal peoples are undergoing a 'cultural revival' - which is characterized by an increased interest in what the tourists consider to be elements of societies of the past - such as a prominent emphasis on community and family. Most of the tourists also told me

that Native peoples are not alone in this 'cultural revival' - Susan, Jeff, Hans and Maria all told me that other Canadians are looking to the past for answers to present-day concerns. For Susan, this comes about as a reaction to the excess of the 80's - a time when people strayed too far away from the importance of family, community and spirituality.

Because Aboriginal culture is seen as strongly connected to the past, and, as Maria put it, 'the past is gone', some of the tourists questioned the authenticity of an Aboriginal culture that they see as being based upon the past. As I stated earlier, most of the tourists did tell me that an identity based upon elements of the past is a welcome and positive 'reaction' to the excesses of the previous era. However, at the same time, the tourists see the assertion of difference (especially differences which are seen as 'constructed' out of things from the past) as being ultimately inauthentic, and threatening to the stability of Canada. What the tourists see as an emphasis on the past by Native peoples is 'overly romanticized' (according to Hans), and not authentic. Hans would like to see Native Canadians be treated 'like everyone else', and not accept 'handouts'. For Hans, the recognition of difference is associated with 'special privileges'. Hans, Maria and Jill also told me that the assertion of difference is harmful to Canada, which has already been fractured because of multiculturalism.

Chapter Six: Interviews With the Staff and Teachers

Interviews with W.C.C Staff

All of the three staff members I interviewed held different positions at the Centre. For example, Joanna Bedard is the executive director at the Centre, while Alice Bomberry is the Museum Education Director. I asked all three staff members slightly different questions, according to their particular positions. Some of the general information they relayed to me, I included in the earlier section that describes the activities of Centre. I asked the staff members similar questions about the issues surrounding Aboriginal culture and identity, and I have summarized their answers to these questions here.

Joanna Bedard

Joanna Bedard, as I stated earlier, was a speaker at the workshop, which was attended by the teachers of Niagara College. She has been employed by the Centre since early 1985, and is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology, at McMaster University. I asked her some of the same questions I asked the tourists and the teachers, and I also asked her some questions that were specific to her position at the Centre.

I began by asking Ms Bedard to briefly relay to me the kinds of things about which she had spoken at the workshop. She told me that she compared the two social structures of Native and non-Native societies, and pointed out the hierarchy that is inherent in the model of non-Native society. According to Ms Bedard, any society that is dominated by corporate interest, as is Western European society, will become hierarchical. This hierarchical structure results in a world view which is somewhat different from that of First Nations peoples.

In fact, one of the reasons the Centre holds workshops, is to highlight for the participants the ways in which the historical experiences of Natives and non-Natives are different. The historical events which make up the past of European Canadians, such as the industrial revolution and the migration to North America, are simply not a part of Native history in the same way. According to Ms Bedard, many people assume that the historical experiences of Natives and non-Natives is the same, and deny First Nation peoples ownership of 'their own' history, which began long before the first white settler ever came to Canada. So, according to Ms Bedard, cultural differences are located in historical experiences, and the social structures which result from these experiences.

Although it was not the main focus of her talk, Ms Bedard told me that she also spoke about some of the injustices which have been committed against Native peoples since colonization. She spoke, in particular, about the harm that is done when a government has an agenda of 'assimilation' for "people who don't wish to be assimilated". She also spoke against many of the stereotypes which have been held about Native Canadians, including the ideas they "don't want to work", and are lazy.

Ms Bedard stated explicitly that the Centre is "interested in preserving differences", and her talk at the workshop reflects this position. I asked her what some of these differences are. Firstly, she pointed out that it is impossible to speak of a Native 'identity', or 'culture' in a homogenous way - there are as many different cultural traditions as there are Native groups. For example, the traditions of the longhouse are very different from those of the Made/Ojibway peoples - it is important to remember that "one doesn't come from the other". Ms Bedard's clarification is the reason why I have used the words 'cultures' and 'identities', rather than 'culture' and 'identity' throughout this thesis, when referring to First Nation peoples.

I then asked Ms Bedard if it was possible to speak of some cultural elements which cross over most or all Native groups in Canada. She explained to me that one of the most important traits which is shared by all Native groups, is a concern for the environment. According to Bedard, we can see this cultural trait in any culture which is 'land based', and has a long history with the land. This special relationship to the land is a large part of Aboriginal spirituality and culture. Ms Bedard also spoke of the way in which others now wish to share in the Aboriginal knowledge of medicinal plants, as well as traditional methods of managing the environment (for example, through the use of controlled burns).

I also asked Ms Bedard if she feels that, in the last decade, there has been an increased interest in preserving the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. She stated that, while it is true that Native groups are becoming stronger, and focusing on preserving differences, these groups are not becoming "more fringe" - they are not looking to separate themselves from the rest of Canadians, but rather working to participate in a sustainable economy and to contribute their own art, cultural and social values. She called this new focus a cultural "Renaissance", which is characterized by an acceptance and strengthening of traditional spirituality and First Nations social and cultural values as part of an effort to "retain what they have", and not be subsumed and 'assimilated' by the larger Canadian society.

However, Ms Bedard also pointed out that, while there is an increased interest in 'traditional things', Native peoples are part of contemporary, twentieth century life. Ms Bedard feels that it is possible for Native peoples to retain their cultural distinctiveness, and still fully participate in twentieth-century life. She points out that, while the W.C.C. has a focus on retaining cultural diversity, the staff members use computers and other technological innovations of the last few decades. According to Ms Bedard, Native children are being prepared for

life in the twentieth century - a connection with traditional culture clearly does not mean that Native peoples are 'stuck in the past', and unable to move forward.

I asked Ms Bedard why this 'cultural Renaissance' is occurring now. She pointed out that many First Nations organizations are becoming more vocal about Aboriginal rights. Also, many young Aboriginal students in high schools and Universities are pushing for more inclusive curriculum - including history courses that include the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples. Bedard likens these things to "a pebble dropped into a pond" - the ripples are felt by Aboriginal peoples throughout the country.

Finally, I asked Ms Bedard how the representation of Aboriginal peoples at the Centre and the workshops differs from the way that Aboriginals are usually portrayed in the media and popular culture. She pointed out that the media generally focuses on "where things go wrong" with Aboriginal peoples - such as the problems of alcoholism and sexual abuse on reserves. While Bedard says that these things are substantial problems, the media generally fails to also present a more positive view of Aboriginal peoples. She also feels that most reporters speak from "knowing nothing", and do not educate themselves about Aboriginal peoples. She feels that one of the purposes of the Centre is to portray a positive image of Aboriginal peoples so that other Canadians can have a more balanced view, and so that Aboriginal peoples themselves can be proud of their heritage.

Alice Bomberry

I asked Ms Bomberry some of the same questions I asked Ms Bedard, and I also asked her some questions that are specific to her position as the Museum Education Manager. Ms. Bomberry has been employed by the Centre since 1980.

I began by asking Ms Bomberry about her duties at the W.C.C. Her position title is the Museum Education Manager, and as such, she works under the museum director, Tom Hill. She acts as a liaison between the W.C.C. and tour groups, and works at designing and evaluating many facets of the Museum Education Program. She also fulfills many tasks outside of the museum. For example, she places and trains summer students, helps teachers develop a curriculum that includes Aboriginal peoples, and develops training programs for new staff members.

I asked her about her training of new staff - I wanted to know what kinds of things were part of the training process. She told me that many of the Native people who come to work at the Centre, are not only un- familiar with computers and the other specific skills they need for their position, but they are sometimes unfamiliar with their own culture, and do not have a clear sense of their identity as an Aboriginal person. These people often need to be educated about Native cultures. She sees the staff training program as being a process of self-discovery, wherein the new staff member becomes educated about his/her Aboriginal identity, and then develops the confidence and self-esteem to function effectively at the Centre.

Ms Bomberry also speaks at the workshops that are held at the Centre. The emphasis of the workshops held at the Centre is the development of racial harmony and tolerance. I asked her what kinds of things, specifically, she talked about at these workshops. She told me that one of the key points she makes is the importance of respect for a peaceful co-existence between the cultures of the world. She points out that the components of respect - which is characterized as sacred space around everything and an emphasis on unity, strength, harmony and balance, is a universal value, and it is only when we fail to respect ourselves and others that problems occur. These problems can take

the form of racism, child, elder and spouse abuse, and the destruction of mother Earth. Ms Bomberry says "It is about healing relationships. It is about harmonious relationships with all life forms. It is about building bridges. It is about appreciating differences." She uses the imagery of the "Two-Row Wampum" - in the sense that Native peoples and non-Natives travel side-by-side, together "through respect, friendship and peace". Ms Bomberry tends to stress the similarities between cultures in these workshops. She wants to emphasize that "we're all human beings first". During her museum tours, she talks about 'cultural universals', such as song, dance and play, as a way to highlight the links between peoples all over the world. She points out that it is in *how* we do things that differences occur - which are based upon historical experiences.

I asked her if she talked very much about the injustices that First Nations peoples have suffered since colonization, such as their experiences in residential schools. She told me that, while of course, these things have had a huge negative impact on Native peoples, forgiveness is important. Ms Bomberry has a strong sense of spirituality - she told me that it is important to "look at people through the eyes of the Creator", and forgive European Westerners for residential schools and other injustices.

I asked her if there were some ways in which Aboriginal peoples are different from other Canadians. She told me that, of course, traditional dance, music and dress is different. She also said that the culture of Native peoples is very much land-based, and respect for the land is an important component of their identities. She pointed out that "more and more people are seeing the value of what First Nations peoples have been saying" - she sees the increase in awareness about the environment and holistic medicine as something that is happening throughout many cultures. She feels that many people have

forgotten traditional teachings, and have strayed too far from the simpler, environmentally-sustainable life of the past. Many cultures are turning to the 'traditional' wisdom of First Nations peoples in these matters.

I asked Ms Bomberry if, like Joanna Bedard, she feels that Aboriginal peoples are undergoing a 'cultural revival', or 'Renaissance'. She agreed that this is the case - Aboriginal peoples are turning to more 'traditional things' from the past, such as ceremonies, dance and music, homeopathic healing and spirituality, as a way to re-claim an identity and self-esteem that was shaken by experiences with colonizers and in residential schools. Ms. Bomberry described the modern world as a 'global village' - a place where all cultures are interconnected, but still maintain their diversity. She feels that it is one of the purposes of the Centre to present an image of Native culture for the public. However, she doesn't feel that this identity - strengthening is confined to Aboriginal culture - it is something that is "happening across the board". Many cultures world-wide are beginning to see the importance of maintaining their cultural distinctiveness.

Like Joanna Bedard, she characterizes Western society as being essentially different from Aboriginal culture, mainly because of the hierarchical power structure that is inherent in Western society. She characterizes Aboriginal culture as being "holistic and subjective", while Western culture is "scientific, measurable and fragmented". These differences, according to Ms. Bomberry, are located in way that Aboriginal cultures are 'land-based', and have a longer connection to the land - and in the way that both cultures have different historical experiences.

Joan Greenberg

I asked Ms. Greenberg some questions about the ways in which the Centre has changed in the last few decades. Most of the information from this interview, I have used in the previous chapter about the Centre. What I recount here, is the part of the interview which relates more specifically to Aboriginal cultures and identities.

Joan Greenberg started working at the W.C.C. in February of 1973. She has fulfilled many tasks over the 24 years she has been employed by the Centre. Her very first job at the Centre was as a microfilmer - since then she has led tours, organized a desktop publishing company, and collected and prepared a mixed-media resource centre. Although she does not work as directly with the public as Joanna Bedard and Alice Bomberry, she has a unique perspective on the Centre, because of her long-time employment there.

Ms. Greenberg values the way in which the Centre has allowed her to experience a variety of jobs, and improve her own self-confidence and esteem. She is Ojibway, and so considers herself to be somewhat culturally different than the other employees of the Centre, who are more familiar with the traditions of the longhouse. Her time working with the public has helped her to strengthen her own cultural identity, and to learn more about other Aboriginal cultures as well.

Although she does point to differences within Native communities - for example, those between reserve and non-reserve Natives, she does feel that there are some traits which are common to all First Nations cultures. In particular, First Nations peoples place a great deal of value on sharing, respect and accommodating differences. These traits, she feels, are not generally held by Western European cultures. Ms. Greenberg credits her early life as helping

to instill these values. She was a sibling in a large family, and learned to share, get along with others and respect her elders.

Staff Interview Themes: Similarity

Both Ms Bedard and Ms Bomberry spoke of the ways in which it is difficult to essentialize differences between cultures. In particular, Ms Bomberry places a special emphasis (in her interview with me, and her tour speeches) on 'human universals' - such as love and marriage, which are shared by all cultures world-wide. She stresses the ways in which, at a certain level, all people are the same. Ms. Bedard also spoke of the similarities between Aboriginal cultures and other 'land-based' cultures - she feels that the components of Canadian Aboriginal cultures are not necessarily unique - they have parallels in other groups, like European Jews, who have seen their homeland usurped by more powerful groups.

Both Ms. Bedard and Ms. Bomberry also spoke of the dangers of homogenizing Native groups. Ms. Bedard pointed out that the Centre represents two perspectives - the longhouse traditions, and those of the Ojibway. So, it is not simple to speak of 'Native culture' in a homogenous way. Ms. Bomberry also mentioned the ways in which some Aboriginal peoples are not educated about their own culture, while others have a strong Aboriginal identity.

Differences

All three of the staff pointed out specific ways in which First Nations cultures are different from those of Western European peoples. For example, all three staff members stated that First Nations peoples have a strong connection to the land, and from this connection arises Native spirituality and values. Alice Bomberry also pointed to traditional ways of dress and dance, that are different

from the traditions of Western European cultures. Ms. Greenberg also felt that an emphasis on sharing and respect is an important aspect of Aboriginal cultures.

It is clear that these staff members feel that, although, at some level, people are all the same, there are still irreducible cultural differences between First Nations peoples and Western Europeans. In fact, according to Joanna Bedard, the presentation and preservation of these differences is one of the main purposes of the Centre.

Although Ms Bomberry pointed out that many Aboriginal peoples need to be 'educated' about their own culture, there is still a sense that this culture is partly innate in Aboriginal peoples, and not 'constructed', or 'made up' to suit political purposes. According to Ms. Bomberry and Ms Bedard, these cultural differences have arisen mainly from the close association between Aboriginal peoples and the land. So, in this sense, culture is not seen as being continually 'constructed anew', but as having arisen from a relationship that existed before colonialism. While Ms Bedard and Ms Bomberry both spoke of the ways in which colonialism has had a profound impact upon the cultures of First Nations peoples, it is clear that they consider the basis of *Aboriginality* to be located in their much-older relationship to the land.

All three staff members characterized Western European societies in similar ways. Ms Bedard pointed to its 'hierarchical structure', and emphasis on 'scientific principles'. Ms Bomberry also characterized Western culture as being 'scientific' and 'rational', as opposed to Aboriginal culture which is seen as 'subjective' and 'holistic'. In response to this question, Ms Bedard and Ms Bomberry both presented a somewhat essentialised description of both Aboriginal and Western European culture. Western society is seen as 'fragmented', 'greedy', and ruled by corporate interest, while Aboriginal culture

is characterized as being more 'environmentally-conscious', connected to the past, and respectful of others.

Both Ms. Bedard and Ms. Bomberry seemed to feel that Aboriginal peoples are more 'connected to the past', and that non-Native peoples are also growing nostalgic for this connection, and turning to First Nations peoples for their knowledge of traditional healing and environmental management. However, it is also clear that this connection to the past does not mean that Aboriginal peoples are 'stuck in the past', and unable to move forward. Ms. Bedard, in particular, spoke of the way in which First Nations peoples participate fully in the twentieth century. It seems that, according to these staff members, First Nations peoples are drawing on the past for solutions to modern-day problems, and it is this very re-strengthening of a 'traditional' culture, which will help them successfully negotiate modern-day life.

Interviews With The Teachers: The Workshop

Most of the Niagara College teachers only attended the workshop - only two that I interviewed, also visited the W.C.C. in Brantford. I did not elicit information that applied to the workshop and the visit to the Centre separately, so I will deal only with the teacher's perceptions of the workshop. I asked more questions than the six I have represented here - I have chosen to use the answers to these six, because they are more relevant to the problem I wish to explore. The answers to these questions have been grouped into tables. In each case, I picked out several themes which re-appeared in many of the answers. These themes I have placed across the top of the table - if a particular teacher expressed this theme in his or her answer, I have placed a 'yes' in the appropriate column. However, although there were commonalties in the answers, each answer (especially to the more complex questions) was still

questions about their purpose for attending the workshop. This initial part of the interview was crucial to the success of the later questions, because during this preliminary stage I tried to put the participants at ease, and to establish my own, non-threatening position.

Reason for Attending Workshop	attended out of interest	attended for professional reasons	has a special sensitivity towards and awareness of Aboriginal issues
Ted	yes		yes
Andrea	yes	yes	yes
Barb		yes	
Lori	yes		yes
Sarah	yes		yes
Bill		yes	

Table 1. Reasons for Attending the Workshop.

We can see from Table 1 that the teachers at Niagara College had a variety of reasons for attending the workshop. Most (four of the six) cited personal interest as their main reasons for attending. Lori, for example, had spent some time in New Zealand, learning about the Maoris. When she returned, she wanted to find out more about Canadian Natives. Sarah (who works at the International Student's Centre), cited a general interest in other cultures as her reason for wanting to attend the workshop.

Many of the teachers attended for professional reasons - there is a large percentage of Aboriginal students at Niagara College. Barb told me that in her classes, roughly one-third of the students are Aboriginal. So, some of the teachers felt they should learn as much as they can about Aboriginal issues in order to be able to 'understand' these students better. Andrea, who works in Correctional Services, told me that one-half of the prison population is made up

of First Nations peoples. She feels that it is important for her, professionally, to learn about First Nations peoples. Barb told me that "there are barriers to success that aren't cognitive - like a lack of motivation, a lack of focus or personal power - being part of a visible minority can also set you apart." Barb feels that many of her Aboriginal students encounter these 'barriers to success" - she attended the workshop to help her understand these barriers, and to learn ways to help the students overcome them.

It is particularly interesting that most (four) of the teachers feel that they have a special awareness of and sensitivity to Aboriginal peoples. This special sensitivity is based upon several different factors. Ted told me that he has some Aboriginal friends, and so considers himself to be already "enlightened" about Aboriginal peoples. Sarah said that her work with International Students gives her a special sensitivity to the issues that face minorities. Lori felt that her time in New Zealand, where she learned about the Maoris, had helped to give her special insight into Aboriginal cultures. She told me that people like herself, who attend workshops, or visit places such as the Woodlands Cultural Centre, "already respect Native culture".

Question #2

I then asked the teachers what the main focus of the workshop was - or what, in particular, they learned. This question was really a way of encouraging the teachers to recall the workshop and begin thinking about it in a detailed way. It was also helpful for me to learn exactly what was done in the workshop.

What did the workshop emphasize	sensitivity / avoiding stereotyping	atrocities committed by whites	'rebirth' of Aboriginal culture	Aboriginal history	other
Ted	yes	yes	yes		
Andrea	yes				how Natives have 'modernized
Barb	yes			yes	how we need to be more sensitive to social issues
Lori			yes	yes	talked about strong identity
Sarah	yes		yes		
Bill		yes			the ways Native gender relations are different

Table 2. What did the workshop emphasize.

Table 2 shows the way in which participants in the same workshop took away different impressions. Many (four) of the teachers felt that the workshop focused on helping to raise levels of sensitivity about Aboriginal peoples, and avoid negative stereotyping. However, Ted and Bill both focused on the 'blaming' aspects of the workshop - according to them, the workshop centered around the atrocities which whites have inflicted upon Natives. None of the other respondents felt that this was a key issue in the workshop. Barb and Lori both felt that the workshop mostly presented information about Native history and 'traditions', while Andrea felt that the focus of the workshop was mainly on the ways in which Native peoples have modernized, and changed with the times in the same ways as have other Canadians.

Question #3

After obtaining some general information on what the participants had learned in the workshop, I then asked them what they thought of these experiences. I left this question open-ended, and most people took it to mean whether or not they *liked* the workshop.

What did you think of the workshop?	liked it	narrow / blaming perspective	additional comments
Ted		yes	ethnocentric - not balanced / fair to non-Natives
Andrea	yes		not radical or blaming - made everyone feel comfortable
Barb	yes		would love to have the W.C.C. back
Lori	yes		
Sarah	yes		was very positive / uplifting
Bill	yes	yes	did not present a positive picture of Native / non-Native relations

Table 3. What did you think of the workshop?

Table #3 presents some fairly uniform answers. All of the respondents except Ted, reported how much they liked the workshop. Both Sarah and Andrea spoke of the positive tone of the workshop. Andrea, specifically, felt that the workshop did not lay blame on other groups, and focused particularly on the positive relationship between Natives and non-Natives.

In contrast, both Bill and Ted felt that the workshop stressed the ways in which whites have committed wrongs against Natives. These answers are consistent with their answers to question #2 - both Bill and Ted felt that the focus of the workshop was the ways in which whites have committed wrongs against Natives. In his answer to question #3, Ted said that "Joanna Bedard criticized the term 'scientific', but never explained what she meant by it. The workshop was

ethnocentric - it had a narrow, blaming perspective." He felt the workshop was effective in 'hooking' them emotionally, but he did not feel it offered a balanced perspective.

Bill enjoyed the workshop, but felt, like Ted, that it focused too much on blame. He thought that it should have presented more information on the positive relations between Natives and non-Natives. He felt that the workshop should have worked harder to "join people", rather than to cast blame. He also spoke about the way the workshop had tried to dispel negative stereotypes, but he pointed out that some stereotypes are neutral, or even positive - he said that some Aboriginal groups 'over-react' to all stereotypes.

Question #4

At this point in the interview I began to ask the more difficult questions. In most interviews, I now asked the participants what kind of information had been presented to them about modern Aboriginal cultures and identities in the workshop or museum. As I stated earlier, this question was somewhat problematic because of my use of the term 'culture'. When people seemed to have difficulty understanding the question, I substituted the phrases 'life-views' and 'values' for culture. Unfortunately, this narrowed the answers to this question - the definition I gave excluded material culture. However, whenever I expanded my definition to exclude these things, the participants seemed to focus exclusively on material culture, such as art, and ignore the non-material aspects of 'culture'. The term 'identity' was less problematic - people tended to be more comfortable with this term, and their own definitions of it seemed to be fairly uniform.

What did you learn about modern Aboriginal culture?	they have a greater sense of spiritualit y	use more holistc medicin es	are conserv atio- nist, have more concern for environ ment	'culture' is a choice - some abor. peoples choose not to be 'culturally different'	more connected to the past - to 'traditional' ways of doing things	additional comments
Ted	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	'culture' is individual
Andrea	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	have to deal with racism
Barb			yes	yes	yes - esp. in regards to art	simplicity in artwork
Lori			yes	yes	yes	they are artistic
Sarah	yes		yes		yes	are more comfortable with silences
Bill	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	are not 'greedy' - their concept of ownership is different

Table 4. What did you learn about modern Aboriginal culture?

There is a great deal of agreement here in the answers. For example, every teacher told me that a concern for the environment is a fundamental element of Aboriginal culture. This is probably because, as was revealed in an earlier section, Joanna Bedard focused much of her workshop talk on the way in which Aboriginal peoples are 'land-based, and have a great affinity and concern for the environment.

Almost all of the respondents also told me that Aboriginal peoples have a greater connection to the past. For the respondents, this connection takes various forms. For example, Bill told me that Aboriginal peoples have retained 'traditional' knowledge of healing and environmental conservation. He said that "everyone

can benefit the things Natives know about healing and the environment - they can offer us a *history*, that the rest of us don't have." For Bill, the Aboriginal 'connection to the past' is more profound than simply a retention of traditional healing. Aboriginal peoples are seen as having an intimate relationship with history - a relationship that is seen as lacking in modern industrial society. For some of the other participants, for example, Barb, the idea that Native peoples are very connected to the past is most evident in their 'simple' artwork, and 'traditional' way of dancing.

Those Natives who are fully 'assimilated' into white culture, are considered to have 'moved forward', whereas those who show a greater interest in 'traditional' things (like homeopathic medicines, Native dancing and drumming etc.), are seen as 'stuck in the past'. For example, Susan told me that, although it was good for Aboriginal people's self-esteem to focus on and celebrate their diversity, they then must sacrifice some of these things in order to "move forward" and "survive in the twentieth century". Ted sees an emphasis on cultural difference as being potentially damaging to Native peoples - he thinks they are remaining "stuck in the past". He said he is empathetic, and understands why they might want to highlight their distinctiveness, but he feels they are "stuck in an angry and blaming spot", and wonders "what about tomorrow?". Andrea, however, was the only participant who stated that Aboriginal peoples need to re-discover their traditional culture *in order* to move forward. She felt that what was done to Aboriginal peoples in residential schools 'robbed them of their culture', and so they need to re-claim this 'culture' before they can move into the future. These are issues that will develop more in the answers to the next three questions

Although there is some agreement in the answers, we can see that, already, the participants are beginning to answer the questions from their own personal experiences with Native peoples, rather than simply reporting upon the things

that they had learned in the workshop. For example Bill, Sarah, Barb and Andrea also listed differences that they had noticed during their own contact with Native peoples at the College, like differences in eye-contact, a quieter style in conversation, and an emphasis on family and community.

Other trends are also evident in the table. Many of the respondents seemed to feel that culture was a 'choice' - that Native peoples were possessed of a distinct culture only when they became aware of and educated about their own culture. For example, Andrea told me of having students in her class whom she suspected were Aboriginal, but who were determined to act "just like everyone else", because they feared the social repercussions of openly admitting their Nativeness. Ted claimed that he suspected the 'cultural differences' about which he learned in the workshop are mainly fabricated by Native peoples to serve their political ends.

We can also see that many of the participants used language such as 're-birth' and 'renewal' when speaking of Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness. Joanna Bedard also used these kinds of terms (such as a 'cultural Renaissance) - although I don't know if she used these terms in the workshop. There did seem to be a generally-agreed upon feeling that at this time, Aboriginal peoples were going 'back to the past', and 're-discovering' their 'traditional' ways. These issues will be explored more fully in the answers to the following two questions.

Question #5

When the participants had identified some aspects of the Aboriginal identities that had been presented to them at the workshop, I then focused more on the issue of *difference*. At this point, I began to move away from asking questions that directly pertained to the workshop, and moved more towards questions that focused on the participants' own feelings and attitudes. I asked the participants how these things (aspects of Aboriginal culture) were *different* than or *contrasted*

with the larger Canadian culture. Most of the participants listed attributes of North American, large-scale industrial society in their answers to this question.

Cultural differences?	no significant differences	N.A.'s have hurt environment, are greedy	N.A.'s and Natives have different histories	additional comments
Ted	yes	yes		we are *all* questioning development
Andrea		yes	yes	we are all the same on a 'human level'
Barb	yes	yes	yes	N.A. culture and Native culture 'in synch'
Lori	yes	yes	yes	we are all becoming more spiritual and conservationist
Sarah	yes	yes		N.A.'s are also becoming aware of the environment
Bill		yes		

Table 5. Cultural differences?

We can see in table #5, the way in which most of the participants seem somewhat uncertain about the concept of difference. All of the respondents (except Ted), initially told me that there are no cultural differences between Natives and N on-Natives. However, as I continued to converse with the participants, they began to reveal ways in which Native culture *contrasts* with the larger, European-Canadian society. Most of the participants, in speaking of the differences between Natives and non-Natives, listed what they consider to be the attributes of North American culture. For example, all the participants spoke of the way in which non - Native North American society, in general, is `greedy', focused only on money, and has 'destroyed the environment', as opposed to Native culture, which is considered to be conservationist and spiritual.

We can also get a sense of where many of the participants feel that these cultural differences are 'located'. Andrea, Barb and Lori all pointed out that Native peoples have had different historical experiences, and that these experiences have led to differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. By 'historical experiences', the participants generally meant the Aboriginal experience of colonialism, including the loss of land and their experiences in residential schools. According to these participants, these experiences have had a major influence in the shaping of modern Aboriginal identities.

After the respondents listed the ways in which Native and non-Native cultures are different, they often modified their answers by explaining the ways in which the two cultures, on a deeper level, are really not different at all. Andrea, Barb and Sarah all stated that people are the same *on some level* - that there is a 'common humanity' amongst all cultures. These participants seemed to feel that the differences which exist between cultures are 'superficial' - not as deep as the 'bedrock' of common humanity.

From the answers to question #5, we can also get a sense that many participants felt that whites and non-Natives are 'going back to their roots', and feeling nostalgic for a simpler life. Bill, Susan, Andrea and Lynn all stated that this revival of interest in the 'simpler things' of the past is a trend which can be seen in all cultures. Susan told me that "many Canadians are also beginning to become more environmentally - conscious - we are getting sick of the excesses of modern life - we are starting to look towards the simpler things - the way Natives have always done."

Question # 6

I finished the interviews by asking the most difficult question -I asked the participants what they think the future holds for Native peoples. I asked them if they felt that Native peoples will continue to assert and develop a distinct culture, or if they will be forced to 'assimilate' into the larger culture - or if it is possible to have some blend of the two options.

what does the future hold for Native peoples?	need to assimilate to survive - will lose distinctiveness	will continue to assert and develop cultural distinctiveness	will assimilate in some ways and still maintain cultural distinctiveness	additional comments
Ted	yes			need to stop asking for preferential treatment
Andrea		yes		Natives need to 'get back their identity'
Barb			yes	need to 'economically' assimilate, but also develop self-knowledge
Lori	yes			they need to stop blaming others for their problems
Sarah	yes			
Bill	yes			those who want to assimilate, can - the 'inner circle' will not

Table 6: What does the future hold for Native peoples?

Many of the participants (four of the six) stated that they felt that Aboriginal peoples would not be able to preserve their cultural differences if they are to economically survive in twentieth - century Canada. The participants who felt this usually also claimed that, while they realize that this is a pessimistic view, they are 'being realistic'. Ted said that, in order to survive, Aboriginal peoples will have to "buy into the capitalist system, and maybe sacrifice some of their

principles." When I asked him which principles he was referring to, he told me that they may have to give up their 'protectionist' attitude towards the land, and focus more on earning money, the way "the rest of us do." Susan told me that "traditions can keep you back" - and prevent Aboriginal peoples from making use of the technological innovations of the twentieth century. While Bill did feel, in general, that Aboriginal peoples must 'assimilate' and sacrifice their distinctiveness in order to move forward, he also pointed out that not all Aboriginal peoples will want to do this - what he called the 'inner circle' of the Aboriginal community will "maybe be a bit more stubborn, and cling to the old ways."

Interestingly, both of the two male teachers I interviewed expressed resentment at the 'preferential treatment' given to Natives, and also felt that the workshop focused on 'blaming' whites. Although it is difficult to speculate on the reasons behind this occurrence, we can guess that perhaps the men felt threatened by a female workshop-leader (Joanna Bedard).

As I found with the tourist interviews, the response to the questions I asked seemed to depend very little upon the information that was presented to them either in the museum, or in the workshop. The teachers answered the questions based upon their own attitudes about and experiences of Native people.

In the next chapter, I will examine the themes that appear in *all* of the interviews, and place these themes within a framework of the anthropological literature I have discussed in chapters two and three.

Chapter Seven: Interview Themes

Several themes are evident from an examination of the interviews with the tourists, teachers, and the staff of the Centre. In fact, many of the themes which predominate in the anthropological literature in this area, also appear in the interviews. In particular, the themes I will be examining and discussing in terms of the anthropological literature and the interviews themselves are: the relationship of Aboriginal identities with the past, nostalgia for the romantic 'primitive', occidentalism and authenticity. I will also examine the way in which the tourists and teachers, and the staff of the Centre, view 'culture' in different ways. The tourists and teachers rely on an 'artifact - based' notion of culture, which necessarily results in a questioning of authenticity, while the staff of the Centre relies on a view of culture which stresses 'cultural continuity'. Finally, I will discuss the profound *ontological* issues which underlie the debate about 'culture' inside and outside of academia. In particular, I will use the arguments of Marshall Sahlins and Obeyesekere to represent differing poles of the controversy.

Although I did not interview the tourists and teachers before they attended the workshop or visited the museum, it seems as though their attendance at these sites made no significant impact upon their pre-conceived ideas about Aboriginal peoples. I came to this conclusion after noticing the way in which teachers who had attended the same workshop, came away with radically - differing impressions. For example, two of the teachers felt that the workshop focused very much on blaming whites for residential schools, etc., while other teachers found the presentation very positive and un-threatening. The two teachers who were very upset by what the what they felt was a negative and blaming viewpoint, also revealed, in later questions, that they feel that Native peoples are getting a 'free ride', and 'special treatment'. So, it is safe to assume that prior to the workshop,

these teachers were resentful of the way the government deals with Natives, and were looking for evidence that Native peoples are engaged in "blaming others for their problems" (according to Jeff), and "not taking responsibility for themselves" (according to Bill).

In my interviews with the tourists, I noticed that they, even more so than the teachers, based their answers to my questions on their own, previously-held ideas about Native peoples. In fact, although I asked the tourists directly about the museum, almost none of them referred to the museum displays in their answers. They definitely did not seem to feel that the museum was based upon any particular conceptualization of Native history, culture or identity. Perhaps the difference here between the tourists and the teachers exists because of the difference in the oral and visual presentations they witnessed. The tourists are, of course, free to tour the museum on their own - none of them had taken official tours. So, when they look at the exhibits, they are free to fit these displays into a framework of their own making. The teachers, on the other hand, were presented with a *specific* viewpoint about Native peoples. Therefore, perhaps the oral presentation made a greater impact upon their own ideas. It would have been interesting to interview tourists who had taken 'official' tours, to see if this would have had a greater impact upon their pre-conceived ideas about Native peoples.

It is clear that both the tourists and teachers did not look to the visual or oral presentations of Aboriginal identities to supply them with a *new* perspective or model of Aboriginal culture and identity. Instead, the respondents seemed to be looking to these sites for *confirmation* of models they already held. Among these models is the romantic image of the autochthonous, spiritual *primitive* - who is seen as an antidote to the greedy, individualistic West. In fact, the West appeared many times in the interviews in a highly reduced and simplified form. I will suggest that, here, ideas of 'The Occident' impact profoundly upon the way the

respondents conceptualize Native peoples. The culture of Native peoples is seen as a mirror image *in reverse* of an essentialized West - everything the West is, the 'primitive' *is not*..

The 'Primitive'

Although I began this research with the idea that I would study the *reception* of Aboriginal identity-presentation at the Centre, I quickly realized that the participants used this presentation as a springboard to discuss their own ideas about Aboriginal peoples. Among these ideas is the romanticized notion of the 'primitive'. I will discuss the nature of 'the primitive' as it emerged in the interviews. I will also discuss the ways in which Occidentalism acts upon 'the primitive'.

Marianna Torgovnick (1990) lists some of the characteristics of 'the primitive', as it has appeared in anthropology and popular culture since colonization. Among these characteristics are:

> "the legality of custom, the presence of traditional leadership roles, the paramount importance of kinship in social and economic organization, widespread and diffuse social and economic functions assigned each individual, the importance of ritual for individual and group expression (rituals which often include dance and the expression of ambivalence), and a relative indifference to Platonic modes of thought - in short, the condition of societies before the emergence of the modern state (21)".

Of course, early anthropologists made 'the primitive' their focus of study - groups that were not small-scale, isolated, or possessing of a self-contained 'culture', were not considered to be fit for anthropological study. 'The primitive' has served various functions over time - according to Torgovnick (ibid.), in the twenties and the thirties, "ideals derived from images of primitive life were used by the Right - in fascist slogans of "folk" and "blood" and "fertility", and in Nazi mass rallies and emblems like the swastika (9)". Later on, in the sixties (and until present-day), "versions of the primitive have been used by the Left - in antitechnological protest, as inspiration for jewelry and dress, as model for communal life (9)". 'The

primitive' has been part of our collective consciousness for many years, and ideas about and nostalgia for the life of 'the primitive' are still very much with us today, although perhaps we are more sophisticated in the way in which we express these ideas.

'The primitive' figures prominently in my interviews - particularly in those of the teachers. Native peoples were described as being 'spiritual', 'connected to the land', and 'communalistic' (as opposed to individualistic). Although it is true that Joanna Bedard did speak of the strong connection which Aboriginal peoples have to the land, and the way in which Native society does not have 'hierarchy in the model' in the same way as does European Western society, she did not describe Native peoples specifically in terms of their spirituality or communalistic values. It is not my position to suggest that Native peoples *are not* spiritual and communalistic - what I am suggesting is that, having received some information about the close association between Native peoples and the land, the participants 'filled in the blanks', and attributed other characteristics to Native peoples, that were built upon their own (perhaps unconscious) images of 'the primitive'.

I did ask some of the participants what they learned about Native peoples growing up - in school or from other sources. Andrea told me of playing 'cowboys and Indians' - she and her friends would fight over who would be the cowboys - the 'Indians' were always the villains, and nobody wanted to be the villain. Maria told me of learning about 'tee-pees and feathers'. She told me "when I was a kid, I didn't think there were any more Indians - I thought they were extinct". Hans told me he loved the romantic image of the mono-syllablic, 'Indian' - who usually had an animal companion, and who "was always the best tracker - or the best at telling what the weather was going to be like". So, we can see that 'the primitive'

figured dominantly in the early education of all the participants - it seems that 'newer' models have not fully replaced the old ones.

The 'Primitive' and the Occident

In many cases where essentialisation of the Other occurs, simple and unchanging small-scale, Aboriginal society is seen as radically different from the "complex and changing West (Carrier; 1995, p.1)". Often, in anthropological literature, the West is constructed as "mechanistic, impersonal (ibid. p.27)", fractured, individualistic and unstable. In some cases, according to Carrier, anthropologists do not refer directly to the West, except as it disturbs and corrupts the idyllic village life they are studying. In this case, "wage labour, missions, plantation, or mining projects are seen as tokens of a relatively undifferentiated and essentialized Western social life that will, if unchecked, displace a village life that is itself often seen as coherent and uniform (ibid., p.4)".

Carrier speaks of the way in which we must look to anthropologists' (implicit or explicit) descriptions of the West, as a way to fully understand the *context* in which their descriptions of the Other are constructed. He suggests that anthropologists characterizations of the West create 'absolutism' and essentialism, which make their descriptions of other cultures seem be *expected* - after all, if something is different, it must be different *from* something else, and the non-West is constructed as a contrast - a counterpoint to everything that the West is.

Carrier further suggests that the opposition between the West and non-West "does not only underlie more specific oppositions, it also gives them much of their rhetorical force and intellectual appeal. If these various oppositions were not about the distinctiveness of the West, people would pay much less attention to them (5)". So, according to Carrier, when we read about non-Western societies,

we are really reading about *ourselves*. We like to imagine that the West is advanced, heterogeneous and at the forefront of development.

People outside of academia also 'occidentalize', and, as I found, these occidentalisms are rarely questioned - and certainly not with the same skepticism and stringency as is applied to descriptions of Native society and culture. All of the participants, and even the staff at the W.C.C., spoke of a reduced and essentialised West. This West (often referred to as 'we' in my interviews with tourists and teachers, and 'they' in my interviews with staff members) was described as being 'greedy', 'individualistic', 'hierarchical' and as having 'lost touch' with its 'roots'. Although many participants objected to answering question about 'Native peoples', when this is a heterogeneous group, most of them did not find my references to 'European Canadians' problematical. In fact, in many cases, those participants who rebuked me for my references to 'Native Canadians', went on to make references themselves to 'we', or 'whites'.

The participants were also much more comfortable with the idea of difference when it pertained directly to European Canadians. For example, when I asked both Ted and Sarah to describe elements of a modern-day Native culture, they initially told me that there are no 'real' differences between Natives and other Canadians. However, when I later asked them specifically about the *differences* between these two groups, they both listed 'characteristics' of 'white' culture - among them, that whites are greedy, have hurt the environment, and are individualistic. When I pointed out that, if white culture is *different*, than it must be *different from* something else, they (somewhat reluctantly) listed some attributes of Native peoples (such as that they are spiritual and communalistic). It is difficult to speculate here on the motivations of the participants, but perhaps their reluctance to reduce and essentialise Aboriginal peoples comes from an awareness of the ways in which this reduction can have negative consequences

(for example, in the case of negative stereotyping). The participants perhaps do not feel this same awareness of responsibility towards European Canadians, because *they are in a position of power*, and not the victims of systemic discrimination. The participants may also *enjoy* the image of the complex, modern and fragmented West. Although it is difficult to speculate here, perhaps this is the motivation behind occidentalism - the fantasy that these characteristics of the West mark it as the 'pinnacle' of evolution - a force strong enough to corrupt and destroy all small-scale societies.

If we take a close look at the participant's descriptions of the West, we can see the hierarchical evolutionary model at work here. The West is seen as constantly in a state of change and flux - 'we' have "lost touch with our history" (according to Bill), and "destroyed the environment", (according to Ted). So, if the West and 'the primitive' are seen as profoundly different, than 'the primitive' becomes 'stuck in time', and not as 'evolved' as other Canadians. In fact, these ideas did surface in the interviews in interesting and diverse ways, which I will now discuss.

'The Primitive' and the Past

As I have discussed in earlier chapters, the representations of Aboriginal peoples in both ethnographies and museums have tended to give the impression that Aboriginal peoples are isolated from the political and historical processes that affect other societies. This, coupled with the presence in popular culture of the romanticized, unevolved 'primitive', has resulted in a far-reaching tendency, among both academics and non-academics, to think of Aboriginal peoples as existing in the past - not as 'evolved' as other societies.

In some ways, the association of Native people with the past may be seen as positive - after all, many of the interviewees spoke of Native peoples as having

superior morals and a greater commitment to community and the environment because of their greater connection with the past. However, at the same time, we will see that, for Native peoples, association with the past is a 'double-edged sword'. The participant's tendency to see Native culture as being closely associated with the past also resulted in a general inability to see Native culture as existing in a constant state of change, restructuring, and 're-contextualisation'. Therefore, 'traditional' Native culture is seen as 'fixing' Native peoples in the past and not allowing them to move forward into the future.

The close association between Native culture and the past emerged many times in my interviews with the teachers and tourists. Firstly, it appeared in the way that all the participants (teachers and tourists) seemed to recall only the *historical* elements of both the workshop and, especially, the museum. The workshop itself was described as being 'very historical' by several of the teachers, although I know, from speaking with Joanna Bedard, that the focus of workshop was mainly contemporary. Of the teachers, only Andrea specifically mentioned that the workshop "put traditions into a 90's context" - all of the other teachers remarked on the way the workshop dealt mostly with historical issues.

The answers of the tourists also contained many references to the way in which the museum was 'very historical' - but perhaps this is because much of the museum is in reference to the past, and, of course, this is what we *expect* from a museum. However, the museum does include displays about modern Aboriginal culture - in fact, the room in which the interviews were conducted contained such displays. Interestingly, not one of the tourists referred to these displays in answer to my questions about Aboriginal cultures. In fact, some of the tourists told me that it was difficult to answer my question about modern Aboriginal cultures, because the museum is 'mostly historical'. So, it seems that in the case of both the teachers and the tourists, the aspects of the workshop and museum that were

mostly recalled were those that referred to the past of Native peoples. Again, it is difficult to speculate as to the motivations of the participants, but, as we will see, this association between Aboriginal culture and the past takes on many other forms as well.

In their descriptions of Aboriginal culture, the participants tended to use language such as 'traditions', or 'the old ways'. For example, Lori described Aboriginal cultures as being "very related to the past". Hans spoke of the way that Aboriginal peoples are trying to resurrect "the old ways". Again, it is difficult to say how much this language figured in the workshop - however, even the tourists (who did not attend the workshop) described Aboriginal culture in similar terms. Aboriginal peoples are also seen as leaders in a movement to 'reclaim' the simplicity and innocence of an earlier time. For example, Maria told me that all peoples are trying to return to the morals and values of an earlier era. According to Maria, Aboriginal peoples are the 'leaders' of this movement - presumably because of their 'natural' relationship with the past. Again, we can see the image of the 'innocent primitive' here - who can teach others the value of a 'simple', environmentally undamaging lifestyle.

This 'primitive' culture that appeared many times throughout the interviews is seen as being strongly connected to the past - in fact, to many of the participants, a 'true' and 'authentic' Aboriginal culture *only exists* in the past, before the corrupting influence of colonizers. Because most of the participants located Aboriginal culture in 'traditional' ceremonies and material artifacts, present-day culture is seen as 'inauthentic'; if these 'old things' do not exist anymore in their 'pure', original forms, than a culture that is based upon a constructed traditionality is necessarily false and inauthentic. In this sense, those Native peoples who choose to present themselves as being 'culturally-distinct', are seen as basing this distinctiveness upon something that does not exist

anymore - while other Native peoples, who are (at least outwardly) modern, are seen as 'just like everyone else' - or, more precisely, 'just like European Canadians'. It is interesting that, even while many anthropologists are speaking out about the destructive results of questioning others' identities, at least some visitors to the sites of identity-presentation have taken up the task of 'deconstructing' the Aboriginal claim to a distinct culture.

Authenticity

The anthropological literature surrounding the 'authenticity' of Aboriginal identities is highly divided and controversial. To greatly simplify, we may say that, the arguments fall into two categories: firstly, there is the position that is taken by Linnekin and Keesing, who both propose that modern Hawaiian Aboriginality is 'inauthentic', and not truly continuous - in other words, Hawaiian Aboriginality is 'invented' - mainly to serve political purposes. Secondly, there is the position held by Friedman and Trask - that anthropologists who 'de-construct' the identities of others belie their own arrogance, and also, a competitive relationship with the people who act as their focus of study. Friedman and Trask further assert that there *is* significant evidence to suggest a great deal of continuity with the past in modern Hawaiian Aboriginal identities. Although these arguments specifically concern Hawaiian peoples, they can be applied here.

Although I did not ask the participants specific questions about 'authenticity', the subject underlay all of the interviews and surfaced in indirect ways. In fact, nearly all of the participants, at some point in the interview, questioned the authenticity of modern Aboriginal identities - in this way, we can say that the participants generally held a similar position to that held by Linnekin and Keesing, explicated in previous chapters, and outlined briefly above. There are several manifestations of this skepticism. Firstly, many of the participants spoke of

the destructive effects of colonizers upon this traditional Aboriginal culture. In many cases, the impact of colonization was seen by the participants as having *destroyed* Aboriginal culture. So, the 'culture' that is possessed by modern Native peoples is seen as having been constructed *anew*, and therefore not continuous with the authentic Aboriginal culture of the past. For some of the participants, an assertion of cultural distinctiveness on the part of Native peoples is seen as not only inauthentic, but also manipulative. It is possible that the participants' 'artifact - based' conceptualization of culture meant that they *necessarily* see Native culture as *extinct*.

All of the participants spoke of the ways in which Native peoples were profoundly affected by their experiences with colonizers. These experiences were discussed in the workshop - Joanna Bedard did speak of Native peoples' experiences in residential schools. The museum also has several exhibits that depict the colonizers' introduction of disease, as well as their treatment of Native peoples in residential schools. Many of the participants spoke of the way in which Native culture has been 'destroyed' through their experiences with colonizers. For example, Jeff told me that, because Native peoples have had to "adapt" to the lifestyles of European Canadians, most of their traditional culture has "disappeared". Hans pointed out that because we live in "a changing world", Native peoples have "lost their identity". To Hans, the force behind this 'changing world' is European-Canadian society, which has destroyed and consumed the cultural distinctiveness of other, smaller groups.

There is no doubt that the experience of colonization has had a profound, and, in many ways, destructive impact upon Aboriginal peoples. However, many of the participants seemed to exaggerate this impact - they told me of the ways in which a pure and authentic Native culture was *obliterated* in the collision between Europeans and Natives. Andrea told me that Native peoples "don't have

a background, because it was taken away from them". Jeff also told me that the things that the museum depicts (traditional crafts and food-procuring methods) have all disappeared, and Native culture has disappeared with them. Andrea, Barb and Lynn all spoke of the ways in which Aboriginal peoples are re-building their self-identities. Because they also told me of the way Aboriginal culture was destroyed through its contact with Europeans, presumably, they think that Aboriginal peoples are 're-building' their identities 'out of thin air'.

Many of the participants' told me that some Native peoples are 'choosing' not to 're-built' a self-identity based upon cultural distinctiveness. In this sense, 'culture' is seen as an individual choice - Aboriginal peoples can be 'just like everyone else', if they do not 'choose' to make Aboriginality part of their self-identity. For example, Hans told me that some Aboriginal peoples live in the city, and have jobs 'in the business world', and are 'no different from anyone else'. To Hans, (and also to Ted, Bill, Lynn and Maria), culture is a choice - again, it is not something that is *reproduced* in all Aboriginal peoples. It is, in a way, a construction - and it can sometimes be used for political purposes.

A few of the participants expressed resentment at the way in which Native peoples 'use' their claim of cultural distinctiveness as a way to get special treatment. Ted, in particular, told me that his ancestors (who are Irish) never claimed to be different, and never wanted special treatment. He feels that much of the Native assertion of difference is an excuse to claim 'handouts' from the government. Hans told me that when Native peoples insist that they are different, the stability of Canada is threatened. According to Hans, Canada has already been 'fractured' by multiculturalism. So, to Ted and Hans, the assertion of difference is seen as not only inauthentic, but also manipulative and dangerous.

An 'Artifact-Based Culture'

The tourists' and teachers' conceptualization of 'culture' makes it impossible for them to see modern Native culture as anything but inauthentic. Most of the tourists and teachers employ an 'artifact-based' definition of culture. Because the 'real' artifacts, or cultural forms, are considered to have been destroyed through the process of colonization, ultimately, the 'cultural Renaissance' which Native peoples are considered to be currently engaged in is seen as inauthentic. In this, we can say that most of the tourists and teachers are 'constructivists' - as the position is represented by anthropologists such as Joyce Linnekin.

Jonathan Friedman (1993) defines an 'artifact-based' definition of culture as the notion that culture is reproduced, and we can glean information about this culture through the forms - the rituals, dances, traditional religion etc., themselves. So, 'artifacts' are not defined as only material objects, but also 'cultural forms' - social elements of culture that identify one culture as distinct from an another. Friedman objects to this 'artifact-based' conceptualization of culture, as it does not allow for the 'recontextualisation' of these forms. Friedman points out, that for example, "no comparison of the traditional religion of the Congo Kingdom with present-day Christian healing cults can be undertaken at the level of the particular symbols, names of spirits, and organization of rituals involved. The similarity is located in the commonalty of experience, in the constitution of selfhood in relation to cosmic forces, and in the strategies generated by this constitution (760)".

The participants in my study do hold an artifact - based notion of culture. For example, Lori told me that Native peoples "don't do their traditional dances anymore". She saw the dissolution of traditional dancing as evidence that Native culture is on the wane. Jeff also told me that Native peoples no longer make

traditional crafts, and use traditional food - procuring methods. For Jeff, also, this meant that a true Native culture no longer exists. So, for Jeff and Lori, a 'real' Native culture existed in the past - we can understand this culture by examining its artifacts and forms, but Native peoples can 'reclaim' it.

In other interviews, participants referred to cultural 'forms' themselves, such as the use of traditional healing methods, a connection with the land and a different kind of spirituality. These cultural forms were also seen as having existed in a pure state only in the past. For example, Bill questioned the claim that is made by some Native peoples that they are environmentally conscious because of their close tie to the land. He told me that, perhaps, at one time, this was the case, but that now, Native peoples are only concerned with owning the land. He told me that "if Natives really believe that the land belongs to everybody, than why do they care whether or not they own it?" So, to Bill, this 'pure' cultural form, has been corrupted through its association with a Western value - the accumulation of private property and money.

Almost all of the participants I interviewed felt that Native peoples are becoming more like other Canadians. This is partly because the participants feel that the 'original' and 'pure' cultural forms, which once made Native culture distinct, are becoming more and more corrupted through their contact with European Canadians. Many of the participants admitted to me that this perspective is 'pessimistic', but also 'realistic' - the smaller, weaker group must be corrupted by and subsumed under the larger, more powerful one. Now most Natives are "just like us", and "go to work in the city" (according to Hans), as if the simple removal of Native people from their traditional geographical location (presumably, in the woods), necessarily cancels out all cultural distinctiveness.

There is an alterNative way to conceptualize culture - one that takes into account the way in which cultural forms change to fit a changed context.

Friedman (1993) suggests, that as an alterNative to an artifact-based notion of culture, we may locate cultural differences (and similarities) in "the motivations and strategies, the intentionalities of social subjects in time and space (760)". So, rather than looking to the cultural forms themselves, we look behind them - to their motivations for stressing a particular aspect of their identity at a certain time. According to Friedman, we can not say that modern elements of culture are 'invented' - they are, rather, 'transformed' to fit a particular context. The term 'invention' "implies discontinuity, and pays little regard to the cultural conditions of cultural creativity (749)".

To Friedman, "the weaving of identities with histories is not so much a question of invention pure and simple. It is, rather, a question of transformation and recontextualisation (745)". Friedman uses this point to argue against Joyce Linnekin and Roger Keesing - anthropologists who (as we have seen in an earlier chapter), have criticized indigenous Hawaiian peoples for their political use of a 'traditional' culture. Linnekin (1992) maintains that contemporary Hawaiian culture is largely 'constructed', and the cultural meanings assigned today, are largely arbitrary - they have no continuity with the past. Friedman contests this point. He claims that "there is good reason to believe that there is a significant continuity here with the last century. That Linnekin does not think this worth consideration would seem to belie her preoccupation with proving the non authenticity or nonAboriginality of these values (751)".

Friedman, here, is similar to Trask (1993), who claims that "what constitutes 'tradition' to a people is ever-changing. Culture is not static, nor is it frozen in objectified moments in time. Without doubt, Hawaiians were transformed drastically and irreparably after contact, but remnants of earlier lifeways, including values and symbols, have persisted (168)". So, to Trask and Friedman, culture is not 'invented' in the present - it is 're-contextualised', and, in many ways,

continuous with the past. Trask also objects to the way in which Linnekin attacks Hawaiians for their 'political use' of these invented traditions. Trask claims that "Hawaiians assert a 'traditional' relationship to the land, not for political ends, as Linnekin argues, but because they continue to believe in the cultural value of caring for the land. That land use is now contested makes such a belief political (760)".

It seems that most of the participants take the 'constructivist' (as argued by Linnekin) position here. Although most of the interviewees did not directly question the authenticity of Aboriginal identities, several of them (Ted, Sarah, Bill and Hans) did speak of the way in which Native people use a constructed assertion of cultural distinctiveness to reap economic benefits. Other participants spoke of the way in which Native culture was 'destroyed' through its association with European colonizers - so, by implication, the culture that exists today is 'constructed'. Perhaps this was why there was so much ambivalence in the answers to the questions about cultural differences - if a 'pure' Native culture was 'destroyed' by Europeans, there are only two options remaining for modern Native culture. Either it does not exist (we have already seen that many of the participants denied the existence of a distinct Native culture altogether), or it was invented.

Cultural Continuity

The conceptualization of Native culture by the staff of the Centre and in the museum display, is, in one important way, different from the conceptualization of the teachers and tourists. In short, the staff and the museum both express the idea that modern-day Native culture is based upon 'cultural continuity' - explicated by Trask and Friedman above. 'Cultural continuity' is the assertion that, although traditional Native culture was disrupted by the arrival of colonists to North

America, remnants of this 'authentic' culture still survive today, although in recontextualised forms. This 'cultural continuity', according to Joanna Bedard and Alice Bomberry, is located largely in the relationship of Aboriginal peoples to the land - a relationship that began long before colonialism, and still continues today.

So , even though the context around them has changed dramatically, Native peoples still possess a distinct culture that has its roots in the past. For Joanna Bedard and Alice Bomberry, even those Aboriginal peoples who are not 'educated' about their own culture, are still culturally different than other Canadians. For the staff of the Centre, 'culture' is not so much a 'mask' that one can put on or take off depending on political circumstances - it is *part* of Aboriginal peoples. In their interviews with me, both Ms. Bomberry and Ms. Bedard referred to the 'atmosphere' at the Centre - in an all-Native environment. They spoke of the way that the atmosphere at the Centre is casual and friendly, because every member of the staff is committed to the group, and has a similar sense of humour *as a result of their Nativeness* . So, for Ms. Bomberry and Ms. Bedard, Native culture is not only rooted in traditional dance and religion and ritual, but also in the way Native peoples *think* - their values, motivations and strategies.

In contrast, most of the teachers and tourists see Native culture as being based upon their practice of 'traditional' things - like their use of homeopathic medicines, or their practice of a certain type of spirituality. Native people are seen as having suffered an irreparable break in continuity - during their contact with colonizers. To most of the teachers and tourists, a modern-day Aboriginal culture has been created anew - largely in order to satisfy political ends.

Native Peoples and the Future

The ideas that the teachers and tourists expressed to me about Native culture, have a profound impact upon the way the *future* of Native peoples is perceived by them. As I discussed in a previous chapter, most of the teachers (and all but one) of the tourists told me that Native peoples will have to 'give up' any claim to cultural distinctiveness, in order to progress as a peoples. I suggest that we can locate the root of this claim in several places. Firstly, we must look to the participants' 'occidentalization' of the West. In short, because the West is seen as rapidly - changing, rootless and powerful, the participants assumed that, eventually, all cultures will be reduced and subsumed under its domination. We can also find another reason for this 'pessimistic' view of the future of Native peoples. As I discussed earlier, most of the participants saw Native culture as having been 'destroyed' by colonizers - in fact, the modern culture that exists today is generally not seen as continuous with a pre-colonial culture. So, to the participants, the (mostly inauthentic) 'shards' of culture that exist today, will eventually also be destroyed (rather than re-contextualised) by powerful Western forces of modernization.

The participants seemed to exaggerate the destructive influence of the West upon Native Canadian and other cultures. Perhaps this is a way we can fantasize that the West is the all-powerful conqueror of weaker societies - no culture can withstand its forces of assimilation. After all, this is the way "the world works" (according to Ted) - the strong destroy and assimilate the weak. I do not wish to underestimate the profound, and sometimes harmful impact European Canadians have had on Native cultures. However, we can not say that Native culture has been or will be 'destroyed' through this contact. Rather, I suggest, Native culture has been, and continues to be 'transformed' and 're-contextualised', but it still maintains significant continuity with the past.

Some of the participants (in particular, Ted, Hans and Sarah) told me that Native peoples' current emphasis on 'traditions', will 'hold them back'. Ted told me that he is "sympathetic" to the desire of Native peoples to 'return' to their traditional culture, but he wonders "what about tomorrow". Sarah told me that "they have to move forward - traditions can hold you back". So, to at least some of the participants, an emphasis on traditions means that Native peoples are 'stuck in the past'. Clearly, the only way that they can move forward, and modernize, is by sacrificing their cultural distinctiveness - by becoming, in essence, 'just like us'.

In contrast, the staff at the Centre expressed the way Native peoples are turning to the past to help them solve modern-day problems. Joanna Bedard, in particular, did not see any contradiction between the strengthening of traditional aspects of Native culture, and the 'modernization' of Native peoples. She pointed out that one of the purposes of Centre, is to preserve cultural distinctiveness, yet the Centre runs the same way any modern business would - with the help of computers and twentieth-century technology.

In fact, it seems that to Ms. Bedard and Ms. Bomberry, the strengthening of these 'strands' of cultural continuity, which have been weakened through Native's experiences with colonizers, is of paramount importance *in order* for Native peoples to have the self-esteem and positive self-identity necessary for successful participation in twentieth-century life.

Chapter 8: The Ontological Status of 'Culture'

Underlying the arguments surrounding authenticity in both the anthropological literature and my interviews with the participants, lies a more profound issue about the ontological status of 'culture'. The term 'culture' has come under intense scrutiny from anthropologists in the last few decades. Partly, this has been in response to a heightened awareness of the way in which the exaggeration of difference has been harmful to Aboriginal peoples. Andrew Lattas (1993) claims that the fear of 'essentialising' cultural differences springs from an awareness of "the monstrous acts of murder and imprisonment which they have historically perpetuated in the name of essential differences (260)".

Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) also criticizes the way in which 'culture' has been used to reinforce differences and create hierarchy. She claims that *dividing* is a fundamental way of enforcing inequality. In this way, 'culture' operates like 'race' - there are self-evident boundaries. It is this rigid sense of difference which Abu-Lughod criticizes. 'Culture' implies an 'organic wholeness' - according to Abu-Lughod, this contributes to our sense of communities as bounded and discrete - outside of the normal forces of modernization. Abu-Lughod suggests that anthropologists abandon their use of the term 'culture' altogether.

Not only have anthropologists and those outside of academia become aware of the dangers of the essentialisation of differences, but, it would seem as though these differences themselves have diminished. Most previously-isolated groups of the world are connected to other groups, and overlap to a significant degree. We are told we live in a 'global village' - computer ads show monks in Tibet talking the internet in computer jargon that seems better suited to North American adolescents. We are given the impression that, not only are previously-isolated

groups *communicating* more, but differences between these groups have been reduced.

Superficially, at least, it may seem as though globalisation has resulted in homogeneity. So, it is easy to see why some anthropologists have declared a 'crisis' in 'culture'. However, when we deny the existence of distinct cultures, we are left with no way to explain the very real differences that undeniably exist between groups of people. At the same time, when anthropologists argue against the existence of profound cultural differences, they may put themselves directly at odds with indigenous peoples, of whom many are in the process of constructing a modern-day identity that is built upon and stresses cultural distinctiveness.

For these reasons and others, some anthropologists (for example, Marshall Sahlins), continue to assert that profound, irreducible cultural differences still exist. Sahlins (1995) is directly at odds with Obeyesekere (1992), who claims that *all* peoples share a common 'rational empiricism', and that 'cultural differences' are superficial, and often exaggerated by those in a position of power. I will discuss these positions, and, further, I will suggest that the tourists and teachers in my study reflect the anthropological 'crisis' of culture - in particular, they are deeply ambivalent about the existence and location of cultural differences.

The debate between Sahlins and Obeyesekere arises over Obeyesekere's skepticism of the assertion (by early missionaries in Hawaii), that Hawaiians believed Captain Cook to be a God. Obeyesekere claims that early Hawaiians relied on an 'objective rationality', the same way as do modern North Americans. According to Obeyesekere, this 'practical rationality' imbues all cultures - even pre-colonial Hawaiians, with the ability to solve problems and make 'logical' judgments - therefore, because Cook could not 'rationally' be considered a God, it is impossible that the Hawaiians saw him thusly. This 'practical rationality', Obeyesekere states, unites humans, while 'culture' divides them. He claims that

this underlying 'practical rationality' "links human beings to our common biological nature and to perceptual and cognitive mechanisms that are products thereof (21)". Therefore, this rationality is considered to be independent of any specific culture or history.

Sahlins argues that, ultimately, Obeyesekere's position suppresses Hawaiian culture. He points out that while Obeyesekere's thesis is attractive, ultimately, it subsumes Hawaiian's beliefs under our own. He points out that 'objective rationality' is a Western cultural value - so, when we attribute it to others, we negate the possibility that Hawaiian's have values of our own - born of different historical processes. Sahlins says that 'objectivity' is mediated by subjective want - in other words, we learn about the world in accord with our own needs. Therefore, 'objectivity' is very context-dependent, and this context changes, culture-to-culture.

Sahlins further explains that, while our biological senses are universal, how we organize our experience of them is not. Different groups of people even classify flora and fauna in different ways. For example, Sahlins points out that, for the Chewa of Malawi, certain mushrooms are in a class with game animals - even seemingly obvious categories are ordered in different ways by different cultures. Therefore, to Sahlins, 'empirical judgment' is culturally - dependent, and not possessed by all peoples in the same way. So, to Sahlins, culture and history determine even our most basic thought processes. He points out that linguistic and cultural systems are *arbitrary* - they do not just reflect the 'real world' - instead, they order objects by pre-existing concepts. In this way, 'culture' is based upon profound internal differences, which adapt to changing contexts, but do not dissolve. An earlier discussion of this argument can also be found in Sahlins (1985). This definition of culture is similar to Friedman's, who finds cultural differences at the level of the 'motivations and strategies' of actors.

While Obeyesekere's thesis of a 'universal empirical rationality' is appealing because it emphasizes connections between groups, on closer examination, 'universal rationality' is really another term for 'universal Westernism'. In other words, we tend to bestow upon other cultures the traits that are considered highly valuable, *by Western standards*. So, 'empirical rationality' - born of the Enlightenment, and highly valued in the West, is attributed to other cultures. This, according to Sahlins, has the effect of 'suppressing' other cultures - reducing them to traits which Westerners deem valuable. Sahlins states that, as anthropologists, "we must take into account other ideas, actions, ontologies that are and have always been different from our own (4)".

Andrew Lattas (1993) also speaks of the way in which a denial of cultural differences can result in the subsumption of other cultures under the dominant West - in other words, the claim that 'peoples are not really different', and are, instead, possessed of a 'Universal Humanism' often conceals the underlying assumption that this 'common humanity', is, in fact, 'Universal Westernism'. For example, Lattas criticizes other anthropologists for refuting the claim that criminal acts of insubordinance among Australian Aborigines amounts to a form of political resistance. Lattas points out that those anthropologists who claim that these criminal acts are merely petty and destructive, and not a form of political resistance at all, "have not questioned their own romantic utopian view that political action should be positively enhancing or be strategically coherent action directed towards realizing a better future. Implicit here is a narrow definition of the political as rational, self-fulfilling, collective action (241)". So, in this case as well, those who wish to reduce differences, and attest to the 'rationality' of Aboriginal peoples, do so by bestowing them with the most valued traits of *Western* culture.

Throughout the course of my research, it became obvious that views of the tourists and teachers in my study reflect the anthropological debate around the

ontological status of 'culture'. Firstly, there was very little agreement about the definition of 'culture' itself. One of the participants took 'culture' to mean art. Several of the participants located cultural differences in traditional dance, ceremonies and food procuring methods. Still others took cultural differences to mean lifestyles, values and priorities.

Secondly, the reluctance of the participants to point to the cultural differences between Native and non-Native peoples is indicative of a general insecurity about assigning differences. It seems evident that not only anthropologists, but non- professionals as well, are uncomfortable with the idea of *difference* - perhaps because, as Andrew Lattas suggests above, of a heightened awareness of the way in which injustices have been wreaked upon Aboriginal peoples because of their difference from the dominant culture. Many of the participants were also reluctant to speak of cultural differences, because, they told me, most Native peoples are outwardly undifferentiated from other Canadians - they wear the same clothes, consume the same products, and live in the same homes as do non-Native Canadians. So, culture is seen as an external marker of difference - those who are not recognizable as different from European Canadians, are not seen as being culturally different.

As Marshall Sahlins and Andrew Lattas point out, a denial of difference can often result in a *suppression of the culture* of Aboriginal peoples, and the subsumption of all groups under a kind of 'Universal Westernism'. These risks inherent in the suppression of differences became apparent to me during my interview with Barb. Barb had been telling me about the way in which the 'Career and College Opportunities' program at the College was helping Native students realize their goals. I asked her if the goals of the Native students were different from those of the non-Native students. She replied "of course not - why should they be? There are Native students here who want to be doctors, teachers,

nurses - why should they want something less?" So, the goal that Barb is helping the Native students realize is the attainment of a career that is considered valuable by *Western* standards. Although, certainly, these goals may also be considered valuable by the Native students, *they may not*.. If we are sensitive to other cultures, we must accept that they may have values and patterns of thought that are different from our own.

There is no doubt that cultures all over the world have a great deal in common - there is also no doubt that many atrocities have been committed because of perceived essential differences. However, when differences are reduced to a common denominator that is implicitly based upon Western values and thought-patterns, and assertions of cultural difference are questioned on the basis of their authenticity, Aboriginal peoples suffer under a newer, more sophisticated form of oppression.

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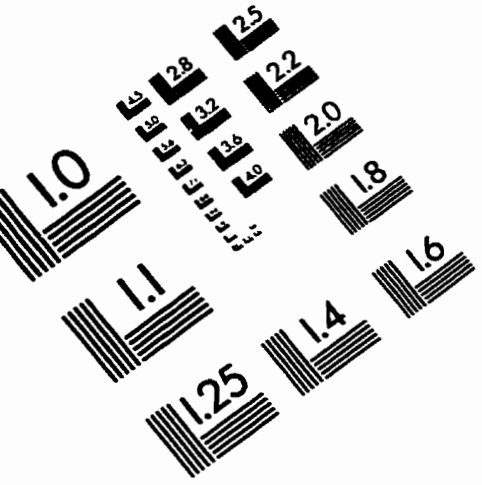

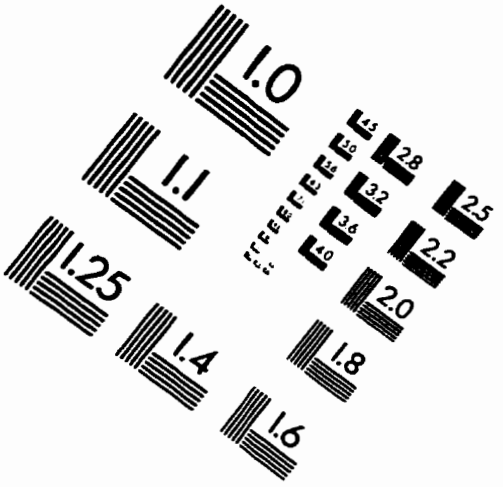

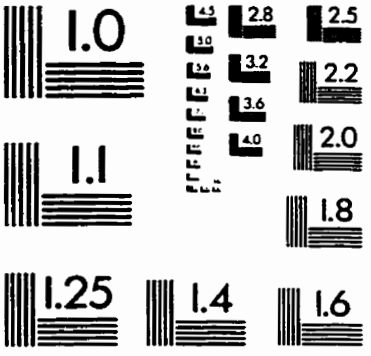

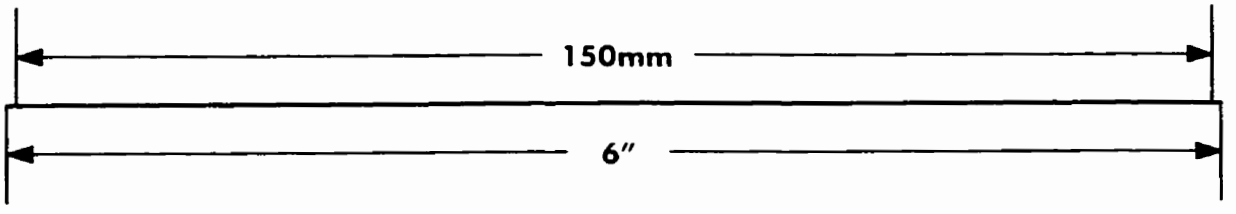

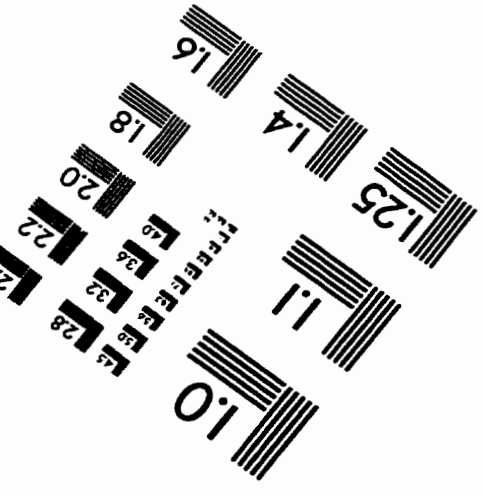

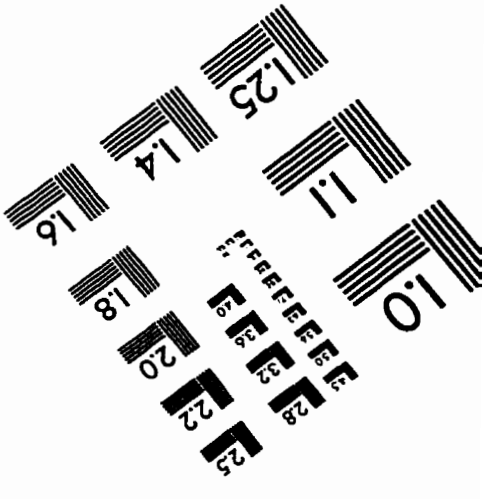

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