CHALLENGING THE IDEOLOGY OF REPRESENTATION: CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS ART IN CANADA

by

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ABSTRACT

Since colonial contact in North America in 1492, First Nations identity, history and culture has been displaced, erased and fictionalized by dominant colonial representations. The long history of dominance of these representations has embedded them in the consciousness of both the colonizers and the colonized, and effectively suppressed and controlled First Nations history, culture and identity. This dissertation examines how First Nations artists have resisted and critically analyzed the representation of their identity, history, and culture from the 1970s until today. Four key themes that First Nations artists have identified in the past forty years are stereotypical representations, exclusion of representation, western framing of representation, and the appropriation of representation.

The research in the study employs a new method titled *Ab/Originography*, that is an analysis of literary, narrative and artistic accounts that come directly from the 'original' source. This approach is grounded in a post-colonial analytic methodology that explores the Eurocentric ideological underpinnings of representations of First Nations covering the period of colonial contact up until today. As a researcher, I propose that deconstruction and

reconstruction must come directly from the First Nations voice and epistemological framework in order to give balance and validity to First Nations representation.

To that end, forty artworks are reviewed in this text with interviews of six First Nations artists. As well, I also include my own narrative, chronicling of art production in relation to my lived experience as a First Nations artist.

The overall aim of this research is to raise public awareness about the predominant role of colonial ideology in the representation of First Nations peoples so that distorted constructions, habitual recycling and western ideological projections will diminish. Ultimately, this deconstructive process provides a new space in the literary canon for the reconstruction of First Nations representation by First Nations people, especially as it pertains to First Nations art. This body of research is intended ultimately to contribute to a profound cultural and political transformation in the perception and representation of First Nations. Through this deconstruction of representation and the revealing of issues relevant to First Nations and First Nations artists in Canada, a foundation has been laid to rewrite art history from the First Nations perspective.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since colonial contact in North America in 1492, the representation of First Nations identity, history and culture has been displaced, erased, and fictionalized by dominant colonial representations. Imperialist colonial practises, evolving popular cultural ideology, projections of Western ideology and recycled myth making are some of the means by which First Nations realities have been substituted with dominant colonial interpretations. Imperialist practices have achieved dominant control over their representation through direct force, such as territorial displacement, genocide and government policies, and through ideological force, termed 'cultural imperialism' (Said, 1978), which he defines as the colonial influential powers used in the dissemination of Eurocentric representations of indigenous cultural groups for the purposes of colonial conquest. Embedded in that cultural imperialism is a racial ideology that dehumanizes and subordinates people of First Nations heritage in order to preserve colonial power structures. Throughout history, racist, romantic and fictionalized representations, have co-existed along side of each other, revealing underlying contradictory ideologies at work. The long history of the dominance of these representations has embedded them in the consciousness of both the colonizers and the colonized, and has effectively suppressed and controlled First Nations history, culture and identity.

This dissertation sets out to deconstruct the Eurocentric ideological underpinnings that have shaped First Nations representation throughout history and attempts to rewrite these representations that have subjugated First Nations representation. By identifying the ideological underpinnings of representation, their hegemonic influence is disrupted and consequently opens a space where First Nations can engage in a discourse of reconstruction and reclamation of their representation.

The research methodology employed in this dissertation is interpretive study that examines the history of representations of First Nations people from the context of the interpreter. These representations are then countered by critiques produced by Canadian

First Nations artists and scholars. As a researcher, I propose that deconstruction and reconstruction must come directly from the First Nations voice and epistemological framework in order to give balance and validity to First Nations representation. Given this primary principle, this research has developed a new research method termed 'Ab/Originography', which is defined as research that emphasises the inclusion of literary, narrative and/or artistic accounts that are derived directly from the 'Ab/Original' source. This particular research approach draws on post-colonial theory as a foundation for analysis, and utilizes the principles of Kaupapa Maori research methodology. The development of Ab/Originography, overall, is intended to create a validated academic space for First Nations to represent themselves from within their own experience as well as from their own cultural and epistemological ideology.

Specifically, this research method draws from artwork and literature from the 1970s up until today that has been produced by Canadian First Nations and who have critiqued various forms of representation. As well, recent interviews of First Nations artists and my own narrative chronicling of my art production are included. This collection of works reveal consistent themes of representation that First Nations have addressed in the past four decades, which has culminated into chapter themes for this dissertation, they are: stereotypical representations; exclusion of representation; western framing of representation; and the appropriation of representation.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions provide the reader with an introduction into the central terms and concepts used within this text. Further definitions can be located in the glossary.

Representation

In general, the definition of representation is that which stands for something else, that which is a substitution for a object, person or collective group through a recreation of; image, likeness, reproduction, symbolism, simulation, presence, discourse, and statement of an account. These representations can occur in various forms of media such as art, film,

photographs, consumer products, academic texts, historical texts, literature, journalistic media and government documents.

Types of representations of people not only include simulation but as well fictional constructions such as racial or romantic stereotypes, or any type mythmaking that may substitute another's reality. Representations also involve topics of inclusion and exclusion.

Representation is a debated topic in post-colonial studies, in which scholars examine the current impact of colonialism on colonized peoples;

> It is obvious that representations are much more than plain 'likenesses.' They are in a sense ideological tools that can serve to reinforce systems of inequality and subordination; they can help sustain colonialist or neo-colonist projects. A great amount of effort is needed to dislodge dominant modes of representation. Efforts will continue to be made to challenge the hegemonic force of representation, and of course, this force is not completely pervasive, and subversions are often impossible. 'Self representation' may not be a complete possibility, yet still an important goal. (Baldonado, 1996, para. 5)

Specific to this text, First Nation artists have been specifically concerned with issues of stereotypical substitutions, exclusion of their representation in exhibits; the western academic framing of their art and the appropriation of their representation of voice and art. While stereotypical substitutions perpetuate romantic and racist notions and myths, exclusion displaces and erases the colonized presence. The western academic framing of their artistic representation superimposes themes from the Western art history paradigm and consequently reinforces these theories that continue the dominance of this discourse. Appropriation of representation lays claims of ownership to First Nations voice and cultural property, such as art production.

Ideology

Ideology is the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions that direct social, political, and religious practice in a society. Ideology is reflected in all aspects of culture, and most visibly seen in social structures, governance and laws, religion, mythology, and all forms of media such as text, images, and film. The term ideology can suggest a neutral belief system, however there can be several different forms of ideology within a culture and they can serve specific functions in society. Some types of ideology that can exist within a culture are:

colonial ideology, popular culture ideology, western academic ideology, religious ideology, and racial ideology.

As an active agent or political tool, ideology can be used to control social reproduction and to generate dominance in a society. "Ideology provides a framework for "organizing, maintaining, and transforming relations of power and dominance in society" (Fleras and Elliot, 1992: 54 p.16 in Henry and Tator). Ideology as a political tool for the means of maintaining ideological dominance in society. As a political tool, ideological concepts can perpetuate propaganda and conceal the true nature of social realities by using popular ideological themes and language in an attempt to sway public opinion in favour of political agendas. The use of ideology for political means can be highly effective force on the unconscious collective mindset with the strategy of repetitive propaganda, ultimately constructing embedded perceptions that can have residual effects for centuries.

Projections

Projections are the transplanting of one's own feelings and desires onto another identity. "In psychological terms, a projection is defined as unconsciously assuming that others share the same or similar thoughts, beliefs, values, or positions on any given subject. According to the theories of Sigmund Freud, it is a psychological defence mechanism whereby one "projects" one's own undesirable thoughts, motivations, desires, feelings, and so forth onto someone else. The principle of projection is well-established in psychology" (Word IQ, 2005).

In this text, I examine the unconscious projections of the despised, repressed and idealized collective psyche, that is involved in the construction of imaginary representations, such as fictitious stereotypes.

Projections of Ideology

Deeply embedded in the public mindset, ideology as an active agent may not be easily detected. The very nature of ideology is a taken-for-granted view of the world. It is for this reason that ideology can unconsciously assume universality in its perspectives and transplant one's own feelings and desires onto another's identity.

Throughout history, stereotypes provide excellent examples of how unconscious structures of society create fantasies that are lived out vicariously through another identity, or negative traits or fears are transferred onto another, creating derogatory and demonized identities. Essentially, such projections reflect the idealized, repressed, and despised self, that are influenced by one's own ideology or society's popular ideology in a particular time period. Overall these projected representations tend to be no more than the reflection of the group doing the defining, a conversation amongst themselves if you will, bearing little relationship to the realities of those being represented. Whether the representations derive from the ideology of colonial imperialism, racial ideology or the construction of fantasy through popular culture, they ultimately reinforce colonial dominance and inequalities, create oppression by excluding other cultural realities and as well, perpetuate a cycle of myth-making.

Racial ideology

Racial ideology can be a key agent in the construction of representations of the other. It is a system of ideas about a particular ethnic group, based on values, beliefs and assumptions influenced by social, political and religious practice within the dominant society, rather than being based on the lived experience and realities of those in the ethnic group. Racial ideology can promote discriminatory attitudes and practices that perpetuate racist, stereotypical and ethnocentric beliefs. Implicitly racist and ethnocentric, racial ideology has been expressed throughout history in institutions and practices ranging from acts of violence against groups of peoples such as in slavery, wars and colonization.

Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2005), who focus their research on racism in Canada, posit that the hegemonic function of a racist ideology

> ...organizes, preserves, and perpetuates the power structures in a society. It creates and preserves a system of dominance based on race and is communicated and reproduced through agencies of socialization and cultural transmission, such as the mass media, schools and universities, religious doctrines, symbols and images, art, music and literature. It is reflected in the very language we read, write, and speak. (p.16)

There are also less overt forms of racial ideology in society that are termed the "invisible" attributes of racism. Invisible racism is not readily identifiable because of its

subtlety, such as disproportionate representation, like the low numbers of visible minorities in the work place, or minimal literature and courses in the education system pertaining to cultural groups on a national and international level.

For centuries racial perspectives about First Nations people have been embedded and recycled within Canadian society, making the deconstruction process difficult for First Nation people. Now, Canadian society is in a transitional period, departing from out-dated notions and stereotypes, racial perspectives and practices, and engaging in a re-conceptualizing of First Nations realities, opening spaces for inclusion. This transitional state results in a shift back and forth as the definers sort through the past and the present, the real and the imagined.

'Other' and 'other'

Throughout this text I utilize the term 'other' to reference the colonized as the subject that is being represented. 'Other' and 'other' are terms used in post-colonial theory primarily to define the colonized subject. The term 'Other' is rooted in the "Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity," though, Jacques Lacan (1968) use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other' and 'other' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, pp-169-170). The former 'Other' is described as the imperial centre, imperial discourse, or the empire itself" while the 'other' refers to "the colonized other who are marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the center." (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 170)

REPRESENTATIONS OF FIRST NATIONS

The control and dominance over First Nations representation has had a long and complex history in North America. Since colonial contact, First Nations people have been observed, documented and depicted in a myriad of interpretations. Often these interpretations are distortions of reality, or have little or no connection to actual Aboriginal realities. The history and complexity of First Nations cultures and the First

Nations experience of colonization and genocide has either been excluded or only briefly acknowledged in education curriculum.

These interpretations, or lack thereof, have created distorted notions that become ingrained in the public mindset. With long-term exposure in various media, these representations become fortified through recycling, and are used as embedded reference points for research. Once they have been reinforced into concrete representations, they become reality in the public's mind. These representations have had a large impact on the daily lives of First Nations people, shaping the interactions they have with society. First Nations face many barriers in countering perspectives conditioned by western ideological assumptions of universality and superiority.

Stereotypical representations of First Nations have changed radically through time. In the early colonial contact period, Aboriginal people were depicted as savages and uncivilized peoples, a portrayal that ultimately supported and justified colonial take-over. Later, dime novels, live western enactments, and cowboy and Indian films depicted First Nations as villains and losers, thereby building an image of settlers as the perpetual heroes and 'good guys.' In the early to mid 1900s, literature, romantic novels and pop images, depicted them with romantic ideals as the noble savage. Today, due primarily to journalistic media and literature, society has a split perspective, viewing First Nations as either spiritual environmentalists or as irresponsible alcoholics or lawbreaking rebels who freeload on tax dollars. Regardless of the nature of the depiction, all stereotypes create a negative impact. In the displacement of First Nations realities, inaccurate myth-making perpetuates racist attitudes and practices that lead to exclusion and marginalization.

The exclusion or at best minimal inclusion of First Nations in Canadian history has relegated their history to a subordinate status and has submerged significant portions of important history. In Canada, archaeological evidence thus far has determined that First Nations existence originated 27,000 to 11,200 years ago, (the large variation due to the debatable variables of radiocarbon dating). Given this extensive history combined with the astonishing cultural diversity of First Nations across Canada, one would think that a substantial portion of educational curriculum would be devoted to First Nations history and cultures. However, the average history text in schools usually focuses only on the

colonial contact period covering the past 500 years. Lutz (1990), professor in American and Canadian studies, theorizes that the conspicuously absent Aboriginal history is due to what he terms a collective "massive displacement", which is an attempt to avoid owning the shameful history of colonial take-over and the painful accounts of genocide.

Western framing of representation is the defining of others through the ideology of the European-based western lens. The Eurocentric western canon assumes that its ideology is the universal norm; it therefore defines, judges and validates all literary and artistic practices in relationship to that paradigmatic standard. In particular, First Nations art has been defined from an ethnocentric position that assumes the right to represent it from within a western art history ideology, and from the self-proclaimed position of the 'expert' about the 'Other.' The outdated notion that all art production is universal to the paradigm of western art theory has presented problems for First Nations artists. First Nations art has been characterized as primitive and inferior based on western art history's narrow ideological lens of what is perceived as innovative art. The dominance of western ideology in art has maintained a hierarchy of academics who have the power to validate or not to validate First Nations artwork while at the same time securing them in the position of experts within the field about the 'Other.' The dominance of the western art history canon has led to the deletion of First Nations art history that has been evolving for thousands of years. This deletion has been achieved by validating western art history as the universal norm in the educational system, and subsequently, displacing other forms of artistic cultural expression. For more than 25 years, contemporary First Nations artists have been challenging the Eurocentric western framing of their artist expression. Seeking to establish an art theory that represents the actual record of First Nations art production, historically and currently, they look to define and validate artistic production within their own cultural terms.

Cultural appropriation has occurred since the start of colonial expansion beginning with the take-over of land, resources and artifacts. The topic of cultural appropriation is controversial and complex, and rose to intense heights in the 1980s. The context of these debates was in museums and amongst visual artists. First Nations people throughout North America began to repatriate from museums their ancestral bones, ceremonial items and

cultural property that had been illegally apprehended. They challenged the representation of their cultures in museums that had assumed authority over them. First Nations people demanded the inclusion of their voice and presence in museums. Within the visual art context, First Nations artists protested the appropriating of their cultural images by mainstream artists. Cultural appropriation becomes problematic when historical cultural images are taken, distorted and sold as 'authentic', with no regard for their cultural purpose and without seeking permission or paying royalties. Overall, First Nations criticized the institutions and public that assumed the right to take over cultural property and voice, and represent it as their own. The debate centered on the clash of cultural ideologies in terms of concepts of ownership.

REPRESENTATION OF FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS

This dissertation focuses on examining central themes of representation found in First Nations artwork and discourse: stereotypical representations; exclusion of representation; western framing of representation; and the appropriation of representation. Each artwork is examined within its specific visual content, supported by detailed artist accounts, as well, contextualized within the larger scope of meaning derived from other First Nations artists work and writing, and within the national historical and political context.

For at least 35 years, First Nations artists in Canada have challenged colonial control over their representation by exposing colonial injustices and reclaiming their histories, identities and cultural representations. Thematic artistic approaches include rewriting colonial history, asserting political action, deconstructing stereotypes, asserting cultural identities, and challenging the framing of First Nations art in western art paradigms. Some Canadian First Nations artists who have been on the forefront of the colonial critique are Carl Beam, Shirley Bear, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Heather Henry, Robert Houle, Jim Logan, Gerald McMaster, Ron Noganosh, Shelly Niro, Marianne Nicholson, Lawrence Yuxweluptun Paul, Edward Poitras, Rick Rivet and Alfred Youngman. Though these artists have been selected as primary references for this text, they by no means represent the totality of artists who have confronted these issues. In

addition to this list of artists, I include myself as a contemporary First Nations artist, and therefore an autobiographical chapter situates my life experience, allowing me to extrapolate from my own reality and the experiences of my contemporaries.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

This dissertation examines representations of First Nations people through the subject matter addressed in artworks by First Nations artists. By researching the types of representations that appear throughout history and by exploring the ideologies linked to these representations, I have identified four key areas that First Nations artists have critically analyzed in the past four decades: stereotypical representations; exclusion of representation; western framing of representation; and the appropriation of representation. I have developed these central themes from independent research and by gathering resource material over the past fifteen years. In addition, as a First Nations studio artist, I have been situated at the center of First Nations art milieu since 1988, and therefore have had the opportunity to participate in conversations with other artists over the years. My artistic conversation addressing these shared themes is documented in an autobiographical narrative in this text. These themes are presented within a historical context, in order to create accessibility to a wide range of readers. As an educator in the post-secondary system, I believe it is important for me to attempt to rectify the educational gap of First Nations history in this generation, so that topics related to First Nations perspectives can be more clearly understood.

The questions that form the basis of my research are:

1. What issues and types of representations of First Nations have First Nations artists critically analyzed?
2. What ideologies have influenced the construction of these representations of First Nations?
3. How have representations of First Nations functioned as ideological tools for colonial and neo-colonial control over First Nations?
4. What representations originate from the colonial and neo-colonial imagination?

5. What effect do representations have on First Nations people/First Nations artists?
6. How can a new First Nations art history be developed that adequately represents First Nations historical and contemporary realities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This interpretive study amalgamates post-colonial research approaches with Kaupapa Maori principles, as well as utilizing the experiential principles of narrative study. The following provides a summary of the research approaches and related literature, which has led the development of the new research methodology, 'Ab/Originography.' The approach Ab/Originography, employs literary, narrative and artistic accounts that come directly from the 'Ab/Original' source. Specifically, these accounts come directly from Canadian First Nations artists. Reconstruction must occur directly from the First Nations voice and from within First Nations epistemological framework in order to readdress the imbalance of colonial representation.

Post-colonial theory employs "a critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, France and other European imperial powers," (Abrams, 2005, p. 245) with the aim of uncovering the effects of colonization. Post-colonial critical theory encompasses various themes related to the dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized, which include the rejection of the "master-narrative" that subordinates and erases the colonized presence; the critique of the construction of the other within western discursive practices; and the disestablishment of Eurocentric norms in academic theory. Post-colonial theory provides the validated academic space from which the colonized can reject western constructions and subsequently expand the literary canon to include the colonized history, voice and realities.

I draw inspiration from the majority of topics examined in post-colonial studies, especially those concerned with the deconstruction of colonial ideology and representation of the colonized. Influential authors include Edward Said and Chakravorty Spivak. Said (1978) writes to resist 'cultural imperialism' of Eurocentric representations of indigenous cultural groups. Chakravorty Spivak (1988) employs deconstructive methods to examine

marginalized representation of women and cultural 'minority' groups. She reveals the dominance of the western and male discourse, and the scarcity of representation by the other in her examination of official structures and institutional barriers that define the discourse of representation. She states that this system denies access to 'real' representations by others, which due to their approach, may fall outside western validated frames. In addition, Chakravorty Spivak makes an important distinction in types of representation: 'proxy', which refers to 'speaking for' and 'portrait' which is, 'portraying' (Baldonado, 1996, para. 6).

Kaupapa Maori critical theory also centres around notions of critique, resistance and struggle (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Critical theory is used to analyse "underlying assumptions that serve to conceal the power relations that exist within society and the ways in which dominant groups construct concepts of 'common sense' and facts..." (Pihama in Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.186). It is believed that the research goal of achieving freedom from colonial control and restrictions and moving towards indigenous self-determination cannot be achieved within western academia's 'universal recipe' of valid methods. To do so would suggest that "oppression has universal characteristics independent of history, context and agency." (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999 p.186). I have been strongly influenced by Kaupapa Maori research methodology that prioritizes indigenous people writing about indigenous peoples, as well as other core principles related to cultural relevancy, indigenous worldview and indigenous empowerment. I have followed the precedent of Kaupapa Maori research in designating my methodology "Ab/Originography" defined as research stemming directly from the First Nations voice and in keeping with the Kaupapa Maori principles of First Nations autonomy and First Nation epistemological worldview.

Narrative enquiry validates human experience as legitimate research data. This validation is critical for research that originates from outside a dominant epistemological paradigm. As a methodology, narrative enquiry engages participants or an individual in a process of reflection, construction of narrative accounts, and meaning-making (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This methodology is utilized in an autobiographical account of my studio research in relation to my life experiences. Incorporating my own artistic reflections

as well as those of First Nations artists into this research draws a collective meaning towards the larger social context.

Consistent with an Ab/Originographic approach, in order to reclaim the realties of First Nations history, culture and identity from the distortions and omissions of representation, a deconstruction of colonial constructs must occur from a First Nations perspective and it must be multi-disciplinary. In order to address the multi-facetedness of First Nations representation, my research delves into several related areas such as history, art theory, ethnography, education, social science, and psychology. This holistic approach situates individual experience within the broader social context, contributing to collective meaning. The values of First Nations epistemology support this type of methodology.

Research of artistic works includes the description of forty-one artworks. Twenty-two of these were produced by thirteen Canadian First Nations artists. They are: Carl Beam, Bob Boyer, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Judy Chartrand, Heather Henry, Robert Houle, Jim Logan, Gerald McMaster, Shelly Niro, Ron Noganosh, Lawrence Paul, (Yuxweluptun), Rick Rivet, and Alfred Youngman. In addition I include nineteen works from my own collection.

The work of six of these artists has been elaborated upon based on their own detailed accounts which have been documented through interviews. These participants are: Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Judy Chartrand, Jim Logan, Shelly Niro, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and Alfred Youngman. These artists were chosen for interviews because of their focus on the critique of colonial and neo-colonial constructs within issues of representation. The interview data has been incorporated into chapter themes throughout the latter part of the dissertation with reviews of specific artist's works. I have inserted direct quotes from the artists as much as possible so that the artist's voice is central rather than my voice dominating their representation.

Even though these fourteen artists have been represented in this text, there certainly are many other talented Canadian First Nation artists that have contributed to the ongoing discourse of critiquing colonial and neo-colonial constructs. Some of these include: Ed Archie Noisecat, Lance Belanger, Rebecca Belmore, Michael Belmore, Lori Blondeau, Faye Heavyshield, Teresa Marshall, David Neel, Arthur Renwick, Eric Robertson, and Charlene

Vickers. This body of research cannot encompass a full spectrum of visual artists across Canada at this time due to its focus of laying new foundations for the literary deconstruction of colonial constructs and a revisionist First Nations art history. This foundational process is intended to open a space for future building of First Nations critical theory and art theory.

The overall aim of this research, *Challenging the ideology of representation,* is to raise public awareness about how ideology has played a predominant role in the representation of First Nations peoples so that distorted constructions, habitual recycling and projections will diminish. This body of research will ultimately contribute towards a profound cultural and political transformation in the perception and representation of First Nations people and First Nations art.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature provides an overview of the most significant works that have influenced my research on representations of First Nations people and artists. In response to recurring themes that First Nations have addressed in both literature and art, this review and subsequent chapters are arranged under the following themes: *Rewriting colonial history; The ideology of stereotypes; The shaping and reclaiming of First Nations identity; Cultural appropriation of First Nations Art* and *Western framing of First Nations art*. While this chapter summarizes the key concepts and literary influences in First Nations art, the following chapters expand on these topics with more detail derived by combining literary, artistic and narrative sources. This review includes work by predominantly First Nations writers, who are often curators, artists or both, and also includes literature by other scholars who have published on topics related to themes of representation.

REWRITING COLONIAL HISTORY

Since colonial contact in North America in 1492, racial representations of First Nations people have been used as a political tool to justify colonial take-over and genocide. Direct quotes from early colonial times reveal the astonishing cruelty of the ethnocentric racial ideology in colonial perspectives. With colonial methods of direct brutal force of genocide combined with its ideological force of propaganda that effectively dehumanized and subordinated First Nations identity, early colonists erased the realities of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures and history, and successfully supplanted their own dominant Eurocentric ideology in every form of media.

Throughout the 1960s through to the mid 1980s, First Nations began to re-tell their perspective of historical events, so the world could become aware of the genocide and forced assimilation that occurred in North America. The major shift in vocal political activism amongst First Nations in Canada began with the development of several political

First Nations organizations and a growing number of political rallying groups. Aboriginal organizations, community members, warrior societies, and the American Indian Movement (AIM) sought to challenge racial discrimination in governance and to expose their grievances to the media and parliament by writing proposals to the government and taking a stand through protests, blockades and occupations.

First Nations artists also began to take political action in their work, with the clear purpose of raising awareness of past and current issues. They accomplished this by deconstructing inaccurate histories and representations, and by presenting current political issues. McMaster (1999) states that Aboriginal artists built upon the political advances of Aboriginal institutions by expressing their own position, with motives based in historical circumstances:

> Their objectives are to create a space for their practice and their tribal identity; to recover and reconnect with the ancestral artistic roots; to critique practices that have systematically controlled them and their ancestors; to articulate new practices based on tribal principals; and to re-establish relationships with tribal communities. (p.38)

It was imperative that First Nations histories, stories, and identities be reclaimed through public telling, generating public awareness and support. Predominant themes that arose amongst First Nations artists at this time were *European contact and genocide; Treaties and reservations; Residential schools; The Sixties Scoop; and Political Activism*. Given that many Canadians are unaware of this history, this section provides a detailed historical account of these topics to provide a clear context for the artwork that will be later described. As Berlo and Phillips (1998) confirm,

> much of the story of this art over the past centuries tells of successive visual responses to crisis such as epidemics, forced removals from homelands, repressive colonial regimes, religious conversion, and contact with foreign cultures and their arts (pp.3 - 4).

Noteworthy exhibits that played a key role in re-writing the history of colonialism in North America included *Beyond history* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1989, *Indigena, contemporary Native perspectives* at the Museum of Civilization in 1992, and *New territories, 350/500 years after* held at various cultural centers in Montreal in 1992.

Beyond history was groundbreaking in that it was one of the first art exhibitions to re-tell the history of colonialism from a First Nations perspective. The exhibit shocked the public as they witnessed stories of genocide, the residential school system, and the deliberate destruction of culture, and the resulting impacts — poverty, alcoholism, depression, and high death and suicide rates — on First Nations communities.

The series of exhibitions in 1992 that marked the quincentennial of Columbus's arrival and contested the standard version of North American history included *Land, spirit, power* at the National Gallery of Canada, *Canada's first peoples* at Founders' Square in Halifax, and *Indigena* and *New territories* in galleries and centres throughout Montreal. The first two exhibitions addressed generic broad themes, while the latter two took a more political stance in addressing the history of colonization. Several of the artists in *Indigena* and *New territories*, and a select few represented in *Land, spirit, power* and *Canada's first peoples*, have made important commentaries on the history of colonialism especially through the approach of revealing the atrocities of colonial take-over and genocide by re-telling the submerged history of their people.

THE IDEOLOGY OF STEREOTYPES

> For most of the past five centuries, the Indian of the imagination and ideology has been as real, perhaps more real, than the Native American of actual existence and contact. (Berkhofer 1997 in Burgess & Valaskakis, p.15)

In the section of the dissertation on stereotypes, I extend research beyond merely identifying stereotypes, to examining the particular ideological contexts from which they were constructed. I investigate the ideological mindset of society, the purposes such constructions serve, and the impacts these identity constructions have had on the social psyche.

Significant literary works and exhibits that have deconstructed racial representations, stereotypes, and myth-making include *Fluff and feathers, an exhibition of the symbols of Indianess* in 1988, researched by Tom Hill and Deborah Doxtator at the Woodland Cultural Centre, Marcia Crosby's (1991) *Construction of the imaginary Indian*, *First Nations-Native stereotyping* (1992) a video produced by Ministry of

Advanced Education and Training, *Indian princesses and cowgirls, stereotypes from the frontier* edited by M. Burgess and G. Valaskakis (1995), and *Native American identities, from stereotype to archetype in art and literature* by Scott Vickers (1998).

First Nations-Native stereotyping (1992) chronicles the history of stereotypes of First Nations in North America. The film reveals how images and words carry negative signifiers by reviewing narratives, theatrical shows, movies, toys and novels. Professor Laroque alludes to the projection of ideologies, particularly of the repressed self, in the depiction of "captivity narratives" of the 1600s. Typically these narratives depict Native men capturing and possibly raping white women, with the woman later escaping and re-telling her ordeal to others. Laroque's critical analysis suggests that these narratives were a form of pornography, fulfilling the repressed sexual desires of colonists vicariously through the identity of the 'savage.' Building on Laroque's theory, I suggest that this is one example of projection of the repressed psyche. I uncover similar projections when I examine current romantic literature and draw parallels to its continued presence in society.

Marilyn Burgess and Gail Guthrie Valaskakis (1995) suggest a similar theory, arguing that stereotypes of First Nations women from the 1920s through to the 1950s reflected society's desires far more strongly than they mirrored Native realities. Romantic images of the "Indian princess" reflected a popular nostalgic yearning to reconnect with the land, while the sexual pin-ups of "wild west" poster girls provided an outlet for women's repressive sexuality. Both representations attempt to achieve these desires by vicariously living them out through Native women's identity. As Beth Seaton states, the construction of fictitious identities of First Nations women had a dual purpose that met the "needs and fantasies" of the definer on the one hand, and masked the erasure of Native peoples by creating "more pacifying appearances" on the other (Beth Seaton in Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995, p.9). Seaton's reference to "pacifying appearances" refers to the fact that these images of Native women were typically light-skinned with white features, or were actually white women dressed up to appear Native.

Scott Vickers (1998) suggests another projection underlying stereotypes. In his historical survey of stereotypes of First Nations in North America, he suggests that early

colonial stereotypes of First Nations as savages and heathens were projections of the despised self. Vickers links the derogatory stereotypes to racial ideologies of the government and the church, whose primary objectives were colonial expansion and the assimilation of Native people. He proposes that the stereotype of "blood-thirsty savages" was a projection of the colonial conscience of the massacre of millions of First Nations people, and that the stereotypes of First Nations as "evil devil-worshippers" was a Puritan Christian projection of their own "persecuting spirit" (p. 32). He suggests that these negative stereotypes project the despised self in order to "get rid of it" by "ascrib[ing] its origin to someone else" (p. 32). This served as a way to avoid acknowledging the brutalities of colonization, much like the "masking the erasure of Native peoples" that Seaton (1995) suggests. Overall, these stereotypes dehumanized and homogenized First Nations, laying the groundwork for colonists to marginalize their identities theologically, physically, and economically, in order to justify actions of genocide and assimilation without guilt.

While Vickers predominantly concentrates on the history of colonialism and the associated cultural values of acquisition of land and political power by the government and the church, Burgess & Valaskakis (1995) review the values in Canadian society at the turn of the twentieth century, in its period of romantic nostalgia and sexual liberation, seeking the freedom of nature and freedom from conservative sexual boundaries. These works laid the foundations for my two central theories that examine representations as ideological tools that generate racism and hegemonic control, and unconscious projections of the collective that reflect the despised, repressed and idealized self.

RECLAIMING FIRST NATIONS IDENTITY

This segment of the dissertation examines identity construction in terms of external influences, especially labels ascribed to First Nations, and their corresponding impact, beginning with capitulation through internalization and eventually culminating in resistance and reclamation of their identity. This evolution is mirrored in artworks produced by First Nation artists.

Topics that are examined in this section are *The shaping of identity; Post-modern notions of identity; Historical context of First Nations identity: Assimilation policies, identity status policies; Measurements of identity; Internalizations: Romantic stereotypes, Generic spirituality; Environmentalists; Racial ideology; Conflicting ideologies: Fracturing identity crisis; Duality; and Reclaiming Identity: Reservation X.* The framework sets out to define the complex nature of identity construction, considering both external and internal constructions. Following that, I provide the reader with a historical background of identity issues pertaining to legislation that has defined First Nations. This introduction lays the foundation for issues connected to conflicting ideologies in identity construction which leads to analysis of how these identity constructions have had an impact on First Nations artists. Artists included in this section are Carl Beam, Judy Chartrand, Heather Henry, Shelly Niro, and Marianne Nicholson.

As First Nations people negotiate between imposed identity constructions and their own individual identity constructions, internal conflict can arise. Valaskakis (1995) speaks to this resulting conflict: "Indians are caught with other North Americans in a web of conflicting interests and actions, confrontations constructed in dominant cultural and political processes and the Native experience of exclusion, or stereotypical inclusion and appropriation" (p. 19). However for First Nations, the conflict is rarely about identity and place. As past and present immigrants search for their identity and place conceptually and physically, First Nations have always known where their identity and place is.

> I think this quest for space or for sense of place, reinventing the notion of place, is a peculiarly Euro-American artifact. Its an artifact of alienations, of movement about the earth, and Indian peoples, at least in their Indigenous contexts, didn't have to worry about abstracting something called "place" from their very existence. They already were somewhere; they already belonged somewhere. (Ovitz in McMaster, 1998, p.19)

With the myriad of conflicting identity constructs in society, perpetuated by ideologies in art history, anthropology, and in government policy, First Nations artists are combating the framing of their artistic identities. First Nations artists speak to the pressure of conflicting ideologies and expectations put on their own individualistic styles and the resulting internal conflicts of identity and purpose. There is a felt pressure to align their

work on one side or the other, or to question the work that they produce. Jackson Rushing (1999) has noted a similar conflictual state with young First Nations artists at the Institute of American Indian Arts. "Realizing their marginality, relative to 'mainstream' culture, and experiencing simultaneously a sense that they were not leading authentic Indian lives, they portrayed themselves in a liminal identity" (p. 143).

My research postulates that with the push and pull of conflicting ideologies represented in galleries, museums, and literary critiques, artists can experience identity fracturing and duality. The duality is produced by the need to be individual combined with the pressure to conform to external ideologies. Saree S. Makdisi (1996) states that this sense of conflictual duality is a global phenomenon amongst Indigenous peoples:

> This is the same dynamic that has generated many of the contradictions now characteristic of other post-colonial societies that manifest themselves in the clash between such categories as the "modern" and the "traditional", the new and old ways of life, and of course between western and Native cultures and values. (p.184)

Ideally, through releasing themselves from expectations and validations provided by the western art history paradigm and "preserving fundamental philosophies and principle" (McMaster, 1998, p. 29), artists can come to terms with their artistic identities, without compromising or substituting their cultural identities and realities. The reclaiming of identity and place by First Nations artists in North America was showcased in the 1998 exhibition, *Reservation X, the power and place in Aboriginal contemporary art,* held at the Museum of Civilization, curated by Gerald McMaster. The term, *Reservation X*, refers to the "ambiguous" zone, a third space between two spaces, where the contemporary Native community is not fixed to the reservation life, but rather is diverse and in a constant state of flux (McMaster, 1998). The exhibition showcased seven First Nation artists from across North America including myself Mary Longman, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Marianne Nicholson, Shelly Niro, Jolene Rickard, Mateo Romero, and Maxx Stevens. Nora Naranjo-Morse addressed the physical and philosophical transformation of her community by contrasting aspects of traditional adobe homes with prefabricated housing. Marianne Nicholson used the frame of the big house as an external and internal metaphor of identity and place of origin. Shelly Niro used humour in her

film, *Honey Moccasin,* to depict the diversity of First Nations characters who live out their daily dramas in the local bar and café on an imaginary reservation. Jolene Rickard spoke to the history of political action in her community and the continuance of tradition. Power lines and corn became primary symbols in her installation as she reflected on the flooding of Tuscarora lands for electrical generating stations and the corn affirms their cultural survival. Mateo Romero's pueblo wall mural mapped the migration of the Pueblo people from the kivas to the urban setting. The narratives of the painted caves at the Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico served as his inspiration to continue the practice of historical narrative drawing. Maxx Stevens addressed the dualism of today's urban Native by juxtaposing two environments of learning: the residential school setting, and the informal community setting where knowledge is transferred through the sharing of stories. She wrote, "Being an urban Indian has always been a source of dualism in my work, and that sometimes gives the viewer a sense of the conflict it generates." (In Museum of Civilization, 1998 p. 152.) In my sculpture, *Strata and routes*, the double rooted tree sculpture speaks to the shaping of First Nations identity that is examined in the context of influential 'roots' and 'routes' in life. The predetermined and on-going influences through time situate First Nations identity in a state of flux with no generalized label or fixed address for 'Reservation X.'

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF FIRST NATIONS ART

The topic of cultural appropriation of First Nations representation became predominant in the late 1980s and has been written about by First Nations artists, scholars, and curators. First Nations challenged practices of galleries, museums and commercial enterprises of excluding their presence, speaking for them and representing their cultural art forms as their own.

Lutz (1990) describes cultural appropriation as a process that "disowns origin and authorship" and results in a displacement of representation (p.168). It is more than a topic of cultural influences; rather in terms of First Nations it is;

> the kind of appropriation which happens within a colonial structure, where one culture is dominant politically and economically over the other and rules and exploits it. More specifically, it is the kind of appropriation in which aspects of the colonized culture are appropriated by the dominant one, while at the same time all traces of origin are neglected and displaced. (Lutz, 1990, p.168)

Cultural property, in terms of First Nations art, is defined in this text as physical and intellectual property that are culturally-specific trademarks of nations. Intellectual property refers to visual designs that have been passed down, including family crests, compositions belonging to names and clans, songs, dances, oral stories, and traditional knowledge. Examples of historically-distinct art designs from specific nations include west coast traditional design, Cree symbolism in beadwork designs, Mi'kmaq quill designs, Iroquois false face masks, and so on. Each nation has its own protocol for reproduction. West coast nations protect visual depictions of family stories and crests, whereas other nations may protect stories or ceremonial objects and associated visual art production.

Two artists who have made valuable contributions to this discourse are Joane Cardinal-Schubert and Loretta Todd. Cardinal-Schubert addressed the long history of cultural appropriation by museums and commercial industry in her 1989 article, *In the red* (1989). There she revealed the history of confiscated art, artifacts and ceremonial items by museums, especially during the ban of potlatch ceremony in British Columbia from 1884-1951. Her article was one of the first in Canada to begin a dialogue between First Nations and museums about repatriation of First Nations artifacts. In the following years, the topic of repatriation became a central issue throughout North America, with First Nations negotiating the return of ancestral remains, ceremonial objects, and other items confiscated by the government.

Loretta Todd, who is a First Nation scholar and filmmaker, aligns the definition of cultural appropriation to the intellectual property of voice, story, and experience:

> Appropriation occurs when someone else speaks for, tells, defines, describes, represents, uses or recruits the images, stories, experi-ences [sic] dreams of others for their own. Appropriation also occurs when someone else becomes the expert on your experience and is deemed more knowledgeable about who you are than yourself. (Todd 1991, pg. 24-26)

Todd (1991) suggests that contrasting values and concepts of ownership, between colonialist and First Nations, was and continues to be, central to the history of conflict surrounding cultural appropriation. "Communities, families, individuals and nations created songs, dances, rituals, objects and stories that were considered to be property, but not property as understood by Europeans" (p. 26).

Cultural appropriation is defined as illegally taking physical and intellectual property belonging to specific cultural group. Physical property includes ceremonial objects, art forms, regalia, musical instruments, artifacts, contents of graves, including bones, and traditional land and resources. Intellectual property includes images, family crests, compositions, songs, dances, stories, and traditional knowledge.

Dr. Marie Battiste, professor of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson, graduate in law from Harvard and director of the Native Law Centre, define cultural property in the totality of First Nations knowledge. Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000), in their book *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage*, recommend the preservation and protection of languages, cultures, heritage sites, ceremonial objects, arts, land, plant knowledge, and medicines through Native partnerships with governing bodies. In Canada, these partnerships would include the Departments of Indian and Northern Affairs, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, along with Parks Canada, Heritage Canada, Environment Canada, the National Science and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, who could assist First Nations with amendments to current laws and with the implementation of the *United Nations draft principles and guidelines on the heritage of Indigenous peoples.*

At the core of the debate over cultural appropriation lie conflicting cultural ideologies, especially with regard to individual ownership versus collective ownership. Todd (1991) suggests that colonial concepts of ownership revolve around conquest, purchase, and capitalist patriarchy, and therefore have given people the assumed right to own, adopt, name, and define the land, the people, and the cultures they contact. Traditional First Nations concepts of ownership involved collective ownership of land, as well as historical assets and intellectual property.

Richard Fung, a video artist, community activist, and also a Canada Council employee in the Racial Equity Department at the time, expanded on the controversial debate over cultural appropriation in his 1993 article, *Working through cultural appropriation.* Fung outlines the counter-debate of artists in the mainstream, who strongly resisted First Nations efforts to protect their art forms. He cites individuals who claim that it was "censorship," "reversed racism," "profoundly racist [reflecting] German Nazism" or merely "fantastical nonsense," and "ignorant" to consider limiting cultural appropriation (Fung, 1993, p. 20).

When cultures collide in emotional debates, such as in the case of cultural appropriation, I theorize that it is indicative of a fracturing of dominant ideology. Emotions run high at a time when fracturing of perspective occurs, when people encounter a new perspective that is radically different from theirs. It challenges their worldview of everything they have perceived as the 'norm' or truth. When the issue involves other cultural positions, this fracturing is further amplified by a corresponding racial identity crisis. The new cultural perspective may challenge a person's deeply-embedded, internalized colonial ideology and require a departure from this ideology, resulting in unconscious reactions and strong emotions. This has been the case in the debates about cultural appropriation, as the two opposing sides have radically different concepts of ownership and cultural property. In addition, it is a challenge to embedded ethnocentric and colonial beliefs that hold notions that cultural appropriation is an assumed right. Departing from internalized colonial ideology is what I define as decolonization.

I am aware that the position I take in this text involves a radical departure from what has been written before about of First Nations history and their art, and that it challenges readers to absorb difficult concepts in a deconstructive manner, and to decolonize their perspectives. I term this situation *Fractured worldview crisis*. The background for this theory came from my own teaching experience. Having taught First Nations art history for several years, I observed students as they processed new historical information and current issues pertaining to First Nations. Over the course of nine years of teaching, I noted their reactions. In 2001, I was influenced by Mi'kmaq educator

Marie Battiste (2001) and also by Helen Fox (2001), who teaches courses in racism at the University of Michigan. Battiste contributed to the notion of seeking internal consistency (2001) when conflicting cultural ideologies collide. She regards this conflictual dynamic to be a natural transitional process, in which the mind will naturally seek to bring clarity to chaos and move on to cognitive transformation. "It is a natural psychological process, one cannot arrive at a new idea without questioning it, it is an attempt to find internal consistency in ideologies" (Battiste, 2001). Battiste suggests that when an individual is presented with new information that differs from their ideology, they will typically process the new information to create a consistency that concurs with their own knowledge base. Essentially, they will transform the new information into something related to what they can identify with.

Fox developed a model titled *Racial identity development* (2001, p. 98) based on her personal memoirs of teaching experience and interviews with students. She reveals four stages of identity development as students process their emotions of doubt, fear, internalized hatred that arise from their daily experience with racism. In the stages of her racial identity development model, Fox suggests that students process their racial perspectives by progressing forward and regressing as they move through a sequence beginning with resistance and defensiveness, then to a new awareness of systemic racism, then to a regression of defensive emotions and finally to cognitive acceptance of difference. Although the reactions and emotions she documents are similar to my findings, the overall pattern of progression and regression is different. I have observed the initial stage of a student's development to be intensely emotional, with emotions tapering off in the final stage of cognitive transformation. The theory of the fractured worldview crisis encompasses four key stages: (1) fracturing, (2) racial ideology crisis, (3) search for internal consistency, and (4) cognitive transformation.

WESTERN FRAMING OF FIRST NATIONS ART

The topic of western framing reviews the impact of the dominance of western art history ideology through the counter-narrative of First Nations curators and artists. Central themes are: *Labels and categorization; Exclusion and inclusion; The dominance of*

the western art history paradigm; Self-assigned experts. I expand on the critique of the western art history canon by presenting further topics such as: *Colonial imperialism and art racism; Duelling dichotomies: Authentic versus assimilated,; Traditional versus contemporary, and Individual versus tribal identity; Western mythmaking; Projections of western art history ideology; The impact on First Nations; Rewriting First Nations art history.*

First Nations in the art milieu have been debating issues of representation with galleries and museums. Debates have revolved around the actual manner in which First Nations are represented in the gallery setting and in the curatorial and academic writings that have defined First Nations art. First Nations artists and curators have challenged the assumed authority to validate, categorize, exclude, stereotype, and ghettoize First Nations art. Where there has been minimal inclusion of First Nations participation and voice, inaccurate information has perpetuated the myth-making around First Nations art. Furthermore, First Nations challenge the displacement of their long history of art production in western art history.

Western frames of reference and the assumptions of control over the representation of First Nations art is a form of art racism. Henry and Tator (2006) define the term "democratic racism" as a deeply embedded dominant ideology that becomes a form of racism simply by its assumptions:

> These frames of reference are a largely unacknowledged set of beliefs, assumptions, feelings, stories, and quasi memories that underlie, sustain, and inform perceptions, thoughts and actions. Democratic racism as racist discourse begins in the families that nurture us, the communities that socialize us, the schools and universities that educate us, the media that communicate ideas and images to us, and the popular culture that entertains us. (p. 23)

The on-going ideological assumptions held by art institutions and academics have fuelled the resolve of First Nations curators, scholars, and artists to mount exhibits and to publish literature that includes the First Nations perspective and changes the way First Nations art is defined. First Nations artist, Jim Logan, critiques the ideology of the western canon in education:

> I started thinking about … how I'd been taught to admire western art.... I went through art history in school and was taught how glorious European art was. It seems to be the standard to judge all other art and I question that.... Is it the standard, and [if so] why is it the standard? (Logan in Ryan, 1999, p.120)

The earliest challenge that First Nations artists have made is to the anthropological labeling of First Nations art as artifact, primitive, craft and exotic. These notions perpetuate a subordinate status of First Nations art, and reflect the Eurocentric superiority over other cultural artistic expressions. Its effect maintains a western art history hierarchy and displaces First Nations art history. The ripple effect into the fine art milieu is that First Nations art is excluded from fine art exhibitions or included but ghettoized, which refers to assigning Aboriginal to specific categories and special groups in exhibits.

> The paradigm of exclusion follows the belief that if an art form is perceived to have no history, then it cannot be recognized as a valid area of study and therefore cannot be included in mainstream art history. (Archuleta, 1994, p. 21)

Archuleta also outlines the issues associated with inclusion:

> The problem of inclusion that is limited to "special" exhibitions and programs by mainstream institutions is that of tokenism. It provided for short-term acceptance and reinforces the longstanding polices of exclusion. (1994, p. 23)

In the 1990s various literature began to appear written by First Nations curators, scholars and artists that addressed the problematic issues of the representations of First Nations art in galleries and museums. The Thunder Bay Art Gallery's *Mandate study 1990-93: An investigation of issues surrounding the exhibition, collection and interpretation of contemporary art by First Nations artists* addressed issues of exclusion and inclusion through a variety of topics that ranged from interpretation, exclusion, taboos, appropriation and employment. Essays were written predominantly by First Nations artists and curators, including: Robert Houle, Gerald McMaster, Margaret Archuleta, Tom Hill, Carl Beam and Lee-Ann Martin.

Hill's (1994) essay covered joint initiatives among First Nations, galleries and museums to establish concrete policies to rectify the exclusion of First Nations and the inaccurate and unethical methods of inclusion. In 1990, *The task force on museums and First peoples* was developed consisting of museum professionals, including First Nations,

who brought to light issues of repatriation, interpretation, and representation of First Nations art and culture in museums. They produced an important final document in 1992 entitled, *Turning the page: Forging new partnerships between museums and First peoples,* that presented more than thirty recommendations based on the principles of mutual respect and equality. Central to this document were three highlighted areas of concern: interpretation, access and repatriation (Hill, 1994). Hill comments:

> Interpretation or representation of information relating to First peoples should conform to an ethic of responsibility to the community represented as well as to the scholarly or professional ethics of the academic and museum communities"; and that "Identification of items in their collection and in exhibitions should use Aboriginal languages. (p.42)

Access centred on Aboriginal peoples having the right to research and document artifacts in museums. Repatriation concerned the return of cultural property to First Nations communities especially those related to "human remains and ceremonial objects that have an ongoing historical, traditional or cultural import to an Aboriginal community" (Hill, 1994, p.42).

Types of myth-making that occur in the defining of First Nations art tend to derive from: the residual romantic notions from the early 1900s, projections of anthropological categorization, and projections of the western art history paradigm. Outdated romantic themes expressed in contemporary exhibits are signalled by terms such as survival, renaissance, spirituality, and land, and references to First Nations peoples as survivors of a dying race who are now born again, revived, yet are still living as one with the land.

The most frequently projected themes appear in the form of the following dichotomies: *authentic versus assimilated, individualism versus tribalism,* and *traditional versus contemporary*. I postulate that these polarizations are reflective of anthropologists' concerns as they attempt to process their way through past fictions to present realities of First Nations though appear to be conceptually frozen in these general categories. The on-going discussions of contemporary versus traditional art inevitably draw the line between past and present at the point of colonial contact. The implication is simplistic black and white categories that deny a continued evolution, diversity and a long history of art

practice, far beyond the historical time line of colonial contact. On the same hand, First Nations have integrating western materials and art processes since contact. Highwater (1986) points out the obsolescence of the traditional and contemporary discourse:

> At the heart of the struggle for artistic identity among Indian artists is nothing so straight forward as an ideological confrontation—traditional Indians on one side (arguing for ancient images, media and forms) and non-Indians on the other (demanding modernism and idiosyncratic style and form). That kind of disagreement is essentially outdated, for since the beginning of this century countless Indians have adapted much of the technique and sensibility of western art. (p. 223)

Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr., Professor of history, law, political science, and religious studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder, has set an incredibly bold precedent of deconstructing western myth-making with the publication of several works including *Red earth, white lies, Native Americans and the myth of scientific fact* (1997); *Custer died for your sins, an Indian manifesto* (1988); *and God is red, a Native view of religion* (1994). In these works, Deloria says it is imperative for First Nations to deconstruct the myth-making so that future generations can perceive First Nations realities:

> The next generation of American Indians must finally find a way to transcend the barriers of communication and provide sufficient information on Indians so that the next generation of whites looks at us realistically and we do not have to face bitter whites who create fantasies about us and then turn against us. (Deloria in Mihesuah, 1998, p. 82)

The critique of western academic control over First Nations representation is the central issue in the collective work *Natives and academia: Researching and writing about American Indians* (1998), written by First Nations scholars. The text addresses problems that can arise when non-Native scholars write about First Nations peoples, such as misrepresentations, myth-making, the use of data other than primary sources, and teaching without direct experience. Mihesuah (1998) states that despite apprehensions that this text might generate "controversy, hurt feelings and possible retaliation," its critique is necessary to "help non-Indians understand what Native academics think about researching and writing about Indians" (pp. ix-x). Mihesuah (1998) reminds scholars that "many Indians are not satisfied with the manner in which they have been researched or how they and their ancestors have been depicted in scholarly writings," and "offer[s] suggestions scholars

might use to produce more critical, creative and well-rounded interpretations of Indian histories and cultures" (pp. ix-x).

In conclusion, I contend that First Nations art history needs to be rewritten from a First Nations perspective, from historical periods through to today. Alfred Youngman (1992), Professor of Native American studies and Native art history theory at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, challenges western ideological constructions that have dominated educational curricula and asserts the importance of re-telling Native history from the First Nations perspective. "In a nutshell, it is the western orientation and prerogatives versus the new re-telling from the Native perspective. The re-telling involves the unmasking of a profound fallacious unconsciousness, the exposing of many false images" (p.83).

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: AB/ORIGINOGRAPHY

The objective of this dissertation is 1). to show how the history has constructed First Nations experience, using the concepts of ideology, stereotyping, representation and identity; 2). to detail the effects of these mechanisms from the author's experience, as emblematic; and 3). to illustrate how First Nations artists of Canada have attempted to deconstruct these representations and replace these by reclaiming their own representations through their work. The research method is written within the principles of Ab/Originography and critical theory, which speaks from a First Nations position about the ideologies that have shaped First Nations representation.

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What issues and types of representation of First Nations have First Nations artists critically analyzed?
2. What ideologies have influenced the construction of these representations of First Nations?
3. How have representations of First Nations functioned as ideological tools for colonial and neo-colonial control over First Nations?
4. What representations originate from the colonial and neo-colonial imagination?
5. What effect do these representations have on First Nations people/First Nations artists?
6. How can a new First Nations art history be developed that adequately represents their historical and contemporary realities?

AB/ORIGINOGRAPHY

The methodology for this research is Ab/Originography, a new approach to post-colonial analysis, that I term, 'Ab/Originography.' Ab/Originography is embleus literary and/or artistic accounts that come directly from the 'original' and Ab/Original source that utilizes the direct voice of First Nations people as much as possible. Ab/Originography is

ultimately concerned with attaining autonomy for First Nations peoples. Autonomy is concerned with independence and self-sufficiency, where Indigenous cultures have the full power to represent themselves within their own cultural terms and produce rigorous, validated research that propels their communities forward. The specific principles of this methodology are:

1. It is First Nations research produced by a First Nations people.
2. First Nations are the dominant voices in research.
3. It is connected to First Nations context of worldview and cultural, social and historical realities.
4. It is holistic in philosophy that encompasses a relational enquiry of the whole context.
5. It strives for Indigenous empowerment through the resistance of colonial control and racism by acts of reclamation of history, identity and culture.
6. It validates First Nations epistemology.
7. It seeks to develop First Nations critical theory and research methods.
8. It is a process that contributes to the community.

Ab/Originography takes a holistic, contextual approach to speaking about and from the First Nations perspective and thereby utilizes First Nations epistemological view. It is my view, as an educator, that historical backgrounds, societal and cultural contexts will aid readers in understanding the full meaning of issues that First Nations address. A holistic methodology relates to traditional teachings that concern a balance and connectiveness of all things in life. Academic research that takes a First Nations epistemological position validates the entire context and considers the connections between mental, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. To study First Nations peoples in isolation from their communities creates distortions. Traditional teachings, state that true learning occurs within the context of that which is being studied. Therefore researchers must situate themselves in the centre, so that they can observe dynamics and patterns in context, and in relation with themselves. In the conventional academic research approach,

this approach is similar to an extensive observation in the field, from a relational and interpretive enquiry position.

Ab/Originography is multi-disciplinary because it must draw from many areas in order to reveal the full context of meaning a decolonizing process. Investigations are complex, requiring the examination of layers of colonial hegemonic structures, and multiple impacts on those who have been colonized. This dissertation research is informed by post-colonial critical theory, Kaupapa Maori methodology and narrative knowing.

INFLUENTIAL THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

Post-colonial critical theory

Post-colonial theory signifies a position against imperialism and Eurocentrism and employs a method of "a critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, France and other European imperial powers" (Abrams, 2005, p. 245). These methods seek to deconstruct the power of Eurocentric ideology, in the 'European Empire' (Said, 1989, p. xx) that is "said to have held sway over more than 85% of the rest of the globe by the time of the First World War, having consolidated its control over centuries" (Bahri, 1996, para. 1). Post-colonial research also examines the interactions between European colonizers and the societies they have colonized (Bahri, 1996), (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000).

At the same time, this research provides a valid platform from which the colonized can speak. Speaking as a colonized person is problematic. Post-colonial theorists have had to deconstruct the definition of the 'Other' in order to avoid perpetuating the very difficulties they seek to resist.

The relatively new and rapidly growing discourse of post-colonial critical theory does not have a distinctive methodology, though Abrams (2005) and Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, (2000) identify five recurrent areas of critical analysis:

1. "The rejection of the 'master-narrative' of western imperialism – in which the colonial 'Other' is not only subordinated and marginalized, but in effect deleted as a cultural agency – and its replacement by a counter-narrative in

which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans." (Abrams, 2005, p. 245)

2. "An abiding concern with the construction, within western discursive practices, of the colonial and post-colonial 'subject' as well as the categories by means of which this subject conceives itself and perceives the world within which it lives and acts." (Abrams, 2005, pp. 245-246)

3. Disestablishment of "Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values and the expand the literary canon to include colonial and post-colonial writers" (Abrams, 2005, p. 246).

4. "The study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions, and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities." (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 2000, p. 187)

5. An examination of "how people are perceived [which] controls how they are treated, and the physical differences [that] are crucial in such constructions.... Such prejudices were generated for economic reasons (see slavery) or to control Indigenous populations in colonial possessions by emphasizing their difference and constructing them as inferior (see hegemony)." (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 185)

These topics have been the focus of table scholars such as Fanon (1952 & 1961), Said (1978), Chakravorty Spivak (1988), Minh-ha (1989), and Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989 & 2000). Some of the most significant works in post-colonial studies include Fanon's *The wretched of the earth* (1952), Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Chakravorty Spivak's "*Can the subaltern speak?*" (1988), Minh-ha's *Woman, Native, other: Writing post-coloniality and feminism* (1989), Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Tiffin's *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (1989), and the more recent McClintock, Mufti and Shohat's *Dangerous liaisons: Gender, nation and post-colonial perspectives* (1997).

Representation is a key issue in post-colonial literature, focusing on the dominance of colonial representation, the exclusion of cultural and feminist groups, and

cultural stereotypes. Said (1978) claims that representations can never be realistic and rejects "biological generalizations, cultural construction and racial and religious prejudices" (Sered, 1996, para. 10). Said's research, in the highly proclaimed book *Orientalism* (1978), examines representations of cultures in Asia and the Middle East since the early nineteenth century. In this examination, he points out how Eurocentric representations of the Orient were disseminated throughout the world under the agenda of colonial imperialism. Said terms the promulgation of this type of representation, 'cultural imperialism' (Said, 1978). Early literature reveals the basis of cultural imperialism of colonial ideology grounded in "the assumption that a truly effective colonial conquest required knowledge of the conquered peoples" (Sered, 1996, para. 7). Colonial constructions of the 'other' were supported "with the unquestioning certainty of absolute truth backed by absolute force" (Said, 1978, as cited in Sered, 1996, para. 9). As an alternative, Said suggests using a 'narrative' approach rather than imposing a 'vision' for interpretation, suggesting that research methods and representation of cultural groups should occur with the process of the subject speaking directly from their own experience, rather than researchers interpreting the subject through their own ideological lens.

Chakravorty Spivak (1988) employs deconstructive methods to examine the marginalization of women and cultural 'minority' groups. She examines problems associated with the dominant group representing the 'Other,' and with the 'Other' using dominant discourse in an attempt to produce a counter-narrative. Chakravorty Spivak distinguishes two forms of representation – 'proxy and portrait.' The former refers to 'speaking for', and the latter to 'portraying of' (Baldonado, 1996, para. 6).

In the examination of minority representation, Chakravorty Spivak examines the 'subaltern' which in Latin means; 'under other' (Abram, 2005, p.246). She specifically questions how minorities can represent themselves in the post-colonial context of dominant European structures in academia. She claims that the self-representation of others is ignored because it falls outside the official structures that define the discourse of representation. Abram (2005) suggests that the discourse of the subaltern "has become a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse and internalized by colonial peoples who employ this discourse" (p. 246). The

contradictory dilemma that the colonized face is the ongoing question as "to what extent a subaltern subject, writing in a European language, can manage to serve as an agent of resistance against, rather than of compliance with, the very discourse that has created its subordinate identity" (p. 246). To be clear, the adoption of western discourse by the colonized is not a choice or preference, it is a requirement in western academia, and certain methods of research must be employed in order to be heard. At least this is the current dilemma until western academia broadens its cultural lens or until colonized cultures develop and assert their own methodologies and terminologies.

Minh-ha, a Vietnam native, is currently the Chancellor's Distinguished Professor of Woman Studies at the University of California in Berkeley. Her diverse background allows her to speak from several positions: as a woman of colour, as an ethnographer, and as an artist in film, music and poetry. Minh-ha's post-colonial approach is unique in that it purposefully rejects the dialectical act of reversal or debating difference, so that she can avoid creating another dogma or blanket representation:

> To prevent this counter-stance from freezing into a dogma (in which the dominance-submission patterns remain unchanged), the strategy of mere reversal needs to be displaced further, that is to say, neither simply renounced nor accepted as an end in itself (1989, p. 40).

Minh-ha weaves discontinuous threads that contain notions of "linguistic mis-mapping of women and all the subsequent re-posturing that occurs in its wake … [and the] mistaking of others' cultures and personas as the consuming group attempts to tell the 'Others' stories for the benefit of themselves" (Longballa, 2004, para. 3). Minh-ha (1989) explains this multi-angled approach in her work: "A writing for the people, by the people and from the people is, literally, a multipolar reflecting reflection that remains free from the conditions of subjectivity and objectivity and yet reveals them both" (p. 22).

Said, (1978), Chakravorty Spivak (1988), Minh-ha (1989) each identify the problematic issues associated with representation of the 'Other' that relate to topics of colonial imperialism marginalization and distortions of representation. These scholars also present the solution which is self-narrative as a means of representation. This dissertation research centres on a similar approach, though focuses on First Nations experiences in Canada. Although I draw from several approaches of post-colonial critical

analysis, I reject some of the terminology that clearly perpetuates a superior position in relation to the 'Other'. Although terms such as 'other', 'subaltern', 'colonized', 'subject' and 'minority,' are widely used to designate people on the periphery of dominating western male discourse, I believe the use of these terms ingrains the concept of the subordinate status they imply in the public mindset. For this reason, I avoid defining First Nations with labels that attribute to subordination.

Kaupapa Maori methodology

Kaupapa Maori research methodology acknowledges the challenges and contradictions that occur when colonized peoples utilize western methods, and therefore the Maori developed their own research methodology. At the core of the Kaupapa approach are emancipatory critique, resistance and struggle, intended to lead to Maori autonomy. The approach is multi-disciplinary and holistic, drawing from frameworks such as epidemiological survey work, ethnography, qualitative studies, and critical theory, though is not limited to these areas. Guiding principles of Kaupapa Maori research include that it is:

1. related to 'being Maori';
2. connected to Maori philosophy and principles;
3. takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Maori, the importance of Maori language culture and
4. is concerned with the 'the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well being'. (G. Smith, 1990, as cited in Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.185)

The Kaupapa Maori research position rejects the scientific paradigm of positivism that has its origin in empirical methods. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states that the Maori have methodological and epistemological concerns in regard to positivism in both "the techniques of research and presuppositions about knowledge which underlie the research" (p. 169). The scientific methods of measurement, classification, representation, and evaluation are said to be an inappropriate method for understanding human society and realities (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Western ideologies that underlie positivist methods conflict with cultural ideologies and epistemology of the Indigenous worldview:

> Western research is more than just research that is located in positivist tradition. It is research which brings to bear, on any study of Indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language and structures of power. (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 42)

The ramification of positivist research methods is that it has distorted Indigenous realities and has left "Maori people within a cultural definition which does not connect with either our oral traditions or our lived reality" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999 p. 170). The same is true of First Nations in Canada.

Narrative knowing

> Tribal knowledge was not fragmented data arranged according to rational speculation. It was simply the distilled memory of the people describing the events they had experienced and the lands they had lived in (Deloria, 1997, p. 36).

Deloria echoes the anti-positivist approach of the Kaupapa Maori and the long struggle of First Nations to have their experiences validated in academia and legally as oral accounts of history. Given the slow process of widening the academic space for other cultural approaches, more and more Indigenous cultures are moving towards the narrative methodology to reclaim their identities, histories and cultural representation.

Narrative methodology is a complex field of inquiry. Jerome Bruner (1990) states that narrative strives to locate the experience in time and place, and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that all experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry also situates individual experience within the broader social context, and creates a framework for moving beyond an individual's personal experiences to discover the more universal or collective meaning of the lived experience. In my autobiographical reflections, I recount my life story from the position as an Indigenous person and artist, which ultimately contributes to the collective meaning of First Nations artists in Canada today.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As indicated by Bruner (1990), Clandinin & Connelly (2000), and Said (1978), using narrative for representing the human experience can result in research that is meaningful and accessible to other people, as well as avoiding the misrepresentation of their experience. I utilize the narrative method in two ways: as a platform to validate my own autobiographical account of my studio research in relation to my life experiences and to validate the voices of other First Nations artists.

In terms of research on art, the scope of subject matter is vast, and many artists tend to be philosophical in nature, always observing and depicting varied physicalities and dynamics in the world around them. Ultimately, their artwork reflects their own ideological context, adding to the layering of meaning. In the past, First Nations art has been defined separately from the artist's voice and lived context. For these reasons the methodology of this dissertation presents the First Nations artist's voice and locates it within the context of their historical, social, and cultural realities. The emphasis of this research is to give First Nations accounts predominance to balance the scales of representation. This process is a collective effort in which First Nations voice their concerns together to deconstruct the ideologies of representation that have perpetuated myth-making, stereotypes, and racial discrimination. By sharing their realities, they contribute to the discourse of racial politics within the collective experience of First Nations people on a national scale and move toward reclaiming their history, identity, and cultural perspective.

The specific research strategy of this study incorporates a literature review, interview data, and artwork by First Nations artists. The research is comprised of the following four primary components:

1. A literature-based account of the representation of First Nations people from colonial contact to the present day indicating a review of predominantly Canadian First Nations artists and scholars to identity significant themes of *representation since the mid 1900s.*

2. Interviews with six First Nations artists about the political content of their work, their identity and experience as First Nations artists. See Appendix 5: Interview data from interview questions. Artists were chosen for their specific

studio research focusing on the critique of representation. The six interviewees are: Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Judy Chartrand, Jim Logan, Shelly Niro, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and Alfred Youngman. This text uses direct quotes from the artists as much as possible, so that the their voices are central rather than my voice dominating their representation. The interview data has been incorporated into this research by integrating direct narratives by the artists into chapters in order to illustrate their perspectives towards common themes of representation. Unlike traditional research methods that compare and analyze the micro data of individual responses, this research centres on revealing the larger scope of key issues that First Nations artists have been addressing in the past four decades.

3. The descriptions of forty artworks by Canadian First Nations artists chosen for their contribution to topics of representation. 21 artworks in this collection were produced by 13 First Nations artists, and I add myself as the fourteenth artist, including 19 works from my own body of work. Artists include Carl Beam, Bob Boyer, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Judy Chartrand, Heather Henry, Robert Houle, Jim Logan, Gerald McMaster, Shelly Niro, Ron Noganosh, Lawrence Paul, (Yuxweluptun), Rick Rivet, and Alfred Youngman.

4. An autobiographical account of the evolution of my artwork in the context of my lived experience as a First Nations person. This narrative provides the reader with an in-depth look at a First Nations experience in Canada through the evolution of art practice.

Chapter themes are arranged according to the following historical sequence of topics: *Rewriting colonial history; The ideology of stereotypes; Reclaiming First Nations identity; Reflections of being in time and place; Cultural appropriation of First Nations representation; The western framing and displacement of First Nations art.*

CONCLUSION

The Ab/Originography research framework has been constructed in an open, non-restrictive manner so that many other scholars, regardless of their fields can utilize it. It is a method that validates the first person perspective and relevant themes that pertain to the person's experience. This method validates First Nations epistemology as well as acknowledges First Nations realities through the representation of a full context of meaning. This method is not intended to move in isolation from western research, but rather it is a move towards a balance of rigorous research from both worlds. The

influential research of post-colonial critical theory, Kaupapa Maori methodology and narrative knowing, related to the study of topics in First Nations history, stereotypes, identity, representation as well as other significant works related to art history and racism are integrated with the First Nations scholarly perspective and lived experience within these same themes.

CHAPTER 4

REWRITING COLONIAL HISTORY

Since colonial contact in North America in 1492, First Nations have suffered from the effects of colonization achieved through both direct force and indirect ideological force. Practices of direct force included territorial displacement, genocide and imposed hegemonic rule, while ideological force, termed 'cultural imperialism' (Said, 1978) displaced and dominated First Nations culture with Eurocentric values and representations. Embedded within cultural imperialism was a racial ideology that dehumanized and subordinated people of First Nations heritage in order to preserve colonial power structures. Imperialist representations of First Nations became embedded in the consciousness of both colonizers and colonized, and effectively suppressed and controlled First Nations history, culture and identity. The Eurocentric history text used exaggerated and racist visual representations of First Nations with biased semantics that encompassed racial underpinnings and effectively reversed history in their favour, portraying Native efforts to protect their territories as 'massacres' and 'rebellious acts.' This story is chronicled in First Nations art:

> ... much of the story of this art over the past centuries tells of successive visual responses to crisis such as epidemics, forced removals from homelands, repressive colonial regimes, religious conversion, and contact with foreign cultures and their arts. Yet is also a story of the enduring strength of traditions. The many moments of transformation, rupture, and renewal in art contained in this story reveal the importance of visual arts in maintaining the integrity of spiritual, social, political, and economic systems. (Berlo & Phillips, 1998, pp. 3–4)

Fuelled by the building and collective empowerment of political activism in the 1960s, First Nations sought to re-tell history from their perspective and expose government injustices towards their people. The re-writing of colonial history was a predominant theme amongst First Nations artists in the early 1970s through to the mid 1990s. They could no longer stand on the periphery and observe the version of North American history that avoids the story of colonial genocide and assimilation of their people. They were also upset

at their portrayal as mere backdrops to explorers such as Cartier, Champlain, and Cook, as primitive, uncivilized naked savages who either tortured missionaries or murdered colonists, or as strangely submissive, helpful tour guides. First Nations in Canada knew that these inaccurate representations had continued residual effects in the collective Canadian mind set, creating barriers against public support for their defence of territorial encroachments, and undermining their efforts toward self-determination as an autonomous cultural entity. Because First Nations histories and cultures were not being taught in the educational system, most Canadians were unaware of the historical context surrounding Aboriginal people, and therefore gaining support for their cause has been challenging.

It is understandable why the brutalities of colonization would be avoided in history texts, but the question of why First Nations culture was not taught is perplexing due to its unthreatening nature. Certainly, Canadians would be interested in learning about the diverse nations that had complex governing societies, incredible knowledge of the land and wildlife, and skills as warriors and artists. In Canada, the history of First Nations stems back 27,000 to 11,200 years (depending whose theory one reads). Given this extensive history and the diversity of First Nations cultures across Canada, one would think that a large portion of the curriculum in schools would be devoted to First Nations history and cultures. However, the average history text usually focuses on colonial contact over the past 500 years.

Perhaps to acknowledge one aspect of Aboriginal history would lead to the acknowledgement of entire history. Scholar Hartmut Lutz (1990) theorizes that the conspicuous absence of Aboriginal history and cultures is due to what he terms a collective "massive displacement" (p.174), which avoids a shameful and painful history of colonial take-over and genocide. The psychoanalytical term "displacement" is best described as a form of repression, which Freud called "Verdragung" (Lutz, 1990, p.173). The problem with displacement is that covering up shameful memories does not diminish or heal those memories of the past; instead it prevents the opportunity to "learn from the past experience, and thus renders one vulnerable to irrational and harmful repetitions of former mistakes" (Hartmut Lutz, 1990, p.173). The irrational reaction of the armed conflict at the 1990 Oka crisis Lutz would describe as a prime example of the effects of collective displacement

where there is a "partial loss of reality and an obstruction of historical memory" (p.175). The same practices continue currently in 2006, with a similar situation with members of Rotinoshon'non: we (Iroquois) people who are protecting Six Nations territory from illegal development, based on 1784 Haldimand Deed, which was formally recognized by the Crown as Six Nations territory. Rather than the government rationally preventing these situations by acknowledging historical land deeds, or settling outstanding land claims in a responsible legal manner, territorial agreements are avoided, until there is a stand-off between a commercial development and Aboriginal people. The preferred solution seems to be to hold Aboriginal people at gunpoint, even though they are often in the legally-justified position. This is the point where the ideological slogan, 'one law for all', becomes a fallacy.

Another reason why historical information from the First Nations perspective has been absent in texts is due to the dominance of western academia, that usually does not validate other forms of knowledge. Information about Aboriginal people is usually only validated through their own interpretation and methods. Furthermore, scholar Vine Deloria (1997) suggested that to validate First Nations epistemology would be to risk contradicting established foundational theories, and if a core theory is dismantled, all the others built upon that theory become nullified. "Consequently, there are literally millions of observed facts which simply do not appear in scientific writing because they would tend to raise doubts about the prevailing paradigm" (Deloria, 1997, p. 35).

Such is the example of the Bering Strait theory, which has been perpetuated for so long now that it is written as fact rather than theory. Based on findings of similar blood type and teeth patterns among Asians and First Nations, and similar prehistoric technology among the Siberians and the Aleutians, the Bering Strait theory postulates that paleo-Indians are the descendants of the Mongoloid races of Siberia and Northern China. This 'proof' of lineage supports the bigger theory that some time between 23,000-12,000 years ago, First Nations migrated from Siberia and China via a temporary land bridge in the Bering Strait. There are, however, significant holes in this theory. The most obvious contradiction is in dates; First Nations were already living in the prairie provinces, some 27,000 years ago. The second hole in this theory is that there is no archaeological evidence

of camping sites or signs of human habitation in the Bering Strait. Thirdly, there is no concrete evidence that the water levels could have been that low in the Ice Age. The logical theory would be that only the Inuit migrated from Siberia by skin boats given that they had that technology and it is similar to Siberian technology. The rest of First Nations across North America, claim their ancestors migrated from South America and the Polynesian islands, travelling both on foot and by boat. Even though First Nations have claimed these accounts time and time again, their oral history and tribal knowledge is often dismissed and not validated in the western-centric context of research that assumes superiority within its own ideological frames.

Today, the old history texts are being revised in the educational system with an inclusion of First Nations history and current politics. Currently, there is the generation that did not have the opportunity to learn about First Nations of this land, and a younger generation that has had this opportunity and will no doubt be more aware of the history and current issues. Because this educational development is relatively new in Canada, the expectation is that a residue of racial discrimination will continue to colour current debate over First Nation political issues.

One of the more powerful vehicles for re-educating the colonized is art. First Nations artists seek to deconstruct inaccurate histories and represent their excluded realities.

EUROPEAN CONTACT

Whether it was Columbus in San Salvador in 1492, Cartier on the east coast in 1534, or Cook on the west coast in 1730, early colonists developed similar objectives: take the riches from the land, get rid of the 'Indian problem,' establish tight control, and recreate the Indian in their own image. The early colonists arrived firmly embedded in their world perspective, and with little thought about the effects of imposing their assumed authority on the original peoples of this land. A quotation from the letters of Columbus reveals this deeply-embedded ethnocentric ideology of the time period, justified through religious ideology:

> There is an island, which I am told is larger than Hispaniola and where the people have no hair. On this island there is gold in abundance and from this island and from others I am bringing Indians as evidence … the whole of Christendom should rejoice and hold great celebrations, and give solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity with many solemn prayers for such glory which will be theirs in the converting of so many people to our holy faith and later for the temporal goods, for not only Spain, but all Christians here will find refreshment and gain. (Columbus' letters, in Viola, 1990, p. 115)

In this passage, it is clear that capital gain was a central value to early explorers despite the religious veneer that dominates the writing. After all, Columbus was searching for the riches of India, and the conversion of these newly found "heathens" can be construed as a pragmatic afterthought designed to justify the atrocities to follow. Such ethnocentrism is not incompatible with pure greed, and this strategy of cultural dehumanization was intended to divest First Nations of all of their resources.

For many years, Columbus would be celebrated as the champion explorer who discovered the new world, only because many did not know the full story of his part in the genocide of First Nations, particularly the Tainos, who were the first of seven nations to be brought to extinction. In Columbus's quest for 'gold in abundance' he ordered every "Indian 14 years and older to deliver a regular quota of gold. Those who failed had their hands chopped off. In two years of the Columbus regime, perhaps a quarter of a million people died" (Bigelow in Bigelow & Peterson, 1998, p.48)

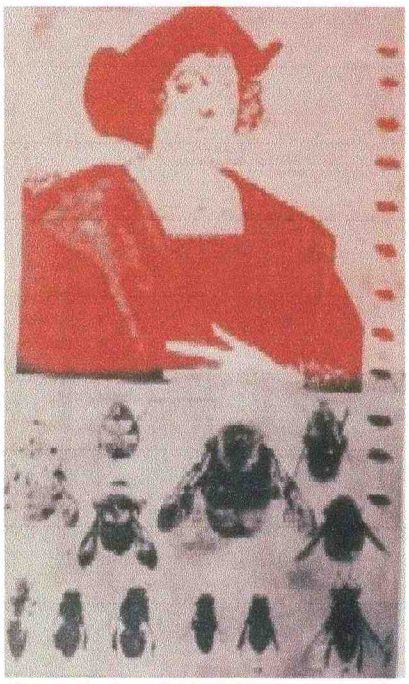

Figure 1. *Columbus and the Bees,* Carl Beam, 1989, etching, 101 x 142 cm.

In the late 1980s, Ojibway artist Carl Beam produced a series of mixed media works, entitled the *Columbus Project.* In his usual layered philosophical approach, this series juxtaposes western and Aboriginal histories and ideologies. In his work, *Columbus and the Bees* (Figure 1), the colonizer is equated to bees, suggesting the never-ending building of an industrious (bee) colony. Notches on the right side of the canvas are found in Beam's other work and

appear to reference time, measurements on the 'ruler.' Curator, Nemiroff (1992) comments on this body of work by stating; "[Beam's work] … goes beyond a simple political critique of the explorer's presumptuous 'discovery' of an already populated America for Spain in 1492. His subject seems to me to be that of reclaiming history, a formidable exercise of cultural memory" (Nemiroff, p. 108).

GENOCIDE

Genocide is murderous acts with the committed intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group; essentially, it is the same as the current political euphemism, ethnic cleansing. Within the first ten years of Columbus's arrival and contact, three million Indigenous people were slain (Viola, 1990). In the 1500s, it is estimated that approximately twenty million First Nations people were in North America; by 1890, approximately a quarter of a million—only 250,000 remained (Brokenleg, 2001). This unprecedented and precipitous decline in numbers, decimation times ten, unknown hitherto in world history (even the black plague of Europe took no more than one quarter of the population), was primarily due to slavery, torture, army slaughters, head hunting, and germ warfare with the smallpox virus.

The genocide of First Nations in North America has some comparison to the ethnic cleansing in the Jewish Holocaust in Germany during Word War II. Approximately six million Jews, in addition to millions of others who were not Jews, were exterminated by order of Hitler's policy, *The final solution,* which appeared to be an updated version of the *Manifest destiny* policy of North America in the 1820s. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, supported by the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, made *Manifest destiny* an official policy in Washington (Vickers, 1998, p. 15) that legalized the murder of First Nations. *Manifest destiny* was ideological propaganda that claimed that colonists were divinely ordained by God to have the dominion over First Nations and their lands, it was the 'the obvious fate, the will of God.'

With an essentially open season on First Nations for the sake of acquiring their territories and rich resources, millions of First Nations women, children and men were killed. Indeed, there was a 'Holocaust' in North America, with leaders who possessed the

'Hitler' mentality of ethnocentrism and racism. But whereas Hitler was toppled within a span of a few years, it was 400-year open war against the First Nations of this land.

One of the first texts that chronicled the practices of colonial imperialism was the groundbreaking work, *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown (1970). Equipped with photographs, United States Congress documents, first-hand quotes from First Nations and colonists, he revealed the shocking systematic genocide of Native people in the untold story of colonization in North America. It was a rare documentation of First Nations leaders, during the period of the 1860–1890s, whose representation prior to this was as faceless, dehumanized 'Indians,' with imposed white names. He summarizes this span of time as, "an incredible era of violence, greed, audacity, sentimentality, undirected exuberance, and an almost reverential attitude toward the ideal of personal freedom for those who already had it" (p. xvii).

Figure 2. Wounded Knee mass grave in 1890 of 350 Sioux men, women and children.

Shortly following the *Manifest destiny* policy implementation, the massacre at Wounded Knee occurred. Three hundred and fifty Hunkpapa Sioux men, women and children, were murdered four days after Christmas in 1890 (Figure 2). The event became known as *The Wounded Knee massacre* and was just one of many massacres that occurred in the war against First Nations. It is difficult to comprehend how soldiers could kill innocent people, especially children. Ironically, while the governing capitalist ideology appeared to conflict with the dominant Christian ideology, in fact both were about acquiring power, and worked in partnership. Author Dee Brown (1970) points to this contradiction as he describes the final slaughter of the Sioux people at Wounded Knee and the transportation of the remaining fifty-one wounded casualties:

> The wagon loads of wounded Sioux (four men and forty seven women and children) reached Pine Ridge after dark…When the first torn and bleeding bodies were carried into the candlelit church, those who were conscious could see Christmas greenery hanging from the open rafters. Across the chancel front above

> the pulpit was strung a crudely lettered banner: PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN. (p.445)

This exact page, taken from Dee Brown's book, was integrated into the installation work of Edward Poitras entitled *Small matters* at the Articule gallery in Montreal. Poitras fences off pages of history from Dee Brown's book. Large white letters on the wall above, subtle traces of a ghostly presence, read, 'Wounded Knee.' As the title, '*Small matters*' suggests, even though genocide of First Nations was so immense and destructive, it is as if it never happened; it was left unsaid in the history books.

Some history texts give the impression that the major decline of the First Nations population was due to the accidental transference of European diseases, such as smallpox, measles, influenza and bubonic plague, rather than admitting to the actual ethnic cleansing of the approximately 19 million First Nations in North America. Though it is true that thousands, perhaps millions of First Nations lives, no one knows for sure, were lost in the unexpected disease epidemics, such as smallpox in the 1500s, and then again in the mid 1700s to mid 1800s, it is also true that several millions of First Nations had already perished in the colonial war, long before these epidemics. The second resurgence of the smallpox virus between 1700-1800 was said to be purposeful germ warfare, accomplished by the orders of Lord Jeffrey Amherst of the British Army in 1763. He had infected smallpox blankets sent to First Nations settlements in order to bring about "the total extirpation of those Indian Nations (Amherst In Hume, 2001, p. A21). When people first learn of the brutal acts of genocide in North , they are shocked, angry and deny it. Germ warfare perpetrated by North Americans on their soil is especially difficult to acknowledge given their abhorrence at the recent terrorist threats of germ warfare by others on American soil. Journalist Stephan Hume (2001) reminds society that the historical record shows indisputable evidence that supports the First Nations oral account:

> For those who want to go to primary sources, there are the letters from Lord Jeffrey Amherst, commanding general of the British armies in North America during the final stages of what my school texts called the French and Indian Wars. Amherst was attempting to pacify and drive off six tribes just south of the Great Lakes that were resisting incursions into their territory by settlers after assurances to the contrary. Those who don't mind secondary references can turn to Jonathan B. Tucker's chilling new book, *Scourge: The Once and Future Threat of Smallpox*.

> Tucker is a biological- and chemical-weapons expert of long experience with the U.S. government (Hume, 2001, p. A21).

So immense were the casualties, and so great the enormity of ethnic cleansing through germ warfare, it is difficult to know how many First Nations died in the second smallpox epidemic, though it is suggested by Hume (2001) that approximately half of the west coast Nations perished. Overall, from smallpox, measles and the plague, it is estimated that over a 300-year span, 200,000 to 300,000 First Nations died in Canada (Miller, 2000).

By the end of this unprecedented genocidal period, several Aboriginal groups had become extinct (though some speculate that there were some surviving Beothuk, who have descendents living today). Ojibway artist, Robert Houle paid homage to these extinct Nations in his work, *Lost tribes.* The work consists of seven panels, each devoted to a tribe that was exterminated: the Taino, Beothuk, Natchez, Mohican, Timuca, Tobacco, and Sibany. These names are juxtaposed with the caution road symbol, perhaps indicating a "stark warning against the repetition of history," (K. Duffek in Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989, p. 28).

Houle's work was included in the milestone exhibit, *Beyond history*, in 1989 at the Vancouver Art Gallery that was sponsored by the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. This was an unprecedented type of sponsorship, yet it revealed the value that First Nations political leaders placed on artists to tell their history to the world. The exhibit was ground-breaking because it was one of the first exhibits that exposed the atrocities of colonialism and its impact on First Nations, dealing with subject matter such as genocide, slavery, forced assimilation, residential schools and religious conversion, and alcoholism and depression. It was a powerful, moving exhibit which no doubt shocked and disturbed the viewing public.

Artist Joane Cardinal-Schubert's two installations blatantly spoke about genocide and Christian boarding schools. She juxtaposes the conflictual ideologies of extermination and preservation through anthropological collections. In the detail of the installation, entitled, *Then there were none,* (Figure 3), Cardinal-Schubert displays a row of simulated leather shirts suspended on crosses and encased in plastic bags. In this particular detail, there are small babies across the chest of the shirt with text overlaid reading 'then there were none.' The words recall the nursery rhyme of 'one little two little three little

Indians…' which is sung until there are none. Today, some would say that the war continues, governed by the pen and the pocketbook, the controllers of which attempt to abolish Native rights and ensure the capitalist agenda for expansion and economic development for the rich.

First Nations of Canada confronted the topic of colonialism in a significant way in 1992, the quincentennial of Columbus's arrival in North America. For many First Nations, it was a time of 'decelebration' rather than a time of celebration, and therefore several artists decided to boycott the invitation to exhibit their work in that year as symbolic resistance to a continuing colonial imperialism. Other artists, however, did not want to allow themselves silence, even for a good cause, and took the opportunity to address head-on the issues of genocide and colonialism that the "celebration" occasioned. The quincentennial year was marked by four large group shows: *New territories 350/500 years after*, *Canada's First Peoples, Land, spirit, power*, and *Indigena. New territories 350/500 years after* was an incredible exhibit consisting of 44 Aboriginal artists from across Canada and into the arctic. The exhibit was curated by Dana Williams and Pierre-Leon Tetreault, who recognized the importance of raising the exposure of First Nations art in Canada, and therefore independent of a gallery, found funds to sponsor the entire exhibit, which included flying all artists to the opening and holding a symposium. The exhibition occurred in various alternative gallery spaces and cultural centres throughout Montreal. Because the exhibit was an artist-run event and did not tour, this extraordinary collection of works did not receive the exposure that it deserved and therefore many Canadians were unaware of its existence. For the artists, it was a great opportunity to come together in one place, meet each other and have the opportunity to discuss issues relevant to them.

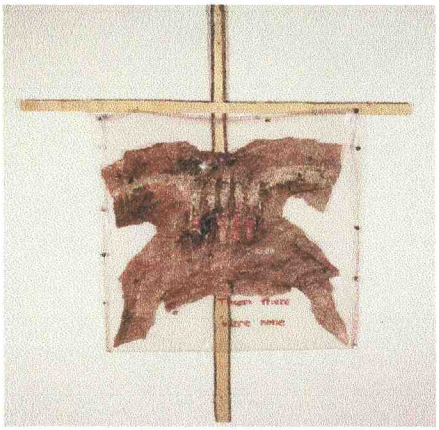

Figure 3. *Then there were none*, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, 1988, Mixed media, detail of installation.

The exhibit, *Canada's First Peoples*, opened up at the Founders Square building in Halifax Nova Scotia, with 26 artists from across Canada. Curator Dana Williams, who is

Potawatomi from Moose Deer Point Nation, curated this exhibit and with his project team secured the sponsorship of Syncrude. This exhibit was unique in Halifax, as it rarely had First Nations exhibits. In addition, it created an opportunity for artists in the east to showcase their talents and meet other First Nation artists from across Canada.

The National Gallery of Canada exhibit, *Land, spirit and power*, curated by Diana Nemiroff occurred in the same city and year as the exhibit *Indigena*, held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, curated by Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin. Even though they both marked the quincentennial year of Columbus's arrival, the shows were markedly different in approach and content. *Land, spirit and power* seemed to avoid the topic of colonization aiming instead to "...recognize a new generation of First Nations artist whose work was individual and personal, yet reflected a distinct cultural experience within mainstream North American art" (Nemiroff, Houle, Townsend-Gault, p.13). The title, reminiscent of romantic ideology, was not the one originally proposed. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (2005) had originally suggested the title, "My land, my spirit, my power". He describes a polarization that developed amongst the artists and staff in this exhibit, between those who wanted to be treated as distinct and those who wanted to be treated as equal with other professional artists. In his original title he opted for the status of distinct and equal, but that status was not easy to achieve.

> I think it [change of title] demasculated the concept.... The only reason they wanted to show the exhibit was because it was the year of Indigenous peoples, up until that point Aboriginal peoples were segregated in this country, nationally, from that institution and we were not shown at all in those institutions, provincially or nationally.... After the show some artists lobbied to have a segregated room, which I called the 'rez room'... I said that it was racist, I didn't make art to be segregated... So I said, Okay, then lets have national equality, lets have a Chinese room, lets have a Japanese room, lets have an English room lets have a French room, lets have a Hungarian room, lets have a German room and I want you all to have your room, I want you to be segregated just like me. After that the room came down. (Paul, 2005 pp. 7-8)

Despite the opposing interests, the exhibit showcased eighteen artists from the United States and Canada, with four of these artists presenting their perspectives on quincentennial of colonial arrival: Carl Beam, Domingo Cisneros, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds and Teresa Marshall. Beam presented his *Columbus project*, previously described in the

genocide section of this chapter; Domingo Cisneros addressed the loss of life and natural order in a land subsumed by colonial capitalistic values; Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds, who is Cheyenne-Arapaho, addressed the genocide of his people; and Teresa Marshall told the story of the genocide of the Beothuk and the one remaining survivor, Mary March. Their work reveals the residual effects of the not-so-distant history of colonialism. Cisneros (1992), whose natural materials reflect the environment in which he lives and his values of the natural land and life, writes about the disruptive effect of colonial values on the natural order;

> They came to give the names of great European cities to clearings in the virgin forest. They could only see the earth as property, its only value economic value. They came to clear, to domesticate, to control. They believed they were bringing order to the place, unaware that an order already existed, which their interference was sabotaging. (In the National Gallery of Canada, p. 132)

Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds (1992) writes a disturbing account of the genocide of the Cheyenne people in the United States:

> From art the truth can be known of the brutal acts of United States Calvary forces on 29 November 1864, at Sand Creek, Indian Territory, in Colorado. During the massacre, the soldiers cut open the Cheyenne women, to take hold of the Cheyenne uterus, destroying the native baby's nurturing home. The Cheyenne uterus was then worn upon the Cavalry hat as a trophy ornament of conquest. (Heap of Birds, In National Gallery of Canada, p. 153)

The exhibit *Indigena*, in contrast, addressed the history of colonialism head on. Curator, Gerald McMaster (1992) opens the catalogue by stating; "This time period, 1492-1992, has a five-hundred-year parallel history, Native and non-Native. The non-Native version tells of Columbus's 'discovery' of the 'New World.' Not only have Indigenous people disputed this claim since 1492, but numerous highly respected writers of 'official' history have also begun to see the facts differently. Those who were planning celebrations of 'discovery' hastily revised their proposals to read 'meeting of two worlds,' or 'encounters.' (p.11). The *Indigena* exhibition showcased nineteen First Nations artists from Canada: Kenny & Rebecca Baird, Carl Beam, Lance Belanger, Bob Boyer, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Domingo Cisneros, Joe David, Jim Logan, George Longfish, Mike McDonald,

Lawrence Paul, Edward Poitras, Jane Ash Poitras, Rick Rivet, Eric Robertson, Luke Simon, Lucy Tasseur, and Nick Sikkuark. Artists exposed events of the colonial past and spoke to the present condition of colliding cultural ideologies.

Rick Rivet produced a series of paintings that depicted aspects of the history of colonization such as images of Custer and the mass burial at Wounded Knee and the Spanish conquistadors. In his work, *Legacy*, (Figure 4), he depicts the Spanish conquistador as a rat dressed in armour wielding a cross as the weapon of genocide. Rivet (1992) speaks to the veneered historical accounts of colonialism, which in reality was an attempt to destroy Native culture and civilization for capitalist gain. He states that behind this veneer are racist attitudes that still exist today;

> I confront the idea of colonial history as a "common lie" perpetuated by colonial capitalist imperialists with the idea of dominating and subjugating Aboriginal people everywhere. Since the time of Columbus, there have been attempts to destroy Native culture and civilization through the denial of its unique history, religious beliefs, and general social/political organization. In effect, there is a denial of the Aboriginal right to sovereignty. At the heart of this system is an attitude of racism that prevails to the present day, based on European hierarchical political, socio-economic, and cultural organization. (in Canadian Museum of Civilization, p. 174–175).

Figure 4. *Legacy*, Rick Rivet, 1991, Acrylic on canvas, 168.5 x 122 cm.

The submerged history of genocide in North America has been slowly emerging into the public eye through literature and film in the past 2 decades. Much of the country's reactions have been of shock and disbelief. Because of the pain and shame associated with war and the ethnic cleansing of millions of innocent First Nations peoples, many Canadians would rather deflect this aspect of history by attributing the large number of deaths to disease epidemics, thus continuing the cycle of 'displacement' (Lutz, 1990), which will ultimately hinder the growth of the collective mindset, and repeat colonial patterns of the past, at least until the history of genocide is fully acknowledged.

TREATIES AND RESERVATIONS

Reservations in North America were implemented in the mid 1700s. The objective was to establish tight control of the lands and to isolate Native people from the public eye. The initial reservation system was perceived, by those subjected to it, as a form of prison camp, because Native people had to receive passes to go on and off the reserve. (It is interesting to note that South Africa based its system of apartheid on the Canadian reservation system, and apartheid is no longer politically viable in South Africa.) Not only movement but also food was controlled.

Reservation Indians had to receive food ration tickets (Figure 5) from an Indian agent. The food ration consisted of basic staples such as flour and sugar, and on occasion, meat products, which were typically spoiled or throw-away by-products not fit for human consumption. Furthermore, hunting and fishing were permitted only within reservation boundaries, most of which did not correlate with traditional hunting and fishing territories. This control over subsistence marked the beginning of governmental dependence of First Nations people, unparalleled "third world" poverty within Canada, and the decline of physical health. For First Nations, their substance, traditional practices, and independence were taken away, causing the morale of the communities to plummet and the social problems to skyrocket.

Figure 5. Food Ration tickets for reserves.

The injustices of the reservation system were addressed in Gerald McMaster's work entitled, *Trick or treaty* (Figure 6). McMaster critiques the policy-making of Sir John A. Macdonald during the 1870s–1880s. Macdonald was the prime minister responsible for the implementation of several reservations in central Canada, and is known for his adamant assimilationist policies and the hanging of Louis Riel. McMaster (1991) writes: "… Native peoples have always faced that situation of assimilation, of acculturation right from the time of contact. You could not be Indian. You could not speak your language. There was a pressure to conform to the rest of Canada." (in McMichael, p. 51). McMaster's visual pun was inspired by the image of the Joker in the

television series *Batman*. For him, treaties were, quite simply, a long-term trick to abolish land rights. Today, McDonald's iconic image on the Canadian five-dollar bill intended to represent the "Father of Confederation" also signifies a colonial ideology that forced assimilation of First Nations and erased their presence in Canadian history. Perhaps one day, a First Nations leader might adorn one of this country's bills, but not before there is a major shift in ideology. That can only take place with a balanced and honest representation of Canadian history and First Nations in our educational texts.

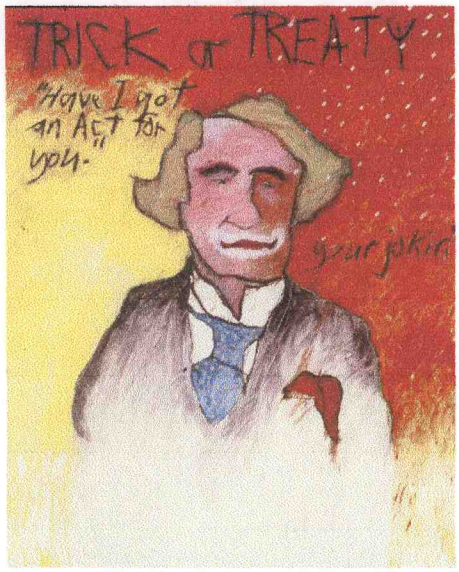

Figure 6. *Trick or treaty*, Gerald McMaster, 1990, Acrylic and pastel, 116 x 96 cm.

Joane Cardinal Schubert constructs a historical narrative of Treaty No 7 in Alberta in her work, *Great Canadian dream: Treaty no.7, 'The bargain'* (Figure 7). In the left panel she identifies the people involved in the treaty process;

> politicians, NWMP, Jerry Potts (interpreter) with the text, 'the bargain' behind his head, Crowfoot with the smoke of the symbolic 'peace pipe encircling him… On the bottom of the left panel was a generic Indian, (in reference to no name as per common practice of photos of 'no name' Indians in books) whom I put to use as a foreteller of the future – a hand raised in a warning gesture, the other hand supporting a peace lance. (Cardinal-Schubert, 2005, p.2)

On the right panel, the images depict the aftermath of death and destruction of a way of life:

> On the right panel is a symbolic depiction of the result of the bargain – death. A white buffalo, overlapped by a dying, falling, upside down horse a skeletal tipi on the far right, bottom mid-point a Woman, representing 'Maternity' holding a child-her dark cloak, furled, meeting the peace lance overflow, she stands on a bone yard – a pile of buffalo bones, to be made into fine china for the tables of European opulence. The smoke encircles the top to the tipi poles. The top of the canvas is framed following the outline of the top of the painting as it shapes the symbolic profile of landforms. (Cardinal-Schubert, 2005, p.2)

Today, one can still observe the impact of reservations and treaties. Small isolated plots that no one wanted left First Nations without economic means to sustain their families and communities. It has resulted in poverty and low morale that manifests in addictions, depression, suicide, violence, low retention in schools, and poor health conditions. There are some fortunate reserve communities who discovered natural resources on their land,

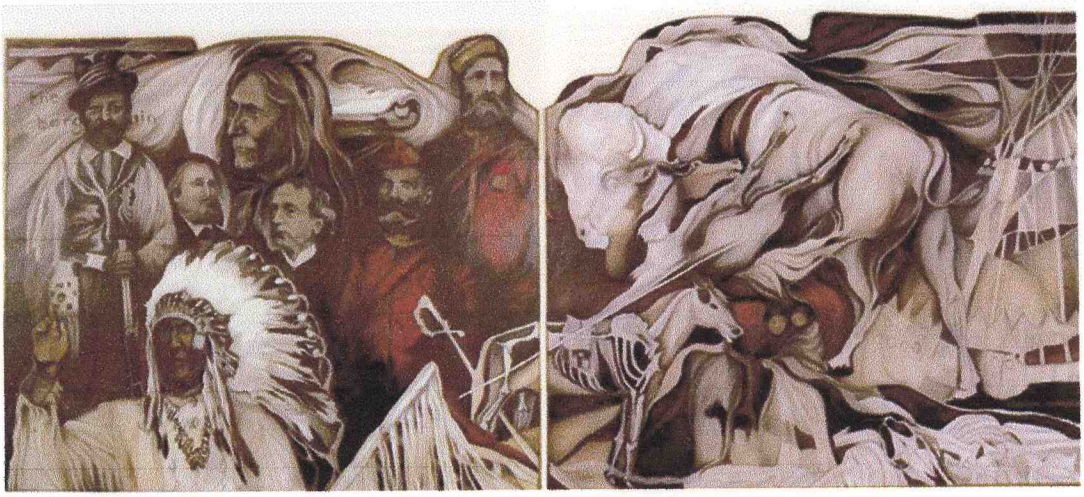

Figure 7. *Great Canadian Dream: Treaty no.7, 'The bargain'*, Joane Cardinal-Schubert, 1977. oil on canvas, 6.5 ' x 14 ', diptych- 2 x (6.5'x 7). Collection, Red Deer Museum and Archives

such as oil, or reside near city centres and are able to lease properties, which have contributed to their economic development, though these communities are far, and few between. On the positive side, the reserves today are seen by First Nations as community centres where cultural traditions can continue without outside interference. McMaster (1998) states, "Paradoxically, isolation helped to maintain aboriginal languages and many other traditional practices" (p. 19).

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Residential schools, also known as Christian boarding schools for First Nations students, evolved from an early school system in the mid 1600s called day schools. The day schools were established by the Hudson Bay Company for the purposes of educating children who lived near the fur trading posts. Students were of both Caucasian and Métis descent. Residential schools were first introduced in the United States in the mid 1700s. In

Canada, they emerged in the 1830s, and the last one closed down in 1989. By 1909, there were 77 Indian residential schools in Canada (Welsh, 2001).

In this time period, Christianity was central to early colonists; thus the primary focus of studies for Native children was through the Christian Bible. The objective of residential schools was to 'civilize' the Native children by indoctrinating them into western ideology and Christian faith, and by prohibiting First Nations language and culture in the school environment. Forced assimilation was legalized in government policy, specifically, Canada's Indian Act, Sections 114–123, which gave the government full control over Native education. The government had the power to establish, operate, and maintain schools, to control content of studies and activities, and to enforce mandatory attendance for all Native children. Children were forcibly taken from their parents and communities and isolated for long periods away from home. The residential system was said to offer an education of a sub-standard level, far less than the calibre of a standard public school. It has been suggested that this occurred due to the racism towards Native people, who were still perceived to be an inferior race and therefore did not need a high level education to pursue their menial existences. The low standard of education was also no doubt due to the basic curriculum produced by missionaries who were not trained teachers, and who also did not have the skills of rearing their own children. Lastly, in many cases, the majority of the Native child's school days were spent in child labour activities, such as janitorial and kitchen, and maintaining the school orchards and gardens which generated income for the schools.

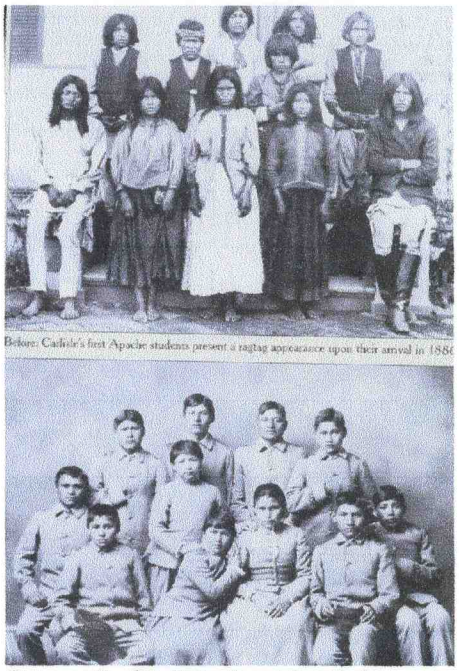

Figure 8. Carlisle Residential School, 1886.

Figure 8 demonstrates the impact of assimilation at the Carlisle Residential School in 1886 in the United States. Children who were once confident individuals are converted

to passive uniformity. Forced assimilation was justified in the mantra of the time, 'To kill the Indian and save the man.' The caption below the photograph reads: "Children arrive in ragtag appearance, six months later they are a vision of well groomed uniformity."

In addition to this Eurocentric educational system, other atrocities occurred behind closed doors. Missionaries abused countless children, physically, mentally, and sexually, in addition to the excessive discipline, poor diets, and child labour. The overall impact of the residential school system was devastating to First Nations communities Canada-wide. The community and family dislocation combined with the indoctrination of Euro-based education severely disrupted traditional roles and customs. Some customs were no longer practised, and some languages were on the verge of extinction.

In perhaps the most vicious turn of all, children of the residential school, when they became parents, lacked the parenting skills they would have learned from their families. For some, their conditioning in these schools led to repeated cycles of abuse in their own homes. Indoctrination into Christianity resulted in further divisions in communities between those who became devoted Christians and those who returned to the traditional teachings and spirituality of their culture.

Missionary work in First Nations communities is thought to be a thing of the past, yet contemporary missionaries still seek out Aboriginal communities throughout the world to convert. Canada is no exception. When I lived on a reserve in the interior of British Columbia, I was shocked to see young missionaries arriving for a couple of weeks, to provide 'day camps' for the children of the reserve. The community allowed this to occur because it alleviated the parenting load. The fact that the missionary's only objective was to indoctrinate these young minds with Christian ideology was passively overlooked by parents.

The experience of residential school left survivors with post-traumatic stress. Their dislocation from their families impacted their adult lives in a variety of ways such as identity crisis, depression, abandonment, and attachment issues, anxiety disorders, addictive behaviours, and dysfunctional relationships. If they were abused, the post-traumatic stress often became magnified to include intimacy issues, trust issues,

nightmares, flash-backs, violent behaviours, authority issues, lack of assertiveness, low self-esteem, psychotic breakdowns, and possibly repeat cycles of abuse in their own lives.

The survivors of residential schools today have had the courage to speak out about the abuse of children in residential schools and many healing programs have begun in their communities. Legal justice is also being pursued in courts across Canada. Books and videos have been produced to raise public awareness of this aspect of Canadian history. An informative and moving documentary of the lives and healing journey of one British Columbia community, titled *Kuper Island; Return to the healing circle*, is an excellent reference, and was directed by Métis artist and scholar, Christine Welsh.

THE SIXTIES SCOOP

The term the 'Sixties Scoop' refers to the apprehension of Native children by government social workers. The Sixties Scoop followed and overlapped the last period of residential schools, resulting in a continued dislocation of generations of children from their families, communities, and culture. In many ways the Sixties Scoop mirrored the residential school in its imposed paternalism, assimilation through dislocation, and abuses of children. In 1951, Amendment 88 of the Indian Act stated that all provincial laws would be enforced on reserves, thus allowing Social Services to apprehend children in reserve communities. Social Services were guaranteed payment for each child apprehended (Fournier & Crey, 1997). Other financial gains were made by selling children across the border to American adoption agencies, sometimes for as much as $4000.00 per child. "Thousands of Aboriginal children were scooped up in the fifties and sixties from Vancouver alone. A lot were sold south of the border, in Chicago, New York, Detroit, the Midwest. Some were used as slaves" (Maracle, in Fournier & Crey, 1997, p. 89). In 1981, 55 percent of Native children in Manitoba care were sent to the United States (Fournier & Crey, 1997). The number of apprehensions of Native children is staggering, especially when one considers that First Nations in Canada make up three to five percent of the population. From the 1960s through the 1980s, approximately 40 percent of all children in foster care in Canada were First Nations: in 1980, 15,000 children were in foster care. In British Columbia, in 1996, the percentage rose to 52 percent of all children in care, with 78

percent of these children in permanent care. Not surprisingly, Social Services of this period was critiqued for operating as a business rather than as a protection service for children and support structure for families in crisis. There was also a financial incentive for foster parents as they were paid monthly for taking children in. Thus, it was not uncommon for families to abuse the system and take several children in at a time.

Child labour was a third form of slavery in North American history, though it has had minimal exposure. Slavery of First Nations began immediately after contact with the Tainos who were used to mine gold, then in the 1800s children were used for labour in residential schools, with cleaning duties such as maintaining the school and grounds, washing everything down with bleach, sweeping, cleaning toilets and tending to farms and orchards. In the Sixties Scoop, children were used for child labour on farms and in homes. For example, many Native boys were put on farms to work and girls were used for housework. This type of exploitation of children in residential schools and the Sixties Scoop took away the childhood experience, which in a normal childhood should have been spent playing and being loved by family.

The abuse of children in foster homes occurred as a result of inadequate processes by Social Services, such as no screening of applications of foster parents, and minimal to no monitoring of activities in foster homes. This situation created an opportunity for further abuses of children resulting in the physical, mental, and sexual abuse of two out of three children in foster homes, a percentage confirmed by my own family experience in which seven children were fostered.

As with residential schools, the effects of fostering were often post-traumatic stress. which mirrored residential school post-traumatic stress. Survivors of both experiences suffered dislocation from their families, communities, and culture; they were often victims of physical, mental, and sexual abuse, and they were exploited for child labour. Some individuals have successfully coped with their post-traumatic stress through counselling, though many others ended up on the streets with no family support, or in jail. A 1990 prison survey in Prince Albert showed that 95 percent of Aboriginal prisoners grew up in a group home or foster home. Half to three quarters of Aboriginal street youth are from the foster care system (Fournier & Crey, 1997). Two documentary videos which offer a

personal look into the lives of Native foster children are *Richard Cardinal: A cry from a diary of a Métis child,* directed by Alanis Obomsawin (1986), and *Patrick's story*, directed by D. Cuthand (1999).

The question that often arises is: Why did the Sixties Scoop happen? The answer is because of systemic racism and inadequate parenting skills of residential school survivors. Systemic racism is evident in the assumed authority to uproot children from their homes without consent of the parents, and in the failure to assist Native parents in crisis to provide protection for these Native children in foster homes. Social Services should have been assisting these families with support systems to prevent the separation of families, rather than adding further trauma to a family in crisis by taking their children away, in many cases, permanently, without information or visitation rights.

Fortunately today, in some provinces apprehension methods have improved. Applicants for foster homes are screened with criminal checks; they have reference requirements; they must take mandatory preliminary workshops, and have regular monitoring. Some provinces attempt to follow ethical guidelines, when apprehensions are unavoidable, prioritizing placement of First Nations children within the extended family, community, or cultural environment. Overall, the Sixties Scoop has been critiqued as another form of cultural genocide, severing succeeding generations from their cultural ties.

The inadequate parenting skills of some residential school survivors was a result of: the loss of family role models in parenting; the negative role models of child abusers and methods employed by childless missionaries; and the lingering affects of post-traumatic stress added to the dilemma. The post-traumatic stress for many was so intense, it was easier to give their children up for adoption immediately after birth, creating another cycle of disconnection amongst communities.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

In the 1960s, political activism amongst First Nations began to rise in Canada, with the development of several political First Nations organizations and a growing number of protests, blockades and occupations that sought to protect First Nations rights. In Canada, political bodies, community members, warrior societies and an alliance with the American

Indian Movement (AIM) combined to challenge racial discrimination in governance, particularly where land and resources were involved.

First Nations artists began to use their work for the political purpose of raising awareness of past and current issues. They deconstructed inaccurate histories and representations, and presented political issues at hand. It was imperative that First Nation histories and stories be told in order to reclaim their identities and histories and to generate public awareness and support. Predominant themes that arose at this time were European contact and genocide, reservations, residential school, the Sixties Scoop, and government politics.

Gerald McMaster (1994) suggests that the impetus for political activism began after First Nations soldiers came back from World War II. The war armed First Nations with more than guns: they received an education, they were treated as equals amongst other soldiers and they learned of another standard of life outside the desperate reserves. This experience increased First Nations men's confidence and articulation skills, which in turn prepared them for political action in the 1960s. As soldiers returned home and became politically active through their organizations, artists also took political action, to expose First Nations issues and to seek justice. To all concerned, it was clear that the history had to be told before the mainstream could understand the present issues.

Artist and Professor of Native American studies, Alfred Youngman (2005) followed a similar pattern a generation later. He was drafted into the Vietnam war at the age of eighteen, and afterwards became politically active in his artwork and within First Nations protests. His work analyzed the United States government as well as "racism, colonialism, the reservation system, Christianity and the welfare state" (p. 2). He describes the censorship of politically-active work in the sixties while he was studying in Santa Fe at the Institute of American Indian Art: "It was ironic that Americans were in the far corners of the world promoting and fighting for free speech and we couldn't have free speech on campus - so they made me destroy a number of my works" (p. 2).

In his work, *Indian on pink and blue*, (Figure 9) he creates a visual pun of Aim toothpaste and the American Indian Movement (AIM). In his description of the process of

doing the work, it becomes apparent that not everyone 'gets' Native humour, especially when they are unaware of the history or politics of First Nations in this country:

> I had asked a Chippewa student here to go down to the Salvation Army to find a suit and I would use him as a model for a painting I wanted to do. He was to hold onto this Aim toothpaste and toothbrush as if he was advertising it, knowing full well that the American Indian Movement was the subtle message here. When I finished it, I took it downtown to get it framed and the person who was framing it asked me if my dentist commissioned the painting. I sold it to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in Ottawa and I think the minister had it in his office while Oka was being attacked by the army (Youngman, 2005, p. 4).

The political organizations were vital in changing existing government policies and protecting the rights of First Nations groups. Some of the organizations at the forefront of political advancement were the North American Indian Brotherhood, 1944–1959; the National Indian Brotherhood 1968, which later became the Assembly of First Nations in 1981; and the Canadian Métis Society, which became the Native Council of Canada in 1970. These political organizations were lobbying the government on several issues and challenging federal policies which oppressed First Nations rights.

Figure 9. *Indian on Pink and Blue,* Alfred Youngman 1986, Acrylic on canvas. 2' x 3'

Some of the most important policy documents challenged at this time were the Indian Act (1850), which disenfranchised Indians by banning political and cultural gathering and denying the right to vote; the Indian status regulations that discriminated against Native women removing their status and rights if they married a non-Native; and the *White paper* (1969), proposed by Trudeau and authored by Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, that was viewed as another assimilationist policy that proposed to abolish the Indian Act along with previous agreements about government responsibilities.

First Nations responses to such policies included significant documents such as the *Red paper* (1970), written by Harold Cardinal, who at that time was Cree President of the Indian Association in Alberta. This document challenged the assimilationist approach of the *White paper*. This paper was also known as *The unjust society paper*. Its sister paper was the '*Brown paper*' produced by the First Nations of Manitoba. *Indian control of Native education* (1972) produced by the Native Indian Brotherhood challenged Sections 114–123 of the Indian Act, which maintained absolute power to control First Nations education. This paper proposed policies such as local control of education, control of funding, and parental involvement in planning.

Aboriginal people have banded together often to take a political stance to protect their territories and their distinct rights. They have protested clear-cut logging and abolition of hunting and fishing rights to make more room for commercial enterprises. Two fairly recent Canadian events that have received public attention were the Oka crisis in 1990, in which developers wanted to build a golf course and condo development on a Mohawk burial ground in Kanesatake, and the British Columbia Treaty referendum in 2001, in which the British Columbia government invited the public to vote on whether or not to extinguish First Nations rights, which would have the effect of encroachment on traditional territories for economic development. Without knowing the historical agreements that already existed, the uninformed public would answer yes to all questions. First Nations couldn't possibly out-vote the opposition being only 4% of the population in British Columbia.

Figure 10. Oka Standoff- An army against families, 1990

The Oka stand-off (Figure 10) one of several attempts over the past 270 years when Mohawks fought against the encroachment onto their traditional territory, first by Sulpician priests, and later by the Oka municipality and developers (York, 1991). The Oka crisis stirred up First Nations from coast to coast, with caravans travelling to Montréal to support the Mohawks in crisis. Artists and film-makers produced works to let the public

know the other side of the story promulgated by the media. Most Canadians were unaware of the racist acts that occurred during the Oka crisis, by citizens in communities, by the Sureté de Quebec and the army. Mohawks in Kahnawake, men, women and children, were tear-gassed on their reserve and stoned off the reserve. Warriors were brutally beaten by soldiers in the middle of the night. Sureté de Quebec stationed police cars and army tanks at all the entrances on both reserves, searching vehicles and monitoring activity with their cameras. Figure 11 shows the final walk out of Kanesatake by community members at the end of the stand-off while the army stands by with bayonet guns. Shortly after this picture was taken, chaos broke out and the army rushed the group, with one soldier stabbing his bayonet into Waneek Horn-Miller's chest. She was only 14 years old. She survived to become a national icon as an Olympic water polo athlete and a spokesperson for the Oka crisis.

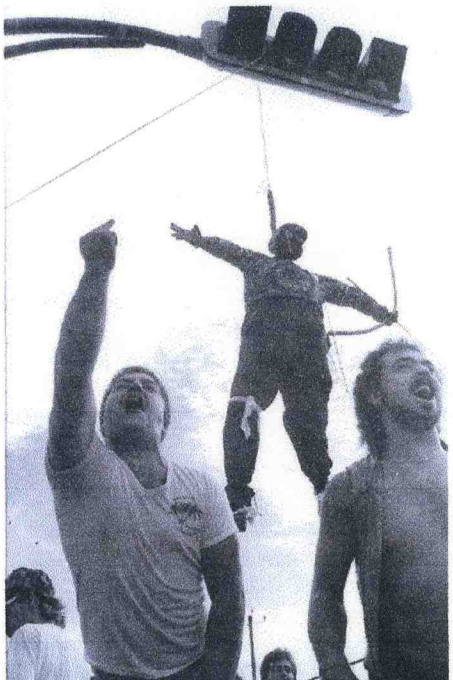

Figure 11. La Salle protest against Mohawks of Kahnawake, 1990.

Figure 11 reveals the ugly side of racism equalling the likes of the Klu Klux Klan, as the nearby community of LaSalle protested outside the Kahnawake reserve and hung a warrior effigy from a lamp post. After this picture was taken, a caravan of children, sick and elderly attempting to leave the dangerous political environment were pelted with stones by the white mob. Police standing by did not intervene. It was said by local Kahnawake members that one elder suffered a fatal heart attack during the stoning, though no written details could be found in the media coverage.

The 1960s through the 1970s saw a resurgence of strength and voice not only for First Nations political organizations but also by First Nations artists. During this time, art organizations began actively to protect and support First Nations art in Canada. Concerned for the commodification and decline of First Nations art production, these organizations worked to protect integrity and to promote cultural production. Some of these organizations

were the Society for the Furtherance of B.C. Indian Arts and Crafts, first begun in 1940, the Montreal Guild, and the B.C. Society (McMaster, 1994).

Since that time, political activism has concentrated largely on protecting First Nations hunting and fishing rights, protecting traditional territories from the commercial industry, and attending to land claim settlements.

The work of individual artists has also contributed significantly to these political goals. Artist Lawrence Paul, who is Cowichan and Okanogan, is well known for tackling racism and injustices head on. Growing up with politically-active parents, he is well-versed in politics and has addressed a variety of issues in his work, such as colonialism, genocide, residential schools, reserves, land claims, racism, environmental issues, and the Indian Act. Paul, like many First Nations artists, has sought to bring public awareness to these issues. His work has also encouraged others to produce work for themselves, as a therapeutic process of ridding the body, mind and spirit of the negative energy that racial politics generates. In discussing his work *Burying the face of racism* he describes his dual purpose to combat racism in which the work memorializes all the First Nations who have suffered at the hands of racism in this country and at the same time the artistic process purges his own anger toward racism:

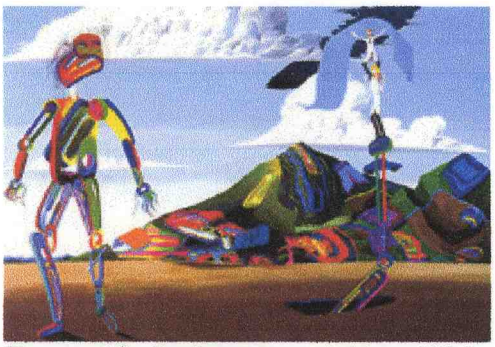

Figure 12 *Red man watching White Man trying to fix hole in the sky.* Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, 1990 Acrylic on canvas. 142.2 x 226.1 cm.

> I think Native people are confronted in their everyday lives with racism. I thought about how do Native peoples deal with post-colonial stress disorder, how do they deal with racism that is thrown in their face all the time? You kind of bury it in your mind. ...I don't think that Aboriginal people have a place to mourn to have solitude, to have a sanctuary. ...It is a memorial to free one's mind up instead of carrying it around all the time, you bury it, put it away [rather] than to carry the hate. (Paul, 2005, p. 3)

Several of Paul's other works address environmental issues, critiquing the destruction of the earth by commercial industry for capitalistic motives. In *Red man watching white man trying to fix hole in the sky* (Figure 12), he addresses the destruction of

the ozone layer. In his statement in the *Indigena* catalogue, he contextualizes his work in the decelebration of colonial arrival:

> I cannot celebrate toxicological environmental hazards that are disrupting ecosystems, creating health hazards, causing toxic death as a result of the industrialization of the resources of ancestral lands by civilized man. I cannot celebrate oil spills, Exxon Valdez, hydrogen sulphide, mercury poisoning of fish by the James Bay flooding, contamination from pulp mill effluent released into the oceans and rivers, dioxins, furans;... Shareholders should be accountable and be fined. Clean your land. This earth is not a latrine, an outhouse where you can urinate toxins. But I wish you well Long knives. (Paul in Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1992. p. 158)

Another artist well-known for his political work is Ron Noganosh, an Ojibway from Magnetawan Reserve, Ontario. Some of the predominant topics that Noganosh addresses are environmental degradation, genocidal wars, and corporate greed on a national and local level. Bringing forward these concerns shared amongst all Canadians, he reveals the connection to First Nations concerns about acts of war, colonization and the destruction of land in North America. He not only speaks to these political issues, but aligns them with the impact on the First Nations today, such as poverty, alcoholism, and depression. The retrospective of his work at the Ottawa Art Gallery and the Woodland Cultural Centre in 2001 entitled *It takes time* surveys national and local themes of crimes against humanity and life overall, such as animals and the land. His work, *Innu* (Figure 13), addresses the low-level flying of the Canadian army over the traditional territory of the Innu, which disrupts natural migration patterns of the wildlife in the area and consequently impacts the traditional hunting practises of the Innu.

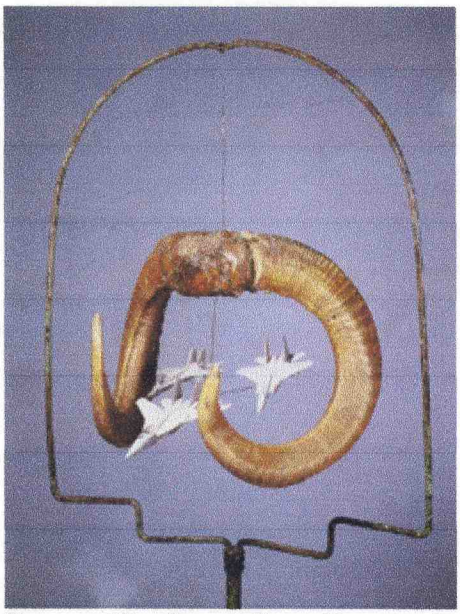

Figure 13. *Innu,* Ron Noganosh. 1990. Plastic airplanes, Big Horn sheep antlers. 160 x 43 x 29 cm.

Political artworks that address past or current issues have been received by the public in varying ways, depending on their previous knowledge of issues. Some people

react by feeling uncomfortable, defensive, empathetic, guilt-ridden, or angry. Extreme denial can manifest in defensiveness, blaming the victims and taking the historical accounts as a personal attack against white Canadians. This type of reception only creates further distance and polarization amongst groups. It is not surprising that these types of reactions would occur. Without education in First Nations history, one would be extremely shocked to learn something so contrary to established beliefs about Canadian history. Intense reactions and emotions are a consistent pattern that I have observed in students when they learn about First Nations history for the first time. I term this phenomenon a 'Fractured world view crisis.' This fracturing occurs when an individual is faced with new information which appears to contradict what is perceived as the 'norm' or truth. Often this new information challenges ingrained societal ideologies and can result in a fracturing of perspective as new information is processed. In a conversation with Mi'kmaq educator and writer, Dr. Mary Battiste (2001), I described this phenomenon and she suggested that when people are presented with new information different from their ideology, they would typically process the new information to create a consistency in which they can identify. This internal process involves, generally, four steps: perception of internal inconsistency, followed by confusion and incoherence, followed by the search to align the new information with something they can identify with, and lastly the cognitive transformation. For others already familiar with First Nations history, the translation into the current political context is more easily accomplished. There are many people in society that are eager to learn more about First Nations of Canada.

Many people perceive political art as full of anger. Author Scott Vickers (1998) describes the political work by contemporary First Nations as possessing "Anger with a capital A." In his book, *Native American identities: From stereotype to archetype in art and literature*, he postulates that this anger could be a universal expression for all marginalized peoples, oppressed by 'bad contact history' (p. 116). I would agree with Vickers, in that artists who originate from a colonized history do share a commonality in the re-telling of their own histories of colonialism. It is true that artists have expresses their feelings of anger towards the atrocities of colonialism in North America and the continued racism in society and governance, and I would also argue that the art process is a

therapeutic purging of racial ideology. Just as Lawrence Paul speaks about carrying around anger and producing art to rid himself of it, Alfred Youngman reflects on the importance of getting anger out of his system through his art and writing. He comments that "Indian people who do not have a similar opportunity, a forum to address these issues on a daily basis, well, as I have said before, this is and can be destructive" (Paul, 2005, p. 5). The anger in political art can also be an expression of repulsion at the difficult aspects of history and racism. Therefore it is important not to undermine or dismiss the content, as these works serve as important social commentary, as do other political works within the mainstream.

First Nations artists must continue to produce work that analyzes the current political state and colonial forms of hegemony so as to create a dialogue that raises awareness and generates support. The re-writing of colonial history by artists has balanced the scale of representation in Canadian history and provides the context for political issues of today. These artists have refused to be the victims of a racial legacy, by taking a stand, exposing injustices, decolonising the mind of racial ideology and moving towards a place of collective empowerment. These vocal and courageous artists have broken new ground for the upcoming generation of artists, who can now focus on the current political issues with a new sense of empowerment.

CHAPTER 5

THE IDEOLOGY OF STEREOTYPES

In this section, I examine the societal conditions in which stereotypes are constructed, extending the research on two levels: first, stereotypes are examined in the context of societal ideologies from colonial contact to present day; second, the construction of stereotypes is examined as a projection of society's unconscious ideology.

I have built my theories of stereotypes upon the founding work of scholars and artists who have identified and exposed the fallacies of stereotypes of First Nations. In the mid- to late-twentieth century, many works were published, the most notable being: *Fluff and feathers* (Doxtator, 1988); *Construction of the imaginary Indian* (Crosby, 1991); *Indian princesses and cowgirls, Stereotypes from the frontier* (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995); *Native American identities: From stereotype to archetype in art and literature* (Vickers, 1998); *Images of Indians* (Sampson, 1984, Four Worlds Development Project); *First Nations—Native stereotypes.* (Ministry of Advanced Education and Training, 1992). These examinations exposed the racist and romantic representations of Native people, and have contributed greatly to the public awareness of stereotypes.

Haida scholar Marcia Crosby produced a well-known article entitled *The imaginary Indian* (1991), which extended the discourse of stereotypes to examining the societal conditions in which stereotypes are constructed.

> I do believe that since educational institutions play such a vital role in shaping attitudes and beliefs, it is imperative that Indian myths and stereotypes not only be identified as such, but are examined in terms of the conditions under which they evolved along with their continuing function in contemporary society. (p.275)

Crosby's research revealed conflicting romantic and racist societal perspectives about First Nations on the west coast of British Columbia in the early to mid-1900s. Crosby boldly challenged the myth-making of Canadian society and revealed how imagined constructions become the "truth" once they are written in texts and recycled. For example, she critiques the notion that Bill Reid revived west coast First Nations art, which is a fallacy, as the production of west coast art has always been active, with many

practising and exceptional artists. Reid, however, had plenty of public exposure, perhaps due to the connections he had with the mainstream urban audience, prior to connecting with the Haida community late in his life. Because this misunderstanding was created from outside west coast cultures, society at large was unaware of the practising artists within these communities, therefore this notion became reality to many people and became another circulated myth. Only now, as a result of the historical research on stereotypes produced by the above scholars and artists, and many others that are not mentioned here, are people reconsidering these past constructions and searching for the answer as to who First Nations are.

The following chapter outlines the terminology associated with my theory about stereotyping. This is followed by a historical overview of stereotypes, and then accounts of attempts to dispel the myths. The chapter culminates with theories of stereotypes as projections of the despised, repressed and idealized self, and as political tools that perpetuate racial ideology.

STEREOTYPES AND IDEOLOGY DEFINED

Stereotypes

Stereotypes can be defined as a society's generalized notions and opinions of a distinct group of people defined by culture, race, gender, sexuality, class, and political or religious affiliation. These generalized notions originate outside the group that they are attempting to define. Often stereotypes can be created by the observance of isolated incidents of the 'Other,' which can then lead to a generalization about an entire group of people. The stereotypes stem from an uninformed outsider perspective and minimal direct experience of the Other. They are, in fact, imagined constructions or myths, which ultimately perpetuate prejudice. The construction of stereotypes is shaped by a society's cultural ideological perspective.

Ideology

The term 'ideology' refers to embedded values and beliefs that direct social, political and religious practice in a society. As ideology is unconscious in the minds of the masses, it can be used by governing forces to manipulate the populace. As a political tool,

ideology can be used to perpetuate propaganda and conceal the true nature of social realities. Using popular ideological themes and language, it can sway public opinion in favour of political agendas. In excluding other cultural realities, ideology creates oppression.

Ideology informs the set of moral values held by and individual or group about how they view their ethnicity and other ethnic groups. Ethnic ideology can evolve into racial ideology when a system of ideas about a particular ethnic group is singled out as Other within the dominant society. Further, ethnocentric beliefs can perpetrate discriminatory and racist attitudes and practices in society that are reinforced through stereotypical constructions of the Other. In the agenda of colonial imperialism, racial ideology has been a key factor in the racial propaganda used to support acts of genocide and take-over of territories. Barthes (1972 in Vickers, 1998) describes the transformation of ideology into stereotypes that result in a fixed, categorical object:

> Ideology continually transforms the products of history into essential [stereo] types ... it cannot rest until it has obscured the ceaseless making of the world, fixated this world into an object which can be forever possessed, catalogued its riches, embalmed it, and injected into reality some purifying essence which will stop its transformation, its flight towards other forms of existence. (p. 27)

Essentially, the stereotype in and of itself is a reflection of collective society's ideologies, a manifestation of subjective unconscious projections. In this research, I examine these unconscious projections of stereotypes as an extension of the despised self, the repressed self, and the idealized self. This aspect of the research is built upon the research of Vickers (1998). In his text, Vickers examines externally-produced constructs of Native people's identities throughout the period of early colonization in the United States. He describes the primary stereotypes as either the romantic, noble "savage" or the ignoble savage that was primitive, hostile, and devilish.

Vickers asserts that the construction of negative stereotypes of First Nations was linked to the racial ideologies of the government and church, whose primary objectives were colonial expansion and the assimilation of Native people. Vickers suggests that the stereotypes dehumanized and homogenized First Nations, allowing colonists to marginalize Native identities theologically, physically, and economically, and to justify

their actions through their religion. Most importantly, Vickers suggests that the negative stereotypes were projections of the colonial self, created to "ascribe its origin to someone else" in order to "get rid of it" (p. 32).

This body of research extends Vickers' research to include the ideological underpinnings of the majority of stereotypes since colonial contact. I do not categorize the stereotypes as "positive" and "negative," as Vickers does. I consider all stereotypes negative insofar as they are false representations. I begin with the unconscious projections in which stereotypes of First Nations originate.

The despised self

The despised self is the dark side of the self-described in Jungian theory as "the shadow." When this form of the self is denied, it is unconsciously projected onto another person or group. Vickers (1998) suggests that the stereotype of "blood thirsty savages" was a projection of the unacknowledged brutal self of the colonizers who murdered millions of First Nations people. The stereotypes of First Nations as "evil devil-worshippers" were a Puritan Christian projection of its own "persecuting spirit" (Vickers, 1998). Vickers states that colonists unconsciously projected the image of their despised selves onto Indians in order to rid themselves symbolically of their sins and fears. The extermination of First Nations was the extermination of those sins and fears.

The repressed self

The repressed self refers to the suppressed inner desires, which are lived out through the projection of the desire onto another. The repressed self, in terms of the puritan ideology of the colonial past, primarily relates to repressed sexuality. The projection of the repressed self can be seen in the early captivity narratives in the 1600s, which typically depict Native men capturing and possibly raping a white woman. These narratives have been critiqued as a form of pornography (Laroque, 1992). Today, they are replaced by numerous romance novels with variations on the theme of adventurous "savage love." The wild west poster girl series of the 1920s-1950s began with the romantic Indian princess stereotype and evolved into sexual poses of white women dressed up in Native regalia or cowboy outfits. The former reflects the desire to connect with nature, and the latter reflects the female desire for sexual liberation and wildness.

The idealized self

The projection of the idealized self fulfills desires vicariously through identifying with another. Idealization suggests that the perceptions are unrealistic and exaggerated, and are intended to invent an ideal identity. The perceptions of First Nations people as exotic, mysterious, noble people who lived at one with the land can be seen in the 1600s in Jesuit writings, in the mid-1700 European romantic writings, in twentieth century kitsch art of Indian princesses and noble chiefs living in harmony with nature, and finally in the twenty-first century's "new agers" and "wannabees" (Doxtator, 1988). Cowboy films offered another kind of idealized identity in the figures of perpetual heroes in their war against the 'Indians,' who were cast as the villains, in order to up hold the dynamic of the idealized colonial hero.

These idealizations by historical and current immigrants reflect their disconnection from homeland and their loss of spiritual and cultural roots. First Nations identity was perceived as being connected to the land culturally and spiritually. The desire to attain this same connectedness was vicariously lived out in representations of Native identity, or assumption of Native identity. It is true First Nations culture is rooted to the land and that traditional First Nations philosophy is holistic in nature, but the exaggerations in romantic representations are not reality.

STEREOTYPES THROUGHOUT HISTORY

The review of stereotypes of First Nations throughout history provides examples of how the common thread of ethnocentric racial ideology runs parallel to the transitions of mythological stereotypes, which are manifestations of the despised, repressed and idealized selves of the collective colonial mindset.

Conquest and racial ideology

Ethnocentrism was the root of great atrocities that occurred during the colonization of North America. For colonizers, the primary ideology revolved around the riches of the new land, and increased wealth and power. For Christians, the primary ideology was their "one truth," and their "one true" God. The "heathen" Indians needed to be converted to Christianity. The conversion of more people to the Christian faith also translated into more

power for the church. These two clearly ethnocentric ideologies permitted governing bodies to meet their needs by collaborating to subdue the Indian. By dehumanizing and homogenizing Native people through the control of representation and the creation of derogatory stereotypes, colonists were able to justify genocide and the take-over of land, people, and spirit. Genocide and the notion of a disappearing race physically and symbolically removed the Indian, thus ridding the colonizers of their guilt and allowing them to avoid addressing the current realities of First Nations peoples.

By projecting immoral actions onto others, colonizers could distance themselves from that behaviour and therefore falsely justify their actions. When one reads anything that pertains to the genocide and methods of forced assimilation in North America, one has to wonder whom, in fact, were the real "barbaric and brutal savages." Documentation of the cruelty of genocidal practices was often found in the journals of soldiers who describe the murders of women and children. Headhunting of First Nations by armies in Canada and the United States included the collection of scalps or noses. Stannard (in Vickers 1998) writes about the racial ideology of the Indian policy of the 1830s in which the then-president of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Andrew Jackson, known as a famous Indian killer, was responsible for authorizing the holocaust of North America:

> [Andrew Jackson] ... had supervised the mutilation of 800 or so Creek Indian corpses—the bodies of men, women, and children that he and his men had massacred—cutting off their noses to count and preserve a record of the dead, slicing long strips of flesh from their bodies to tan and turn into bridle reins (p. 16).

In Canada with the methods of genocide included scalp headhunting, germ warfare through the distribution of the smallpox virus, and slavery. Early colonists shared the disregard for First Nations revealed in Cartier's narrative of 1534: "This people may well be called savage, for they are the sorriest folk there can be in the world, and the whole lot of them had not any thing above the value of five sous, their canoes and fishing-nets excepted" (Miller, 2000, p. 31).

The stereotypes of "devilish, savage heathens" perpetuated by colonial Catholicism were a reflection of the ethnocentric ideology and a projection of Catholicism's own "persecuting spirit" (Vickers, 1988). Christianity believed in one universal truth. Upon arrival to this new land, Christian colonists discovered different

forms of spirituality. This realization threatened the Christian paradigm of truth, and action had to be taken to maintain the absolute authority of their belief system. "There were two possible responses: either to admit that this law was not universal or to exterminate the Indians so as to remove the evidence" (Baudrillard, in Vickers, 1998, p. 30). This extermination was carried out both physically, through genocidal actions, and culturally, through proselytization. Missions and residential schools were options that allowed religious colonists to sidestep the injunction "Thou shall not kill." Instead, their plan was to destroy the spirit and cultural identity of the Indian. This plan to "kill the Indian and save the man" removed the threat to their beliefs, while allowing the colonists to maintain a feeling of virtue. This ethnocentric ideology, "persecuting spirit," and patronization is evidenced in many diaries of priests:

> Let the miserable condition of these naked savages of the devil move you to compassion towards them. They acknowledge that there is a great God, but they know him not, wherefore they serve the devil for fear, after a most base manner… they live naked of body, as if the shame of their sin deserved no covering…. They esteem it a virtue to lie, deceive, steal … if this be their life, what think you shall become of them after the death, but to be partakers with the devil and his angels in hell forever more? (Whitaker, in Vickers, 1998, p. 36).

Exotic, erotic savage: Captivity narratives

Starting in the 1600s, fiction-based captivity narratives were introduced. Typically, these narratives depicted warriors descending on a colonial settlement, killing and pillaging, and then making their escape with a hostage, in most cases, a young white woman. The captive woman is forced to live among the "barbaric" Indians and is repeatedly tortured and raped. After some time, however, the woman is saved by the white men of her settlement. Upon her return, she relates in great detail the brutality she suffered at the savage hands of her captors (Laroque, 1992). These captivity stories are now critiqued as pornography for their time: these "Descriptions of torture, to some minds at least, is titillating, arousing the passions" (Doxtator, 1988, p. 36). It could be said then that these stereotypes of Native people as rapists were in fact a reflection of repressed sexual desire.

Today, these captivity narratives have been replaced by mass-produced romantic novels (Figure 14) which mimic the early narratives of 1600s and demonstrate how long residual ideology can exist in a society. These novels typically depict similar themes of the capture of a white woman by a Native man, either a wagon raid or as she naively wanders through the forest. At first the woman resists her captor, though later relents and falls in love with him due to his handsome features: long black hair, strong body and brown complexion, untamed nature. And she comes to admire the beauty of his culture. The Native male characters usually do not have typical Native facial features, but white features with brown skin, or they are blonde 'half breeds'. The story includes lengthy segments elaborating on the sexual intimacy shared between the two. The final segment describes the woman's return to her community, which inevitably shuns her for now she is tainted, tarnished by the Indian connection. The narrative ideology provides a continued example of society's repressed sexuality, which leads to the desire to pursue the 'wild men' of Native cultures. As Doxtator (1988) states, "Once having experienced the joys of an Indian lover, everyone else is just too tame" (p.36).

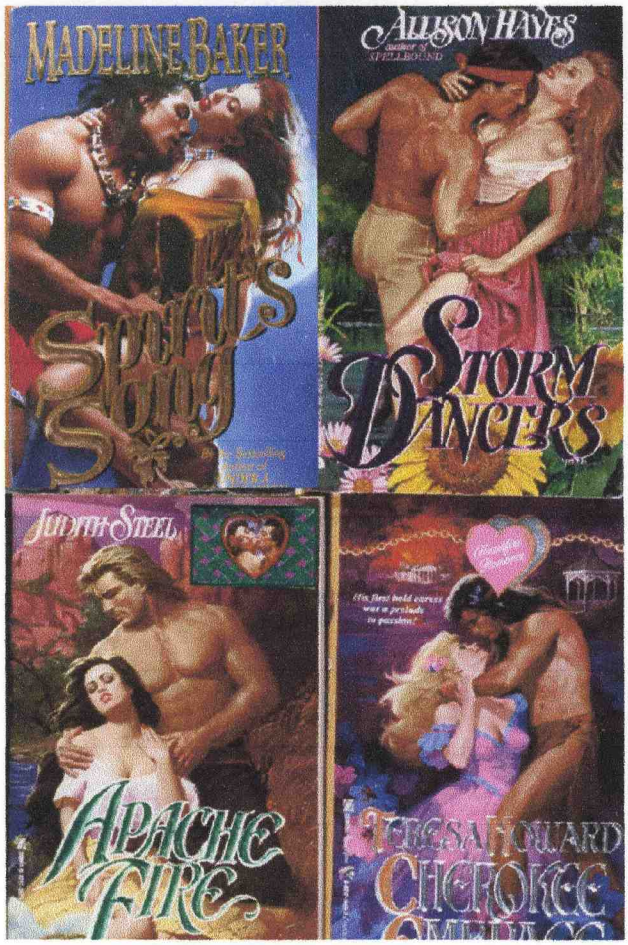

Figure 14. Romance Novels: *Spirit song,* Madeline Baker, 1999, *Storm dancer,* Allison Heyes, 1992, *Apache Fire,* Judith Steel, 1992, *Cherokee Embrace,* Teresa Howard, 1992.

These captivity themes also extended themselves into cowboy and Indian movies, though the movie stereotype focussed more on the Native as a barbaric savage. In the

movies, the heroine is depicted as being saved in the nick of time, before she becomes barbaric, wild, and savage, like her captors. There was a belief that if one were to experience prolonged contact with Native people, the captive would become uncivilized, barbaric, and even insane (Sampson, 1984, Four Worlds Development Project). The captive would no longer be considered human, because they would have lost their civilized, white self.

The villain: The wild west

From the mid 1880s to the early 1900s, the "wild west" expanded significantly and was booming with settlements. In this time, wild west shows, the "enactments" of cowboy and Indian battles, became extremely popular. These shows were invented by "Buffalo Bill" (William F. Cody), who was the central hero of these fictitious enactments. Aside from being known as a showman and shrewd businessperson, Cody also had a hidden past as a mercenary Indian-scalper for the army and as a slaughterer of buffalo. The Buffalo Bill shows were yet another opportunity to line his pockets by re-enacting the killing of Indians. Cody's shows profited him a million dollars per year, as he capitalized on the riding skills of Native people and their naive business skills.

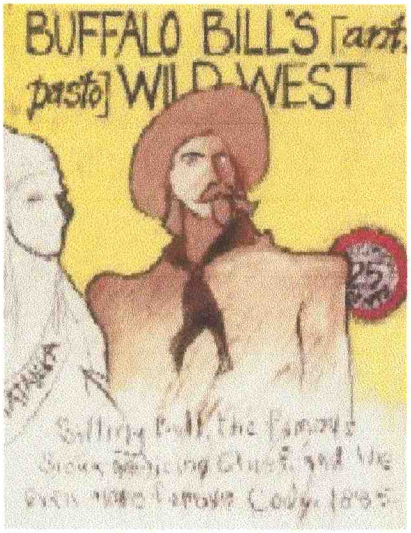

Figure 15. *Buffalos Bill's (antipasto) wild west,* Gerald McMaster, 1990. acrylic and pastel, 114x94 cm

Artist Gerald McMaster noted how First Nations were used as backdrops in Buffalo Bill's shows and in cowboy and Indian movies: "Buffalo Bill used Indians. He used Arabians. History tells us that Gabriel Dumont joined the wild west show, too, for a while after the Rebellion. Perhaps he was used as a stereotype of a Métis" (McMaster, in McMichael Canadian Art Collection, p. 25). In *Buffalo Bill's [antipasto] wild west* (Figure 15), McMaster refers to the shows as "antipasto, " since they precede the appropriately named "spaghetti westerns" later produced in Italy. McMaster extends this idea by juxtaposing the faceless ghost of Chief Sitting Bull beside the famous Buffalo Bill. The text pointing to Sitting Bull says, "Sitting

Bull, the famous Sioux medicine chief, and the even more famous Cody, 1885." The word *Tatanka* written across Sitting Bull's chest is a shortened Sioux translation of Sitting Bull's name *Tatanka Yotanka,* a sarcastic remark indicating that this is "Bull!"

In these movie dramatizations, the whites are threatened by the unpredictable Indians and when all seems lost, Cody comes to the rescue. Of course, the Natives lose once again. The shows were promoted as authentic and as positive education for the public (Doxtator 1988). Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, historically, Native people won most of the battles against the whites. Nevertheless, wild west shows gained so much popularity that they were shown all over Canada, the United Sates, and across Europe. Doxtator (1988) writes:

> A "Western" fashion sensation swept Paris the summer the wild west show toured Europe as men women and children imitated the dress of cowboys and Indians. Hundreds of western Indian clubs sprang up in Germany as a result of the mania created by the show and by western novels of the "German Cooper" by Karl May. (p.18)

While wild west shows are an event of the past, there are current events that echo the nostalgia of this period. In Germany, a popular events such as *der wilde Westen* cultivate the colonial frontier fantasies by reconstructing large pseudo Native encampments with locals dressed up in Native costumes attempting to 'relive' history in the natural wilderness. In Regina, Saskatchewan, *Buffalo days* replaces the wild west shows with an annual fair. Overlooking the fair grounds is a giant rendition of Buffalo Bill riding a bison. Regina also has the *Piles of bones day* event, where, in contrast to Germany's pseudo Indian enactments, locals dress up in colonial costumes and provide stage shows for the public.

Western dime novels correlated with the wild west shows in their popularity from about 1860 into the 1930s. These novels depicted similar cowboy and Indian battles, and they were so popular that they generated millions of dollars of revenue (Sampson, 1984, Four Worlds Development Project).

The question remains: Why were these wild west shows so popular? The stereotype of First Nations as unpredictable and wild provided the perfect evil character in the archetypal battle between good and evil. These enactments were not based on reality

but were in fact colonial mythology (Campbell, 1988). The stereotype of the Indian as "villain" was a convenient carry-over of the "brutal savage" of the projected the despised self in early colonization. The continuous story line of the colonist as the hero and the 'Indian' as the villain reflected the colonial desire to be the invincible hero. This ideology elevated and empowered "American manhood" (Doxtator, 1988). It continued through the mid 1900s with the new media of films of cowboy and Indians.

Figure 16. Movie still from *Arrow Head*

The wild savage: Cowboy and Indian movies

Wild west portrayals had a significant influence on the public and laid the ideological groundwork for the production of approximately 2000 cowboy and Indian movies, between 1913 to the late 1900s (Sampson, 1984). The movies portrayed Indians as savages and renegades, killers of innocent pioneer women and children, as shown in the movie *Arrow Head* (Figure 16). The few Indian characters not portrayed as ruthless murderers were depicted as worthless drunks, or the females as whores. These subordinating stereotypes heightened the status of the hero cowboy by contrast. This is especially true in the case of the "Indian sidekick." The most famous Indian sidekick of all was 'Tonto,' which is a Spanish word for 'stupid' and therefore clearly illustrates the overt racism prevalent in these films. Tonto's character, along with many other Native characters in film within this period, often used white actors with wigs and dark paint on their face (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Movie Still from Tonto, 1956

Gerald McMaster's work, *End of the trail* (Figure 18) displays the most well-known images of First Nations in film and literary media, such as a generic chief, medicine man, Tonto and Lone Ranger. Central to this work is the infamous, overly-generated image of the

and Lone Ranger. Central to this work is the infamous, overly-generated image of the exhausted, surviving warrior on a horse. In the background is a plains narrative style drawing of warriors on horses following imaginary pink bison. The faceless stereotypes and comic style images of Natives subtly point to the fictitious nature of these generic representations, which were constructed for public entertainment.

When one reflects on cowboy and Indian movies, the most popular actor that comes to mind is iconic American hero, John Wayne. He emanated smooth confidence, with a fast draw at the gun, an invincible hero. Wayne had a side to him that gained him a reputation of having racist views towards Native people. John Wayne stated: "I do not feel we did wrong by taking this great country from them. There were great numbers of people who needed new land and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it all for themselves" (Wayne in Vickers, 1998, p. 40).

Figure 18. *End of the trail,* Gerald McMaster, 1991 acrylic on canvas, 134.75 x 196 cm.

Dispelling myths in movies

The video, *Images of Indians*, produced by the Four Worlds Development Project (1984) and hosted by First Nations actor Will Sampson, offers a concise historical account of the transition of stereotypes of First Nations in cowboy and Indian movies. The video is dated now, though it was advanced for its time. It explores the history of stereotypes in film, the colonial ideological underpinnings of myth-making, and the impact of cowboy and Indian movies on Native youth, making this video an excellent resource for teachers. Educating youth about stereotypes requires explaining their fictional and mythological context, to help youth realize that these movies are not real depictions of Native people or history. These stereotypes have had a negative impact on this generation of young people. They are ashamed of how they have been represented, and in turn, this shame affects their

self esteem. Professor Laroque (1992) states that young people "are led to believe that their identity is only in the past and they can't go into the future. You can understand that they are psychologically, intellectually and emotionally paralyzed." (In *First Nations-Native stereotypes*. [video]). Overall, teaching about stereotypes would be helpful to the healing of First Nations communities, decolonizing minds of fictional and racial representations.

The mythologizing of First Nations cultures in film, especially the representations of ceremony and spirituality, legends, and values, essentially mirrors Caucasian values and preconceived notions. These movies were not historically accurate; instead, they were creations of white fantasy, a projection of the idealized self. So while, as mentioned earlier, First Nations historically were great warriors and won most of their battles, in films they were the repeated losers, the constantly vanquished. Hollywood "Indian" costumes were equally fantastic, often strange distortions of various Plains regalia, tantamount to mixing Basque and Polish culture and calling it Portuguese. The simulated Native language in movies was nothing more than gibberish, an enacting of simplified stereotyped versions of complex Native languages.

Depictions of spiritual rituals were also fabrications, with some aspects simply imported from other cultures, and others based only loosely on fact. For example, bloodletting to make a pact to become brothers was never a practice of First Nations. Rather this was a practice of European secret societies (Sampson, 1984) such as the Masons, many of whom were founding members of American society (e.g., George Washington). Sun Dances, depicted as tests of endurance and manhood, in reality revolve around the spiritual belief of self-sacrifice as a way of giving thanks, or praying for someone, or fulfilling a commitment from a Sun Dance dream. Sun Dances are held in large, open, outdoor lodges and are from sun-up to sundown for four days. Not all dancers are suspended from the pole, and both male and female dancers dance around the circumference of the lodge in small enclosures. The notion that Sun Dances were a demonstration of male stamina is far from the concept of real Sun Dances, which are an expression of prayer and sacrifice for others, personal commitments and cultural obligation.

The stereotypes of First Nations as blood-thirsty murderers were equally unfounded. The idea that scalping was a Native method of killing was in fact a projection of western practices that were, ironically, used on Native people. The United States army and the French army in Canada both employed these brutal acts as a method of keeping count of dead Native people (Sampson, 1984). With each scalp came a cash reward.

In the mid to late 1900s, cowboy and Indian movies began to disappear and societal ideology shifted from a view of the Native person as inferior, to a growing interest in First Nations culture. As a result, Native roles in film began to change and Native people were given the opportunity to act. No longer were Native characters in films depicted as wild savages or mere backdrops to the cowboy narrative. They began to act in significant roles, though usually the 'white man' was the central character and hero of the story. In this time of transition, some of the most famous movies about Natives were: *A Man called Horse*, *Broken Heart*, *Chief Crazy Horse*, *Geronimo,* and *Little Big Man*. In the 1970s, individual roles for Native people were developed that humanized First Nations characters more. Significant movies of this period include *Fish hawk, One flew over the coo-coo's nest*, and, more recently, *Black robe*, *Dances with wolves*, and *The last of the Mohicans.* Today, there are several films that continue to maintain the role of the white man as the hero, though this is being balanced by films and documentaries directed by First Nations, such as Canadian directors, Dana Claxton, Annie Frazier, Zacharias Kunuk, Catherine. Martin, Shelley Niro, Loretta Todd, Alanis Obomsawin, Christine Welsh, and Gary Farmer, to name a few.

The noble Indian: The romantic era

The romantic stereotypes of Native people are constructed perceptions, and in part operate as projections of the idealized self, and/or the repressed sexual self, such as in romantic novels. The projection of the idealized self begins with an absence within the self and the desire to fill this absence with the identity and lifestyle of another. Idealization suggests that the perceptions of the other are unrealistic and exaggerated.

The "noble primitive Indian" stereotype finds its origins within the literature of French intellectuals in the Enlightenment and Romantic periods. The most noted works, which promote the ideology that connectedness to nature is the true enlightened path, are

the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). Rousseau believed that science, art, and social institutions corrupted humankind, and that the answer to superior living was within the natural primitive state. Other noted European writers who advanced this ideology were Voltaire, Diderot, and Karl May. In Canada, the yearly publication of *Relations* by the Jesuits in Quebec from 1632–1674 spoke of the Indian as having an "innocent relationship with nature and the Great Spirit" (Vickers, 1998, p. 40). In years to follow, this romantic ideology would be tied to Indians, as they were perceived as primitive peoples whom the Europeans admired because of their "primitive technology" and ability to live off the land.

Figure 19. *Paddling twin princesses*, 1920s, Rudolph, in Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995.

Some of the romantic ideology in the mid-1900s revolved around the Native woman as a princess, at one with nature. In the catalogue *Indian princesses and cowgirls, stereotypes from the frontier* (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995), stereotypes of First Nations are described as an appropriation of identity, which is a political process that functions to serve colonial ideologies. Throughout colonial history stereotypes of First Nations women were transformed. The earliest, which appeared after contact in South America in 1375, was the bare-breasted Amazonian Indian Queen of the New World, in 1624 it was the Pocahontas story, in the early twentieth century it was the Indian princess; in the 1950s it was the white Indian princess as a sexual pin-up.

Perhaps the most popular stereotype of Native females is Sacajawea, of whom numerous versions were printed in mass reproductions throughout the 1920s. Sacajawea was said to be the guide for Lewis and Clarke on their expedition to the Pacific Ocean, and it is speculated that she died in 1812 in South Dakota (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995). Her

image was consistent: white features wearing a red tunic dress, a headband, and a feather in her hair, and usually in a boat, at one with nature (Figure 19).

Seductive poster girls of the 1950s (Figure 20) dressed in pseudo Native outfits, inserting their identity into Native women's identity, temporarily stepping into the wild side of sexuality:

> Post World War I calendar princesses are more enticing, with low necklines, net stockings, and outfits that are more sexually explicit. Indian maidens, princesses, and 'chieftain's daughters' can be found on wood burned plaques and mirrors, in textbooks, children's stories, and the documents of the ethnographic enterprise. (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995, p. 31)

The stereotypes of women in this period were very much a part of nostalgia of the western frontier and, as well, a part of underlying politics of difference, especially in terms of gender and sexuality. The gender and sexual politics of the time were in transition: women were asserting their independence and thus the passive princess transformed into the warrior maiden, who in turn transformed into the light masculine wild cowgirl (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995). This identity construction reveals the transference of the repressed side of the woman that fantasizes a risky sexual adventure into the wild, untamed domain, though in reality women of this period were still confined to traditional homemaking roles. As these images point to female ideology, it is safe to presume that this fictional identity was quite popular amongst the men as well. Beth Seaton (in Burgess & Valaskakis 1995) states that the construction of First Nations women's identity was for a dual purpose, to meet the "needs and fantasies" of the definer and to mask the erasure of Native peoples behind "more pacifying appearances." Seaton states:

Figure 20. *1950s Pin up*, Photographer unknown, in Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995.

> In the history of colonization it is most often women who are repossessed, made amenable to occupation while re-figured and re-drawn in an appreciative light. Thus it is the debased squaw—serving as the repository for all that was considered prohibited and polluted—was accompanied by a figure of desire in the form of her lighter twin: the beautiful and heroic Indian princess. (p. 9)

The romantic Indian can also be seen in the mass-produced photographic works of Edward Curtis, 1868–1952. The American photographer devoted himself to documenting the 'Indian', though debates over his true objective still occur today. Some say his images of First Nations had romantic ideals of documenting dying races and that many of his photos were fictional, staged with props and wigs. Curators Barry Ace and Jeff Thomas, at the Indian Art Centre in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in Ottawa, have shown the archival works of Curtis and reveal that many other photographs of his were accurate depictions of First peoples that were important documentation of the time period. "The historical photographs in *Emergence* had never been presented before, and are important in that many people have identified relatives… These photographs depict Indians as they were, without the fluff and feathers" (Ace, 2000). Some of the staged photographs of west coast peoples that Curtis produced were in fact used in the movie *In the land of the head hunters* (today, known as *In the land of the war canoe*) produced in 1916.

Despite Curtis' poetic photographs and important contribution to the documentation of First peoples, his motive was perhaps his own recognition rather than admiration for First Nations or the desire to contribute to the people. His own writings demonstrate his racist perspective towards them, not uncommon, given the ethnocentric racism that existed in this time period:

> It is an inhospitable country with its forbidding rock-bound coasts, its dark, tangled mysterious forests, its beetling mountains, its long gloomy season of rain and fogs. No less inhospitable are the inhabitants. They seem constantly lost in dark broodings, and it is only after long acquaintance and the rather tedious process of gaining their confidence that one discovers an uncertain thread of cheerfulness interwoven in the sombre fabric of their nature. Even then, one is impelled to question their knowledge of any such thing as spiritual exaltation or mental pressure except such as aroused by the gratification of savage passions or purely physical instincts. Chastity, genuine, self-sacrificing friendship, even the inviolability of a guest, a cardinal principle amongst Indian tribes, are unknown. It is scarcely exaggeration to say that no single noble trait redeems the Kwakiutl character. (Curtis, 1914 in Cranmer, 1992, p. 31)

Environmental spiritual leaders: New age wannabees

The contradictory past romantic stereotypes of the noble Indian that coexisted with racist subordination of First Nations transformed in the last half of the twentieth century into a new type of romantic notion under the influence of those known as new agers or wannabees. With a quest to connect to nature and become spiritually grounded, people began to go back to the land and become environmentalists. These people perceived First Nations as being connected to the land culturally and spiritually and so these seekers adopted or aligned themselves with the identity of First Nations people, sidestepping the delicate issue of not sharing any history or struggles with them. Many of these people became the "wannabee" Indians. Through their search for spiritual and cultural connections, they adopted the identity of First Nations. Many suddenly began claiming Indian blood or Indian connections. Wannabees usually claim their connection to Native people in three common ways: they profess to have a great-great-great Native grandmother in some disconnected past, or they claim they have been 'adopted' into a Native community, though realistically this doesn't occur, or they say they 'feel' Native because they have a spiritual connection. Vine Deloria (1988) discusses this common occurrence of pseudo-Indians claiming to be Cherokee in the United States which exactly mirrors the Canadian wannabees, who usually claim ancestry of the Haida, Cree or Iroquois nations:

> It was a rare day when some white didn't visit my office and proudly proclaim that he or she was of Indian descent. Cherokee was the most popular tribe of their choice (p. 2).

> It doesn't take much insight into racial attitudes to understand the real meaning of the Indian-grandmother complex that plagues certain whites. A male ancestor has too much of the aura of the savage warrior... While a real Indian grandmother is probably the nicest thing that could happen to a child. Why is a remote Indian princess grandmother so necessary for many whites? Is it because they are afraid of being classed as foreigners? Do they need some blood tie with the frontier and its dangers in order to experience what it means to be an American? Or is it an attempt to avoid facing the guilt they bear for the treatment of the Indian? (p. 5).

In the show *Beyond history*, Bob Boyer (1989) constructed an installation entitled *Huey, Duey and Luey wannabee* (Figure 21). Not only does he address the notion of 'wannabees' but he also comments on the appropriation and commodification of Native identity by kitsch Indian representations in the commercial market and in television. Boyer's plastic Indian tent comes equipped with such things as Boy Scout blankets, a drum, a headdress, and Redman tobacco. A 'totem pole' made out of both real and simulated televisions sits in the background, referring to representations in film and the marketing of Native names, such as 'Comanche,' and the Redskins' baseball team.

Figure 21. *Huey, Duey and Luey wannabee,* Bob Boyer, 1988/89, mix media. 610 cm.

Many "new age" organizations have taken up spiritual concepts of the medicine wheel, shamanism, mother earth, vision quests, and shaped these spiritual concepts to fit their own ideas and stories. Today, a consumer can purchase products to play 'Indian' or go on retreats to construct their own personal totem poles or attend sweats or learn about shamanism. In a way, some of the new age adherents have adopted themselves into their own understanding of "Indianness" (Doxtator, 1988, p. 31).

Adopting and aligning with Native identity and culture possibly reflect the absence of connectedness to homeland, and the loss of spiritual and cultural roots of immigrants of the past and present. The desire to attain these lost connections is vicariously lived out in representations of Native identity, or through the practise of Native spirituality.

NEO-COLONIALISM: RACIAL IDEOLOGY TODAY

As the above stereotypes throughout history demonstrate, stereotypical representations have a powerful impact on the collective society that can last for centuries. Many of the stereotypes mentioned still have a continued effect on society today. So does colonialism, though racial attitudes have become more veiled, usually hidden behind

ideological propaganda. From a First Nations' perspective, colonialism has changed, but not disappeared. The neo-colonial government still seeks control over First Nations communities, land and resources. Given that colonialism in North America is relatively recent, just over 500 years ago on the east coast and approximately 250 years ago on the west coast, it is not so unrealistic to suggest that colonial hegemony and the imperialist agenda continues to be exercised systemically, directly and indirectly, today.

In Canada, neo-colonialism can be seen in the persistence of dominant rule, with the most problematic areas of conflict being governmental refusal to respect Aboriginal rights documented in early negotiations and treaties, and the continued holding of Native lands and encroachment on traditional territory. The overall structure of governance is still colonial, giving white people the primary position of authority over the country, provinces and First Nations, rather than a tripartite governing system that honours the distinct independence of First Nations.

In current politics, remnants of racial ideology are echoed through the words of politicians who use phrases such as "our Native people,", or in ideological statements such as "one law for all," or "equality for all Canadians," which were championed when faced with a conflict over Aboriginal rights. 'One law for all' assumes a divine authority to determine the law of the land, even over First Nations who have inhabited this land for thousands of years. "Equality for all Canadians" alludes to the assumption that all people in Canada have equal circumstances. Realistically, there is nothing equal about the social and economic conditions in which Native people live, or the racism they encounter on a daily basis. Ultimately, these forms of ideological propaganda are typically empty sentences used to sway public opinion or justify an agenda. Stereotypes continue to be used on the political front to represent First Nations in a negative light and ultimately undermine and dismiss the distinct rights and land belonging to First Nations.

CONCLUSION

Given the tremendous influence of the multiple stereotypes throughout history, societal perspectives around the world have been engrained with fictitious notions of who First Nations of North America are. The study of stereotypes throughout post-contact

North American history reveals a consistent polarization of the "good" and "bad" Indian, which derives from both projected ideology and racial ideology. Essentially, First Nations identity has been mythologically constructed and used throughout history to support the colonial imperialist agenda.

A continued critical analysis of representations is critical to understand the powerful effects they have on First Nations identity and in mainstream beliefs. The past generation of First Nations artists has effectively exposed and dismantled stereotypes; the current generation has set out to reclaim their true identities that reflect their actual lived experience, and thus reveals their distinct cultural and individual diversity. The next chapter looks at the impact of identity constructions in terms of the influences and shaping of Native identity and the reclamation of their identity through the art process.

CHAPTER 6

THE SHAPING AND RECLAIMING OF FIRST NATIONS IDENTITY

> First Nations identity and cultural struggle are grounded in representation and appropriation – in how Indians are represented and how these representations are appropriated by Others in a political process which confined the Native past as it constructs the Native future. (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1992, p.19)

This chapter examines the shaping of First Nations identity as a result of the influence of external representations and reveals how artists have resolved and challenged these representations. Artists have been caught between the push and pull of conflicting representations and categorizations in society at large and within the art milieu and, in through a variety of approaches, have attempted to reclaim their authentic identity, that reflects their individual and cultural identity. Topics that are examined in this section are: *The shaping of identity; Historical context of First Nations identity: Assimilation policies, Indian status policies, Measurements of identity; Internalizations: Romantic stereotypes, Generic spirituality, Environmentalists, Racial ideology; Conflicting ideologies: Fracturing identity crisis, Duality;* and *Reclaiming Identity: Reservation X.*

THE SHAPING OF IDENTITY

Identity is shaped externally by influences in society and internally through individual processing. On the same hand, identity is constructed by others and by ourselves. The most common external social influences are those related to childhood conditioning, the social and cultural environment, education, and life experiences. Internal shaping of identity occurs through conscious and unconscious selection of conditioned perspective and is impacted by predetermined influences such as race and social status. Social status, poverty or privilege, membership in a visible minority, gender, and physically or mentally challenged, determine how society perceives and

interacts with that person and impacts how the individual perceives him or her self. Culture also plays a significant role in identity construction. Values, philosophy and worldview shape a large part of a person's identity. Cultural ideology is embedded in identity and impacts what an individual perceives as the norm through cultural representations and also determines how they are represented by other cultures.

All of these influential factors that shape identity eventually are processed in the internal self. Internal identity construction is a conscious and unconscious process of selection, whereby some external influences are adopted and some are rejected. Identity of an individual is never fixed; it is always in a state of flux, shifting as an individual matures, experiences life, and processes the influential forces around him or her. Internal identity construction is dependant on a person's ideology.

For First Nations, the identity landscape is complex given their existence between two cultures, First Nations and the Canadian mainstream. With the myriad of external representations found in stereotypes and colonial legislation, First Nations have had to process these influences and deconstruct identity constructions that contradict their realities and perpetuate racial ideology. This in-between existence can create conflicting ideologies, not unlike the experience of other colonized peoples around the world. Ultimately this path has led to the reclamation of their cultural identities.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF FIRST NATIONS IDENTIY

This section provides a brief historical background of identity policies for First Nations legislated by the Canadian government. Imposed identity constructions and restrictions enforced by government legislation in Canada has impacted First Nations perceptions of their identity. Assimilation policies, such as the *Gradual civilization act* of 1857 that denied enfranchisement and then made it compulsory in the 1969 White Paper, to Indian status policies in the Indian act, that evolved from broad definitions of the 1850's, to the Métis recognition in 1982, to the reinstatement of First Nations women's status and their children's status in 1985 through Bill C-31 have contributed to identity politics for First Nations in Canada . Combined with other assimilation tactics such as Christian conversion, the prohibition of Indigenous language in residential

schools and the outlawing of ceremonies has had the opposite effect of assimilation. Instead, First Nations adamantly protect their cultural traditions and territories and have taken political stances to protect the manipulation and rights of their identity.

Assimilation policies

The word 'assimilation' has negative connotations for First Nations, as it recalls forced assimilation practices and policies that have attempted to extinguish their cultural identity. Assimilation policies sought to disenfranchise First Nations peoples of their cultures and identity. Historically, this has occurred through government legislation, through residential schools, and by the outlawing of ceremonial practices. It is obvious that assimilation policies were intended to abolish the distinct rights of First Nations people for the sake of complete colonial control and profit from the take-over of land and resources. The *Gradual civilization act* of 1857 clearly outlines these intentions:

> To encourage the progress of Civilization amoung the Indian Tribes…gradual removal of all legal distinctions between them and her majesty's other Canadian subjects...to facilitate the acquisition of property and the rights accompanying it, by such individual member of the said tribes as shall be found to desire such encouragement and to have deserved, to the end that statute established ways in which Indians might become enfranchised. (Gradual civilization act in Millar, 2000, p.139)

Cairns (2000) outlines the contradicting measures in assimilationist policies in Canada, all aimed at denying First Nations their sovereignty.

> The long history of the policy of assimilation, which lasted for more than a century, is a remarkable example of a goal that survived from decade to decade in the face of limited evidence of success. The 1857 Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Canada "viewed enfranchisement as an honour for many Indians," and thus imposed penalties for Indians who tried falsely to pass as such. Sixty years later, in 1920, an amendment to the Indian Act gave authority to the government for the compulsory enfranchisement of Indians who were not voluntarily accepting the honour in sufficient numbers. Half a century later, the 1969 White Paper proposed applying the 1920 policy—abandoned in 1951—to the entire population. (p. 77)

Residential schools and the outlawing of cultural ceremonies have already been discussed in the chapter *Rewriting colonial history* and therefore will not be treated here,

though suffice it to say, that religious conversion and Eurocentric educational dogma that prohibited First Nations language and cultural activity in residential schools has greatly impacted the First Nations community. Most of the last two generations of First Nations people don't speak their language, though communities have been actively integrating curriculum to rebuild their language use. Christian conversion has resulted in divisiveness amongst many communities, where there is a polarization between those who have adopted Christian beliefs and those who practise traditional spirituality.

Even though these policies were destructive in many ways, First Nations cultures and identities have prevailed. First Nations today adamantly protect their culture and identity from homogenization and work to maintain their distinctiveness. For First Nations artists, the assertion of Native identity is paramount.

Indian status policies

First Nations identity has been legally defined through the Indian Act "without consultation, amendable and enforceable without Indian consent… unambiguously indicates that the subjects of the legislation have literally been created by the government (Morrison & Wilson, 1995 p.14). Even the term 'Indian' is an inappropriate description, though many have adopted the term, including many First Nations themselves.

Initially the Indian Act of the 1850s defined 'Indians' broadly as anyone who lived in 'Indian' villages, such as those who had Indian blood, persons who intermarried, descendants, any persons residing there and persons who were adopted. (Indian Act in Miller, 2000, p.138). However, this definition has continued to change over the years, to more specific descriptions that excluded Inuit, Métis and women who married non-Indians and their children. The Métis became officially recognized as Aboriginals by the Canadian government in 1982. It wasn't until 1985 that Bill C-31 reinstated First Nations women's status and their children's status. The discriminatory patriarchal clauses of the Indian Act had removed a woman's status if she married a non-Native person and subsequently took away her children's status. Although if a First Nations man was in the same circumstance, he and his children would keep their status, and his

non-Native wife would gain status. It wasn't until First Nations women challenged the clauses by taking their case to the Human Rights committee of the United Nations that Canada was found in violation of their human rights, and with the pressure of protests, eventually their status was reinstated. However, all clauses were not attended to, leaving non-Native women with their status as Indians intact despite of divorce or legal separation. In some cases they refused to move off reserves. This is a tenuous situation, given the housing and land shortages on reserves, and frustrating for leaders who have no power to evict these tenants due to the outstanding clause in the Indian Act.

Today, Aboriginal identity is sorted in categories of status and non-status. The former are registered with the government and the latter are not. Many Métis people are not registered. The Canadian Constitution, however, recognizes Indians, Inuit and Métis as Aboriginals.

Measurements of identity

Despite all the complex influences and relational contexts that determine First Nations identity, measurements based on government registries, notions of assimilation, out-moded blood quantum formulas, and stereotypes impacted the identity politics within the First Nations community and has resulted in polarizations. Designations of status/non-status, full-blood/half-breed, mixed blood, traditional/contemporary, assimilated "apples" (that are red on the outside and white on the inside), are common terms. Other notions include the authentic traditional Indian who should live off the land or regularly participate in ceremonies or must speak their language. These indicators, or supposed labels of authenticity, attempt to measure the "real Indian" by how close you live up to these static categories. Indeed, the use of these indicators in themselves reveals an unconscious acceptance of static identity constructions that exist in a vacuum independent of the past, denying the diverse lifestyles and individual roles of contemporary times.

Measurements of First Nations identity have occurred in academic and political circles. Reference to mixed-bloods has been a notion used to project ideas of assimilation and homogeneity that inevitably negate or undermine the distinctiveness of

Native identity. By referring to mixed bloods, Native identity is watered down, usually used as a prefix, to politically deny distinctiveness. These types of references essentially suggest that there are no "real" First Nations today, thereby undermining First Nations political assertions and status as the original peoples. In anthropology, categories have been used for ethnographic collections, attempting to define 'authentic' or 'real' cultural production within their frames of reference. In this case, the underlying notion is that 'authentic' works are produced by 'authentic Indians' and therefore adding monetary value to the work.

In other cases, First Nations themselves have had to define identity criteria in order to protect their rights. Detailed criteria may be necessary to protect First Nations opportunities from those who falsify their identity in order to gain access to jobs, grants, education and so on. These types of identity descriptions are not fixed generalities, they tend to be specific and relational to the context of the institution or group that defines it.

INTERNALIZATIONS

> The problem is that culture tells you these things again and again and you internalize them, and you make an effort to find the cases that support what you've been programmed to believe. Liberation is liberation of the mind. You liberate your mind. Then you change society. But you can't liberate your mind until you examine honestly what has been put in your mind. (Author unnamed in Maher & Thompson Tetreault, 1997)

The internalization of external identity constructions is a critical phenomenon for First Nations that hasn't yet been fully addressed. The examination of the "adoption of changing representations and narratives which we generate and articulate in our individual and social experience" (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1992, p.19) will assist in the decolonization of the mind and provide freedom from the self-imposed restrictions which inhibit the representations of First Nations realities.

With tremendous amount of externally constructed representations of First Nations identity over the years, it is to be expected that such constructions would have an impact First Nations perceptions of their actual identity. With influence of romantic and racist stereotypes, or general notions as to how First Nations should look like or live

or specifically, what kind of art they should make, can stimulate the unconscious adoption of identity constructions and create a conflictual fracturing of identity. Research on the impact of romantic and racial ideologies has only begun to be explored with the depth and rigour it deserves. Recently, elementary schools have begun to teach children about First Nations stereotypes with the intent to deconstruct derogatory images before they impact the self-esteem of youth. In my generation, we did not have the advantage of First Nations courses in the school curriculum, and it was not uncommon for many of us to be embarrassed by our racial identity, given the racial stereotypes that were perpetuated by society.

The following section reviews some external representations of First Nations identity that may be internalized by First Nations. The purpose of this section is to bring to consciousness the powerful influence external identity constructions can have on First Nations identity and to reveal their residual effects.

Romantic stereotypes

Romanticism and nostalgia, as a past way of life, have been adopted by some First Nations, as these stereotypes come from a much more friendly position than early derogatory racial stereotypes. The internalization of romantic ideals can provide escapism from the real world, and make some aspects of reserve life less harsh. As well, even though all types of stereotypes have a negative impact, nostalgic notions can instil pride among First Nations as they 'recall' a noble way of life in the past. In some respects, the romantic stereotypes do reflect traditions that exist today, such as living off the land by hunting, fishing, and plant gathering, though the stereotypical images of First Nations spiritually being one with the land, or as warriors riding horses or as beautiful maidens canoeing the serene waters is not reality.

Vine Deloria (1998) suggests that the perpetuation of overly-romantic notions by First Nations themselves is due to an attempt to repair the harm done by generations of racist stereotypes of Native people:

> The modern Indian movement, in an effort to strike back and recover ground unnecessarily lost during the preceding five centuries, has made a lot of mistakes, has overtly romanticised episodes, beliefs and moral positions, and has made a lot of people uncomfortable.(p. 66) ....The next generation of American Indians must finally find a way to transcend the barriers of communication and provide sufficient information on Indians so that the next generation of whites looks at us realistically and we do not have to face bitter whites who create fantasies about us and then turn against us. (p. 82)

Deloria points out that in the midst of deconstructing past stereotypes, non-Natives have accused First Nations of making up aspects of history, though he suggests that it is their own constructed fantasies that they have come to believe. In some instances, these fantasies are based on some aspects of truth, but these can be confirmed only by researching primary sources. First Nations have access to these primary resources and should take responsibility for providing accurate research on First Nation history and realities.

Evidence of the adoption of romantic stereotypes can be seen in the art that decorates many First Nations homes. Their walls often contain the commercialized images of the romantic Indian: noble warriors on horseback, beautiful maidens with their hair blowing in the wind and eagles everywhere. The collection of romantic art by First Nations may be due to the fact that such art portrays positive images of First Nations and quite possibly, in practical terms, these mass-produced prints are affordable.

One of the most popular romantic images is the surviving warrior depicted in the mass produced, *The end of the trail*. Artists James Luna and Gerald McMaster have critiqued this image in their work by reproducing the image and manipulating its context. James Luna, of Luiseño/Diegueno ancestry from La Jolla Reservation in California, is a performance and installation artist who has set a critical precedent in North America in debunking stereotypes and generic notions of Indian spirituality. His work not only challenges the wider audience to consider the constructions of imaginary identities, but also challenges the First Nations audience to consider the internalizations of the generic Indian and exposes those who practise pseudo-spirituality. Because his performances and visual art are often created with humour, the critique of generic pseudo-spiritualism is well-received by First Nations audiences. In his work, *End of the*

trail (1993), Luna reproduces the image in a painting, and then pastes a photo of himself over the center sitting on a carpenter's saw horse, rather than a real horse, slumped over with a with a bottle of whiskey in his hand. Luna juxtaposes two contradictory stereotypes: the romantic image of the warrior and the derogatory image of the drunken Indian.

McMaster's work *End of the trail*, (1991), shown in the chapter, *Ideology of stereotypes*, presents the most common representations of First Nations identity in film, images and literature. He centres the *End of trail* warrior amongst other famous stereotypes such as the generic chief and medicine man, and the infamous Tonto and Lone Ranger. The faceless stereotypes of Natives reveal the contradictions of varying types of representations, from the generic Plains Indian, to the passive sidekick.

In conclusion, it is important for First Nations to analyze romantic notions that have been adopted, which will ultimately reduce the pressure to align with an imaginary identity.

Generic spirituality

A form of generic spirituality perpetuated in spiritual books and fictional novels has been adopted by many First Nations people. This move is understandable in light of temporary dislocation of spiritual practices by residential schools and the legal ban on ceremonial practices, both of which greatly reduced opportunities for spiritual mentorship in First Nations communities, and certainly within the urban centers. If First Nations didn't turn to native spiritual books when mentors were not available, then they sought out Christian literature and religious practice. With the resurgence of spiritual traditions, First Nations don't need to go to books as often because ceremonies occur with regularity and are accessible. However, these books have inspired many, both Native and non-Native, to seek out the spiritual quest which has evolved into a barrage of generic symbols and concepts and forms of exploitations of generic First Nations spirituality.

James Luna confronts the clichés of generic spirituality by exposing over-used references to dream catchers, sacred colours, and feathers, just to name a few. In his

performance *Shameman* (1996), he critiques the generic spiritual symbols and the commercialization of First Nations spirituality, and states, "If I see another dream catcher I'm goin' to shit!" (Luna, 1996). Following this comment, he introduces a new style of dream catcher, called the "wet dream catcher" made out of a tennis racket equipped with 4 condoms in the four sacred colours. He then proceeds to conduct a commercialized ceremony that ridicules pseudo-shamans who distort, commercialize, and capitalize on traditional practices. His costume is a bizarre mixture of standard mainstream clothing with stylized First Nations regalia, gaudy with feathers and sequins. Luna begins his pseudo-ceremony by spraying an aerosol can of "eau de sage" in the four directions. Luna's performances have played an important role in not only exposing the internalization of generic spirituality among First Nations, but also exposing those who have taken advantage of spiritual practice for monetary gain, both First Nations and white "wannabe Indians."

With the rise of new agers, spiritual retreats are in demand, and the commercial commodification of ceremony is becoming more common. Traditionally, these ceremonial practices are quite diverse in practice from one Aboriginal nation to the next, though generic spirituality is an amalgamation of similar practices with pseudo rules and philosophies. The very act of advertising and selling cultural practices for spiritual enlightenment goes against First Nations protocol in all areas of North America. It is common knowledge that a request for spiritual guidance is made in person to a medicine person with tobacco and or gift. This gift can be money, though a medicine person usually does not ask for money when someone needs help, and never turns anybody away.

Environmentalists

The notion of the environmentally-friendly Indian is a contemporary amalgamation of past romantic stereotypes of First Nations as living off the land and being one with nature and traditional First Nations philosophy that respects the land and its biological cycles. Realistically though, for the past 500 years First Nations have been existing between two cultures. Some have adopted mainstream lifestyles: live in houses,

shop at the local grocery store, and are not universally environmentally-friendly in terms recycling, and respecting the cycles of animals in hunting and fishing seasons.

However, the philosophy of the land still remains intact, and there are those who practise this philosophy on a daily basis and are committed to those values. And of course, hunting, fishing and food gathering are still important activities. The point is that any general label, even a positive one, may be the creation of another stereotype, moving us farther away from reality. It is understood that those who admire the teachings and values of aboriginal cultures in this country usually have positive intentions. They are our allies and we accept them and embrace them. It is often the case that current romantic stereotypes evolve without malice, and can stem from naivety. However, it remains important to discuss stereotypes in whatever form they take, as they are damaging to the people being represented. At the same time, it is important for First Nations to be authentic. Revealing the authentic, in First Nations terms, is like inhaling a breath of fresh air; the facades come down leaving more room for individual, diverse identities to show through. Only through deconstructing these internalized, stereotyped identities can we be ourselves, follow our own paths, and be proud of who we are.

Racial ideology

Internalized racism exists as a residue of derogatory stereotypes from the past as well as in current overt forms. In some cases, Indigenous peoples are unconscious of the levels of racism to which they are exposed. And they may begin to accept the racist views of themselves and come to believe notions such as "white is right." Internalized racism can have damaging psychological effects that affect individual potential and governance of First Nations institutions.

Considerations of internalized racism in First Nations communities today is relatively recent and needs much more elaboration by scholars. Its manifestations are often not well-known among First Nations people, and thus it remains to some extent, at an unconscious level. As difficult as this topic may be to admit, dialogue about it is critical to decolonizing racial and imperialist perspectives and practices, and to empowering First Nations communities.

In general, unconscious internalized racism has ingrained two primary, though incompatible, beliefs: that First Nations are subordinate to white people; and that there are means to judge the "authentic Indian." Examples of the internalized belief that First Nations are subordinate to white people can be seen in several periods of history. At its height in the mid 1900s, the impact of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop left many Aboriginal peoples with low self-esteem, questioning their worth and ashamed of their identity. Many people, primarily men, began disassociating themselves from their communities, moving to urban centres and marrying white people. On one hand, this seemed to be a natural evolution, but on the other, some people from the 1960s and 1970s generation say that it was an attempt to remove themselves from the dysfunction of First Nations communities at that time. Others would say that it revealed the belief that white was better and that marrying white people would thus elevate their status in society. What is left unsaid perhaps, is the possible unconscious acceptance of derogatory stereotypes of First Nations women, who were at one time depicted as beautiful maidens and at other times, as passive whores. Things have fortunately changed significantly, with the increased awareness of colonialism, and a resurgence of cultural activity. First Nations tend to have more pride in their identity and are more politically-driven to maintain their blood lines.

We have also seen internalized racism in First Nations institutions, where it is common to see non-Native people in all the senior positions and hold the majority of jobs. This framework suggests that there is an underlying belief that Aboriginal people aren't qualified and that non-Natives are smarter. Another scenario is organizations that give employment preferences to those First Nations who have fair skin. Positions held by visible First Nations tend to be minor administration support positions or temporary positions. In the past, arguments could be made that there were not enough trained First Nations, though at the same time, no steps were taken to provide mentorship and training on the job. Today, with thousands of Aboriginal people receiving degrees in various disciplines, there is no reason for First Nations institutions, band schools and band offices to employ non-Native people, especially when there are so few jobs to be had in reserve communities. Also, there is no reason why mainstream institutions have

to hire non-Natives for First Nations-specific jobs when Aboriginals with degrees are waiting for an opportunity.

Currently, the trend in job postings for First Nations applicants is the prefix "First Nations" with the word "qualified." Mainstream and First Nations institutions have been using this term consistently, and it has been adopted without even questioning its underpinnings. This practice has its origins in the debate whether or not to hire a First Nations person, and seems to suggest that most are unqualified. Usually the underlying beliefs are antagonist, viewing employment equity policies as unfair preferential hiring of First Nations. Essentially non-Natives are making the case for themselves as to why they should not be excluded from posted positions.

The above internalizations point to just a few examples of the importance of having an open dialogue to bring consciousness to the First Nations collective, so that contradictory ideological polarizations can be realized and First Nations can move ahead towards cultural autonomy.

CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES: FRACTURING AND DUALITY

The conflicting ideologies underlying First Nations and societal representations of First Nations identity has resulted in competing narratives. These competing ideologies are at the root of the fracturing of identity and sense of duality that First Nations artists have experienced. The challenge for First Nations artists is to critically analyze the ideologies of these representations and the resulting expectations of what 'Indian art' should be, in order to relieve the pressure of conforming, so that their individual style and content can flourish.

Duality

The fracturing of identity is a global phenomenon amongst colonized peoples. It is a manifestation of the pressures of conflicting ideologies and the reality of existing between two cultures. Makdisi (1996) comments on the duelling dichotomies experienced by Indigenous peoples;

> This is the same dynamic that has generated many of the contradictions now characteristic of other post colonial societies that manifest themselves in the clash between such categories as the modern and the traditional, the new and old ways of life, and of course between western and Native cultures and values. Native intellectuals as they have been called, often (though not always) feel trapped between some traditional culture (or its residual traces) and the now dominant culture associated within imperialism, which forces itself upon them. In response to the alienation from the colonial and pre-colonial pasts there have been widespread efforts throughout the Third World at returning to coming to terms with the past by revising it and re-narrating it, often by literally rewriting the histories of imperialism. (p. 184)

This fracturing of perspective that results from being caught in the past but living in the present and existing in two worlds with opposing ideologies is observed by Rushing (1999) in students' work at the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe:

> Dozens of self-portraits, which have blurred indistinct and/or fragmented facial features. Lloyd New, founding director of the IAIA explained that these were self portraits of young artists who knew neither were they enfranchised as members of American society, nor were they living the reality of their ancestors as they perceived it through representation. Realizing their marginality, relative to "mainstream" culture, and experiencing simultaneously a sense that they were not leading authentic Indian lives, they portrayed themselves in a liminal identity. (p. 143)

For artists, balancing between conflicting ideologies of representation can be a laborious process of sorting through considerations of audience and purpose that may be on one side, the other or in between and finding one's authentic style beyond imposed expectations and validations. Anishnabe artist, Heather Henry speaks about the duality that she has experienced due to the societal expectations that 'Indian' art should encompass some kind of stereotypical symbolism, thereby dismissing her individual artistic style as not authentically 'Indian';

> As an Anishnabe woman, I feel my individuality is more important than, say, painting feathers onto a canvas to sell for a quick buck (that comes later!). But commercial galleries encourage society to look at so-called Native art in order to sell their product made by an Indian. This issue is a sensitive one for me personally and it will be in the future but I also believe the question of duality comes strongly into light. Living in an urban setting and being educated from a European perspective has brought me closely to examine what it means to be a

> First Nations artist in the contemporary art world. Firstly, contemporary art is not accessible to Native communities nor is it recognized as real art, in the way that eagles and the feathers might be. That is to say, unfortunately the graphic images of the dark Vandyke brown Indian Warrior and Indian Princess tend to be more accepted as art. (Henry, personal communication, August 21, 2002)

Henry's comments not only point to the internalization of romantic stereotypes by First Nations themselves, but reveal how the ripple effect of representations continue to affect the artists who attempt to portray images relevant to their reality. The imaginary constructed Indian image, more than likely painted by a non-Native person, is preferred over authentic work produced by a First Nations artist.

Artist and professor, Alfred Youngman (2005), speaks about Indian identity in his painting, as he processes the external and internal perceptions of Native ideas that create an internalized dichotomy:

> There has always been the question of Indian identity how that comes out in a person's artwork and how a Native artist might express that... since everyone and their grandmother has a theory of what constitutes Indian art and who Indian people are. Those questions have always been in the forefront of the kind of the work I have created and I have always tried to solve those issues on the canvases that I paint. Today, still, the questions are there and they come up all the time, in my writing and teaching as well. . . . I have always gravitated towards the image of the Indian, how that image is portrayed objectively and how we ourselves feel about ourselves subjectively. There is always that dichotomy to live with and even today, the inner and the outer come into conflict and I feel that that issue is a rich strata of reality to mine for artistic ideas and statements. (Interview, 2005, pp.1-2)

Society places other pressures on First Nations that contribute to internal conflicts, such as expectations for an Aboriginal to define the First Nations realities for academics, to act as a voice for everyone. This is just not possible given the diversity of nations and experience. Caught in between, Haida scholar Marcia Crosby (1991) realized that she was encountering a new dichotomy of identity representations, a textbook Indian validated in western academia.

> Throughout the semester, the professor would continually look at me to confirm or negate what he was saying. I did not have the experience to do either. Not

> only that, but I was embarrassed at my lack of knowledge. However, for the first time I was presented with a positive alternative to the negative stereotype: real Indians legitimized inside an academic framework. . . . After all, this was my own heritage I was seeking to recover, and it was a positive difference with which I could identify. However, I did not know then that to embrace the authentic Indian produced by the western science of anthropology would be to adopt a western construct--a textbook or domesticated Indian. (p. 268)

Another duality with which First Nations artists grapple is the tension between their desire to reclaim their own individual identity and their sense of responsibility to contribute to the collective. According to artist Jimmie Durham (1992), "Indians of the Americas have a subtle colonial overlay to our self definition which is almost impossible to separate out. Then, because we all still live under colonial conditions, we have a political responsibility to our own people" (p. 143). A common method that contributes to the community is dismantling colonial constructs through disseminating information about First Nations issues. Other more subtle methods include asserting cultural identities through art and recently in the past ten years, through subjective works that re-humanize First Nations in the public eye. These works depict the human experience, from a First Nations perspective, by addressing topics such as family, love, and sexuality, to name a few.

The historical fact of colonization positions First Nations between two cultural ideologies, therefore their identity construction is connected to both First Nations cultural identities and external constructed identities, as well as relational to the historical and current context of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Despite cultural imperialism of colonial society, and specifically the myriad of imposed identity constructions and pressure to conform to western standards, especially in art, some artists would state that First Nations have persisted to hold true to their individual and cultural identities.

> Artists' work comes from a very deep-seated core of their own recognized reality. It is an extension of who they are—not what someone else thinks they are—where they fit. The collectors come afterward, whether they are physical collectors or collectors of ideas which they write down, paraphrase and claim, whether they combine philosophies with others' and whether they group

> individual artists' work in thematic exhibitions. (Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Interview 2005, p. 5)

Like Cardinal-Schubert (2005), curator Vivian Gray (1993) asserts that First Nations people have never questioned their identity due to the deep-rootedness of who they are;

> The question of "who we are where we come from" has never troubled the people of the First Nations. Tribal knowledge is essential to the survival and growth of Native Americans. Our history is alive through our languages and in our oral tradition. Our social order, though changed by the ever-present Euro-society, maintains its essential systems, such as Native metaphysics and aesthetics, most apparent in visual statements by the people of the First Nations. (Gray in Museum of Civilization, 1993, p. 137-138)

Similar to Gray's view, Ovitz asserts that mainstream discourse of identity and place has not been a predominant concern for First Nations given their continued connection to their homelands and culture;

> I think this quest for space or for sense of place, reinventing the notion of place, is a peculiarly Euro-American artifact. Its an artifact of alienations, of movement about the earth, and Indian peoples at least in their indigenous contests, didn't have to worry about abstracting something called "place" from their very existence. They already were somewhere; they already belonged somewhere. (Ovitz in McMaster, 1998, p.19)

Perhaps the question has been, how does their work fit within these contrasting cultural ideologies? The following section reviews how artists have examined the ideologies of representation in order to reclaim their identity.

RECLAIMING IDENTITY

The solid affirmation of continued cultural ties reveals clearly that First Nations continue to hold a strong stance and will never sacrifice their identity, history and culture to any form of cultural imperialism that attempts to assimilate, erase or dishonour their existence. While the First Nations artists in the 1970s and 1980s exposed stereotypes by directly identifying them through reproduction, the current generation of artists has opened up a dialogue about cultural ideologies in order to reclaim their identity. Contemporary artists have dismantled imaginary racial representations and

shifted ideological perspectives propelling their identity out of the past and into the present. Artistic methods include ironic identity role reversals, spoofing identity constructs with exaggerated identity constructions, humanizing Native identity by representing Native humour, contrasting Aboriginal and western cultural ideologies and practices, revealing realistic identities through personal stories and collective practices, and acknowledging or resisting transformations of identity and community as a result of living 'in between' two cultural contexts. The following section reviews the specific topics that First Nations artists have focused on.

Cree artist, Judy Chartrand (2005) challenges stereotypes and identity fraud in her piece *One drop of Indian blood* (Figure 22). The work is a part of a series entitled *White lard* that mimics lard tin products from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though alters them with a role reversal. She states;

> What intrigues me most about them are the way the images reveal the dominant culture's sentiments towards racially identified groups. The use and commodification of the stereotyped Indian image, as "noble savage" and "Indian Maiden" were used in the advertisement of everyday products such as foodstuffs, medicines, and tobacco. Other common household items—ashtrays, salt and pepper shakers, toys. (Chartrand, 2005 website, para. 1)

Figure 22. *One drop of Indian blood*. Judy Chartrand. 2000. Slip-cast clay, underglaze, glaze, luster. 7" x 6."

Chartrand critiques the commodification of romantic Native stereotypes by reversing the roles, transplanting white caricatures in the place of Natives. Through the reversal, Chartrand alludes to the connection of romantic stereotypes with western ideology's desire to be Native.

One drop of Indian blood refers to white folk claiming to be Indian by using the "one drop" theory. The man in this image actually has blond hair and blue eyes and is wearing a black wig…you can see it quite clearly on the actual works. I have come across many white folks claiming to be Indian. Of course, it is always the "romanticized" version. The image on this pail comes

> from an antique tin called Sureshot Tobacco. It was the only image depicting a native man in a cartoonish fashion and when the idea came to me to make him white (pink), it made me snicker to myself...as do many of my ideas. I thought, what better than making this goofy looking caricature into a white dude...turning the tables...so to speak. The text Pure White Lard...can almost be viewed as: Pure White Bullshit. (Chartrand, 2005, Interview, p.5)

Artist Shelley Niro is well-known for her humorous irony in photography and film. She presents the diversity of First Nations identity and humanizes First Nations in contemporary contexts. Her work offers unexpected twists on Native identity that challenge the ideologies and expectations of western society. Her earlier work challenged the generic, passive representations of women by transplanting new images of strong women from her matriarchal Iroquois community. Niro (2005) comments on the representations and exclusions of Native women that initially inspired this direction of her work:

> When I first started making art I was aware of the fact that there were not too many native women artists. There was Jane Ash Poitras, Joane Cardinal Schubert, Daphne Odjig, and the rest seemed to be men. The imagining of women was really limited. It seemed that if women were subject matter they were often portrayed as silent, as posing quietly, and as pow wow dancers. So it was a very narrow view of what Indian women were all about so I wanted to put Indian women in my art, but I want them to be real and I want them to be confident and happy and really positive. (Niro, 2005, Interview, p. 1)

Figure 23. *Mohawks in bee hives*. 1991 Shelley Niro. Hand tinted photograph. 20 x 25 cm.

The Native women in her photographs typically emanated confidence and independence, while projecting their humour to the camera. In her work, *Mohawks in bee hives* (Figure 23), Niro's three sisters pose with overly-embellished make-up, jewellery, and big hairdos, asserting their personalities as confident divas. It is common for Niro to reinvent new identities by transforming the Native woman with

over-the-top pseudo glamour, in fashion and poses, that seemingly pokes fun at the idea of representations. These exaggerated twists on identity make the work humorous.

Niro states that the original idea of *Mohawks in bee hives* stemmed from the experience of the Oka crisis, in which she attempted to provide a positive representation to counter the negative media coverage of the Mohawks:

> So after the Oka crisis, I am sure a lot of people were depressed. I thought that there must be a way to having a little bit of control over the way you are represented, you have to represent yourself. It just came down to asking my sisters to be a part of the series of Mohawks in Beehives and try to have fun and getting away from the stereotypes of Mohawk women.... I think every time you make an image with an Indian person in it, it is representation, maybe it is not about stereotypes all the time, though I still think it is important to get images of Indian peoples out on the walls for people to see ...it sort of takes the exotic out of it and makes it little bit more real and normal. (2005, Interview, p. 5)

The late Ojibway artist, Carl Beam, has often integrated and manipulated his own identity to create shifts of perception between the western and Aboriginal world. In *Self portrait in my Christian Dior bathing suit* (Figure 24), he takes a similar approach to Niro in that he uses glamorous idealizations to create an absurd twist on Aboriginal identity. Beam inserts Aboriginal identity into mainstream identity, and therefore reinvents an Aboriginal identity that seems mismatched. Beam speaks strategically in language that mainstream can identify with, though underlying this is a subtle challenge of western cultural values. In the process of 'civilizing' and 'assimilating' Native identity to appeal to mainstream values, the work humanizes and contemporizes Native identity for the viewer, though also points out the absurdity of such

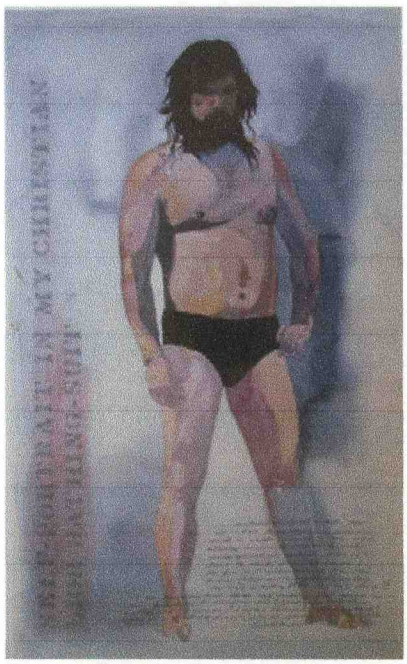

Figure 24. *Self portrait in my Christian Dior bathing suit. .* Carl Beam. 1980, Watercolour on paper. 106 x 68.5 cm

ethnocentric notions. The ironic trade of identity asks the viewers "to play the participatory game of dreaming ourselves [as] each other. In this we find out that we're all basically human" (Beam in Ryan, 1999 p. 151). This absurd shifting is a technique that is at the core of what is called 'Indian humour', a mimicking of western ideologies that makes a point of contrasting cultural ideologies in order to bring attention to the outrageousness of identity constructs.

In his painting, Beam poses as a model with his hand on his hip, yet his expression is that of serious sarcasm, with elements of humour. This work, like many of Beam's, has layers that examine representations of Aboriginals and appropriation of representations. In the bottom right hand corner of the painting his handwritten text reclaims his authorship:

> ...autobiographical work done in 1980 to validate my presence and to make sure that the work always remains explicitly autobiographical in nature even if I have to state it in this way. As far as I'm concerned I'm the artist (among other things) as this is my work. THIS IS MY WORK!! I am marking time through my work (if it serves my other function not anyone else) and if I do this I will say tomorrow, "I was around yesterday, and here's the fucking proof," where's yours? Babble, babble, verbiage etc.

Judy Chartrand (2005) also incorporates high fashion to propel perceptions of First Nations representations out of the past. By combining desirable high fashion and traditional beading and moose hair tufting, Chartrand creates and displays sexy lingerie for Native women and men (Figure 25). Her clever and humorous exaggeration of decorative underwear recontextualizes the notion of traditional while humanizing notions of First Nations sexuality and gender. Like Beam and Niro, her exaggerated representations are not realistic, though they work as visual signifiers to deconstruct stereotypes in a humorous way, mimicking exaggerated imagined stereotypes, with the ironic twist of amalgamating two contrasting cultural ideologies. The use of chamois from Canadian Tire, rather than buckskin, situates traditional practices in the current context. To add further sarcasm, Chartrand describes her designs with detailed elaborations of high fashion style:

Encased in a plexi-glass covered, maple framed, box, the large sized chamois bra and panties are decorated with beaded floral designs that are reminiscent of the colours of spring and regeneration. Lined with dark red velvet, they exude an energy that can be equated with life-giving blood, a force that harks back to a time when it was believed that menses could drain a man of his powers. Judy's Secret embodies all of these notions, while leaving room for the imagination to go wild. ....This men's thong is decorated with caribou hair tufting and has a fringe of real buffalo hair sticking out in the lower part of the crotch. It is also lined with a red satin fabric. (URL: http:// judychartrand.com/catalog.0.html2.0.htm, Para.1)

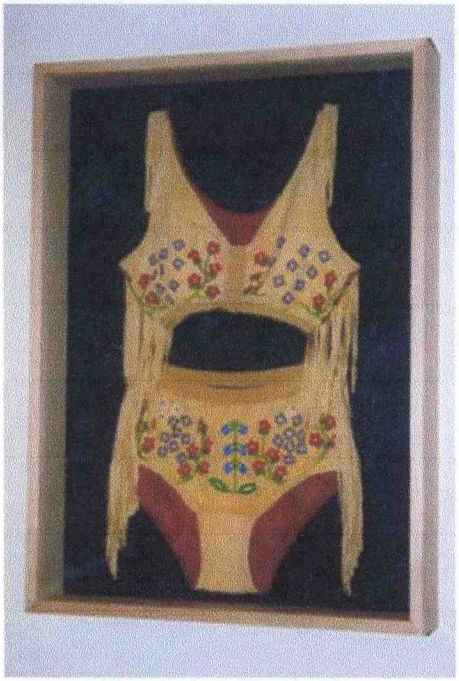

Figure 25. *Judy's Secret* Judy Chartrand. 2002.Chamois, glass beads, velvet, wood, plexi-glass 4'H x 3'W

Figure 26. *Thong 3, Buffalo Soldier Series*, Judy Chartrand 2004. Chamois, glass beads, caribou hair tufting, buffalo hair, satin, velvet, wood, plexi-glass 7.75"H x 13"W (one of four)

Thong 3 (Figure 26) is part of a series entitled *Buffalo soldiers*, a twist on the original term 'buffalo soldiers' that First Nations used to describe soldiers of African descent because their hair looked similar to buffalo fur (Chartrand 2005). The thong leaves little to the imagination with the added fringe of bison hair and appears crass yet hilarious with its over-the-top exaggerations and decorative embellishments. Thongs that are popular today in fact have their origin from the Inuit and the "Yanomami males who reside in the Amazon forests [who] are a tribal people who customarily wear thongs for everyday use" (2005, Interview, 2005, p. 6).

Heather Henry has explored her identity by researching the traditional customs of her people. In this process she found that the

majority of her people's historical belongings were currently inaccessible, allocated to various museum collections. In her work, *Showcase #1 & 2*, (Figure 27), she juxtaposes two types of traditional Ojibway hats found in a Department of Indian Affairs catalogue. Text in the background of the left-hand image reads: rabbit fur, American Museum of Natural History, and the right image has text reading; showcase and N.Y. (Henry, 2002). Henry addresses origin and ownership of these historical items and critiques the current representation in museums that has removed these items from their cultural context. By representing these historical items in her paintings, she reclaims them:

> Archival photographs of everyday objects that were created by the Ojibway people but that now exist far from their place of origin and are considered artifacts, conjure mixed feelings in me. A place like the American Museum of Natural History in New York City is far removed from most First Nations communities and most people on reserves will never get the opportunity to view them. And these objects have no context when they are on display like that. … if they were accessible to Ojibway people, might help us to feel a sense of connection to our past….In essence, this is my attempt to return these images in some form. The use of text in these pieces emphasizes the questions of ownership and origin. (personal communication, 2002)

Figure 27. Heather Henry. *Showcase #1 & 21*, 1997. Oil on canvas. 36 x 48 inches.

Reservation X

Reservation X, The power of place in Aboriginal contemporary art, exhibited in April 1998 at the Museum of Civilization, marked a transition in approaches to exploring identity and place. Curator and artist Gerald McMaster and co-curator Arthur Renwick invited seven First Nations artists from throughout North America to participate: Mary Longman, Nora Naranjo-Morse, Marianne Nicholson, Shelly Niro, Jolene Rickard, Mateo Romero, C. Maxx Stevens. Artists examined the theme of

community and identity by depicting their current realities in relation to specific traditions, history and issues within their home communities. While some artists concentrated on depicting the reserve community within the cultural and family context, others addressed the impact of colonialism in their communities, or the travel in between the two cultural contexts.

The term *Reservation X* refers to the "ambiguous zone," a third space between two spaces, where the contemporary Native community is not fixed to the reservation life, but rather moves between the two cultural contexts, with identities that are diverse and in a constant state of flux (McMaster, 1998). As the communities are diverse and changing, so are the identities which are inextricably influenced by the environments.

> ...there exists a socially ambiguous zone, a site of articulation for the First Nations contemporary artist that is frequently crossed, experienced, interrogated and negotiated. . . . Living and working in a changing world while maintaining a sense of identity is to recognize the importance of preserving fundamental philosophies and principle. (McMaster, 1998, p. 29)

In a discussion with artist Shelley Niro (1997), I asked her how identity and place inform her artwork. Niro stated that she considers both history and personal experience in order to arrive at a contemporary dialogue that reveals diversity:

> I like the concept of self. It is here where I realize we are all different. Growing up with a brother and sisters, we all basically had the same initial life experience but we have a very different story from each other. When dwelling on personal history, the many layers that have made up the individual's psyche always is a source for raw material. I like mixing history and my personal by-line together. Using this formula should always give me something contemporary but which derives from the community echoing this time and place. (personal communication, p.1)

In her film, *Honey Moccasin*, Niro depicts the diversity of First Nations characters who live out their daily dramas in the local bar and café on an imaginary reservation. Her storyline presents a humorous mystery in which community members investigate the traces left behind by the person who is stealing traditional regalia from dancers. Amidst the mystery, the audience experiences a variety of events including

music, art performance and a fashion show at the local pub, as well as becoming a voyeur of personal histories and secrets. Despite the range of diversity amongst these characters, the community offers unconditional acceptance of each of them. In Figure 28, Niro displays one of the pseudo-Native fashion designs used in the community fashion show at Honey Moccasin's café. Again Niro reinvents Native identity with absurdity, using an outfit made from a rubber inner tube with a fake dream catcher mounted on the chest and a simulated roach headdress made out of a broom.

Figure 28. Shelly Niro. Costumes from video, *Honey Moccasin. (1998)*

Nora Naranjo-Morse, Towa from Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico, addresses transformations in the physical and philosophical sense within her community. Her work contrasts these changes by juxtaposing elements of the traditional Pueblo adobe home with prefabricated government housing.

Mateo Romero, also of Pueblo descent, inspired by the narratives of painted caves at the Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico, commented on the history of his people's migration and transformation. His concave wall mural maps the migration of the Pueblo people: from the kivas to the urban setting, from walking to automobiles, from handprints to bar codes. Romero continues the tradition of documenting history through narrative painting.

Maxx Stevens work, *If these walls could talk*, addresses the dualism of today's urban Native by contrasting the rigid residential school setting with the informal community setting that transfers knowledge through the sharing of stories. Physically this is created in an installation where half the room is a classroom setting and the other is a picnic table with drying onions accompanied by a soundtrack of women talking to each other. She writes, "Being an urban Indian has always been a source of dualism in

my work, and that sometimes gives the viewer a sense of the conflict it generates" (Stevens, 1998 p. 152).

Jolene Rickard's *Corn blue room* speaks to the history of political action in her community and the continuance of tradition. Power lines and corn become primary symbols in her installation as she reflects on the flooding of Tuscarora lands for electrical generating stations, while the corn affirms the people's cultural survival.

Marianne Nicholson, Kwakwaka' wakw, created an installation entitled *Place of origin*. Marianne floats a structure of the big house or 'Gukwdzi' to comment on her personal identity and the collective identity within her Native community. Her place of origin is Kingcome Inlet, where she returned in her mid-twenties and admirably learned about Kwakwaka' wakw culture, art forms, and language. The big house for Nicholson became an external and internal metaphor of collective and personal identity, with the big house as the central hub of traditional community activity. Nicholson places stories of origin of the people of Kingcome Inlet in large canvases on either end, written in the Kwakwaka' wakw language. The photographs surrounding the house depict images of Kingcome landscape on the outside, and images of family members on the inside. The single words on each panel describe the image: cousin, mountain, river, and so on. To Nicholson, the Big House is a place of learning, especially for herself.

I asked curator and Cree artist Gerald McMaster to describe his identity. His response was an amalgamation of various representations that defined him, though through the barrage of labels, he remains 'steadfastly Plains Cree' in the twenty-first century:

> Hello, my name is Gerald Raymond (Christian name) McMaster (surname). My Indian name is Gerald McMaster. I'm a Nehiyaw, or exact speaker, which is to say we speak not with diaglossic (forked) tongue! Anthropologically, you may know me as Algonquian speaking Plains (dialect) Cree Indians. Legally, besides being Canadian, I have meaning under the Indian Act: known by the Department of Indian Affairs as 'treaty' Indian ....Though I remain steadfastly a Plains Cree, I would like to think that I enjoy many aspects of life beyond the boundaries of tribal identity. If you are unable to carry with you the principles and philosophies of your Indianness surviving as an Indian in the 21st century may be very difficult. Being Indian is to be proud of your past, yet I believe we can survive

> amidst the complex and rapidly changing world around us. (McMaster, 2002, personal communication, p. 1)

CONCLUSION

Identity for First Nations artists flows between the rootedness of cultural identity and the impact of colonial society. In this dual existence in the midst of conflicting ideologies, critical analyses, political struggle and transformation will inevitably occur. A critical analysis of representations, political struggles with colonial control and transformations of traditional concepts are methods that First Nations artists have employed in order to recreate cultural identity.

Place for First Nations usually refers to home territory. Historically, the territory has shaped traditional and cultural activity, for example, subsistence practice that relates to season cycles and the natural world that inspires spiritual and artistic practises. For artists, the natural world provided materials and subject matter, differing in different places throughout the land. The Inuit, for example, used materials that were accessible, such as whale bone and ivory. Their artistic ideas honoured the spirits that gave them sustenance, reflecting values critical to survival in an arctic climate. The bountiful waters and mild weather of the west coast of British Columbia resulted in art artwork being produced all year round, with a specialization in painting and carving the plentiful cedar. First Nations on the Plains were nomadic by necessity, migrating for food and so their artwork was portable and integrated into everyday utilitarian objects.

Today, place and social contact continue to influence the cultural identity and work of contemporary artists. Whether one exists on a reservation, in an urban centre, or somewhere in between, home territory and socio-cultural context informs the work. Transformations in their territory will occur due to societal progress and colonial expansions, and therefore will be a part of this dialogue as First Nations maintain their distinct cultural identity amidst a rapidly growing multifaceted Canadian landscape.

Despite the varying factors that have influenced the shaping of Native identity, it is clear that maintaining cultural identity is paramount to First Nations artists. While racial ideology and stereotypes have dehumanized their identity, artists have cleverly

reversed these ideological constructions through individual and collective portraits that speak to their experience in their daily lives, from the cultural roots, and from the place of co-existence in between. The stoic, generic 'Indian' images have been replaced with authentic, diverse identities which artists have played a significant role in bringing to the forefront in contemporary society.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTIONS OF BEING IN PLACE AND TIME

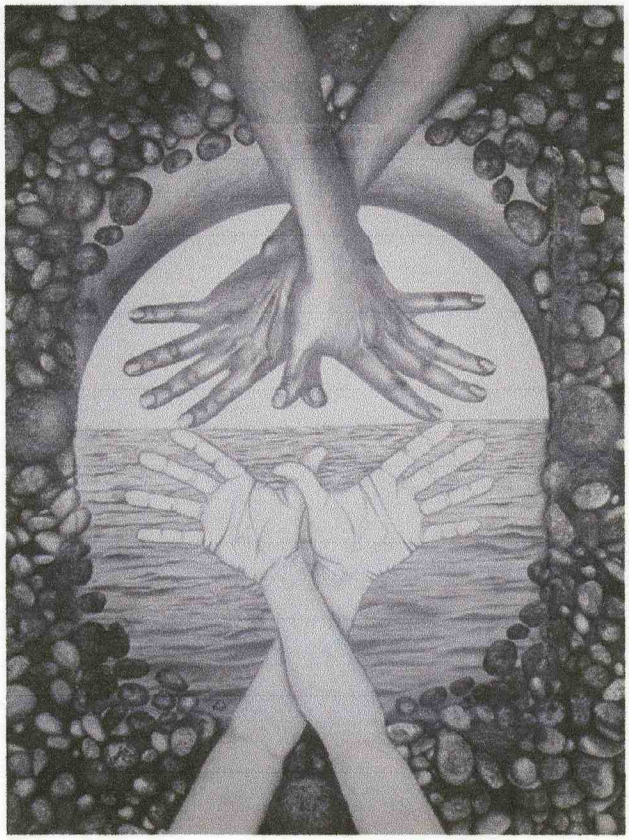

Figure 29. *Consciousness of self,* 1999. Pencil, 44 x 30 inches.

My artistic subject matter is influenced primarily by significant events, challenges and milestones in my life, that are specific to the First Nations experience, both on a personal, national and political scale. I tell these stories through my art to raise public awareness and human compassion. Overall, the autobiographical narrative serves as a important historical marker, that reflects a point of being in place and time in history.

The 'roots' of Saulteaux ancestry, and 'routes' of experiences throughout life, navigate me through political and personal topics that I process within my art production. My context began as a First Nations person born in Canada in the 1960s, at the peak time of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and overt racism. For First Nations people, it was a time of political activism and resistance to colonial hegemony and a time of poverty and depression in many communities. This context is critical to mention, for mainstream Canadians born within this time frame would have had a radically different experience than mine. I believe public awareness cannot be elevated unless the narratives are told. A personal experience demonstrates this experiential difference took place when I was having a conversation with a friend who is one day older than I. She had inquired about my family and my past life, and when I told her about being put in foster homes, and the racism and abuse I had experienced, she was shocked at our different experience growing up. She is white, a daughter of a doctor, grew up in sheltered upper-middle class home with lots of support and opportunities. Even though she had lived in Canada all her life, she had never heard about the First Nations experience in Canada. We were one day a part in age, but a world apart in experiences.

As a First Nations person living in a colonized country, I have had the challenges of a dual existence — living in two vastly different worlds that often have cultural collisions. Even though two cultures co-exist side-by-side, they may be very much segregated from each other. This dual cultural existence requires that I constantly balance on both sides of the Canadian and First Nations cultural fence, in order to effectively speak to both audiences through my work, and bridge connections of understanding. This is a common phenomenon amongst many First Nations artists, which at times can be frustrating, and at other times rewarding, especially when a connection is made.

In a larger historical sense, art production that reflects the context of place in time is a continuation of the creative process of my ancestors before me. They produced art within their time and place; they generated a cultural ideology consisting of beliefs,

values, philosophy and customs, that manifested itself in artistic visual stories congruent with their realities.

The following section reviews the significant lived events and transitions in my work. The central themes are: origins, Sixties Scoop; education, political activism, duality, traces, identity and place, blood and bones, and love. I offer these themes as an insight into my life, as they are expressed as a symbolic narrative of my art. Through them I represent myself as a First Nations person and ask the reader to bear witness to my story. It was a Romantic poet, John Keats, who said that an artist's life is an allegory, which I take to mean that artists live within their own symbolic narrative, and that a full interpretation of their oeuvre must include an understanding of their life.

Figure 30. Sun dance lodges at Gordon First Nation, Saskatchewan.

ORIGINS

I was born in Fort Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, in 1964. I am a member of Gordon First Nation, located forty-five minutes from Regina near the small town of Punnichy. (Figure 30). Most people know me by my English name, Mary Longman, though I also have a Saulteaux name, Aski-Piyesiwiskwew, which translates to Earth Thunderbird Woman, given to me by my great-grandmother. As a young child, I lived in various places, including Gordon First Nation, a Métis reserve in Labrett, and in the city of Regina. I had many caretakers: my mother, my great-grandmother, my aunts and uncles. My family is one of the three original families which settled on Gordon's reservation. The Longmans are probably the largest family on the reserve, occupying most of the south side — so large in fact, that we have our own cemetery. Over the generations, my family have been practising medicine people, and big drum singers, known as the Grey Bison Singers, derived from our original name, Grey Buffalo.

SIXTIES SCOOP

Born in the 1960s, I was one of the thousands of First Nations children that were apprehended by Social Services and put into foster care. The Sixties Scoop overlapped the residential school era and was a time of a tremendous loss of generations of children, which proved to have a devastating impact on First Nations communities. Children were no sooner coming back home from residential schools, then they were taken away again in the Sixties Scoop a few years later. Today, there is much more public awareness about residential schools, but for some reason the Sixties Scoop remains unknown. It is ironic that it is not widely known, given that the two events mirrored each other in terms of dislocating First Nations children from their family and communities, and their experience of abuse and exploitation.

Five years after being introduced into the world, my six siblings and I were taken from our family by Social Services, and split up into foster homes. After being shuffled into a variety of foster homes, in the 1970s my sister and I were put in a permanent foster home, where we resided for the next 11 years without any permitted visitation from my mother or family. I was told that the reason we were apprehended was because my mother was an alcoholic, though I found out in later years that the real story was quite different. In reality, she wasn't an alcoholic and rarely did she drink it was primarily due to medications she had to take on a daily basis, though she did have other challenges. My mother was very young when she had children: she had me when she was fifteen and proceeded to have six other children one after the other. Aside from being a young mother, she suffered the effects of brain trauma after being beaten with the sole of a shoe by a nun in residential school at the age of six. The scar on her brain left her with life-long grand mal epilepsy and mental illness.

Given my mother's circumstance, Social Services might have offered some kind of support for her first, with apprehension of her children as a last resort. Extended family could have shared the parenting and visitations with the mother and could have occurred on a regular basis. At the time, Social Services didn't offer this type of supportive option to Native families, they simply took the children and did not disclose

their whereabouts to the parents. Their policy stated that all foster children would not have access to any information about their family until they were eighteen years of age.

Figure 32 shows the typical adoption ad for Native children, in this case, describing my sister and me. Our names were changed for the advertisement, mine was Joan and my sister's was Ruthie. The text in the advertisement reads;

> Joan and Ruthie are attractive sisters aged 9 and 5 ½. Joan is in grade 3 and doing well. She has long since discarded the impediments that are evident in Ruthie's speech. The school where Ruthie attends kindergarten will arrange speech therapy if the staff thinks it necessary but it seems likely she will follow her sister's healthy pattern of speech development. Joan has a quiet, thoughtful disposition, tending to mother her little sister. Ruthie is content to accept this although she has a bouncy personality. Joan loves her Barbie dolls, reading and helping with baking and cooking. Ruthie is imaginative and relishes any "pretend" game. (Leader Post, 1973)

After this permanent placement in a foster home, I did not see my family again for a total of eleven years. Foster homes during this time were the luck of the draw. One could only hope one would be placed with a family that sincerely wanted to provide care and love for children. There were many families, however, that were taking First Nations children in for money and free labour. The permanent foster home in which we were placed was one such home. Their incentive was a regular cheque in the mail for each child, and they also banked on the advantages of having extra hands for work. The child labour and discipline in this home was excessive. There was a strict regime, and if we fell out of line or didn't do a job exactly right we were physically punished. It was clear that we were not considered real members of the family; we had a subordinate status that the biological children were aware of and took advantage of by casting blame and being abusive. Essentially, we were slaves for a white family, a modern Cinderella story if you will, that remained hidden behind closed doors for many years. Given the

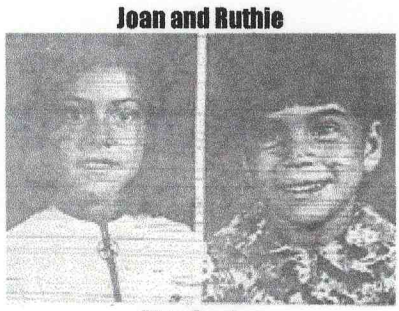

Figure 31. Adoption ad of myself and my sister in 1970, Leader Post paper, Regina

academic nature of this body of work, I have chosen to withhold the details of cruelty and abuses that occurred in this foster home. But I can say that no child should ever have to endure this type of life, and the governmental system should be ashamed of subjecting innocents to criminals who abuse and exploit children. Social Services must radically change their ideology: it must truly act in the best interest of the child, and serve to support family in crisis, rather than create more crisis by apprehending the child and placing it in a foreign, and at times, abusive environment.

Even though this was a difficult time in my life, it also marked the beginning of my passion for art. I discovered as early as grade two that I had the gift of art, with imagination and the technical ability to recreate images in 2-D and 3-D form. Perhaps, art-making began as escapism for me, in which I could create imaginary worlds that I wished to be a part of. Perhaps on another level it was therapeutic for me. I do know that art was a positive force in my life. I gained pride in my accomplishments and received praise from my teachers and peers. From grade two onward, I received grade A standings, and I hoped that I would always be able to create art.

In 1986, with the support of my band, I was able to attend the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver. In 1988, I dedicated an entire exhibition to the telling of my experience in foster care with the intention of exposing the excessive apprehensions of First Nations children across the country, and the exploitation and abuse of these children in foster homes. The exhibit was titled, *Wolves in sheep's clothing,* shown at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Even though it was a risk to share my story with the world, my need to bring public awareness to this issue was greater than my fear of vulnerability. At the time, no one was talking about the Sixties Scoop and therefore it was critical to give exposure to this issue, involving the lack of protection of First Nations children who were wards of the court and the responsibility of Social Services. In addition, it was critical to point out the obvious racial underpinnings of these apprehensions. In a vast majority of cases, there was clear disregard for the children's well-being and the rights of their parents.

The painting *Separation* (Figure 32) depicts the apprehension of my siblings by Social Services. We are pressed up against the back window of the social worker's car. The faces express chaos and sadness as they leave behind their mother and drive off with strangers. The two babies on the right side of the window are my twin brother and sister. It was a traumatic experience for a child, I still recall the descendance of social workers and police upon my home, the arguing, and my emotionally-distraught mother. As a child I stood in the middle, confused and scared.

The central piece of the *Wolves in sheep's clothing* exhibit was entitled *Exchange* (Figure 33) ,which reflects the disempowered feeling a child has as it becomes the victim of socio-political circumstances beyond its control and comprehension. Children were taken from their mothers and fathers, shuffled from home to home, and forced to adapt to new rules, beliefs, values and expectations in each foster home. Their long hair was cut and they were given different names stripping them of their ancestral identity. They became commodities for sale, advertised in papers for adoption as reflected in the background collage of newspapers on the stands made up for sale and stock exchange papers, echoing the image of my own adoption ad.

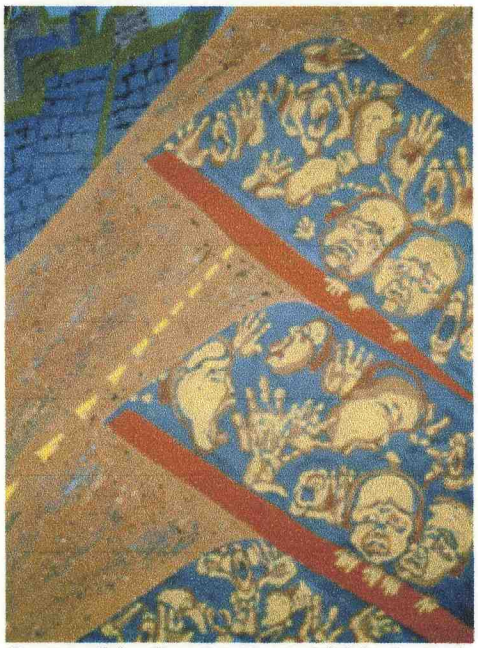

Figure 32. *Separation*, 1988. Detail. Mixed media. 22 x 30 inches.

The style of my work in this exhibit, was unique to this time period, and did not reoccur in my work later on. I expect the narrative nature of the subject matter was depicted most effectively through representational images. Immediately after this exhibit, my work moved into metaphorical images, and assumed a three-dimensional focus. Pencil drawing would always be a favourite medium for sketching and for large works that combined metaphor and representational images.

Years later in 2004, I readdressed the Sixties Scoop with a digital photo collage work entitled, *The Sixties Scoop child labour,* (Figure 34). Ironically, the digital medium and style were also new to my repertoire and I have not done any other digital works since. This work revisits the topic of child labour. Even today, the topic is not often discussed or presented in the media. In this work, there is a child locked in a birdcage, symbolic of an abusive foster home. The child is essentially a prisoner, a victim of circumstance over which she has no control. The border of this image, at first glance reads as a First Nations design, though is in fact a constructed image made of clothespins and pitch forks, subtly referencing labour. The cage hovers above the prairie farms, where most of the boys were sent to live to assist with farm work. The distant horizon is lined with small ghost-like cages, symbolizing headstones, and memorializing those who did not survive the experience. Many either committed suicide or met their demise after living and working on the streets, or experiencing the prison system.

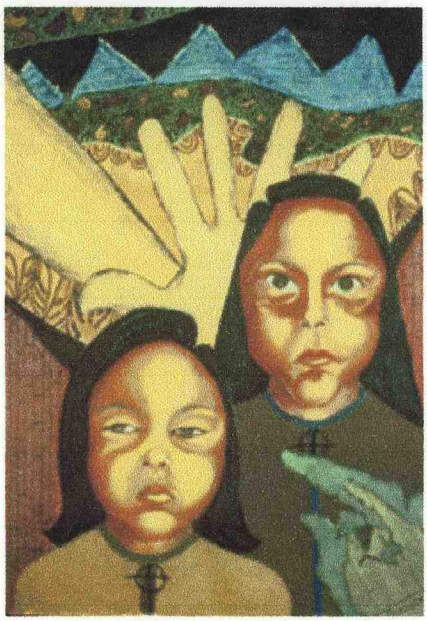

Figure 33. *Exchange,* 1988. Mixed media. 22 x 30 inches.

The Sixties Scoop chapter in my life ends on a positive note, as my next critical milestone was the reunification with my family. I am one of the fortunate ones who found my family early, at the age of sixteen, unlike many others who are still looking. The experience that led to the reconnection to my family was a powerful and unlikely chain of events, so much so that it seemed as if spiritual forces were at work. Things changed one night when I had reached bottom and was in complete despair. After recently being transferred into a group foster home for teen girls, I discovered that this foster home had a reputation for sexually harassing the girls. I lost hope that there were kind people in the world. Everyone seemed to have an exploitative agenda. That night, I

stayed awake and stared at the full moon and wept, asking someone to help me out of this abusive world and help me find my family.

The next morning, the foster parents told me that they wanted to give me a car for my sixteenth birthday because they felt I was the best girl they had ever had stay at their house. I knew this was an unsaid peace offering, though the car meant freedom to me. They offered 200.00 dollars to purchase a car, so we immediately found one in the paper and went that day to check it out. On the way, I told the foster father about my quest to find my family and questioned how I could get information. He couldn't help me because the rules where that I had to wait until I was eighteen to receive my file. When we arrived at the place that was selling the car, a Native man came to greet us. The foster parent whispered, "Ask them if they know your family." I said, "Just because they are Native doesn't mean they will know my family," though he went ahead and asked, much to my embarrassment. The man replied, "As a matter of fact, there are some Longmans living across the street, hold on and I will get them." Shortly after, a smiling couple appeared, the woman had an apple pie in her hand. They said, "Little Mary, is that you? We have been looking a long time for you," and they hugged me. You can imagine my overwhelming emotion. Maybe someone did hear my prayer and cared to help me after all.

Figure 34. *Sixties Scoop – Child Labour. 2004. Digital Photo,* 76 x 102 cm

The next week, we had a family reunion with my mother in attendance as well as uncles, aunts and cousins (Figure 35, 36). I was able to sneak my sister out from the other foster home so she could meet our family and our mother. It took eleven more years to complete our family by tracking down the other siblings.

Figure 35. My mother, Lorraine Longman

Figure 36. Family Reunion,

This reunification with my family marked the beginning of a reclaiming of my identity. From that point on, I wanted to learn everything I could about my family history, the cultural ways, and was eager to learn what ever I could about First Nations as a whole in Canada and North America. What started as an effort to catch up for lost time, turned into a life-long passion that ultimately became an on-going research focus and provided me with the opportunity to teach others as a post-secondary teacher in First Nations education and First Nations art history. My drive for knowledge about First Nations history, culture and current social and political environment would inspire years of art work to come.

EDUCATION

The education in my life through my mid-twenties and thirties has been significant to the development of my artwork, my research and to my teaching profession. When I speak about education, I am referring to three types: in the educational institution, and historical and socio-political education from independent

research, and as well, cultural education from the First Nations community. It is important to validate all these forms of education, because this experience has informed the development of my art work and research, and my teaching profession.

My earliest experience in education at the elementary and secondary levels, aside from what I learned in the curriculum, was the first time that I was introduced to overt and systemic racism. Of course at the time I was unable to understand what it meant. As one of only a couple children of colour in an entire school, I was a visible target for racist bullying, being called 'squaw' and was excluded from cliques. I realize that these children were conditioned by their parents and society, and therefore this behaviour was no fault of their own. However, I was fortunate in that this discrimination was short-lived because I was able to gain respect from my peers early by physically fighting back and excelling in sports. In reflection of those formative years, I also recall the absence of First Nations content in the school curriculum. First Nations were only briefly mentioned in history classes, as backdrops to explorers, and as characters depicted as uncivilized savages. The clearest memory about learning of First Nations is of a drawing I saw in a history text that depicted a missionary being boiled alive in a giant cauldron, while half-naked First Nations danced around the perimeter. This type of derogatory, false image depicted in the educational system is a clear example of a western ideological bias that has shaped racism in this country. In addition, it impacted First Nations children and youth, who became ashamed of their identity. The systemic racism that excluded equal representation of the tremendous history and cultures of First Nations, deleted 90% of this country's history. This distorted portrayal suggests that important history only began 514 years ago at the time of Columbus's arrival, as opposed to approximately 27,000 years ago, when the first peoples lived on this land, in communities, made tools and survived on wild game such as the mammoth. (Bryan, 1991).

It is troubling to consider that in the twenty-first century, First Nations curriculum still makes up only a minimal percentage of courses that are being taught in the educational system at all levels. As I continued with my education as an adult, completing a Diploma in Fine Arts and a Masters in Fine Arts, this minimal number of

First Nations courses frustrated me, and it is for this reason that I pursued vigorous independent research. It is in fact what inspired me to teach. Teaching allowed me to convey what had been absent and therefore contributed both directly and indirectly to the disclosure of First Nations and their extensive art history and related cultural practises. In my art work, this has been a central value in the intent of my work which is to disseminate knowledge about First Nations of this country. On one hand, my work has been didactic and concerned with First Nations issues in order to balance the scales of education. On the other hand, the work is an act of empowerment and self-determination in reclaiming First Nations history, culture and identity through the process of critiquing aspects of past and current colonialism, resisting western representation that does not correlate with my reality, all for the purposes of 'emancipation' (L. T. Smith, 1999) and freeing First Nations from the social, political and cultural controls that have maintained societal inequalities and injustice.

My training in the visual art institutions was certainly valuable in the development of technical skills and creative process. Throughout my undergraduate education in 1986 at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, I learned a myriad of technical skills in various media such as printmaking, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, performance and even fashion design classes. By the third year, I had focused on sculpture and drawing, and my sculptural forms were becoming more and more minimalistic and metaphorical. Like most sculptors, I loved the tactile qualities of three-dimensional form and materials, and experimented working with a wide range of materials and many methods of casting, in metals, concrete, gypsums, resins, and paper. These skills continue to be useful in both my art work and in teaching.

During my time at the Emily Carr Institute, much of my subject matter explored spiritual and worldview beliefs of First Nations. In the beginning, my quest to learn about Native spirituality began with books, perhaps an experience similar to many other young urban Natives living away from home. These books were generic in nature but they introduced me to general worldview concepts of the medicine wheel teachings of balance in life. My understanding of spirituality gradually matured over the years, as I

learned directly from the First Nations community by attending ceremonies and traditional events, such as sweats, sun dances, healing, naming and walking-out ceremonies, pow-wows and round dances, and by learning things informally from my family members.

I was specifically interested in concepts of life cycles, which in later years became more personalized to my experiences of life and death, which I will address later. As well, this spiritual and philosophical quest inspired my interest in the notion of the metaphysical, or life energy forces, that are said to exist in all forms, animate or inanimate. The Ojibway call it the 'Manitou,' and it is for this reason that all things are to be respected. I contemplated this energy, that is usually only 'felt', such as in the essence of air, in the trees or in rocks. As my work began to focus more on the use of natural found objects, I considered the Manitou in my own work. Through the combination of the use of natural materials and overall biomorphic forms this combined energy may stimulate the subconscious of the audience, in a naturalistic, uninhibited manner. The construction of natural forms and materials has been an on-going process in which I purposefully attempt to emanate an inviting energy and hope that the audience connects with the work.

When I began my independent research on First Nations' history and current affairs, I began by finding books on the history of indigenous peoples in North America. Like many people who learn about the conspicuously-absent history of the colonization in North America for the first time, I was shocked, enraged and felt a sense of grief. The more I learned, the more I felt a sense of urgency to bring some kind of justice to atrocities. I felt it was imperative to expose this history and its connection to the current political context, in order to generate public awareness and support. This education marked the beginning of political activism that I would express in my artwork, writing and participating in political events.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

In 1990, I did a year of study at Concordia University in Montreal, and then moved on to complete a MFA at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, where I graduated in 1993. My interest in studying in Montreal was two-fold: I wanted to sample the graduate courses and studios to see if Concordia could offer a strong Masters program, and secondly, I wanted to support the Mohawks cause in the Oka crisis, to protect their traditional burial ground from development into a golf course and condominium site. Shortly after arriving in Montreal, I became involved with the peace camp at Oka and within a few months, I moved to Kahnawake and experienced the dynamics of the crisis first-hand. I arrived to find army tanks situated on the edges of the reservation and the Surete du Quebec checking vehicles on a daily basis as they went on and off the reserve.

Figure 37 *Appropriation.* 1990. Detail of installation. Stainless steel, wood, bones soil

This experience impacted my work, as it did for so many other First Nations artists across Canada. At Concordia, I participated in a First Nations art exhibit entitled, *Our home and native land.* In this exhibit, I made an installation entitled *Appropriation* (Figure 37), which focused on the illegal taking of land, image, text and identity. The installation consisted of several stainless steel signs, amidst soil and bones. The signs were replicas of actual ones, with Native names and images on them, though the star attraction was the large sign in the back, a replica of a sign in Oka Park, (which ironically depicted the tipi symbol for park). With a subtle alteration, I shifted the tipi logo over and added a golfer swinging his club at the tipi to add further

irony. The golfer, of course, symbolically represented the attempted take-over of Kanesatake's burial ground for a golf course and condominium development.

During my time in Quebec, I also went on a field trip to northern Quebec with other First Nations students to examine the impact of the James Bay dam projects on approximately 11,000 Cree and Inuit who resided in those areas. We visited Cree communities, stayed on trap lines, and observed the enormous dams and flooded village sites and burial grounds. We enquired as to the kind of ecological, cultural and social impact these six dams had. The community dislocation had proven to be devastating , especially since their traditions have been rooted in the land for many centuries. The video, *Place of the Boss, Utshimassits*, produced in 1996 by the National Film Board, reveals the impact of dislocation on First Nations communities, and the traumatic psychological effects on the people, such as depression and the significant rise of suicide.

In terms of the ecosystem, chemical reactions occur when dams flood an area, poisoning the fish and raising mercury levels in the water. This had an impact on pregnant women that resulted in deformed offspring. When the flood gates opened, hundreds of animal species were drowned, such as the caribou shown in Figure 38. The destruction and poisoning of the local wildlife greatly impacted the hunting and fishing of the First Nations peoples, because the majority still actively used their trap lines for subsistence. These traditional practises are so significant amongst the Woodlands Cree that their school year breaks revolve around hunting and fishing seasons. The dams put a sudden end to a way of life and means of subsistence for many communities.

Figure 38 Hundreds of drowned caribou caught in the flood gates at James Bay

It is a rare circumstance for a governing or corporate agency to permit the flooding of a community and cemetery for the sake of economic development, though with First Nations communities this has been a frequent occurrence. The dislocation of

First Nations communities for the sake of economic development has been a recurring act of racial discrimination since colonial contact.

From this experience, the work *Culture Clash* (Figure 39), formerly known as 'De-taut', was conceived. *De-Taut* is a play on a French word *Détente*, meaning an ease of tension in a trigger mechanism — an ease of tension between nations. "De-taut' suggests the opposite: a tension and pulling of a trigger. In particular, this piece addresses the clash of values pertaining to land and natural resources. In governments and big business, values revolve around capital gain, and often the land and its resources are appreciated solely for their monetary value and for the attainment of economic development. The impact on life and lifestyle tends to be a secondary consideration. The simulated justice scales suspend pans of rocks. On one side the rocks are in natural form, on the other, the more weighted side contains a pan of golden rocks. The scale is constructed with a six-foot metal shotgun with a stylized bow straddling the butt with its string around the trigger, seemingly to prevent the gun from re-cocking.

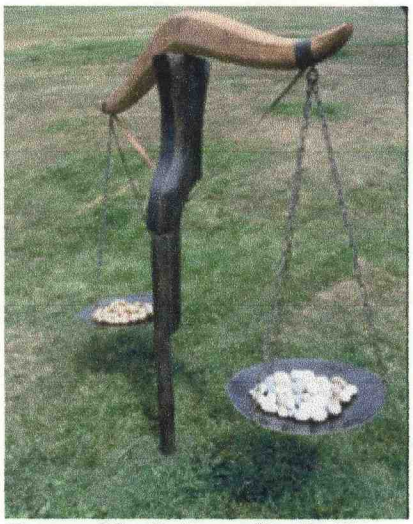

Figure 39. Culture Clash (De-taut). 1993, Longman. 73 x 12 x 18 cm, steel, wood, rocks and leather

In 1991, I was accepted into the Masters program of Fine Arts at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NASCAD) in Halifax. When I was at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, I did a year of exchange at NASCD and was impressed with their studio facilities and the academic calibre of the courses, as well as their art education program. I was already teaching while I was going to school at Emily Carr, first at the elementary level with First Nations students at *Spirit Rising* in Vancouver, British Columbia then at a post-secondary level at the Native Education Centre. I viewed NASCAD as an opportunity to develop my teaching skills as well as progress with my artwork.

During this time, I continued with my politically active work, exploring themes of representation such as stereotypes and interpretations of First Nations history. In this time period, I produced two significant works, *Western resource shelf* (Figure 40) and *Reservations* (Figure 41, 42). *Western resource shelf* examined stereotypes of First Nations peoples in terms of identifying types and sources. The most predominant stereotypes of First Nations derive from Hollywood movies, kitsch tourist items, and biased history texts. The top shelf displays film reel canisters, referencing film media that has been a powerful tool in perpetuating the stereotypes of First Nations, particularly those of a dangerous murderer. Even though many of these movies are fiction-based, they have influenced the public to believe that they are true representations of history. The middle shelf depicts rows of plastic 'Indian' dolls, 150 to be exact, that reference the multitude of kitsch images of 'Indians' found in tourist shops. And lastly, the bottom shelf has leather-bound history texts that subtly point to the bias of exclusion of First Nations representation of history, by titling the first volume, 1492.

Figure 40. *Western resource shelf-* Detail 1991, Mary Longman Mixed Media, 6 x 1 x 1'

The work *Reservations* examines the initial implementation of reservations and their current impact on First Nations communities. The purpose of reservations in North America in the mid-1700s, was to localize and control First Nations people and their lands. The government could tend to the 'Indian problem' through containment and isolation away from the public eye. Even though the Indian agents are gone and First Nations no longer have to receive a permit to go on and off reserve, the legacy of this impact remains visible today in First Nations communities. Traditional practises were interrupted, such as travelling to camps throughout the year to collect food. Poverty and hardship led to depression, addictions, suicide, violence, low retention in schools, and various health problems in reserve communities. Due to the isolation of many

reservations, employment opportunities were and are today extremely minimal. In 2005, the Canadian government addressed the problem of poverty in reserve communities that has been described as disgraceful Third World conditions. One hopes that this government initiative will follow through with support for economic development in reservation communities and set a precedent in Canadian history.

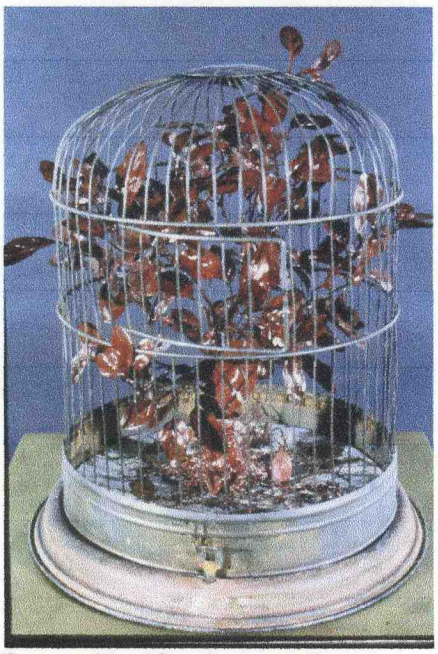

Figure 41, 42. *Reservations*. 1991 Body filler, cage, wood. 153 x 31 x 31 cm

As destructive as the reservations have been to First Nations, they have had one positive impact in that they became a central hub for the community's cultural and linguistic connections. As artist and curator Gerald McMaster (1998) points out, the isolation of reservation communities, in a paradoxical twist, deviated from government intention and preserved cultural traditions without outside interference.

Reservations, is comprised of a pillar representing the governing system which implemented reserves. On the top of the pillar are dominant architectural features of the White House, while the bottom are architectural details of the Ottawa parliament buildings, complete with medieval-style designs found in the foyer including praying monks that peer down from the peak of the building. The pillar alludes to systems of power that profited from the implementation of reserves. The bird cage symbolizes the reservation, with a tree inside

that represents the people. The rusty bird cage has weathered boards inlayed in the floor, referencing the poverty and small perimeters which at one time confined the people, though now the door remains open. This tree stands with its roots splayed across the floor boards, overgrowing its perimeters, the leaves dying and falling to the floor.

DUALITY

At the end of my Masters degree, the issue of 'duality' began to surface. I struggled with questions of audience, access, and priority. Who was I creating my work for, Canadians and/or First Nations? How would I make my work culturally accessible to both audiences at the same time? What is my priority, to educate Canadians about First Nation issues, or to contribute to First Nations art and discourse?

At the same time, I had difficulty with the viewing public's general lack of knowledge about First Nations issues, with the result that viewers might not be familiar with the content of my work. Often my critiques would turn into didactic sessions on the historical context of First Nations which would derail my time for an adequate constructive critique of my work. At this time, courses in post-modern critical theory were concerned with identity politics, which helped me to define my own position as a First Nations artist in my Masters thesis. I wrote:

> I found it difficult to find a comfortable positioning and voice within educational institutions, and I found that the content of my research, interests and form of my approaches were perceived as alternative or irrelevant or were simply misunderstood due to conditioned European frames of reference... Creating work from a different cultural perspective, other than the dominant culture can prove to be quite challenging, as there is a dual objective. On one hand I want my work to be accessible to the mass public and on the other there is a deep rooted need for my art to contribute to aboriginal culture. (1992, Masters Thesis)

An example of the differences in of cultural perception is the varied interpretations of the symbol of the tree I made for the work *Reservations.* For many, the tree was interpreted as a symbol related to environmentalism, but for the First Nations audience the tree is known as the symbol for the tree of life, often seen on the back of

turtle which is said to be mother earth. This image is particularly common with the Mohawk Nation. Given that education and contribution is important in my work, I struggled with the fine line of producing accessible metaphors without becoming overly didactic and literal. What I did conclude from this inquiry is that this balancing act of producing poetic forms and content that are accessible to the mass audience will always be a part of my process, given my dual cultural existence. In my quest to find a common language that contributed to both audiences, I discovered the power of the human story to create understanding about First Nations realities, and satisfied my need to contribute directly to First Nations people by addressing shared experiences. Shortly thereafter I would resolve the form in which I began to incorporate natural materials and aesthetic choices that naturally drew people into the content without inhibition. These two major realizations marked the next transition as seen in my work *Traces of life* and *death* and *Blood and stones*.

TRACES

In 1993, I graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and moved to Merritt, BC to engage in the full-time teaching of visual art and First Nations art history at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. The institute was unique in that it is First Nations-owned and had a strong Aboriginal component to its curriculum, a refreshing change to the educational institutions I attended. What I didn't anticipate was that half of the population was of First Nations descent, which made me feel at home. I didn't expect to find a beautiful valley town, with rolling grassy mountains and winding rivers. I moved to Shackan reserve, (Figure 44), which was a half hour outside of Merritt. It was beautiful, sitting on a plateau above the Nicola River, with horses roaming and waterfalls hidden in the forest. After a year of working as a full-time instructor, I was promoted to Department Head of Fine Arts.

The immersion into a First Nations community and the natural setting provided the inspiration and materials I needed to create a new body of work. I narrowed my

scope and focused my objectives on the documentation of my immediate life experiences.

My sculptural forms became more minimal in their metaphorical form and I began to incorporate natural materials. Working in a more distilled fashion, I questioned whether my work was accessible for even the First Nations audience. Though in time I had resolved that my work did not have to be 'Native looking', it also did not have to confine my creative intuition to appease the pressures of what the mainstream audience expected my work to be. The fact was that the work was inextricably intertwined with a First Nations perspective regardless of its form.

Figure 43. Exploring the shorelines of the east coast. Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1988

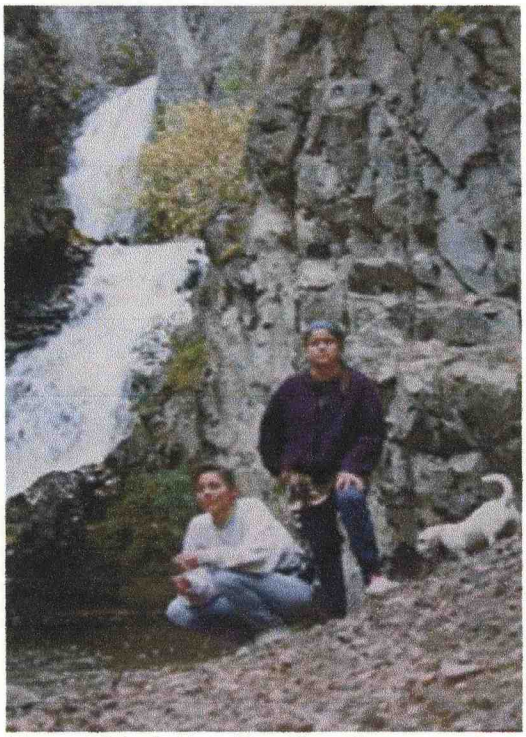

Figure 44. Artist, Heather Henry and myself exploring the landscape at Shackan Reserve falls, British Columbia. 1993.

During the period of 1994-95, I began telling stories of my life and family in cast paper reliefs. The move into cast paper wasn't new. At the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, I had experimented with paper casting, first by painting on large handmade textured paper, and later making small relief paper casts. The purpose of exploring handmade paper was to find a common ground between the textural and formal qualities of sculpture with colour and detail of painting and drawing. It was also an opportunity to sculpt in clay, which has always been a satisfying way to work due to its

flexibility and forgiving quality. It seemed the perfect medium to tell the realities of my experience, by casting directly from my family members' faces. These casts contained realistic traces of their portrait identity, rather than distant, faceless or imagined 'Indians' from a past long ago.

These works culminated in a solo exhibit at the Kamloops Art Gallery entitled *Traces*. Traces referenced memory or imprints left behind. When this body of personal narratives began, a string of family deaths and illnesses occurred, which greatly impacted the choice of subject matter. These tragedies represented the 'traces' of my immediate life from a First Nations experience. These types of tragedies were also common to many First Nations people across the county.

Figure 45. *Twin lightning*, 1995. Handmade paper, mix media. 63x36"

In the exhibit I produced two large paper reliefs. One was *Twin lightning* (Figure 45) and the other, *Blue thunderbird* (Figure 46). *Twin lightning* is my Uncle George's Native name. He was a respected medicine man, sun dancer, and traditional singer. He died of a heart attack at a Sundance ceremony on our reserve in the summer of 1995. Uncle George had danced and fasted for the entire four days. At the end as he was hanging out prints in the tree for people, he had a fatal heart attack. Prints are coloured pieces of material that are symbolically connected to a specific prayer that people give to medicine people.

Just prior to his death, I was visiting him on the reserve. Sitting in his kitchen, I noticed the interesting lines in his face and asked him if I could take of a mould of his face and he agreed. At the time, I didn't know what I would do with the mould. On this

same day, my uncle asked me to design a specific dream image for a drum he had. I went home and made the design and was going to bring it to him later that summer and paint it on his drum, but he passed on before it could be given it to him. In the end, *Twin Lightning* was produced as an honour piece, and at the same time my promise to him to complete the drum was achieved. In this piece my uncle wears an old and specific type of headdress with bison horns and rabbit fur, which was reserved for respected people. Since he dedicated his life to medicine and helping others, I felt he was deserving of the headdress.

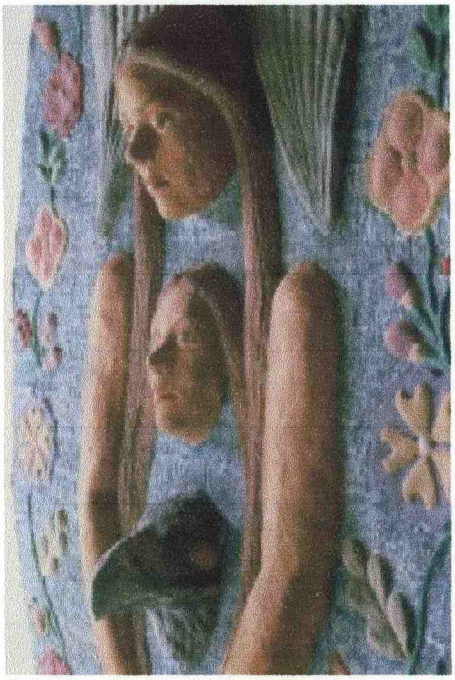

Figure 46. Blue Thunderbird, 1995. Handmade paper, mix

The second cast was dedicated to my sister, whose native name is *Blue Thunderbird.* She received her name from my great-grandmother because she had become severely ill and it is believed that a Native name will give a person strength. To have the thunderbird in your name is said to be an honour as it is the most powerful of all birds. Some would say that thunderbirds were real, as opposed to mythological. Given that First Nations history stems back to the Ice Age, it is possible that accounts of large prehistoric birds have been passed down, either orally or through artistic renditions. Perhaps stories of the thunderbird are an amalgamation of oral accounts and mythology. Today we can view old thunderbird images on pictographs and petroglyphs across the county.

Thunderbird descriptions from my territory say it is a very large bird with facial features similar to an eagle and a hawk. Its feathers are black with a tint of blue and its eyes are large and glowing. Old stories say that a thunderbird could project lightning bolts from its eyes and its wings in flight would sound like thunder. On the west coast,

the thunderbird is said to be so large it could pick up whales right out of ocean, and its home is a nest made of rocks in the mountains. This thunderbird was also known for casting lightning bolts and sounding like thunder in flight. The Anishnabe stories say that there are two kinds of thunderbirds, one of which is a man transformed into a thunderbird, the other, a great powerful bird. These lived in the mountains and some even say left large circular impressions of their nest in the earth. The Anishnabe say they traveled disguised in storm clouds. Across Canada, the stories of the thunderbird's power vary, but generally, it is known for its ability to be a guardian in life and in ceremony, to protect one from destructive or enemy forces, and to bring rain. Today stories of the thunderbird are still being told and depicted in contemporary works produced by Aboriginal artists.

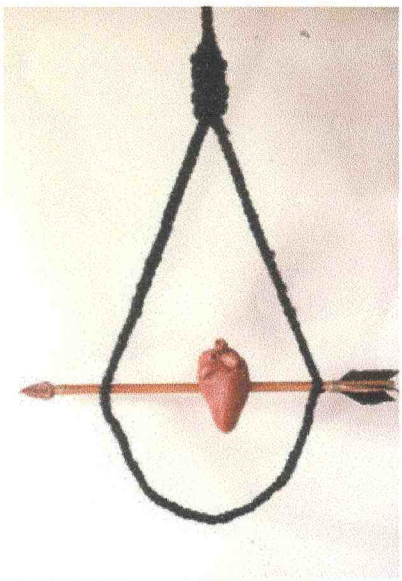

Figure 47. *Goodbye to romance,* 1996. Plaster, flint, wood, leather, synthetic hair.

In the work *Blue thunderbird,* I inserted mould impressions of my sister's face and my own, and added the face of a thunderbird. Our faces are surrounded by seed bead impressions and old Saulteaux floral patterns. The work reveals my closeness and love for my sister and the concern and protectiveness I felt when she suddenly fell into a mental illness after the summer of tragedies.

The work *Goodbye to romance* (Figure 47) reveals the tragic suicide of my brother, which occurred in the same summer that my uncle died and my sister fell ill. *Goodbye to romance* is the title of an Ozzy Osborne song which speaks about a broken heart and giving up on life. My brother wanted this song to be played at his funeral. In this work, I made a cast of a deer heart, and constructed an arrow in the traditional way with sinew and flint. I suspended the heart and arrow with a noose made out of braided synthetic hair. The braided rope extends ten feet, attaching itself to the ceiling. The initial

concept was derived from the song he had requested and a photo I saw of him as a child, holding a bow and arrow in his hand. Even though my brother died of a broken heart and devastation of the news of his HIV, I knew that his desperate loneliness and depression was post-traumatic stress due to his displacement from his family and community in the Sixties Scoop. This work traveled across the country in a show entitled *Native love*, curated by Nation to Nation art collective in Montreal.

Figure 48, 49. *Medicine people*, 1996. Bondo, copper paint, copper wire. 3.5x1.5x10'.

Two other sculptures in this time period were fine examples of the minimal direction evolving in my work. *Medicine people* (Figure 48, 49) was in the *Traces* exhibit, and a new work *Co-dependents* (Figure 53) was featured in the *Topographies* exhibition with *Medicine people*. *Topographies* was a major group exhibit of BC artists, held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1996. The majority of the work of First Nations artists chosen to be in this exhibit was situated in one room. I was chosen by a different curator, Monika Kin Gagnon, and therefore was placed in the thematic section of *Moving ground underfoot.* Kin Gagnon (1996), writes; "I have selected twelve artists that navigate the terrain narratives and cultural migrations, nature and landscape, and their related histories." (p. 47). It was to my benefit that my work was not ghettoized in the 'First Nations section' because I had the opportunity to show my work without the Aboriginal label, where it could viewed on its own terms.

The work, *Medicine people*, is a 'sculptural installation' in which four forms occupy a ten foot area. Three foot high bison horns sit in a circle facing each other and release copper wire from their tips. The copper wires join together in the centre to suspend a simulated cracked rock hovering just above the ground. The bison horns are symbolic of the bison's importance for Plains First Nation culture for subsistence, cultural production and spiritual practices. The horns were reminiscent of traditional, prestigious head regalia made with bison horns to symbolize the status of the wearer who, through acts of strength, courage, and leadership, had attained respect in the community. Given the high regard for the bison, these horns were metaphors for medicine people. The concept of healing in this piece was initially inspired by being involved in ceremonies with medicine people in my family. Witnessing the power of these events, I was awe-stricken with the energy that entered the space where the ceremony was held. The use of copper in the horns and the wires suggests a conduit

Figure 50: Ancestors Rising. Detail

Figure 51. *Ancestors rising*. 2006. Bronze. Diameter: 20', Each Horn- H: 54" x D: 228."

of energy that works to suspend, cradle and heal what is fractured in the centre of their focus.

In 2005-2006, I re-worked this piece into the new version entitled, *Ancestors rising* (Figure 50, 51), which was commissioned for a permanent outdoor sculpture at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. This site specific works speaks to the history of the surrounding area called Wascana Park which was known as the Mackenzie River. In particular, this piece acknowledges a critical time of intersection between First Nations and early settlers, in which the bison where a key symbol of this history.

Since the beginning of human existence in the prairies, First Nations have co-existed with the bison. Their ancestors, the Paleo-Indians, hunted mammoths and giant bison, and in later years survived on the bison we know today. In Saskatchewan, the bison not only contributed to the survival of Aboriginal people, their hides, bones, horns and hooves and so on, contributed to many aspects of cultural production such as ceremonial items like headdresses and Sundance items and utilitarian items such as clothing, blankets, implements, tipis and served as canvases for historical and personalized narrative drawings.

This history is central to the site of Wascana Park. The term, 'Wascana' is a variation of a Cree word translating to "pile of bones" which refers to the piles of bison bones that were placed by First Nations in the Wascana River area. It was their belief that the bison would return to the bones of their dead ancestors. When Colonel Palliser arrived in 1857, he named the settlement *Pile-o-Bone*. Shortly thereafter, new piles of bison bones were made by the settlement of colonists, but for a different purpose. Bison bones became an export product for fertilizer and chinaware. Archival photographs reveal early settlers posing beside massive piles of bones ready for manufacturing and export (Figure 52). This new bison industry, combined with long-term effects of sport hunting when the national railway went through eventually culminated in the extermination of wild bison from the prairie landscape. This extermination marked a significant change of life for Plains First Nations and ended a long history of cultural production associated with the bison.

Today, 'pile of bones' has a different meaning to the people of Regina. It marks the annual celebration of colonial settlement. This celebration recreates early settlement days through costumes and offers a variety of entertainment. I hope that one day, 'Pile of Bones Day' will reflect the First Nations' part of this shared history and honour the ancestors' bones that reside beneath the soil.

The entire work is cast in bronze with a speckled patina treatment that achieves an aged stone appearance. Four bison horns of human scale are positioned in the exact direction of north, south, east, and west, referencing the First Nations spiritual beliefs of balance in life. From each of the tips of each of the horns flows a braided rope, which still suggests the conduit of energy, though with a subtle suggestion of First Nation braids. The ropes now suspend a net woven in a dream catcher pattern filled with river rocks. The rocks represent life in its earliest form, at a cellular level where all life is the same and equal.

Figure 52. Piles of bison bones awaiting shipment at Saskatoon, ca.1890-R-B677-2. Saskatchewan Archives.

Overall, the sculpture, *Ancestors Rising* is a metaphor for the First Nations ancestors and bison whose bones lay beneath the soil, rising from the earth as a reminder of their presence. This work ultimately is an urban historical marker that memorializes the First Nations and bison that lived on this very land, just two hundred years ago. I ask the audience to bear witness to this history, to acknowledge it and give this place and its spirits the respect and commemoration it deserves.

The work *Co-dependents* (Figure 53) is a result of my observance of co-dependent relationships in First Nations communities. This of course, is not exclusive to First Nations people and it exists elsewhere. Co-dependant relationships occur when friends and family maintain a relationship even though it is unhealthy for them, even if extreme abuse occurs. Each person disables the other from moving beyond the state of dysfunction. People usually stay in co-dependent relationships due to lack of self-esteem and/or lack of healthy boundaries. They may even over-compensate by caretaking, resulting in further preventing their loved one from dealing with addictions or unhealthy behaviour. Sometimes it doesn't matter how extreme the tension is, the two may still remain precariously balanced between love and resentment. Co-dependence is all around us, such as in the music we hear everyday. In love ballads, we often hear lyrics that reflect unhealthy dependency and the loss of the independent self; "I would be nothing if I didn't have you" or "You are my everything," or in the most pathetic case, "If you leave me, can I come too?"

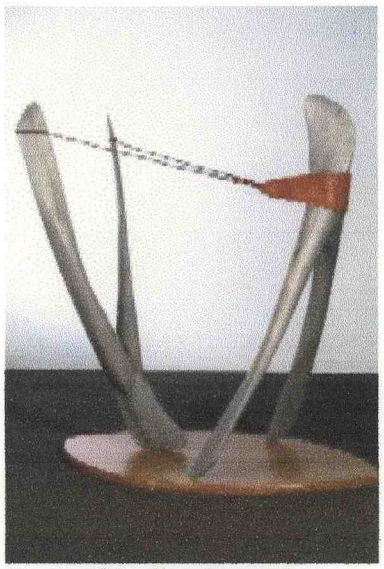

Figure 53. *Co-dependents*, 1996. Mary Longman. Cottonwood, leather, copper. 60 x 55 x 41"

The wishbone in the piece suggests the contradictory dynamics of a co-dependent relationship: one side wishes that things will get better, the other side reversed, becomes a weapon, a slingshot specifically intended to injure and cause pain.

IDENTITY AND PLACE

In 1998, I was invited to participate in a group exhibit called *Reservation X, the power of place in Aboriginal contemporary art*, shown at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

The work *Strata and routes* (Figure 54, 55) stemmed from an examination of First Nations identity and place. In researching this topic, I discovered that identity is a highly complex issue that involves exploring multi-faceted ideas and issues. In analyzing some of the factors that shape identity, I began with ancestral roots and past conditioning. An individual's roots and upbringing have a direct bearing on one's values and outlook on life. These involve a layering of experiences where identity is perpetually evolving. The external influences vary, and play a large role in determining lifestyle, and one's choices in life.

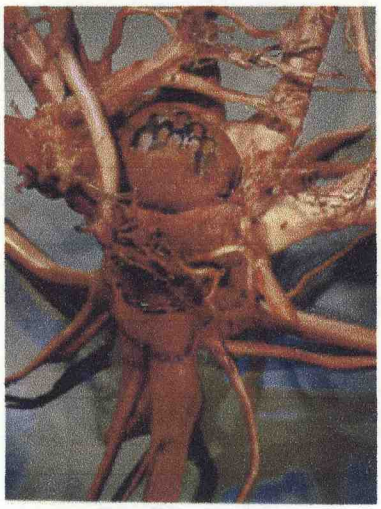

Figure 54, 55. *Strata and Routes,* 1998. Mary Longman. Rocks, cotton wood, fir, rocks, cement, 5 x 6 x6'

Aside from past factors that shape identity, there are also the influences of the 'routes' we travel in life. Places that a person lives influence societal and cultural perceptions. This is an important point, for my routes involved a nomadic experience, living in many different provinces across Canada, and in the Arctic, and in contexts of the urban centers and reservations. These places have influenced the art that I produce, such as the found natural materials that I incorporated in my work.

Identity is also constructed externally by others. Representations of a cultural group can influence societal perspectives as well as one's own perception of themselves. With the consideration of the many factors that shape identity, I resolved that I could not address a definitive, generic description of First Nations identity, rather I needed to speak from my own personal experience. In the catalogue for *Reservation X*, I stated that there is no recipe for

Native identity, nor is there a fixed address for 'Reservation X'.

The initial inspiration for the form of *Strata and routes* came to me one day when I was walking in the forest and noted an overturned tree with a large rock embedded in its roots. The tree and rock lived together, grew together, and shaped each other. I thought about this co-existence and the connotations of roots, and developed the metaphorical image for the art work. On this same day, I stopped to look at strata layers on an exposed bank. I pondered the strata layers in a soil profile, the layers suggesting layers of time and the evolution of past to present, and the present building upon the past. The stratified layers also became symbolic layers of memories and experiences.

The overall form of the sculpture evolved into two rooted tree trunks attached to each other by simulated strata layers, which connected the concepts of the roots of ancestry with the 'routes' of life passages. Ironically, the tree trunks came from two different areas and were two different types of trees. They became one hybrid form, which spoke to the influences of place on identity and also to the dual culture in which I reside. Nestled within the top of the tree trunk is a large rock on which is imprinted a photographic image of my family. This reveals the place of family as home. Despite a nomadic lifestyle, home is consistently a place to which I always return, and is where I truly understand the nature of identity and place.

BLOOD AND STONES

The exhibit, *Blood and stones*, held at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery in 1999, was a culmination of works produced over the years that integrated stones. The stone was central in representing First Nations peoples on the Plains over thousands of years. The purpose of the *Blood and stones* exhibit was to revive the medium of the stone, and connect it with past traditions that utilized stones to record places and events, stories, experiences and ceremonial practises. The term blood in this context refers to ancestry, lineage, relations, memory and life force.

Stone markers left behind on the prairie grasses and cliff faces were traces of the history and cultural practices of Plains people throughout time. Stone was used for its

practical physical properties and as well for its spiritual and metaphysical properties. The dense, physical properties of the stone served well for utilitarian items such tipi rings, fire pits, burial sites, and caches, in addition to items used for tools and warfare. The permanence of the stone also served to trace the history of activity that documented important places, events, commemorations and memorials. The metaphysical properties of the stone served as a medium of communication in the spiritual realm and were found in the forms of medicine wheels, pictographs, petroglyphs, petroforms, sacred boulders, amulets or carved into figures and pipes.

The interest in working with stones and natural materials was a culmination of many years of exploring forests and edges of water for natural art forms. I have always been drawn to stones for their visual beauty and tactile qualities, and for the energy they seem to carry. This energy, which I refer to as a metaphysical property, is connected to the concept of the Manitou- the soul, presence, and life in all things, animate or inanimate. Some may understand the meaning of soul in inanimate forms when one recalls a memory of being drawn to a rock because it had a special essence. Perhaps it was taken home and put it in a special place or given to someone special. From Stonehenge in Great Britain, to the sphinx in Egypt, to Ayers Rock in Australia, ancient cultures have understood and harnessed the energy of stones over thousands of years. I have used the stone's natural form in this exhibit of sculpture and drawings to reveal its essence and metaphysical properties. When incorporated into a metaphorical form, it ideally communicates to the viewer on both a conscious and unconscious level.

The origin of this body of work began with a triptych drawing I had done in 1996 titled, *Blood and stones* (Figure 56). The work addressed life and death in a personal story of my two brothers that related to stones. Before my brother Richard passed away, he carried six stones in a leather pouch in his pocket, each symbolizing one of his siblings. He asked that that the pouch be buried with him. The left panel shows my brother's grave site that I had made for him, and the right panel shows hands holding six rocks with an X-ray of a heart above showing intricate blood vessels. As a whole, the heart vessels looked like a branching of a tree which connected my idea of blood lines

and the family tree. The centre panel shows my other brother and me back to back. I recall him stating that given that I was the eldest, I had to be the stone for everyone. My thought was that family support needed to be a mutual effort in order to build strong bonds of support. It is a concept not unlike the actual make-up of stones, in which each granules of sand are fused together to ultimately make up a solid stone. These two stories of stones connected to my brothers are visually brought together with electrocardiogram (ECG) graphs, which symbolized life and death.

Figure 56. *Blood and stones*, 1996. Pencil, 7 x 3 feet.

The *Thunderbird nest* in (Figure 57, 58), revisits the historical stories of thunderbirds and imagines what their nest of stones might look like. The *Thunderbird nest* is made out of an alpha gypsum and stones with willow branches form the inner nest. In the nest is a large egg that appears to be old and fossilized. This work is simple in its content and poetic in form, and leads one to ponder and imagine the possibilities of the great thunderbird's existence.

The *Birth of life* (Figure 59, 60) revisits the recurring theme of the life cycle and reproduction found in my earlier works. Essentially, this work is a creation story that imagines the birth of all life in the beginning of time. The sculptural form is a poetic gesture of the beauty of birth, with an arched tree that transforms into an umbilical cord suspending a net of rocks. It embraces mythological and scientific stories that describe

all of life evolving from the ocean, just as today, life is conceived in the salty waters of the womb. It encompasses traditional Native philosophies that describe the life cycle and reproduction in a holistic sense, in that all forms of life are equal through the representation of stones that points to the cellular form in which all life begins.

Figure 57, 58. *Thunderbird nest*, 1999-2004. Wood, stones, matrix G, willow branches, ostrich egg, raffia. 60 x 76 x 72 cm

LOVE

In 1999 and later in 2004 I created two sister pieces around the topic of love in courtship and love in motherhood. The work *Elk man waiting for love* (Figure 61, 62), produced in 1999, was an exploration of the universal topic of love, spoken from traditional courting rituals of Plains First Nations. The elk was a predominant figure in Plains courting rituals, usually seen on the end of courting flutes that a man used to entice a woman with his song of desired commitment. The flute's opening had an elk's head with open mouth for the sound to travel out. The elk was revered for its powerful songs during the time of mating and fertility. Its natural song during the mating season emanates power and longing and if heard in the distant forests, can sound magical and intimidating. The traditional courting ritual usually occurred at large events, in order to guarantee

witnesses at the time of the proposal, and is said to occur at such events as Sun dances. These events were not only a time of annual ceremonies but an opportunity for socializing and "snagging." If a young man was interested in a woman, he would come by her tent at night and serenade her with his flute. It was believed that if he played the flute exceptionally well, he could entice any woman with the beauty of the song and the power of the elk to assist him. If the woman was agreeable to his request, she would bring out her blanket and the two would promenade around the camp, announcing their commitment.

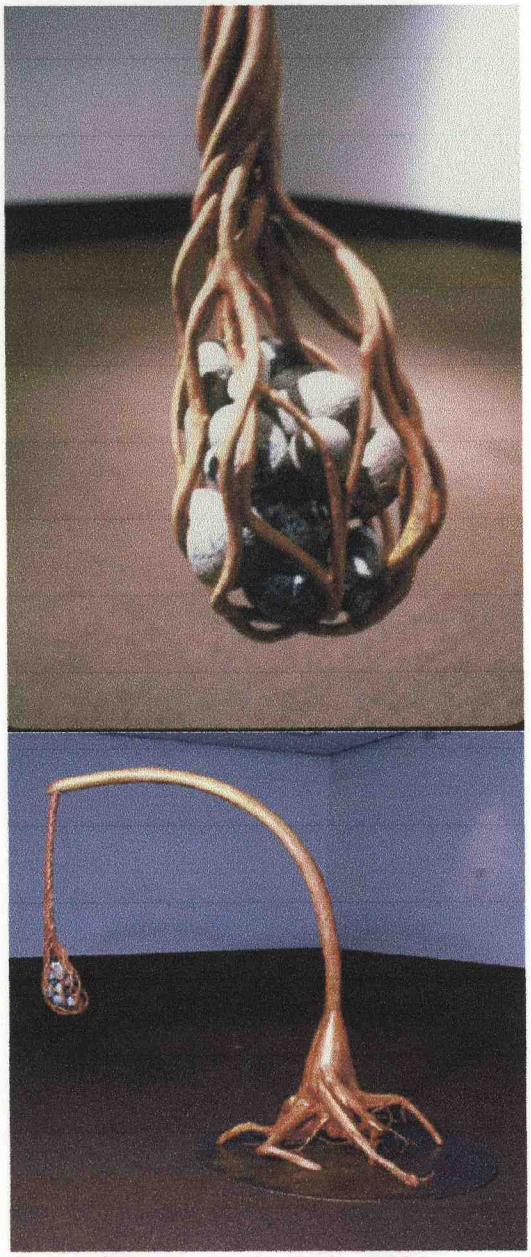

Figure 59, 60. *Birth of life,* 2000. Wood, matrix G, rocks, cable, steel 180 x 188 x 107 cm

The life size *Elk man* represents the longing for love and courtship symbolized by the two rocks in his hand bound together with a lock of hair from his desired love. His longing is expressed though his elk calls that exit his mouth, made possible with a recorded loop tape played on a CD player, hidden inside his body. This work revives traditional courting rituals with a contemporary twist of formal representation and media. It is unfortunate that this courting ritual is not practised in my territory today, as I am sure many women would love to have this early romantic engagement revived.

Elk woman's strength (Figure 63, 64) was initially inspired by my life's passage into motherhood which led to an appreciation and acknowledgement of women's contributions to community. My role as a mother first began when I parented the children of my partner, and then later deepened when I had my first child. The experience of giving birth and being a single parent gave me a renewed appreciation for women's strength and courage.

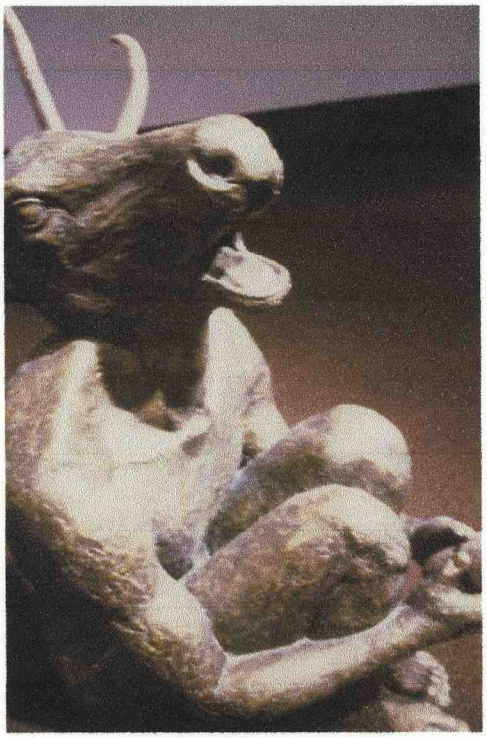

Figure 61, 62. *Elk Man Waiting for Love,* 1999.Matrix, elk antlers, CD sound track, 60 x 55 x 41cm.

A woman's gift to the world is her life-giving force and her ability to provide love and leadership in family and community. A testament to her strength is evidenced in giving birth itself, which is a tremendous act of courage. Often a mother sacrifices much for her family, putting aside her career and independence in order to concentrate on providing a home of love, support and security. In the First Nations community it is often the women who are the silent pillars of strength and organize events which provide the support needed to advance and heal the communities.

At times these sacrifices and efforts can be taken for granted, and the woman's personal power is undermined. In traditional teaching there have been misperceptions about women's personal power. A woman's moon time was considered her most powerful time and was respected. Today though, some people interpret this concept as a negative energy rather than a positive one,

demonstrated by the exclusion and avoidance of women at the time of their menstrual cycle.

At other times, a woman's personal power is threatening to others and results in the subordination and abuse of women. This practice must be stopped, and communities must protect women and take steps to hold the abusers accountable for their actions,

Figure 63, 64. *Elk Woman's Strength*. 2004. Matrix G, elk antlers, wood, stones, horse hair, glass ball, light, synthetic eyes, teeth and tongue, paint 114 x 100 x 100 cm

The work *Elk woman* serves as a reminder to men and women of women's personal power. Women deserve the reciprocation of respect and love. In her human and elk metamorphism form, *Elk woman* returns the mating call of *Elk man* as she gently cradles her illuminated unborn fetus. Despite her metamorphic appearance, she has a realistic presence due to the materials used to construct her, such as her eyes, teeth and tongue which are replicas of elk parts from a taxidermist. Her hair comes from a horse and her spine is made of cow bones. Her hands and feet are a direct cast of my hands and feet.

In a recent solo exhibit at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in 2004-2005, the 12-year retrospective of my work brought *Elk woman* and *Elk man* together for the first time. They shared an entire room, sitting across from each other, appearing

to have a conversation. Their physical appearance connects them, though it is clear they are now on separate paths. On a personal level, it speaks to my own matters of the heart, of love, separation and motherhood.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these artworks have chronicled and reflected significant transitions and milestones throughout my life. Through the process of expressing these experiences with historical and contemporary reference, I resolved my inquiry into my role as a First Nations artist. In my quest to find my link from the past to the present, I replaced the concept of linear time with one of a spiralling continuum. From this, I deduced that it is not so much an exploration to find links to past traditions, rather, as a First Nations person, my work is the continuing link, as I create and interpret the history of tradition in the present day. My visual stories reflect the continuance of cultural beliefs, values and philosophy congruent with my current reality. To that end, as a contemporary First Nations artist, I recreate the history of tradition today, and tomorrow my work will be seen as traditional while another contemporary artist will have taken my place.

CHAPTER 8

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF FIRST NATIONS ART

The topic of cultural appropriation concerns complicated issues of representation that relate to topics of cultural imperialism, concepts of ownership, intellectual and cultural property, copyright and censorship. In the First Nations context, it is not defined as mere influences and exchanges of cultures co-existing, rather, it specifically relates to a long history of colonial exploitation of First Nations property and representation that has ultimately lead to the disowning and displacement of First Nations authorship and property.

For centuries, First Nations have continuously struggled to protect their property from illegal take-over. Since colonial contact, First Nations have had to fight for their territories and physical resources despite previous agreements with governments. Their borders have been continuously encroached upon, in the past for gold, and today for resource development by the government and commercial industries. Throughout the years, cultural property has been taken: artifacts, art, ceremonial objects as well as the contents of graves. In the twentieth century, First Nations insisted that museums return these items to their rightful owners. This movement has become known as repatriation, and has occurred throughout North America.

In the 1980s, First Nations began fighting a new battle, that of cultural appropriation of their intellectual property. They sought to protect their art, cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and representation from exploitation by the museums, commercial enterprises, researchers and other artists who assumed the right to take over, sell, reproduce and/or use for their own profit or gain, without permission. First Nations intellectual property consists of images, performance and oral communication such as in art, dances, rituals, songs, and stories (Todd, 1991), and traditional knowledge and inventions.

The frequent occurrence of cultural appropriation over the past centuries begs the question: why it has been legal for so many years? One reason is that there appears to be no

legal repercussions in Canadian criminal or copyright laws that protect First Nations properties, assets and cultural production. Take-over of First Nations property, then and now, has often been sanctioned by the government. Intellectual property laws as governed by the Canadian Copyright Act are designed with western values in mind, and protect individual rights as opposed to collective rights of distinct cultures. In many cases, First Nations do not have the financial and legal resources to protect their property, and they lack in numbers: First Nations make up only 1-5% of Canada's population. Given these factors, governments and big business have taken advantage of First Nations people to achieve their ends.

There also seems to be an assumed right to appropriate from First Nations, which I believe is reflective of what Lutz (1990) would describe as the colonial practice of exploitation for imperialism purposes:

> What is an issue here is the kind of appropriation which happens within a colonial structure, where one culture is dominant politically and economically over the other, and rules and exploits it. More specifically, it is a kind of appropriation in which aspects of the colonized culture are appropriated by the dominant one, while at the same time all traces of origins are neglected and displaced. (p.168)

The other reason that cultural appropriation has continued to exist lies within the contrasting cultural ideologies of the two cultures, especially surrounding notions of ownership and cultural protocols.

> Ownership was bound up with history. Without a written language, we nonetheless recorded history and knowledge. Communities, families, individuals and nations created songs, dances, rituals, objects and stories that were considered to be property, but not property as understood by Europeans. Material wealth was re-distributed, but history and stories belonged to the originator and could be given or shared with others as a way of preserving, extending and witnessing history and of expressing one's world view. (Todd, 1991 p. 26)

The radically different cultural ideologies would explain the tremendous confusion and resistance experienced by Canadians within the discourse of First Nations protecting their intellectual property. The centre of this debate seems to be the lack of comprehension that a distinct cultural group can retain ownership over their physical and intellectual

property. This may be due to the differences of First Nations and mainstream Canadian community structures and cultural customs. First Nations communities are communal: wealth is shared, and membership consists of extended families. In mainstream Canadian culture, the community is diasporic and ownership is individually-based. Todd (1991) suggests that contrasting values and concepts of ownership between colonialists and First Nations was and continues to be central to the history of conflict surrounding cultural appropriation.

As a result of this long history of appropriation, First Nations artists and scholars have set out to protect their cultural heritage by defining boundaries, educating the public of respectful protocols, and attempting to balance the scales of representation. But with the continued advancement of capitalistic enterprises, this may not be enough. Some would say that the act of protecting cultural property is fruitless, as no person or group can control the appropriation of cultural production such as art images. There are ethical ways to work with First Nations on issues of representation, and First Nations may have to take self-governing action to develop their own copyright entities and negotiate legal amendments of the Canadian copyright laws and criminal code to protect certain aspects of their cultural production.

This section defines intellectual and cultural property, and then reviews types of cultural appropriation by museums, industry and artists, the debates surrounding this.

DEFINING PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CULTURAL PROPERTY

The definitions of First Nations property are derived from research and past discussions with First Nations artists. I do not claim that these are absolute but rather that they are signposts which can point the way and assist the understanding of this complex issue. It is hoped that these definitions may serve as a working template to develop a policy for First Nations who seek protection of their art forms. I would expect that, given the diversity of First Nations, the concept of property would be adjusted to reflect the philosophy and protocol of each community.

The protection of physical property is straightforward, as it covers anything that is a physical object. Any physical property that is stolen is usually subject to standard laws of theft. Physical cultural property is any physical object made in, or having origins in a cultural group, and can consist of, but not be exclusive to, ceremonial objects, art forms, regalia, musical instruments, artifacts, bones of the deceased, and traditional land and resources.

There are five areas of intellectual property listed in the Canadian Copyright Act: patents; trademarks; industrial designs; confidential information and trade secrets. A new addition is integrated circuit topography (Harris, 2001, p. 2). The Canadian Copyright Act describes intellectual property as an invention, a creation, a concept. It states: "Intellectual property law refers to and protects the intangible or intellectual nature of an object… material that led to its creation, such as sketches, containing its design or plan…." (Harris, 2001 p. 1-2). The word "intellectual" suggests the 'expression' of an idea which is protected by producing the evidence of the creative concept by the creator, such as sketches.

Intellectual cultural property of First Nations consists of visual designs and oral communication that have originated in their cultural group, such as art, family crests, songs, dances, rituals, oral stories (mythological, historical and personal); and traditional knowledge and inventions (ecological knowledge of relationships between people, animals and plants); and scientific inventions (plant use and medicines).

Intellectual property pertaining to the visual arts of First Nations can be defined as culturally-specific trademarks belonging to a First Nations group. Examples are distinct designs and compositions of art which have distinct historical origins in First Nations groups. Examples of art compositions that clearly originate from specific First Nations groups are west coast traditional design, symbology in Cree beadwork designs, the designs of Mi'kmaq quill work and embroidery, Iroquois false face masks, and so on. Each nation has its own protocol for reproduction as well. For example, west coast nations protect visual depictions of family stories and crests, Plains nations protect their personal

symbology on moccasins and dancing regalia, and most nations would protect images on ceremonial objects, or depictions of personal stories and dreams on visual art objects.

To be clear, culturally-specific trademarks are not to be confused with generic images and motifs that make general reference to a culture. Generic cultural images refer to mass-produced items that have generic motifs or elements of design that do not reflect compositions belonging to a specific artist, cultural group, or family. These works do not falsely represent the works as authentic designs made by a First Nations group, nor are they direct copies of historical and contemporary works of First Nations artists. Examples of generic designs may be a south-western style motif on a throw rug, or geometric patterns on a blanket that suggest Plains design. Essentially, generic motifs depict an essence of First Nations style, though are not a direct copy. Nor does it falsely claim to be 'authentic.'

Cultural appropriation occurs when the physical or intellectual property of a First Nations group is illegally taken, sold, manipulated, reproduced, represented or published for gain and profit by someone outside the group. The cultural appropriation of intellectual property associated with oral communications such as voice, story and experience, "... occurs when someone else speaks for, tells, defines, describes, represents, uses or recruits the images, stories, experiences dreams of others. Appropriation also occurs when someone else becomes the expert on your experience and is deemed more knowledgeable about who you are than yourself (Todd 1991, pg. 24-26).

APPROPRIATION BY MUSEUMS

In the late 1980s, the topic of cultural appropriation reached the peak of controversy between First Nations and museums. First peoples throughout North America were actively seeking to repatriate their cultural property from museums. First Nations were also challenging the appropriation of their cultural identity and voice that excluded their living, current realities with the substitution of artifacts and outdated stereotypical representations.

The appropriation of First Nations cultural property, such as artifacts and human remains, occurred primarily during the colonial war against First Nations in North America, then in the early nineteen hundreds through government apprehensions.

> ...we must all understand clearly that not all Native objects were acquired in good faith. Many, if not the majority of museum specimens, were forcibly taken, war booty from the colonization of First Nations. The unethical acquisition of the material culture has become part of the oral history of First Nations, and the return of these illgotten gains has become a goal on the political agenda of aboriginal peoples. (Rick Hill, 1988, p. 32)

Government apprehensions of cultural property were justified through the out-lawing of ceremonial practices, such as the ban against potlatch ceremony in British Columbia from 1884 to 1951. During this period, a tremendous quantity of masks and ceremonial regalia was confiscated. Such was also the case with the Kwakwaka' wakw potlatch collection that was seized in 1921 by the order of Duncan Campbell Scott, superintendent general of Indian Affairs. Elder and scholar Gloria Cranmer Webster recalls this apprehension of cultural property: "When the trial was over, 22 people were sentenced to jail and 17 containers of masks, rattles, whistles and other dance paraphernalia were crated and shipped to the Victoria Memorial Museum ...(and the) Royal Ontario Museum" (Cranmer Webster, 1988, p. 43). In 1974, with the lobbying efforts of Gloria Cranmer Webster and community members, the first repatriation negotiation was finalized in Canada with the board of trustees of the National Museums of Canada. The Royal Ontario Museum, however, refused to return their share of the potlatch collection unless their conditions were met, such as a reimbursement for the "years of curatorial care," (p. 43), and with the agreement that only some of the potlatch items would be returned. They insisted that the gallery have cooperative rights to tour the pieces. However in 1987, the Honourable William McKnight ordered the return of the remaining potlatch items from ROM, and now these works are currently housed in their home territory at the Kwakiutl Museum and the U'mista Cultural Centre.

The request to return the bones of the deceased to First Nations communities was met with less resistance, I believe due to the culturally-shared values of honouring the dead. Furthermore, no money could be gained by the sale of human remains. Historically, human remains were taken from archaeological excavations for the purposes of specimen study. An example of how far museums were willing to appropriate First Nation belongings is

documented in the true story entitled *Give me back my father's body,* in which a modern Inuit boy travels to New York to retrieve his father's remains which had been taken by a museum under some pretext.

Initially museums were resistant to discussing repatriation, as there was concern about setting a precedent that might empty their collections. First Nations, however, simply wanted the return of items that had been illegally taken in excavations and seizures. Often, discussions of repatriation where halted even before they could begin, with excuses that it would be an impossible task to find the records of legal and illegal acquisitions, or that it was in the public's interest to keep the artifacts for education purposes.

Despite the resistance, the issue of repatriation was important, and in 1988 -1989, First Nations throughout North America published numerous articles on the topic, and held conferences and symposiums with museums. The *Muse Magazine* published several articles at the time, and others also appeared in *The Fuse* and *Parallelogramme*. Some of the key First Nations authors were Joane Cardinal Schubert, Deborah Doxtator, Rick Hill, Richard Hill, Deidre Sklar and Loretta Todd.

Joane Cardinal-Schubert has been on the forefront of the cultural appropriation debate in Canada. In her influential article, *In the red* (1989), she addresses the long history of appropriation by museums, and the exploitation of First Nations art by commercial industry. She raises the important point that the displacement of cultural property disconnects First Nations from their traditional practices and history. This point is reminiscent of conversations with First Nations about their dismay at having to go to museums to learn about their history because no more artifacts remain in their community.

> As well as the displacement of ceremonies and language, Native people suffered the loss of their cultural icons, their reliquiae. Ceremonial objects were taken from them and systematically collected by museums and collectors throughout the world as evidences of a dying culture. Some of the more numerous pieces collected reside in collections in the U.S.S.R., Germany and Sweden. These ceremonial objects are an important link in the cultural practice of most ceremonial rituals. (p. 21–22)

In his article, *Sacred trust: Cultural obligation of museums to Native people* (1998), Rick Hill questions the ethics of past cultural appropriation and the ethical obligation to First

Nations today, which he identifies as returning illegally-taken property. He also sees the obligation of museums to ensure that First Nations have the right to represent their cultural identity by developing a "cooperative approach" that would benefit everyone. This means including First Nations in education programs and in the development of exhibitions.

> The needs of Canadian academe, in terms of research and education, are [claimed to be] more important than the cultural needs of the First Nations...We must begin to recognize that culture is a living, daily activity, manifested in human relationships, in dance, in art, in ceremony. It is time that we celebrate all cultures and help the First Nations to enjoy their cultural heritage on their own terms. Maybe that will be the true legacy of Canadian culture. (p. 32-33)

A notable contribution which generated partnership and negotiation was the development of a *Task force on museums and First Peoples* in 1990 in Ontario, which was comprised of First Nations and museum staff who worked together more than two years to formulate nation-wide recommendations. This task force was born out of the controversy around the exhibit, *The spirit sings: Artistic traditions of Canada's First Peoples,* held in conjunction with the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. The controversy that surrounded this exhibition was that Shell Oil Company, a primary sponsor of this exhibition, had oil leases on the Lubicon Cree's traditional territory, a land claim that had still not been settled with the government. Tom Hill (1990) states, "...the Lubicon Cree and supporters argued that it was hypocritical to mount a Canadian exhibition that celebrates traditional cultures when governments were still dealing unjustly with First Peoples" (p. 40).

In 1992, the culmination of the task force's efforts produced a final document entitled, *Turning the page: Forging new partnerships between museums and First Peoples*, which was presented at the second national conference held at Carleton University. The document outlined over thirty recommendations, principles for partnering to develop future policy. The three central issues that arose concerned not only repatriation of artifacts, but also commitments toward equal representation and inclusion of First Nations in museums. The three initial major issues raised were:

1) increased involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the interpretation of their culture and history by cultural institutions;

2) improved access to museum collections by Aboriginal peoples; and

3) the repatriation of artifacts and human remains. (Hill, T. 1990, p. 41)

Many changes have evolved in museums due to the efforts of First Nations artists and curators, who brought cultural appropriation issues into the public eye in publications, at conferences and by negotiating with museums. Museums have come to accept that they can that no longer exhibit their First Nations collections without the participation of First Nations peoples. It is no longer possible to assume authority over First Nations cultures through independent interpretation and assuming the rights to cultural property. Museums have entered into their own philosophical enquiry which has forced them to re-examine established practices rooted in stereotypical notions and ethnocentric superiority. And they have had to review their ethics when collecting cultural property.

Many museums today include Native people in the development of First Nations exhibitions. They consult with community members, include a First Nation's voice in published materials, and hire First Nations curators and docents. In addition, some museums have allowed First Nations people freer access to their collections and archives. They have also taken steps to return cultural property, particularly human remains and artifacts of significant ceremonial purpose, such as medicine bundles and related artifacts that were clearly confiscated without community permission. Upon a community's request for the repatriation of a cultural object, museums will review the case, but they must also make pro-active efforts and report possession of known cultural items to communities.

APPROPRIATION BY COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY

The topic of cultural appropriation by commercial industry is a growing concern for First Nations communities, given the increased mass reproduction of their cultural images around the world. This has now become relatively easy to do, with the new age of internet accessibility. Cultural appropriation of intellectual property becomes problematic when historical cultural images are taken, distorted and sold as 'authentic' with no regard for their cultural purpose and without seeking permission or paying royalties. Currently there

are no existing laws to protect First Nations from commercial exploitation. It is equally problematic if an image is appropriated from a living artist, although an artist can pursue legal solutions under the Canadian copyright laws.

It is not only images that are being appropriated in the commercial arena, there are other forms of historical intellectual property that have no legal protection, such as family crests, songs, dances, rituals, stories (mythological, historical and personal), and traditional ecological knowledge and inventions, such as plant use and medicines. In the mainstream world of intellectual property, infringement of copyright, such as with music and stories, is vigorously protected by law. For example, we cannot use a Beatles song to promote our small business. Nor could we lift the plot and characters of the latest Tom Clancy novel and turn it into a film. In fact, to do so would lead to serious legal and financial repercussions. However, even though a variety of creative media are afforded protection under Canadian law, First Nations cultural property remains unprotected: "Indigenous knowledge does not appear to meet the requirements of Canadian patent law … the human rights of Indigenous people have not yet been fully defined, and discussions of their rights have just begun to address the issue of intellectual property rights" (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, p. 241).

Dr. Marie Battiste, professor of Education, and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson, graduate in law from Harvard and director of the Native Law Centre, review methods for the preservation and legal protection of Indigenous knowledge in their book, *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage,* (2000). Battiste and Youngblood Henderson define Indigenous knowledge that should be legally protected as all forms of cultural production of First Nations, including language culture, heritage sites, ceremonial objects, performing and visual arts and land and ecology, plant knowledge and medicines. They review global initiatives by Indigenous cultures to protect their cultural property, and make recommendations for the preservation and protection of all sorts of cultural property, including the long history of cultural knowledge pertaining to herbal remedies and medicinal elixirs created by First Nations groups that have been openly taken and patented by pharmaceutical companies (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Battiste &

Youngblood Henderson state that the ineffective protection of intellectual property is a reflection of Eurocentric values.

> Until recently, it was considered unlikely that intellectual property rights could pertain to the collective, transhistorical qualities and assets of Indigenous cultures, even though these Indigenous interest in the ecology are no more incorporeal than Eurocentric rights in the market place. (p. 242)

The removal of property from a cultural context is a complicated issue and is crucial to sort out in understanding when cultural appropriation occurs. For example, while touring a reputable museum, I saw what I thought was an authentic Chilkat blanket. But what was it doing for sale? As I investigated further I read the tag, which stated, 'Made in Nepal,' and was entitled *Tlingit totemic design*. I inquired further and the staff handed me an information sheet: the Nepalese artist claims a close connection to the Tlingit at a certain point in his life. What was clear to me was, first, he was not First Nations, and second, he was not aware of the significance of Chilkat blankets. The designs on a Chilkat blanket are heavily coded with meaning specific to the wearer. Chilkat blankets have a specific purpose, which is to be worn by high-ranking people such as Tsimshian chiefs for special ceremonial purposes. It is not intended to be a wall hanging or a throw rug. I was perplexed why this museum, which showcased west coast culture, would support such sales and, by extension, such cultural appropriation.

In another incident, I went to a company that sold garden ornaments. To my surprise, I saw a large version of an Nlaka'Pamux puberty rite bowl, which historically a shaman would carry in a puberty rite ceremony for young women (Figure 65, 66). The bowl was distorted: enlarged, double the usual size of ten to twenty centimetres in height. A ball at the top of the head replaced the typical rattlesnake head, located on top or on front of the bowl. The front of the bowl displayed an odd contorted bird-like creature. The perforations usually found in the ears or on the top of the head, used to suspend the bowl around a shaman's neck, were placed in the cheeks and in the neck. The entire human form was cherubic in appearance, rather than a typical skeletal body which referenced fasting prior to the puberty rite ceremony. Regardless of its mutations, it was clear that the overall form was taken directly from an Nlaka'Pamux puberty rite bowl and was now being sold as

a garden ornament. By way of cultural comparison, one might as well market Christ's cup at the Last Supper as a birdbath. It was disturbing to find a reproduction of an important ceremonial item removed from its cultural context and degraded to such a level. I spoke to the business owner about the piece and she did not know the significance of the imitation nor did she know who was reproducing them. But she had no problem selling them.

Figure 65. Lillooet Puberty Rite Bowl, 400 B.C.-400 A.D. Steatite, 25 cm. high.

Figure 66. Imitation Puberty Rite Bowl, 2000, concrete, 39 cm high.

Another example is imitation Cowichan sweaters, which are sold in many stores. In one store I inquired as to where the sweaters were being manufactured. The staff member indicated to me that the sweaters were made in Japan for the cheap labour and reduced shipping costs and taxes. To the mass public, the sweaters are simply interesting, warm sweaters to be cuddled up with while reading the latest Martha Stewart magazine or Wall Street Journal whereas to the Cowichan, the sweaters are an art practice, a reflection of individual identity and history which has been passed down through generations. Each design element on a Cowichan sweater has a distinct signature and story connected to the maker. In the consumer arena, authenticity and cultural context has been sacrificed, the integrity of designs have become simplified and distorted, and the pieces have been produced by non-Natives. The only cultural element present is the use of the First Nations name, Cowichan, from which the art form has been taken.

The cultural protocol of west coast art is particularly complex due to the historical ownership of

songs, stories and art. Given that west coast art is unique to the world, it has been exploited probably the most. Artist Joanne Cardinal-Schubert (1989) discusses this exploitation:

> In the 1960s there was a rush on the Northwest Coast culture and black shoe-polished totems could be found in every souvenir shop across the nation. Now there is a rousing business in sweatshops. Native artists are being exploited in the "limited edition print market." The T-shirt market, the publishing business, the doll market, and by the dominant society's artists curators, writers, and granting institutions. (p. 21)

West coast family crests are an item about which First Nations of the west coast have been repeatedly vocal. The appropriation of family crests is an infringement of both physical and intellectual property because they are both image and name. House poles represent family crests and associated stories. To take these images is similar to someone appropriating a family crest and name from other cultural backgrounds. It would be similar to an individual coming along and saying, 'I like your name,' and using it thereafter for profit and gain. An example from the mass media might enlighten by a reverse scenario.

When I introduce the topic of cultural appropriation in my art history or education classes, the question always comes up, "Am I culturally appropriating if I buy a culturally-specific item in a store?" My answer to that is "no", since the consumer is simply purchasing, not reproducing, exploiting, or making a profit from someone's or some group's art. Many tourists, I am sure, are unaware that their purchase may have been made by a non-Native, and that the design may be an inaccurate representation of the original work. The tourists are, more likely than not, under a false assumption that their purchase supports First Nations art and culture, instead of the opposite. However, a consumer can make ethical choices to purchase work that is authentic, produced by a First Nation artist, so as not to support and, by implication, financially encourage appropriation. Culturally-specific work or designs directly taken from an artist's work by individuals and commercial enterprises are essentially stolen works, the royalties for which have not paid. In essence, if the royalty has not been paid, buying an appropriated item is the same as buying stolen goods from a thief. The moral dilemma, if it is one, is whether or not a person feels

comfortable purchasing stolen goods and if they want to financially support appropriation. As an alternative, I would suggest becoming consumer-aware, that is, refraining from purchasing imitations and seeking out authentic works produced by the artists themselves. An aware consumer can buy work in reputable galleries, museums, cultural events, or purchase works directly from First Nation artists in communities. When one is in doubt of authenticity, read the tag or ask the manager, though one should always be prepared for perplexity and cultural ignorance that many storeowners have about the items they sell.

In summary, the ramifications of cultural appropriation are many. When cultural items are removed from their context and reproduced, the alteration affects the authenticity and integrity of the physical and conceptual properties. This, in turn, impacts on the culture, history, and people. It is a moral infringement as defined in the copyright act. Not only have the original design and personal symbols become distorted, but the entire meaning and original function is often severed. Cultural art forms are degraded to a curious commodity, or as Fung (1993) would say, "a marketing of superficial difference" (p. 18). When cultural art forms are decontextualized in this manner, the result is the opening of possibilities for distortions, misrepresentations, and mythologizing of a culture, history, and people. And when cultural appropriation occurs, protocols are often not followed, such as obtaining permission and giving credit. In addition, businesses that appropriate do not typically pay copyright or royalties to the cultural group or to individuals who own specific stories, crests, songs, and so on. With this type of definition, culturally-specific trademarks are stolen on a regular basis. The unauthorized production of cultural property is an exploitation of a culture.

APPROPRIATION BY ARTISTS

In the contemporary milieu, First Nations art can be appropriated in both the contemporary and historical sense. Entire images or portions of contemporary artwork and traditional designs and forms are reproduced. When the reproduction is a direct appropriation of a contemporary work, the artist is protected by copyright. When the reproduction is a direct appropriation of traditional designs, currently there is no protection.

Contemporary First Nations artists view these forms of appropriation as stealing their identity for gain and profit. Indeed, it has been no secret that many non-Natives have built lucrative careers on First Nations culture, as noted by Fung (1993).

An example of direct copyright infringement of First Nations work can be seen in the unauthorized use of the work *Honour dance* (1987) that was originally created by First Nations photographer, John Running and appropriated by the high profile rock band, The Cult. They took Running's image of a mother and son dressed in traditional pow wow regalia, cropped the image of the boy's face and used it for their album cover. Subsequently, they were sued by the artist.

Artist Jack Shadbolt has been known to appropriate west coast imagery at one point in his career. His work *Grieving spirit* (1985) clearly appropriated traditional designs from a Kwakwaka'wakw transformation mask. Despite the strange cutting up of west coast traditional form lines, it still reads unmistakably as Kwakwaka'wakw due to the overall transformation mask and use of the same colour palette of traditional work. Under the copyright act, this would be a moral infringement of the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw form line. Ironically, or perhaps tellingly, some of Jack Shadbolt's work from this time period hangs in many university libraries of Canada, in particular British Columbia, institutions which valiantly enforce CANCOPY laws for printed material.

Emily Carr's various totem pole paintings and west coast design pottery have also been alleged to be cultural appropriation. I recall reading some of Carr's personal memoirs displayed at a retrospective of her work at the Royal British Columbia museum in the mid 1990s. She admitted to her conflictual feelings of reproducing west coast designs in her pottery; she felt it wasn't ethical though she needed the sales. On the other hand her famous painted works of west coast poles in the forest were not so much appropriation as they were a romantic scenic documentation.

More recently, Liz Magor was charged with cultural appropriation in the early 1990s. In her work, a mixed media work entitled *Child's sweater* (1989), she incorporated a tiny Cowichan-style sweater resting in a raven's beak, with a backdrop of a woven cedar mat. This work is obviously west coast and Cowichan-based, and Magor received much

criticism for appropriating First Nations imagery as well as their voice, by attempting to represent and speak for them.

The reason there has been controversy about cultural appropriation of Shadbolt's, Carr's, and Magor's pieces is because that there is no question there was a direct appropriation of imagery, which could lead the audience to believe that the work might have been done by First Nations artists, because culturally-specific trademarks had been reproduced. In addition, even though these are only three out of thousands of artists who appropriate, the attention has focused on their work because they were high-profile artists who didn't really need to be appropriating First Nations work.

Another case in which artists have been charged with representing First Nations culture with the reproduction of Native imagery is the work of the non-Native collective, Fastwurms. Joane Cardinal-Schubert (1989) critiqued their use of Native imagery in her article, *In the red.*

> Just as Picasso pillaged African art, and Max Ernst and Paul Klee took much from Indian pictograph/petroglyphs, white mainstream artists today feel quite justified in creating works rampant with misused symbolism and visual cultural language. Why else would Toronto artist Andy Fabo think that he could appropriate the imagery of the sweat lodge ceremony and incorporate it in his steamroller rip off of cultural icons which seem of late to focus on the "mining" of art by Natives. (p. 25)

Author Richard Hill (1992) references Cardinal-Schubert's points and Andy Fabo's response in his article, *One part per million, white appropriation and Native voices*:

> Some White people have suggested that cultural sovereignty is divisive, leading to further disharmony between cultures. In Andy Fabo's response to "In the red," for example, he states that "the unfortunate thing about Cardinal-Schubert's polemic … is that she attacks us [himself and Fastwurms] as enemies when we are such likely allies. We endorse her issues …." I find it presumptuous for Fabo to assume that they "endorse her issues" one sentence after disagreeing with the very ideas Cardinal-Schubert raised in her article. If Fabo or any white person is serious about being allies they must first listen to what we feel our issues are. (p. 13–14)

It is indeed a confusing state of affairs when artists who are appropriating believe they are doing so under the auspices of being allies. And when this is pointed out, not only does the

artist defend the appropriation, but extends that appropriation to include voice, moving quite easily, one might say naturally, to a position of paternalism.

APPROPRIATION BY FIRST NATION ARTISTS

In terms of First Nations artists appropriating, two questions come up: can First Nations appropriate from First Nations and, conversely, can First Nations appropriate from Canadians? In response to the first question, my answer is "yes"; First Nations are not exempt from the ground rules of cultural appropriation. There are many First Nations cultural groups in Canada. Therefore if a First Nations artist is reproducing artwork that belongs to another cultural group without authorization or giving credit, that is cultural appropriation — an art form has been removed from its cultural context. For example, if a First Nations individual from the Plains decided to reproduce west coast images, they are culturally appropriating. When this occurs, it is generally by those who have not been educated about cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation, especially of crests and stories, can also occur within the same cultural group. An example of this was the controversy over the ownership of the story carved on the Museum of Anthropology doors at the University of British Columbia. The doors were commissioned in 1976 to a group of Gitxsan carvers, who depicted the story of the so-called grandmother of the Gitxsan named Sk'a wa. (Montgomery, 1999). However, Dolly Watts, a Gitxsan herself, stated, "The story belongs to our house. The mother on the doors is not the mother of all the Gitxsan people. She's the mother of our clan alone, the Ghu'sen house .... We own that story" (p. 40). Currently, there are many examples of conflicting stories, histories, and protocols in First Nations communities. This is a result of the severing of cultural practices due to forced assimilative government policies, such as residential schools, outlawing traditional ceremonies, and recycling inaccurate documentations by non-Native authors. However, these contradictions will decline over time as First Nations community members rebuild the connection to the roots of their histories.

In response to the second question, can First Nations appropriate from Canadians, the answer is two-fold. If the image is specific to Canadian identity, then the answer is

"no", because First Nations co-exist in Canadian culture and are Canadians. First Nations video artist, Loretta Todd (1991) addresses this issue of co-existence:

> I quoted Walter Benjamin. Someone challenged my use of Benjamin as an appropriation of western culture. My response was that I am a part of western as well as Native culture, Benjamin is of my culture. "Aha," say the appropriators, "then our use of Native images and stories is analogous to your use of Benjamin, since Native images and stories have become a part of contemporary culture." Was this clever reasoning or just specious argument? What was this cultural crossover of which they spoke? (p. 24)

Todd's point is that First Nations reside within Canadian culture; however, Canadian society does not reside within First Nations cultures. First Nations are Canadians and co-exist within its society. Canadians are not First Nations, nor do they live within First Nations communities or culture. Nevertheless, quoting an author plus crediting the source is not cultural appropriation, it is a process of academic scholarship. To turn the question around, in fact it would be welcomed for mainstream academics to read and quote First Nations writers, thinkers, artists, and leaders. It would not be considered an act of appropriation. The distinguishing factor is that cultural appropriation occurs when one takes something from another culture and presents it as their own. It is not that much different from non-ethical plagiarism or identity fraud. Canadians are welcome to use stories and images of First Nations in education: it is the reproduction of someone else's property without permission or credit that becomes illegal. The other aspect of this answer relates to culturally-specific trademarks of ancestral cultures of Canadians. These images are separate from Canadian iconography and identity. Canadians who are not indigenous have migrated from all over the world, and some maintain the cultural aspects of their originating homelands. To reproduce their cultural images, which distinctly belong to their originating cultures, would be cultural appropriation by First Nations or by all other Canadians for that matter.

THE DEBATE

There was, and continues to be, much confusion about cultural appropriation due to the obtuse complexity of intellectual property laws combined with the absence of cultural

property terms in copyright laws. In response to this growing debate and confusion, the Canada Council mounted a research initiative to shed some light on the issue. The incoming responses were intense, perpetrating an array of confusion, emotion, and heated debate out of proportion to the nature of the questions asked. The concept of cultural property and the nascent issue of cultural appropriation incensed those who made lucrative careers at appropriating cultural imagery, offended those who used Native imagery in the guise of allies, concerned those in museums who might have to give back some of their prized collections, and confused those who wanted to make ethical choices but did not know exactly what the cultural boundaries were. Most importantly, this debate challenged the long-established North American view that cultural imagery could be appropriated and reproduced by anyone at any time. The debate in and of itself was curious, and revealed a clash of cultural ideologies, a resistant and/or transitional mode of the collective unconscious, which I term 'fractured worldview crisis.' This section sets out to clarify the issue of cultural appropriation by defining terms, addressing First Nations concerns, and providing legal and ethical boundaries.

Cultural appropriation in the art world continues to be ill-defined because of the confusion about the nature and boundaries of it. It is often dressed to look like the more innocuous and flattering "influence." Three common areas of confusion about appropriation are: to what degree an artist can use cultural images from other cultures (i.e., influence versus appropriation); the question of First Nations appropriating from other First Nations cultures and mainstream Canadians; and the boundaries for artists, researchers, and educators when they want to incorporate First Nations content, image, text, stories, voice, in their work.

A question of degree

Two common questions that arise concerning the boundaries of cultural appropriation is: 'what if my work is influenced by First Nations art' and 'to what degree can a person use First Nations imagery?' In terms of the first question, the notion of influence, or appreciation, needs to be defined. If the discussion revolves around the notion

of the appreciation of First Nations art, then it is a neutral noun, a sensitive awareness, and in reference to this topic it would suggest an appreciation for Native art forms that do not result in the action of taking something and making profit. 'Influence', however, manifests through the production or simulation of First Nations art. 'Influence' can also suggest that there has been an indirect action of taking, even though it may be unconscious and may involve only minimal aspects of design. However, the issue is not whether or not a person is conscious or unconscious of their motives; regardless of intent, the end result is the same. The issue is, to what degree, as Day and Hunter (2000) point out:

> It is quite irrelevant to inquire whether the defendant [appropriator] was or was not consciously aware of such casual connection. (ii) Where there is a substantial degree of objective similarity, this of itself will afford *prima facie* evidence to show that there is a casual connection between the plaintiffs' and defendants' work. (Francis Day & Hunter v. Bron in Battiste & Youngblood Henderson)

This brings me back to defining the visual boundaries of cultural appropriation. To provide further clarity about the point at which cultural appropriation occurs, I will restate the definition of cultural appropriation: if specific cultural trademarks, such as unique designs elements and or composition of a cultural group, are being used in someone's art, then it is cultural appropriation. If it is an influence of general design elements which does not necessarily mimic cultural trademarks, then it is not appropriation. Nor is it if the influence of a cultural art form suggests the use of general design elements, such as colour, use of positive and negative space, materials and so on which does not involve mimicking the composition of specific design elements, i.e., such as ovoids in west coast art.

An example of influence versus cultural appropriation can be seen in one of the earliest such debates concerning Picasso's work in relation to traditional African work. In the 1907 *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, his imagery resembled African masks with sharp, geometric facial forms. The overall style, however, was uniquely his, and he was at the time developing geometric forms of cubism. He did not replicate an African mask, and try to sell it as an authentic work; he was simply inspired by the general forms.

Another example of influence of First Nations design is in the fashion advertisement in Figure 67. Despite its derogatory reference to Native women, which in

itself is ironic for a magazine for women, the fashion designs do not appropriate any specific cultural trademark belonging to a Nation. The clothing has been influenced by old Plains and Métis clothing, though overall, it is generic, reflecting only an essence of First Nations design. These fashions do, however, point to the continuing cycle of society's brazen adoption of parts of other cultural identities, in order to make a profit.

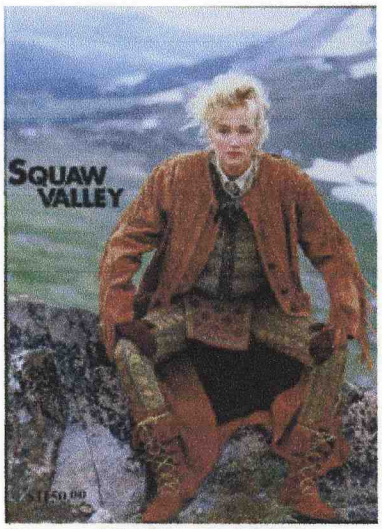

Figure 67. *Squaw Valley,* in a fashion magazine, 1991

The dilemma of influence versus appropriation is described by Fung (1993) as a 'contradictory reality.' He explains, "This is the contradictory reality of using voice, sound, image, dance, or stories of another: it can represent sharing or exploitation, mutual learning or silencing, collaboration or unfair gain, and more often than not, both aspects simultaneously" (p. 21). The preferences of First Nations are that collaboration occurs in equal partnership, representations of them are inclusive of their voice, and credit is paid where credit is due.

The inevitable global village

The justification for cultural appropriation is often made within the concept of the global influence of meshing cultures. This argument concludes that elimination of cultural appropriation is an unattainable (and undesirable) purist ideal. This echoes the theory of 'global village', a futuristic concept of the inevitable evolution of this world's population, which would become a mono-culture, a mono-race. It assumes assimilation of all people, into, I suspect, North American or at least westernized culture. In effect, the concept of the global village is a return to a modern variation of North American ethnocentrism, in which there is a notion that all cultures around the world will adopt their ideologies. In addition, the global village concept perpetuates the colonial mind-set, and the assumed right to take anything from another culture. It is a return to modern discourse of universality and early post-modern discourse of 'Other' versus 'Sameness'. Ultimately, this theory is not a

current reality, though the introduction of such globalizing forces as the new European currency, the Euro, and the strengthening of the World Trade Organization pushes against this. The global village concept avoids and minimizes the unique, distinct identity of cultural groups around the world, including First Nations of North America. It is important to remember that land and environment define people, history, and ideologies, and so First Nations and cultures around the world will remain distinct despite influences of North American culture. People will always live in different places with different environmental context; even weather determines the colour of one's skin. This issue of a global culture and its assimilationist underpinnings is too large to discuss within this paper; however, in terms of cultural appropriation, it is realistic to say that cultures influence each other. But the futuristic imaginings of a global culture do not justify the exploitation of cultural property.

Cultural clashes in debate

The strong reactions of confusion and resistance to the pro-active prevention of cultural appropriation was documented by Richard Fung, who is a video artist, community activist, and was a Canada Council employee in the Racial Equity department. He wrote an article after a heated debate in response to a Canada Council recommendation to discuss issues related to cultural appropriation in the realm of systemic racism. In his article, he outlined several key examples of reactions of resistance. Some individuals responded to the dialogue by stating that the prevention of cultural appropriation is 'censorship,' 'profoundly racist,' 'German Nazism,' 'fantastical nonsense,' and 'ignorant' (Fung, 1993, p.20). They felt they did not have to ask permission for anything. I have heard similar statements: "Every artist has a right to freedom of content and imagination," and "Requesting permission for use of cultural images is unrealistic and time consuming" and it is a "purist ideal," or it is countered with blame reversal, as we saw above with the Todd example. Most of these reactions appear to be defensive in nature, and the bizarre blame reversal of racism is indicative of those who deflect criticism in order to control the dialogue. This type of comment undermines the issue of cultural appropriation in order to maintain a

position of security and authority. In this type of statement, the underlying fear is evident, the fear of restrictions and loss of control regarding their creative endeavours. It is also clear that these fears are disabling for these individuals, that is, they don't want to hear that cultural ethics and boundaries exist, or face the fact that not everything is ripe for the pillaging. It is akin to someone who has been taking whatever they wanted from a department store only to discover that a cashier has now been set up at the front. The arguments for this cultural shoplifting are about as logical as those employed by material shoplifters.

The people making these arguments are seen to be more sophisticated, educated, and ethical than average, so the question arises: Why does the issue of cultural appropriation generate so much anxiety, fear, resistance, and confusion? In Canada we have a diverse society, made up of people who have strong ties with their original culture, such as First Nations, and recent immigrants, as well as those who disconnected from their cultural origins many generations ago. It may be that the different values arising from either this connection or dislocation is what is behind the conflict. For example, while artists agree that copyright laws should protect their art forms and their right to represent themselves, they have difficulty comprehending and accepting that collective cultural groups have the same right to protect their cultural art forms, heritage, and representation. This may be due to conflicting ideologies of understanding and valuing the ownership and cultural collectives.

Ownership in Canada is best understood when it comes to individuals and corporations. Conflicting cultural ideologies seemed to be at the core of the debate concerning the concepts of individual ownership versus collective ownership. Todd (1991) suggests that colonial concepts of ownership revolve around conquest, purchase, and capitalist patriarchy, and people have assumed the right to own, adopt, name and define, the land, the people, and culture. Traditional First Nations concepts of ownership involved collective ownership of the land and community infrastructure, historical assets, and the intellectual property.

The concept of cultural collectives is not familiar to most, and so may be incomprehensible to some. The idea that a community is made up of the same bloodlines and extended families and everyone contributes in some way to the betterment of the community is radically different from modern city living. The closest thing resembling this kind of collective structure is communes. Thus the concept may be too different from their conditioned worldview.

The strong emotions may be a result of a 'fractured worldview crisis'. I suggest that these emotions are due to the jarring experience of being introduced to new concepts that are radically different from one's learned experience, ideologies, and worldview. In an interview with Dr. Marie Battiste, scholar and author of *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage*, she commented on why she thought there was resistance to the concept of cultural appropriation. "They are holding on to an ideology, a paradigm," a set of values that revolve around "individual subject value," as opposed to values that pertain to "collective object value" (personal communication, April 5, 2001). Battiste describes the confusion and emotion as surface reaction to search for 'internal consistency' (2001). The mind will naturally seek to bring clarity to the chaos and move on to cognitive transformation, or the concept will be rejected altogether. Anger often suggests an underlying fear of loss, typically when a person perceives that they are being asked to give something up, even if it is respect and understanding. They quickly assess what they might lose rather than what might be gained. This is where the issue of cultural appropriation gets side-tracked from a discussion of cultural understanding and racial equities to a magnification of fears.

An example of the search for 'internal consistency' is revealed in repeated questions and a search for remote reasons to justify cultural appropriation. One question I often hear is, "What if a person was adopted in to a First Nations community, would it be okay to practise their art forms?" Battiste offers her interpretation of the search for remote justifications: "It is a natural psychological process, one cannot arrive at a new idea without questioning it, ... it is an attempt to find internal consistency in ideologies." She suggests that when an individual is presented with new information different from their ideology he

will typically process the new information to create a consistency in which they can identify. This internal process generally involves four steps: perception of internal inconsistency, confusion and incoherence, the search to align the new information with something they can identify with, and cognitive transformation (Battiste, 2001). I would also add that cognitive transformation might not occur; rather, denial and dismissal of the concept can also result.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

Solutions for the protection of cultural property can be sought legally and/or through raising awareness about cultural protocols of First Nations groups. Resources concerning copyright, such as the intellectual property of patents, trademarks, industrial design, confidential information and trade secrets, copyright, and integrated circuit topography (Harris, 2001), and the Cultural Property Import and Export Act can be viewed at the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) at (819) 997-1936, website http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/cipo/welcome/welcom-e.html or in the book, *Canadian Copyright Law* by Lesley Harris (2001), or on the Department of Justice of Canada site at: http://laws.justice.gc.ca/ . Direct questions pertaining to visual arts can be forwarded to the Copyright Collective, Canadian Artists Representation Copyright Collective Inc. (CARCC) at (613) 232-3818, Fax: (613) 232-8384. http://www.carcc.ca/ or the Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des Artistes, (CARfac) at 306-982-4784, www.carfac.ca.

In this last section, I present recommendations that may assist artists, researchers, and educators with appropriate protocols of cultural property. If these guidelines are followed, an artist's or academic's work will be well-received by the First Nations community instead of being perceived as exploitation.

1. Avoid reproducing First Nations art, historical or contemporary, unless authorized to do so. Commission an artist instead and purchase the copyright.
2. Avoid moral infringements of First Nations work.
3. Avoid reproducing First Nations intellectual property: seek authorization first.

4. Know that it is not ethical to appropriate for purposes of professional and financial gain.
5. Seek permission to publish or patent cultural property.
6. Pay copyright fees/royalties for cultural property.
7. Avoid identity fraud. Assume that First Nations know the people of their Nations and who their artists are.
8. Defer from assuming the voice of First Nations people; collaboration works better.
9. Include the First Nations' voice as much as possible. Use the narrative rather than interpretation.
10. Consult with First Nations who are closely connected to community and culture.
11. Identify and cite source information by First Nations individuals and communities.
12. Assume that First Nations people are the experts on First Nations history and culture. No academic degree can parallel the knowledge of lived experience of a First Nations person in a First Nations context.
13. Refer to publications written by First Nations scholars so that the recycling of inaccurate information and outdated representations is reduced.
14. When teaching First Nations content, use appropriate resources and bring in First Nations guest speakers to balance the voice of direct perspective.
15. Museums should hire more First Nations docents and curators for the interpretation of First Nations collections (permanent positions).
16. Be consumer-aware and purchase work that is clearly produced by First Nations people.
17. Boycott businesses that culturally appropriate and exploit other cultures.

With further public education, more exposure to the drawbacks of cultural appropriation, pro-active prevention, and by outlining ethical boundaries and creating legal terms, cultural appropriation can at least be brought to a minimum.

The intention of this discourse is to reinforce that the First Nations of this country have been exploited long enough, and it is time for Canadians to be aware that assuming rights to appropriate from other cultures might be a reflection of a colonial cycle which

needs to come to an end. It is time to appreciate without taking, and to acknowledge that cultural ethical boundaries exist. Cultures do not have to collide; they can co-exist in mutual respect and partnership. Overall, it is my hope that by defining the various issues of cultural appropriation, individuals can make informed decisions about the reproduction of First Nations art. I also hope that this will advance the discussion of cultural appropriation and bring forward an implementation of cultural property laws in the copyright act, proposals for amendments to copyright laws by First Nations groups, the development of First Nations collective societies, and a further academic research on this topic. A greater understanding of cultural property will ultimately be beneficial to all cultural groups.

CHAPTER 9

THE WESTERN FRAMING OF FIRST NATIONS ART

> I shall argue here that contemporary Native American art presents aesthetic and political strategies that do not conform to the categories usually assigned to it. When the Native artist speaks as the author rather than the bearer of (an other's) meaning, he or she precipitates an epistemological crisis, which exposes the fundamental instability of those knowledges that circumscribe the social and political place of the colonized peoples. (Fisher, 1992, p. 44)

As First Nations artists speak to issues central to their cultural identity and colonial circumstance, their specific issues and themes have not been heard or adequately represented. Rather much of their representation has been generalized and described within the ideological concerns of western art history. The representation of First Nations art has been dominated by western interpretation that has assumed the right to define and validate it within frames of western art history ideology. This self-assigned authoritative position has maintained a hierarchy of academics that have secured their positions as experts in the field, with First Nations voices as secondary sources. The notion, now outdated, that all art production is universal and framed within a paradigm of western art theory has presented several problems for First Nations artists. First Nations art has been defined as primitive and of inferior status based on western art history's narrow ideological lens of what is perceived as innovative. It has been excluded from contemporary exhibitions in the past, or included with inappropriate labels and western ideological themes. The dominance of this Western art history canon has been concretely established in the educational system and perceived as the universal norm, displacing other forms of artistic cultural expression. This dominance has led to the displacement of First Nations art history that has been evolving for thousands of years.

This section provides an opportunity for the First Nations perspective to be heard on the critique of western representation and as well, it is an opportunity for non-Native curators to learn about these perspectives and hopefully gain insight into their projected

ideology. The topic of western framing reviews the impact of this through the counter-narrative of First Nations curators and artists.

COLONIAL IMPERIALISM AND ART RACISM

When a country has been colonized, colonists will maintain their hegemony by forcing their cultural ideology on all aspects of society. This type of cultural hegemony, termed "cultural imperialism" by Said (1978), is rooted in the belief that acquiring knowledge of the colonized is to 'own 'the colonized (Sered, 1996, para.1). Today, these practices of control over cultural production continue, though not so much as a conscious act of imperialism, but rather as the residual ethnocentric belief that western knowledge is superior. Academics assume a superior position and impose their interpretation on other cultures. This assumed superiority subjugates and oppresses other cultural representations, and therefore is a form of racial ideology. By taking control over representations, academics actively preserve their dominant power structures in society, perpetuating racial concepts "through agencies of socialization and cultural transmission." (Henry and Tator, 2006, p.16).

Art is one medium in which racial ideology perspectives can be perpetuated to maintain a hierarchal structure. The subjugation, erasure and dominance over the representation of First Nations art is an act of racism. Art racism is a core practice in western art history domination and needs to be exposed in art theory and post-colonial theory. Art educator Graeme Chalmers (1996) is one of the few scholars who has examined the history of racism and 'Eurocentric male-dominated notions' in western art history in his text, *Celebrating purism: Art education and cultural diversity:* "We in art education…[need] to comprehend the causes and results of racism, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination…The dominance given to western artistic canons has excluded the art that matters in many people's lives" (Garcia, 1982 in Chalmers, 1996, p.14).

Alfred Youngman (1992), artist and professor of Native American studies and Native art history theory for the past twenty-seven years at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, addresses this long history of western representation of First Nations, and the conflict that arises as First Nations reclaim control over their representation;

> Because colonization has had a long-standing hegemony over the representation of First Nations of North America, First Nations artists and First Nations art history educators have had several challenges to deconstruct outdated or inaccurate forms of representation and to reconstruct a new First Nations art history that balances the scales with a First Nations perspective and the unveiling of deeply-felt, unconscious antipathies and jealousies among laymen, anthropologists, art students, art historians, art critics and curators. Aboriginal Americans, their history and their art have always challenged the popular American and European ethnocentric archetypal notions of "history" and undoubtedly will continue to do so. (p. 83)

The remainder of this section reviews topics of art racism, something First Nations artists and curators have challenged since the mid 1900s. Through this deconstructive process, First Nations artists can reclaim their representation and their long history of submerged art production.

LABELS AND CATEGORIZATIONS

> The inequality of my own personal experiences based on embraced standards by others' - racial profiling, and imposed stereotypes – these include and depict real experiences of my family, friends and relatives within both historical and contemporary perspectives, with references to both historic and contemporary institutions of systemic collecting and labelling, numbering, and controlling and 'disappearing' in an ongoing continuum of systemic genocide. (Cardinal-Schubert, 2005, Interview, p.3)

Joane Cardinal-Schubert describes her incentive to produce work that revolves around challenging racial and romantic representations and categorizations of First Nations peoples. The ripple effect of stereotypical representations and western myth-making has a direct impact on how First Nations art is defined, labelled and validated, and is directly related to the racial ideological mindset that society holds about First Nations at the time of these constructions. In the 1970s to early 1980s, First Nations art was labelled as craft or artifact, inferior to the artwork in the fine art milieu, and as a consequence, it went through various transitions, being excluded from fine art exhibitions or being included, but ghettoized.

The categorization of Native art as artifact had been a difficult to dismantle for First Nations artists because of the long history of collecting First Nations art by anthropologists. The impetus for collecting began with the search for exotic curios, which in later years developed into large anthropological collections that sought to save these artifacts from a dying race. At the time, the ideological view of First Nations was romantic, generated by novels such as those of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) that honoured a natural primitive state, a natural connection to First Nations way of life. In the next century, the nostalgic era took its course, sentimentalizing the past way of living off the land, perhaps mourning the lost connections to their motherlands. First Nations identity became the symbol of admiration for the past way of life that was connected to nature. At the same time, the great cultures of First Nations were thought to be disappearing. Such sentimental notions were depicted in the photographs of Edward Curtis (1868–1952), in the work of Emily Carr (1871-1945) and Jack Shadbolt (1909-1998), and in the mass-produced images of Native people co-existing in nature in some poetic way. Running parallel to these imaginary romantic ideologies was the contradictory racial ideology about First Nations, that viewed First Nations as naive, primitive and inferior.

Because anthropology museums have been the primary keepers of Indigenous cultural production and have had the longest history of representing First Nations art, they have been the central focus of criticism of representation methods. First Nations have criticized the projected myths of the romantic ideology and the subjugation and exclusions of the racial ideology of the time. These ideologies influenced the inappropriate labelling, categorizations and exclusion of First Nations presence and voice. Deirdre Evans-Pritchard (1989) wrote:

> Anthropologists have often been unaware of pointed critiques of their own behaviour. They can be oblivious to 'Native' opinions of them, partly because people naturally avoid criticism and partly because social scientists expect to observe indigenous cultures in context – not to be observed. (Deirdre in Ryan. p. 156)

Even today, exclusion occurs, despite ongoing years of negotiations and recommendations by First Nations. For example, it is rare to see First Nations curators and docents in the museum setting representing their cultural production, even though a

significant portion of the collections are from First Nations cultures. Instead non-Native docents, with minimal background on the culture, interpret the work on a daily basis to a mass public audience, a lethal combination for more myth-making.

The racial ideology that has informed anthropological practices is evidenced in the assumed right to own First Nations cultural production, even the bones of ancestors, ceremonial items, and other cultural items that were illegally taken without permission.

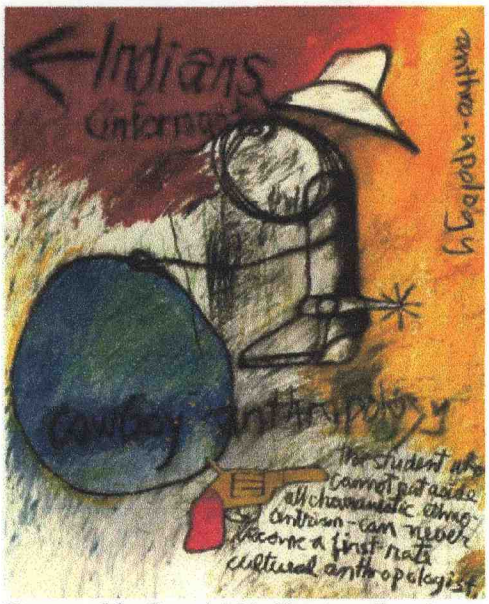

Figure 68. Gerald McMaster *Cowboy anthro-apology*, 1990, Acrylic on

Gerald McMaster, Cree artist, scholar, and curator, has critiqued anthropological ethnocentrism in his 1990 work, *Cowboy anthro-apology*, (Figure 68). He makes the point that an ethnocentric lens blinds people to other cultural forms. The text on the painting reads "anthro-apology… the student who cannot put aside all chauvinistic ethnocentrism – can never become a first rate cultured anthropologist." Ironically McMaster became a curator in anthropology museums and has often revisited the conflictual concept of cultural representation of First Nations in museums, especially in the light of repatriation of cultural property by First Nations throughout North America:

> there's a range of anthropologists. I think there are good to bad, sensitive to insensitive. There's a certain group of interpreters. Again, there's this notion of the power, of structure, of control and scientific interpretation….What I'm hearing from anthropologists recently is: Our profession is in jeopardy but, at the same time, it can be a source of assistance to a lot of Native peoples.' The issues that seem to be raised most often at this point are litigation and land claims. What I'm concerned about is that I think anthropologists should be open for criticism. (McMaster 1999, in Ryan, p. 154)

As museums worked out their past and present ideologies, galleries had to contemplate their exclusion of First Nations art. Because First Nations art didn't quite fit into the modern art history ideology of aesthetics and subject matter, especially the works

of art that drew from traditional forms, it was viewed as not progressive enough, or was labelled as craft.

This same racial perspective existed amongst art critics, especially the notorious John Bentley Mays, a columnist for the Toronto *Globe and Mail.* I recall reading an article of his in the 1980s, entitled *Art or craft?* The article displayed an image of an Inuit sculpture and questioned whether Inuit art was in fact art or craft. He concluded that due to the sculpture's figurative form, it should be labelled as craft since it didn't fit within boundaries of the modern art aesthetic. It is true that Inuit art is different from the modern art aesthetic, though its difference does not invalidate it as a progressive art form. If Mr. Bentley had done some research on Inuit art, he would have known that the bold, figurative carvings and prints of the Inuit are a specific cultural style that has been evolving for a few centuries now, and is just as valid as the evolving style of modernists in western art history. Bentley Mays's discriminatory writings about First Nations art clearly reveal his western bias and minimal knowledge about First Nations art production and history, and therefore have given him an unpopular reputation amongst First Nations artists. Cardinal-Schubert, (2005), addresses the racial exclusionary practices of the western art history paradigm:

> The only thing homogeneous about Aboriginal art is how it is perceived by a non-Aboriginal historian steeped in western euro-thinking (philosophy). Homogeneous could be construed as a racist term that ignores the diversity of cultural expression of the many Nations of Aboriginal people. When Aboriginal artists spoke out about this dissatisfaction and noted that their artwork unlike Others' was exhibited in an anthro, ethno paradigm with a qualifier identity factor, their work received the accusative label of 'victim art' by a well-known Toronto art reviewer, John Bentley Mays. (p.4)

Artist, Lawrence Paul (2005) stated that May's review in the *National* of *Land spirit and power* was derogatory;

> I did call him a racist and a red neck publicly and told him not to speak about Aboriginal art if he doesn't know what he is talking about. Most people don't know how to talk about or write about or critique aboriginal art. I think the problem that we have is that we don't critique our own art… I think if you are in the business of art you should be able to be held up to scrutiny. (p.8)

The labelling of First Nations art as primitive has a long history in North America. The misguided perception of First Nations art stems from earlier representations that equated

First Nations art to that of children. The following condescending description by Cope (1887) describes First Nations art as naive and clearly points to the ethnocentric and racist values of the time, that blinded early colonists from appreciating and learning about Indigenous artistic approaches.

> We find that the [artistic] efforts of the earliest races of which we have any knowledge were quite similar to those which the untaught hand of [European] infancy traces on its slate or the savage depicts on the rocky faces of cliffs. (In Chalmers, 1996, p.19)

Art production in First Nations communities has been a predominant practice for thousands of years. Art was everywhere: artistic embellishment of utilitarian items, spiritual items, clothing, and housing. Artists worked in a diverse range of natural materials with the interchanging of abstracted and figurative forms. Like any other art, their concepts were instilled with their iconography, through personal and tribal symbology, narrative depictions and decorative design elements and principles. Even though the early colonists might have found the artwork of First Nations attractive, their racial ideology insisted on undermining these talents as childish renderings:

> Delight in bright, glistening things, in gay things, in strong contrasts of color as well as in certain forms of movement, as that of feathers-the favourite personal adornment-this is known to be characteristic of the savage and gives to his taste in the eyes of the civilized man the look of childishness. On the other hand, it is doubtful where the savage attains to the sentiment of the [white] child for the beauty of flowers. (Sully, 1895, in Chalmers, 1996, p.19)

The colonial arrogance constructs an imaginary hierarchy by lifting its identity to a lofty plane, subordinating First Nations with notions of childish naive behaviour that underlies a perspective that First Nations weren't intelligent enough to conceptualize aesthetics. However, I would suggest that dismissing First Nations people and cultural practices was actually a reflection of the naiveté of the colonists. It is quite possible that iconographic imagery found in First Nations art was incomprehensible to them; the designs and concepts were alien, as was the entirety of the cultural practices, and therefore dismissed as childish. Ironically, it was perhaps easier to interpret incorrectly than to risk the opportunity to ask questions and look naive. Perhaps this is another projection to investigate.

The notion of childish art later evolved into notions of primitive art, continuing the same perception of inferior abilities that did not encompass a conceptual process. This ideological position of European art as the most highly evolved persists even today in education, in art theory and in galleries. Charlotte Townsend-Gault (1999) echoes similar condescending sentiments when she summarizes identity politics in First Nation art, "They [First Nations artists] have come to a maturity in the understanding that art and its discourses are inseparable. The challenge to a non-Native audience is not to re-socialize the Natives but to recognize them" (p.130). Despite her concluding request to recognize Aboriginal art, the overall message speaks from a self imposed position of authority and clearly undermines First Nations conceptual intelligence, as their art has always reflected their cultural context, which is their discourse, as well as critically analyzing the colonial context around them.

The appellation of 'primitive' prevailed and continued to reinforce these ideas in art theory and anthropological literature. In the mid to late 1900s, the term 'primitive' often arose in discussions of modern art. The text, *Primitivism in the 20th century* (1984), produced by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, ironically drew connections to the influence of Indigenous artwork on modern art. First Nations artists pointed out the irony of that claim: on the one hand critics subordinate First Nations art by calling it primitive, yet the artists idealized in western art history are the same ones that have sought out First Nations and African art for inspiration.

> When I was going to university, before there were native studies programs or departments anywhere in North America, we were taught that modernism was a more or less a miraculous conception, almost a miracle if you will, that Pablo Picasso almost single handily brought to the fore and invented modernism. I know there were modernists before him, going all the way back to Gauguin, still the type of modern art that we know today, we were never told that Pablo Picasso and Max Ernst, and other modern artists collected and studied African and North American Indian art from which they got their ideas. (Youngman, 2005, p.7)

The paradox between racial and romantic perspectives is manifest in the devaluing of First Nations art, and yet, First Nations art is, typically, chosen to be given as gifts to important international dignitaries. Perhaps what this suggests is that there is the perspective that First

Nations art is impressive and valued, though the western art history canon has difficulty letting go of its authoritative position.

Fortunately, these racial descriptions and categorizations have not deterred the evolving practices of artistic cultural expression. First Nations artists continue to forge ahead, building on the traditional knowledge of past masters, reinventing new movements, and continuing the long history of art production that has been evolving for at least the past 4000 years in Canada.

EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

Throughout the twentieth century, contemporary First Nations artists struggled to have their work recognized on its own terms in art institutions. They vocalized their resistance to categorization and exclusion, forcing museums and galleries to re-examine and deconstruct long-held notions about First Nations art and examine their dominance over First Nations representation. Departing from the old and moving to the new created some confusion and polarizations as to what to do with First Nations art. Sometimes it was included by museums but excluded by fine art galleries, or accepted into fine art galleries and museums only if it was not contemporary work. Labels fluctuated between fine art and craft, reflecting these polarized perspectives. Eventually both museums and fine art galleries should resolve to show contemporary work, which includes traditional methods.

In museums, artists challenged the anthropological methods that defined their art as objects removed from the cultural context and maker. They objected to the representations that relegated First Nations art to the past. They challenged museums' prioritization of historical works over contemporary work, which erased their current existence in society. Recent discussions include new categorizations for First Nations art, moving from regional or linguistic categories to thematic categories. In recent years, art historians and anthropologists have been making efforts to consult with communities and include First Nations voices in exhibits. To give credit to museums, they set a precedent in Canada by showcasing First Nations artwork in the 1970s. Fine art galleries, on the other hand, had a more difficult transition in accepting First Nations art as high-calibre work.

It was only in 1986 that the National Gallery of Canada acquired its very first artwork by a First Nations artist, the late Carl Beam. In addition, the gallery had its first solo exhibition of a First Nations artist in 2006, which is Norval Morrisseau. Of all the art institutions in Canada, the National Gallery has been the most criticized for its exclusion of First Nations art. Logan (2005) stated that the gallery has acquired only 50 First Nations artworks out of the approximately 50,000 in their collection (p. 5). First Nations art exhibitions at the National Gallery have been minimal, with only a couple of shows around the time of the Quincentennial of Columbus's arrival, in 1992; and then interest fizzled out. Because of this, the temporary inclusion of First Nations art was viewed as mere tokenism at a politically appropriate time.

Given that First Nations artwork is some of the highest-calibre produced in Canada and by the most active art-producing collective community in this country, it begs the question as to why there has been so little interest at the National Gallery. It also begs the question as to what the National Gallery policies are in terms of eligibility criteria for artists; and do these criteria simply reflect the exclusivity of the western art history paradigm, or is there intended to be some type of cultural inclusion that requires cultural expertise to identify high calibre work from within its own cultural paradigm of aesthesis and conceptualization?

Margaret Archuleta's essay, *Issues of inclusion: A history of Native American fine art exhibitions within the United States* (1990), mirrored similar topics that First Nations artists in Canada were critiquing. Her essay states that exclusion of First Nations work in exhibits finds its roots in the history of categorization within the fields of anthropology and art history. Archuleta suggests that the primary reason that First Nations art has been excluded in exhibits is because there was no category for innovative ideas which departed from traditional historical forms or strayed from 'Indian themes.' The methods of inclusion were just as critical as exclusion; with inclusion, 'ghettoization' of First Nations art evolved, meaning that First Nations art was shown only in First Nations exhibits — another form of exclusion. Archeluta defines ghettoization as a:

> 1990s code word for exclusion. A value judgement is implied. Somehow the art and culture of Others is perceived as being of a lesser value than that of dominant art and culture. It also suggests the need to separate the art and culture of Others away from mainstream art and culture. (p. 27)

For Canadian First Nations artists, ghettoization expanded to include the lumping of all artists into thematic group shows and labelling the artist as First Nations first and foremost, before listing them as professional artists. Archeluta describes the exclusion of First Nations art in galleries and museums as specifically having to do with a western paradigm that does not validate First Nations, due to its perception that the art has not had an evolving history of practice. She writes:

> A basic and fundamental element that allows for the exclusion of Native American fine art from the discussion of mainstream fine art is the belief that Native fine art does not have a history but rather is a recent phenomena resulting from outside influences, which renders the art something other than Indian and therefore not "authentic". The paradigm of exclusion follows the belief that if an art form is perceived to have no history or an invalid history, then it cannot be recognized as a valid area of study and therefore cannot be included in mainstream art history. This is what has happened to Native American fine art. (Archuleta, in Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1994, p. 20-21)

In order to address exclusion and inclusion issues at the exhibition level, First Nations joined together with galleries and museums to produce documents between 1990-1993. *The Thunder Bay Art Gallery mandate study, 1990-93: An investigation of issues surrounding the exhibition, collection and interpretation of contemporary art by First Nations artists* documented central issues and negotiation processes between museums and First Nations artists. A collection of essays was put together that included topics of interpretations, exclusion, taboos, appropriation and employment. It was written predominantly by First Nations artists and curators such as Robert Houle, Gerald McMaster, Margaret Archuleta, Tom Hill, Carl Beam and Lee-Ann Martin.

In this mandate study, curator Tom Hill's essay, *Between two potentially strong allies*, describes the development of the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples that brought forth recommendations in 1990 to increase involvement by addressing inclusion/exclusion and by describing the evolution and results of the document. In the task force both First Peoples and museums collaborated to compile nation-wide

recommendations that addressed the issues of repatriation and interpretation, and representation of First Nations in museums. In terms of the interpretation of First Nations art, the document recommends;

> 1. increased involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the interpretation of their culture and history by cultural institutions,
> 2. improved access to museums collections by Aboriginal peoples; and
> 3. the repatriation of artifacts and human remains.
> (Hill, 1990, p. 41)

Following this initiative was the final report titled *Turning the page: Forging new partnerships between museums and First People* (1992), which defined major principles of mutual respect and equality with regard to the distinctiveness of First Nations cultures and recommended that these principles be incorporated into future policy development of museums.

DUELLING DICHOTOMIES OF REPRESENTATION

> Both modern and post-modern methodologies and ideologies, particularly within the new terms of reference as being discussed in current cultural discourse (Rushing) have had a profound influence on the contradictions (Martin), exclusions (Archuleta), and politics (McMaster) of contemporary First Nations art. As humanities, art history and anthropology, remain polarized about a "new" cognition of what is contemporary (Hill) and traditional (Vogel) when looking at "other" cultures, the specificity of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the Unites States assume a position of importance. (Houle & Podedworny, 1993)

The discourse of polarizations that Houle and Podedworny (1993) identify reflects the dilemma experienced by curators and scholars from outside First Nations cultures who attempt to arrive at new categories to define First Nations art. They are still unconsciously sorting through outdated notions about First Nations peoples. Polarizations such as *authentic versus assimilated*, *traditional versus contemporary,* and *individualism versus tribal identity* reflect the disjointed conceptualizations academics use to redefine First Nations art and artist identity.

These insistent revolving categorizations, shifting between past and present, reveal western ideology's attempt to make congruent their past and present perspectives, and

ultimately find a new way to insert First Nations art into the paradigms of western art history and anthropology. Therefore, many of the projected themes become another form of myth-making, and in reality, are conversations amongst themselves more so than representing the actual themes that First Nations artists were processing and articulating. The problem with this is that these themes are then fortified within contemporary academia, creating master texts of the 'other.'

These recurring themes are often perplexing to First Nations artists, as the topics are usually not central to the immediate priorities of their art production, though it has become part of their conversation simply due to the consistency of this persistent dialogue. At times, these themes are voiced by First Nations artists in order to offer academics some clarity. As curators become consumed in creating thematic exhibits that reflect their own perspectives, specific themes of First Nations are overlooked. Popular curated themes have often incorporated romantic or assimilation notions such as spirituality, land, change, renaissance, survival, and revival, while artists have been working with themes that challenge racism, colonial imperialism, ideological representations, stereotypes, and assert their cultural identities through traditional and personal stories. These types of contradictions reveal curatorial subjective ideology at a time of transition or of releasing past notions, and may also reveal the larger disconnectedness that mainstream Canadians have with the First Nations of this land.

The following section reviews the most common dichotomies in First Nations art discourse that reflect this transition of the curatorial mindset.

Authentic versus assimilated

The topic of assimilation of First Nations artists is a common theme for art academics, whereby an artist's contemporary context is evaluated in terms of western influences. The authentic 'Indian' and his artwork have been replaced with the assimilated 'Indian' who produces western work. The 1980s curatorial and ethnographic quest for authentic tribal art "'uncontaminated' by western influence" so that it could be "juxtaposed with an elite selection of Euro-American artists" (Fisher, 1992, p. 45) or to add value to anthropological collections has now been replaced with an obsession with finding aspects

of assimilation to draw upon some kind of homogeneity. The term 'assimilation' has different connotations for First Nations and academics. For First Nations, it relates to assimilationist policies of the past and present and is met with resistance and disdain. For academics, it's a discourse attached to the sister debate of traditional versus contemporary First Nations art, which is a discourse that seeks to define current First Nations realities through general categories. Assimilation conversations centre on the perception that First Nations artists have departed from the traditions of their culture and have essentially become a part of the multicultural melting pot. Fisher (1992) would suggest that assimilation is a new variant of multiculturalism, "a means by which the mainstream incorporates diverse cultural perspectives, without essentially relinquishing control" (p. 45).

The academic discourse of assimilation has arisen out of the anthropological dilemma of defining and distinguishing historical and contemporary collections of First Nations art. The debate, for example, will arise in discussions about acquisitions, such as to what extent should museums purchase contemporary work, even though it will inevitably become a valuable historical work as time elapses. The debate also persists in the search for a black and white system in which to categorize the work. Overall this repeated conversation appears to be a priority amongst academics and appears to be a reflection of cognitive transformation of past perspectives, which relegated First Nations art to objects of the past, into the current perspective of comprehending First Nations artistic diversity in current times. It is also connected to notions of First Nations identity, the cognitive departure from outdated notions of First Nations people living in the past, to current concepts of evolving First Nations identities.

The unconsciousness of the projection that occurs in this place of transition is evident in the framing of discourse about First Nations art which aligns itself with assimilation issues. For example, many First Nations artists are approached with a repeated question, "How do you feel about departing from traditional forms of art to using contemporary materials, or what are your comments about working in contemporary forms and being educated in a mainstream schools?" The question is odd and perplexing, I am sure, to most First Nations artists, as they have existed amongst the colonial society for

over 500 years. Questions are also extended into the life of the artist, inquiring about the departure of traditional life, such as from living off the land to urban living. These questions project notions as if just yesterday First Nations artists were pounding ochre in preparation for a cave painting.

The evolution of media and expression, in terms of the incorporation of western fine art media and form, is not as new to First Nations as some may think. For example, First Nations artists have been drawing with pencil since the mid 1700s and worked with non-figurative and metaphorical concepts and forms long before the arrival of colonists. Like any another people in this world, their artistic expression has naturally evolved towards concepts that are relevant to the time. What is new, however, is the altered state of the mainstream collective unconscious, which is in transition, moving away from stereotypes and preconceived notions of First Nations people, and towards the conceptualization of realistic First Nations identities. It is difficult to break old patterns of thought and it takes time to reconstruct a fractured worldview. It appears that researchers may be unaware of their ideological projections that inform how they represent First Nations art. And this is precisely where myth-making begins.

The obsession with concepts of assimilation of First Nations artists amongst academics goes so far as to suggest that First Nations have lost their identity and have become completely assimilated. This misconception is revealed in statements made by Vickers: "Recognizing the perilous prospects of total assimilation into the white hegemony.... [Indians] are busily trying to recapitulate their traditional religions and customs" (1998, p.). There is no doubt that First Nations have had to rebuild cultural traditions that have been damaged by early assimilation policies, such as the language and spiritual practices decimated by residential schools, and ceremonies outlawed by legislation. At the same time, traditional activities have been maintained and protected despite all efforts to 'civilize the Indian.' Participation in western society does not suggest assimilation either; it is simply a natural adaptation to the ever-revolving environmental context. In summary, it can be said that the search for authentic 'Indians' is another unrealistic construct that arises from stereotypical imaginaries and misconceptions of First Nations realities. First Nations have been consistently practising their cultural traditions

while at the same time existing within western culture. The reality of living in a pluralistic society is that First Nations art has been influenced in new ways, though their traditional art production and cultural identity has not been sacrificed as a substitute.

Traditional versus contemporary

The dichotomy between traditional versus contemporary is directly linked to assimilation issues, although it has not been identified as such. The history of assimilation, with its underpinnings of the abolishment of First Nations cultural traditions, has resulted in First Nations protecting the traditional aspects of their culture and art forms. Non-Native academics have adopted themes of assimilation to expand their own discourse of traditional versus contemporary to cognitively process past and present realities of First Nation art production. Overall, I believe there is a transition of the Canadian collective unconscious, in terms of letting go of outdated notions and trying to create some kind of new internal consistency about First Nations identity. An old worldview has been deconstructed, so a new understanding must take its place, which is in the midst of happening. The conversation of traditional versus contemporary is a constructed discourse for academics who sit on the periphery, trying to make sense of it all.

Another similar discourse relates to the topic of individualism and tribal identity, popular in the United States. Individualism often points the development of individual style, typically in contemporary, western modes of expression, while traditionalists maintain the tribal identity through traditional forms of art. Each has felt pressures to maintain traditional forms or to work in contemporary forms in order to have their work validated.

Jamake Highwater (1986) acknowledges the out-datedness of this debate and states that the lines between traditional and contemporary are not as distinct as some people may think. In the United States, the concept of traditional versus contemporary has created divisiveness amongst "conservative traditionalists and non-Indians who attempt to promote a form of Native imagery" and emerging artists who have new artistic modes of expressions. He points out that both traditional and contemporary modes of expression incorporate modern materials and concepts, and have been doing so for several years:

> At the heart of the struggle for artistic identity among Indian artists is nothing so straightforward as an ideological confrontation — traditional Indians on one side (arguing for ancient images, media and forms) and non-Indians on the other (demanding modernism and idiosyncratic style and form). That kind of disagreement is essentially outdated, for since the beginning of this century countless Indians have adapted much of the technique and sensibility of western art. (p. 223)

> There is, for instance, nothing Indigenous about watercolours, tempera, illustration board, or paper-the standard materials used since about 1915 by traditional Indian painters. Likewise, it needs to be pointed out that there is nothing Native about seed beads or silver; these are elements introduced from Europe, which were thoroughly Indianized by North American Native craftspeople. (p. 225)

To expand on Highwater's point about materials, First Nations historically produced art with the materials that surrounded them, such as natural dyes used to make paint, or metals such as copper. Painting, drawing, carving, engraving metals was occurring long before the arrival of the European. To expand this dialogue even further, I would add that this discourse stems beyond the issue of material to the issue of conceptualization. Take the symbology of early pictographs, or Plains geometric designs, or the highly-coded designs of Chilkat blankets; these constructed images are forms that suggest specific content and have been conceptually incorporated in designs. These abstract codes have been passed on through generations until today, with each artist incorporating his or her own specific style. The overall point is that the evolutions of artistic materials and creative conceptualization were occurring long before the influence of western art.

Another topic associated with individualism is contemporary artists' departure from the collective forms of traditional art-making. Artists want to break out of the confines of traditional modes of expression and are frustrated with those who insist on traditional forms or perpetuate out-dated romantic notions of 'Indianness.'

Gerald McMaster (1998) contextualizes the concept of individualism in Canada, through the disconnections from traditions and community due to the influence of modernism, to the current reconnections of artists with their communities:

> Artists are attempting to merge the legacy of individualism with the dynamic and affirming bond of community. They no longer see the appeal of being marginalized iconoclasts but prefer to become active participants, where community and

> individual growth are not incompatible but complementary goals. By understanding the logic and evolution of their practices, we may be able to see some critical connections and reconnections. (p. 23)

First Nations response to dichotomies

As curators and anthropologists debate these categorizations, First Nations have been countering the narratives with the explanation that their work is not defined by a linear historical perspective, rather is a continuous cycle of tradition. However, some First Nations writers and artists have adopted the historical discourse, perhaps because it has become engrained, or perhaps because adopting the language permits their voice to be validated and heard. I would suggest that this move inevitably supplants their artistic and cultural realities with outside interpretations and theories.

> Many Indians have come to parrot the ideas of anthropologists because it appears that the anthropologists know everything about Indian communities. Thus many ideas that pass for Indian thinking are in reality theories originally advanced by anthropologists and echoed by Indian people in an attempt to communicate the real situation. (Deloria, 1988, p.82)

The adoption of the western discourse, Deloria (1988) suggests, is an example of the influence of the long-term authoritative power that academics have held in the interpretation of indigenous cultures.

WESTERN MYTH-MAKING

Western ideology has played a dominant role in the construction of First Nations art and its racist notions have resulted in considerable myth-making. Aboriginal artists and scholars have attempted to deconstruct these in order to include their own perspectives. With the hegemony of western ideology, self-assigned experts have been created who have projected western art ideology onto First Nations art, assuming the authority to define, categorize, represent, invalidate and exclude. Research about Native people is often written from the western ideological mindset, and can result in projections rather than representations of the artistic processing and themes of First Nations artists. The projection of western ideology is an unconscious action, and is not done in malice or with intention to control; it is simply what the colonial society believes and thinks best. The point here is to

raise consciousness about this issue and state that it is inappropriate and problematic to define other cultures from within one's own paradigm.

Mythologizing First Nations people occurs because of the dominance of western ideology in education, social perspective and cultural production. Specific reasons include the minimal amount of curriculum in the educational system devoted to First Nations history and cultures; the disconnectedness of mainstream society from First Nation people; inadequate research that recycles outdated and secondary resources and has limited field study in First Nations communities; and academic writings that project western ideologies onto other cultural groups, ultimately producing work that reflects western issues. The lack of education about First Nations issues and the lack of direct experience with First Nations peoples manifests in distant, speculative texts by the outsider looking in, and makes for myth-making and perpetuation of inaccurate information.

Another central reason why myth-making has occurred is the long history of non-Natives dominating the writing about First Nations, making the Native perspective difficult to find. Alfred Youngman (2005) has spent many years searching for the Native perspective by going out into First Nations communities to incorporate the First Nations perspective into his curriculum;

> Nearly 99.9% of the text books that I have consulted, that I have researched over the past 40 years, were written from a non-Indian perspective, most were written from an anthropological perspective…very seldom was there anything written *by* Indians for Indians on Indian art, it was practically non-existent back then and still is today...There was a book published in 1970 by the American Indian Historical Society called *Textbooks and the American Indian*, edited by Native American historian Robert Costo who lived in San Francisco. His book did a survey of all the American Indian textbooks of that time found in America, and I assume world libraries, colleges and universities; his research found that every one of them was written by a white writer or scholar. In other words, by definition, these books were fictitious in nature. (Youngman, 2005, Interview, p. 5)

The prominent Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria Jr., devoted much of his work to the deconstructing of western myth-making. As a professor in history, law, political science and religious studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Deloria had the rounded experience and confidence to challenge western myth-making of First Nations history, culture and identity, and contributed immensely to this discourse while inspiring other First

Nations scholars to do the same. Deloria speculated that perhaps one of the reasons non-Native scholars are reluctant to validate First Nations perspectives of their history in North America is that it may result in the dismantling of their forefathers' foundational theories. It is for this precise reason, he suggested, that myth-making continues. An advanced researcher should be willing to present alternative points of view even when they may contradict his or her own theories or beliefs, and must be willing to investigate long-held theories if they are challenged.

The ramifications of myth-making are several, as stated earlier. They perpetuate misrepresentations through stereotypes, outdated references, recycling secondary and tertiary references, watered-down generalizations, racist ideology, exclusions, and categorizations.

PROJECTIONS OF WESTERN ART HISTORY IDEOLOGY

Given that most writers about First Nations art are most familiar with western art history, it is not surprising that they would use those frames of reference for interpreting First Nations art. Two authors who repeatedly write about First Nations art in Canada are Carol Podedworny and Charlotte Townsend-Gault. Both are known to insert First Nations art into western art history frames of reference. Doing so makes them comfortable in the discourse they know well, but does not always represent the First Nation artist's topics of priority. Podedworny wrote a well-known article in 1992 titled, *First Nations art and the Canadian mainstream*, which is laden with western art history theory that attempts to insert a round peg into a square hole by inserting First Nations art into the modern and post-modern art history paradigm.

In a recent Townsend-Gault article *(1999), Hot dogs, a ball gown adobe and words,* she describes the work of Lawrence Paul in the context of surrealism, like many other writers before her. Townsend-Gault (1999) states; "Both surrealism and ethnography depended heavily on artifacts and epiphanies gained from 'primitive' societies. The process of taking (some of this) back and, in his turn appropriating their style to do so, has given Yuxweluptun his manner." (p.115). Even though Paul's work has nothing to do with the original surrealism concept of unconscious dream images, with the exception perhaps of

familiar distant landscapes, writers insist on imposing the notion. When I asked Paul (2005) what he thought about that projected notion, he acknowledged that academics write from the place they understand, and do not understand his conceptual approach, which he terms 'visionism';

> They are trying to say that I expropriated surrealism. I see how they are trying to dialogue a language that can fit within their context. I think the experience of being Native is quite different. I think they are going to write what ever they want to write about me. Visionism is from re-looking, from seeing again, teaching someone to see the world again, to how one views the world. Visionism is the Native experience, it is their view of the world. When I have been compared to surrealism I just say it is Visionism. They don't understand the ideologies of the Native person so they don't write about it. They are limited to what they can understand.(Paul, 2005, Interview, p. 6)

Another example is Vickers (1998), who attempts to describe how First Nations artists have moved away from the traditional forms of art. He describes the work of Haida artist Robert Davidson as being influenced by abstraction and states, "While Robert Davidson, mentioned above as an abstractionist, has further abstracted the traditional form lines styles of his native Haida culture, he also uses the traditional media of woodcarving, jewellery, totem poles, and masks to produce an eclectic blend of old forms with modernist feeling" (p. 112-113). The fact of the matter is that Davidson's work, along with the rest of west coast art, while often not realistic, has nothing to do with the abstract movements that focused strictly on formal exercises of intuitive manipulations of material without representational content. Traditional west coast Aboriginal design is very specific, with designs planned out, always with cultural symbology and subject matter that reflect mythology, stories and traditions. The composition of west coast design has been distinct for thousands of years, long before modern abstraction.

First Nations artist, Jim Logan, has critiqued the dominant ideology of the western canon in art education, and uses the canvas as his medium to reconfigure western ideology from a Native perspective. He states, "I started thinking about …how I'd been taught to admire western art… I went through art history in school and was taught how glorious European art was. It seems to be the standard to judge all other art and I question that… Is it the standard, and [if so] why is it the standard?" (Logan in Ryan, p.120). Logan

challenges dominant western ideology in science, art history and religion by reconstructing well-known art images. In *A rethinking of the western front* (Figure 69), he alters the famous iconographical work of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam,* by inserting First Nations people, and brings us to question origin stories from other cultural perspectives. He also challenges the western worldview of origin in science education, by critiquing Darwin's *Theory of evolution* in the top left of the canvas. He paints the common educational science diagram of human evolution, depicting a dark ape transforming into the evolved white man. An arrow points to the brown Cro-Magnon man who is situated between the Neanderthal and Homo Sapien, with text that reads "Gee, Is this me?" with a further comment "Sorry Charlie, I don't believe in such a theory." Expanding on this topic further, Logan provides a personal narrative in the bottom left of the painting that reveals how the dominance of western ideology in educational curriculum excludes First Nations representation and realities and ultimately has a negative impact on the identity of young students:

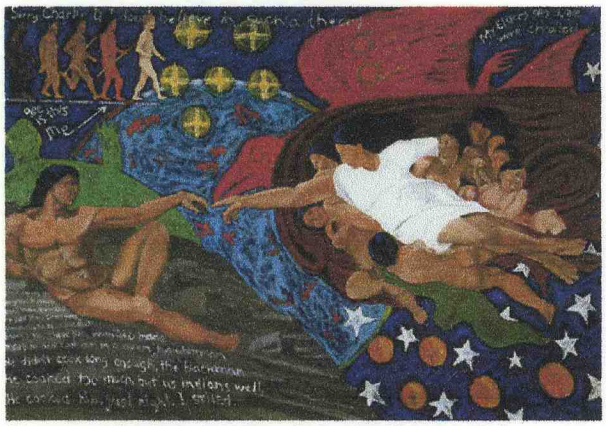

Figure 69. Jim Logan *A rethinking of the western front*, 1992, Acrylic on canvas. 167.5 x 244 cm.

> After seeing a diagram in school, I came home and asked my dad if we Crees were caveman, he told me this story, 'You know son, when God made man he had cooked them in an oven, the white man he didn't cook long enough, the black man he cooked too much, but us Indians, well, he cooked them just right.' I smiled. (Logan, 1992. Text on *A rethinking of the western front).*

To deconstruct the myths of the master texts would require that academics of western art history abandon the notion that their version of this history is universal and superior. It would also require examining the texts for projections of their own interests and values. At the same time, First Nations need to examine their adoption of these master texts and current post-modern themes that exist within them.

SELF-ASSIGNED EXPERTS

The topic of self-assigned experts may be difficult for some to digest, though it is a critical issue to address in the post-colonial debate of speaking for the 'Other.' More importantly, this critique is a necessary process so that First Nations can reclaim their rightful position as experts on their own culture and art production. The self-proclaimed expert is an academic who truly believes that they know more about First Nations cultures than First Nations people do themselves. When they represent First Nations, they do not include the Native voice but write from an isolated position and from within their own agenda and unconscious ideology. Not all non-Native writers of First Nations content take this position and it is important to acknowledge that there have been altruistic researchers who have made a point of including the voice of First Nations directly, and taken the appropriate time to get to know the First Nations community. These scholars are allies who truly make an effort to contribute to First Nation peoples.

Given that First Nations art history has been largely constructed by anthropologists and art historians who are typically from outside First Nations cultures, conflictual issues of cultural voice and representation often surface. These issues came to prominence when appropriation became a highlighted topic in the late 1980s. First Nations artists and scholars critiqued non-Native, self-assigned experts on First Nations culture who were rooted in Eurocentric superiority and authority. Artists and First Nations community members at large were frustrated with the continued lack of consultation in projects and the unequal balance of representation.

It is true that there are some anthropologists and art historians who really believed that they were the experts of First Nations culture, more so than the people themselves. I recall having a discussion with an anthropologist who worked at a high-profile museum. I had inquired if they had any First Nations curators, to which she replied, "No." I then asked if she agreed that it is critical to have at least one First Nations curator on staff, especially since their museum showcased First Nations art from the area. She replied in a most defensive manner that "it is not necessary, besides I often know more about First Nations history and culture than most of the First Nations I encounter." I was shocked at her position which clearly revealed a position of ethnocentric superiority that blinded her from

the realization that the knowledge she had gained from her field research, came from the very people she was undermining. Swisher (1998) and Deloria speak to a similar experience:

> The [non-Indian author] is cited more often than the experts from whom their experience and information was gathered, and they have become the experts in Indian education recognized by their mainstream peers. This is not so much a criticism of their efforts as it is an admonition for Indian authors to publish more. (Swisher, 1998 p. 193)

Deloria (1998) writes about his experience with a self-proclaimed expert, "what he misses more than anything else is that fine sense of superior status which he received as a new Ph.D. who had actually 'studied' Indians and therefore knew more about them than they did themselves" (p.65).

To really have an in-depth knowledge about a cultural group, a researcher must have direct experience with the people he/she seeks to define. The richness and complexities of a cultural group exists outside text books. Culture is not solely based in history, and an understanding of a culture includes all facets of culture, yesterday and today: all cultures evolve and change. Cultural facets include the current social and economic factors, governance, daily traditions and ceremonial practise, art production, music, education, and so on. My opinion is that one cannot purport to be an expert on First Nations culture unless one is aware of all these facets and has had the opportunity to live amongst First Nations people for an extended period of time.

The assumed superiority of academics who study First Nations has been discussed in First Nations circles for years and recently is being openly written about. Academic researchers have been dropping into reserve communities for years, some arriving with their imaginary elevated status, naive to First Nations intelligence. Their superior attitude can often be spotted from a mile away, and thus First Nations may have already made the decision to give minimal information and perhaps even misguided information if the researcher is particularly pompous.

Deloria (1997) worked as a professor in post secondary institutions for numerous years and was always quite open to discuss the white Indian expert:

> It follows, to listen to the apologists for many university departments, that an urban, educated white person, who admittedly has a deep personal interest in a non-western community but who does not speak the language, has never lived in the community, and visits the people only occasionally during the summer, has a better understanding of the culture, economics and politics of the group than do the people themselves. When this attitude is seen in religious studies it is appalling: white scholars truly believe that they know more about tribal religions that the people who actually do the ceremonies. (p. 35)

The challenge to the control First Nations representation in academic writing is published in collective work by First Nations scholars entitled *Natives and academics, researching and writing about American Indians (1998).* The book addresses problems that can arise when non-Native scholars write and teach about First Nations, and include information dealing with misrepresentations, myth-making, the use of data other than primary and secondary sources, and teaching without direct experience. Despite apprehensions that this dissertation may generate "controversy, hurt feelings and possible retaliation," Mihesuah (1998, p. ix) states that it is a necessary critique to help non-Indians understand what Native academics think about researching and writing about Indians and to:

> remind scholars that many Indians are not satisfied with the manner in which they have been researched or how they and their ancestors have been depicted in scholarly writings... offer suggestions scholars might use to produce more critical, creative and well-rounded interpretations of Indian histories and cultures. (Mihesuah, 1998, p. ix)

The text challenges those academics who "have regarded themselves as definitive authorities on Indians," (in Deloria, 1998, p. 82) and those who say they write from an Indian viewpoint because "... they may possess a modicum of Indian blood. But many of these "Indians" do not even know which tribe they belong to and were not raised with a tribal connection." (p. 12). The problems that occur with such 'experts' is that they are not aware of the 'inside' realities of tribal communities; their research often does not include primary sources, and this ultimately perpetuates inaccurate information, myth-making, and treading on sacred information. Furthermore, ethnocentric academics will devalue First Nations knowledge, such as oral histories, and not acknowledge or compensate community members who gave them all their valuable research (Mihesuah, 1998, p. 9). Instead, they cash in their lucrative grants and run, not even giving the communities a review before they

run to the publishers. Authors in this text have voiced their resentment of those who study First Nations history and culture or maintain their exclusive positions as experts only to take advantage of such motivators as a "degree, grant, fellowship, or tenure and promotion." (Mihesuah 1998, p. 8)

Artist Judy Chartrand (2003) also addresses the problems associated with the recycling of inaccurate information about First Nations by academics as well she presents a portrait of the self proclaimed expert. Her work, *Indian expert brand* (Figure 70), is one of her *White lard* series, which mimic lard buckets from the mid 1900s made in the ceramic medium:

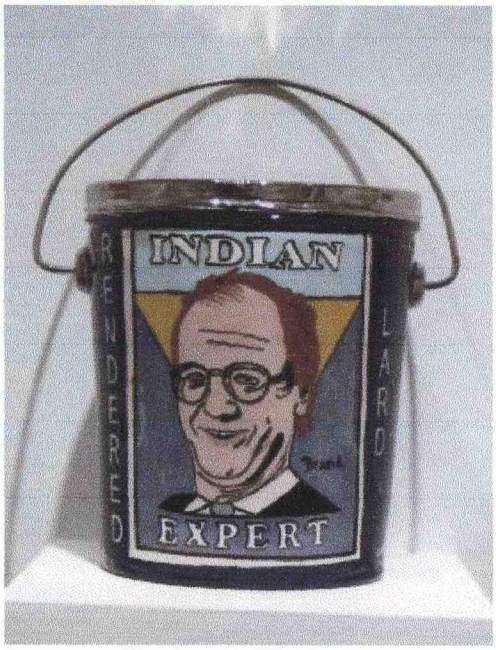

Figure 70. Judy Chartrand. *Indian expert brand*. 2001. Slip-cast clay, under glaze, lustre

> *Indian expert brand* (2001) relates to experiences I have had with white people. The image is a portrait of a white man I had encountered while I was a student attempting to organize the inaugural First Nations Awareness Day event at the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design. I have used his image to address the issue of white people thinking that they know more about us than we do. In reality, they have most likely received their (mis)information from misinformed texts that were prevalent in institutional curriculum, beginning with grade school and continuing on at higher levels of education. (Chartrand, 2005. URL: http://www.judychartrand.com/catalog.0.html3.0.html)

IMPACT ON FIRST NATION ARTISTS

The recycling of themes, combined with the power that art institutions hold to validate and include First Nations artwork in exhibitions, has had an impact on First Nations artists. There is, at times, a felt pressure to align their work on one side or the other, or to question the work that they produce. With the push and pull of ideologies of galleries, museums and literary critiques, artists can experience a sense of duality. The

duality is characterized by the need to be individual, combined with the pressure of having to conform their work to the external ideologies. The ideology of the artist may be temporarily side-tracked, as they re-evaluate their purpose and connection to their tribal identity.

Eventually, the tribal connection for artists is validated by removing the pressure of labels and by reaffirming that their work is First Nations in philosophy and content, and regardless of form, the connection is understood as always being there. McMaster (1998) writes, "Living and working in a changing world while maintaining a sense of identity is to recognize the importance of preserving fundamental philosophies and principle" (p. 29). As artists come to terms with their artistic identities, they come to terms with their co-existence with mainstream culture and assert their identities and realities.

REWRITING FIRST NATIONS ART HISTORY

How do we change the way First Nations art has been represented and write a First Nations art history? First, Native art needs to be defined within its own terms and validated within that history. There is at least a 2700 year period of art production in Canada that needs to be chronicled into art texts. Second, galleries and museums must include First Nations presence and voice in the construction of First Nations exhibits. Third, First Nations curators and scholars must have more opportunities to write about First Nations art, and there is no reason why they shouldn't be the primary writers for catalogues, reviews of exhibits and art history texts. Lastly, writings should focus on presenting the narratives of artists, with interview questions that are open rather than directive in form. The narrative, open-ended approach to research documentation leaves less room for the transplanting of ideological perspectives.

Joane Cardinal-Schubert (2005) addresses the current state of the representation of First Nations art from the western art history paradigm and the necessity to hire First Nation writers in permanent positions so that the First Nations art history can be written from a First Nations context:

> Basically we have art ethnologists in place. Although internships have been developed and contract positions, there are not continuous employment

> opportunities available. Aboriginal art history as it is written uses the European model, as do journals, catalogues etc. There is no recognition of the continuum from what is considered traditional practice to contemporary practice. (Cardinal-Schubert, 2005, Interview, p.4)

Much research still needs to occur to disengage racial notions, myth-making and unconscious projections of curators and academics. It will require effort from both sides of the cultural fence in order to "decolonize the mind" and to situate First Nations as the experts about their own cultural production. Alfred Youngman (1992) speaks to exposing the long-term myth-making that has occurred. "In a nutshell, it is the western orientation and prerogatives versus the new retelling from the native perspective. The retelling involves the unmasking of a profound fallacious unconsciousness, the exposing of many false images." (p.83)

The reclamation of the representation of First Nations art could prove to be a radical departure from what has been previously presented and will no doubt empower First Nations with a rigorous dialogue relevant to their immediate priorities of art production.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This body of work has identified several types of issues of representation that First Nations artists have analyzed since the 1970s. They are the displacement of historical representation; stereotypical substitutions; the exclusion of representation in exhibits; racial and fictionalized categorizations; appropriation of representation and western framing and projections of representation.

The underlying ideologies that have influenced representations of First Nations people since colonial contact typically involve four types: colonial ideology, racial ideology, romantic ideology and the western academic ideology. Representations of First Nations peoples stem from the values of these ideologies, and in most cases, are imaginary constructs rather than realistic representations. Throughout history, these types of ideologies have run parallel to each other, and as a result, it has not been uncommon for constructed representations to contradict one another, with racist and romantic notions occurring at the same time. I propose that these representations of First Nations people have emerged from the collective imagination, that manifests in the projection of the idealized and repressed psyche.

Colonial ideology is centered on imperialistic values and uses direct force and ideological force to achieve and maintain dominance. Colonial ideology encompasses racial ideology, which is rooted in ethnocentric superior positioning. Racial ideology has transformed over the years from overt extreme racism to today's democratic racism (Henry and Tator, 2006) in which racial views are submerged and co-exist with surface notions of equality. Racial ideology has been used as a political tool throughout history, constructing racist stereotypes of Native people for the purposes of engaging public support for colonial and neo-colonial imperialist agendas. Colonists also dominated First Nations representation through cultural imperialism (Said, 1978) that effectively displaced their presence in history (Lutz, 1990), resulting in the erasure of the war and genocide against First Nations

and of First Nations cultural history. The derogatory projections of both the despised and the idealized self of racial ideology stem from deeply-embedded ethnocentrism. The despised projection manifested as early colonists ridded their psyches of the brutalities of genocide by transferring their behaviours onto Native people and labelling them brutal, murderous savages (Vickers 1998). I suggest that racial ideology is also an idealized projection in its delusional sense of grandeur and superiority above all other races. From the many racial quotes of early colonists to the self-proclaimed heroes in cowboy and 'Indian' movies, we see testaments to a delusional egocentrism that attempts to construct its hierarchal position by inflating its own identities and subordinating First Nations outlooks and perspectives.

Ethnocentric idealizations have been central to the western academic hegemony and the appropriation of Indigenous property and representation. Western academic ideology involves engrained assumptions about western knowledge as the universal truth and norm for all cultures. It is rooted in ethnocentric ideals, and therefore many of the types of representations used to define other cultures mirror that self-absorbed position that assumes universality and expertise. Like racial ideology, it idealizes the self with delusional, grandiose hierarchy, though differs in that its ideology stems from superior assumptions rather than from racist perspectives. However, the end result of dominating cultural representation becomes a racist practice due to the suppression and exclusion of other cultural realities. The western academic canon projects an idealized position of superiority through its assumptions, though it still reveals the residue of ethnocentric racial ideology instilled by early colonists.

The appropriation of First Nations territories, cultural property and representation is another example of ethnocentric assumed rights to dominate and exploit the colonized, typically for the purposes of financial gain. First Nations authorship in art is denied, and replaced with the name of the appropriator, who often believes that cultural appropriation is his right. Cultural collisions occur in this debate, as the two opposing sides have radically different concepts of ownership and cultural property. Cultural appropriation is the residual effect of embedded colonial ideology.

Representations of First Nations that project romantic ideologies typically have occurred in the mass-produced consumer products of popular culture. The media range from fictional stories, images, film, to leisure products, and are usually intended to provide consumer entertainment. Romantic ideology reconstructs fictional fantasies of the collective psyche and consequently representations are fictional reproductions. These are derived from the idealized and repressed psyche. Substitutions of Native women's identity involves projections of the repressed sexuality in society, for example in the captivity narratives of the 1600s, in the poster girl series of the 1950s, and in romantic novels of the current day (Burgess & Valaskakis, 1995), (Laroque, 1992). These romantic stereotypes and notions, from the 1700s literature of French intellectuals to today's new age spiritual enlightenment literature, are projections of the idealized self. All of these romantic stereotypes mirror the colonial desire to have a spiritual connection to land, perhaps a result of displacement from the motherland. Given that First Nations had spiritual connections to the land, their identity was romanticized, providing a conduit for society to live out their fantasies in nature.

Within the art milieu, western art history and anthropology have dominated the representation of First Nations art. Many of the representations are a mirror of their own paradigms and academic concerns rather than a true representation of First Nations art discourse and practice. These unconscious transferences have led to years of inaccurate depictions and myth-making perpetuating art racism in society. For First Nations artists, the result has been the erasure of their historical and contemporary art evolution. As well, for some, a fracturing of identity (Rushing 1999) and duality (Makdisi, 1996; Henry, 2002) has occurred due to the push and pull of conflicting cultural ideologies and the pressure to seek validation according to the terms of western art history. However, I suggest that the fracturing and duality of identity is a temporary processing, necessary for the examination of co-existence between two cultures. Eventually, artists resolve their artist role in society by concentrating on their individual styles that are rooted in their cultural identity.

FRACTURED WORLDVIEW CRISIS: DECOLONIZING THE MIND

Given that this text is a radical departure from other First Nations art history texts, and general history texts for that matter, I would assume that many readers may experience a fractured ideological crisis before they reach a place of full cognitive understanding of the First Nations perspective on history, identity and culture. It has been an important value of mine as a First Nations educator to prepare students for difficult topics such as colonialism and racism, so they are not stuck in raw emotion, which can create learning blocks. In order to assist students in actualizing an egalitarian ideology, a decolonization of deeply-embedded ideologies must occur. Embedded ideologies are powerful, and when they are disrupted chaos sometimes follows. The course may be tumultuous and emotional, though in the end, it can be freeing. This topic of emotional upheaval leaves room for further study, nevertheless, I present a summary to prepare readers who may have difficulty experiencing another cultural perspective.

When cultural ideologies collide, emotions with a common dynamic arise, which I term, *Fractured worldview crisis*. The term 'worldview' is a term referring to cultural ideology. I theorize that this crisis is indicative of a fracturing ideology, that is creates a cognitive dissonance when the new information contradicts what one perceives as the norm or the truth. The new cultural perspective requires a paradigm shift that deeply challenges embedded views. In terms of First Nations issues, readers are challenged to examine the embedded historical, colonial ideology as well as racial ideology in order move outside these frames, and into a new awareness of these issues. (Figure 71)

Those readers who have entered into the First Nations perspective for the first time may experience the following stages: 1) fracturing of worldview; 2) racial ideology crisis; 3) search for internal consistency; and 4) cognitive transformation. The stages are described as fracturing and confusion due to internal inconsistency with their ideology, followed by resistance, followed by the search to align the new information with something they can identify with, and lastly the cognitive transformation entailed in accepting another cultural perspective.

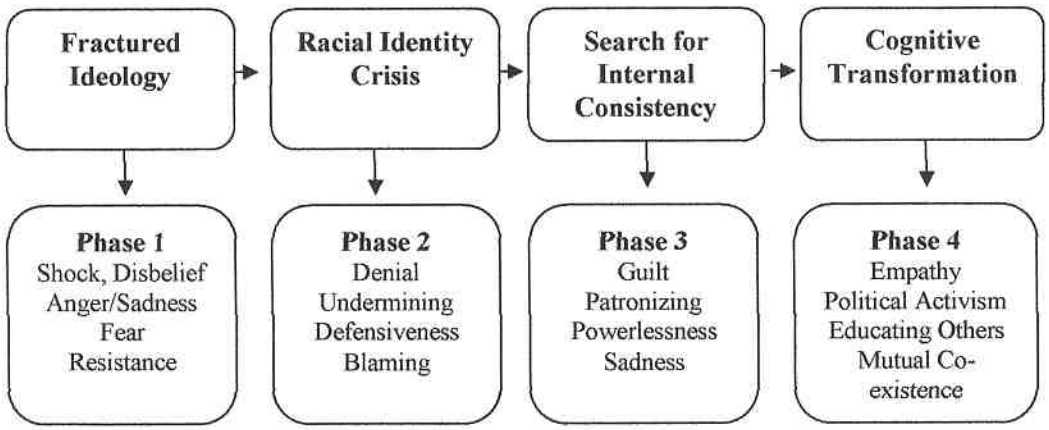

Figure 71. *Fractured worldview crisis.* This model demonstrates the four stages a person may encounter when their ideology is fractured due to new information about a new cultural perspective that contradicts what they perceive as the norm or the truth. Fracturing leads to the release of unconscious primal emotions, which then leads to a search for internal consistency and ultimately to cognitive transformation.

As one processes internal conflicts within these areas, they naturally seek a balance with their ideology and positioning in society. This search for 'internal consistency', or common ground, usually entails a re-alignment of the new information with their ideology (Battiste, 2001). Once this re-alignment is resolved, there is a realization that cultural perspectives can co-exist without polarization. In summary, what was once a separate, insular perspective, has had to be fractured in order to be rebuilt. Though now, the new self can never return to the old self, because the lens has been refocused to include a broader perspective.

WRITING A NEW FIRST NATIONS ART HISTORY

Having reviewed problems associated with the representation of one culture by another, I would assert that the priority of writing a new First Nations art history must begin with First Nations representing themselves and reclaiming their authorship. First Nations artists and curators need to support each other to in order to reclaim control over their representation. To understand the importance of this idea, one must understand how ideologies can work as a tool to preserve dominance, this comprehension can lead to the

removal of the dominance that suppresses First Nations voices and displaces their history. First Nations also need to examine and reflect on aspects of imposition that allows disempowerment to occur. Aboriginal artists and educators need to take a pro-active stance and support their own people in this reclamation. The following list recommends steps that would need to occur to establish a new art history:

1. Continued research on the unmasking of ideologies and their impact needs to occur (Youngman, 1992).
2. Native art needs to be defined within its own terms of art history and be validated within that history.
3. Canadian First Nations art history texts need to be published chronicling the evolution from traditional practice to contemporary practice (Cardinal- Schubert, 2005).
4. Research and writing for catalogues, exhibits, and art history texts must be done by or in equal partnership with First Nations scholars and curators (Mihesuah, 1998).
5. Galleries and museums must include First Nations presence and voice in the construction and curating of First Nations exhibits. (Hill, 1990; Archuleta, 1990).
6. Research data on First Nations artists should be structured to place emphasis on the self-representing narrative, rather than interpretation by others (Said, 1978).
7. First Nations artists need annual national conferences to present their unique artist strategies with rigorous dialogue on issues of priority.
8. National research on emerging artists needs to occur on a regular basis so that research is progressive and the recycling of the repeated names is reduced.

The artists represented in these chapters have contributed greatly to the deconstruction of colonial, racial and western-centric ideology through a variety of methods that, in the end, reclaim their own cultural ideology. In doing so, they are repaving the path for Aboriginal people to walk towards cultural autonomy. And perhaps, through

the consciousness-raising that results from the deconstructive, this path may be walked with Canadians of this country, in partnership and equality.

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GLOSSARY

1. Colonialism is a system that forcefully takes over control of territory, resources and people outside its own country, for the purposes of economic and political advantage. The formation of a colonial empire involves the imperialist, "practise, theory and attitudes" (Said, 1993 in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000) of direct force and ideological force over the colonized presence (Said, 1978) to maintain colonial dominance.

2. Consciousness: Awareness of one's own feelings and what is happening around oneself. The totality of one's thoughts, feelings and impressions. Conscious raising; the process of seeking increased awareness of one's role, attitudes, needs, etc., in connection with personal, social, economic, sexual, etc. problems of life. (Webster, 1980).

3. Cultural appropriation is defined as illegally taking physical and intellectual property belonging to a specific cultural group and the assumed right to represent other cultural property as their own. Cultural appropriation results in a displacing of ownership and authorship of the cultural group. Physical property would include: ceremonial objects, art forms, regalia, musical instruments, artifacts, contents of graves, including bones, and traditional land and resources. Intellectual property would include the sale or reproduction of: images, family crests, specific trademarks, songs, dances, oral stories, and traditional knowledge, such as plants and medicines.

4. Democratic racism is the contradiction of values in democratic ideology, in that democracy implies that all citizens are equal due to shared power with the voting citizenry, yet systemically, the dominant culture controls the primary power of governance and cultural representation and thus controls systems of governance within their ideology. Henry& Tator (2000, p.23) state that "democratic racism" is "an ideology in which two conflicting sets of values are made congruent with each other. Commitments to democratic principles such as justice, equality, and fairness conflict but coexist with attitudes and

behaviours that include negative feelings about minority groups, differential treatment, and discrimination against them."

5. Ethnocentrism: The emotional attitude that one's own ethnic group, nation or culture is superior to all others.

6. Eurocentric racism: The belief that European-rooted ideology, in academia, religion and cultural practices, is the universal norm and is superior to other cultures around the world. Systemic Eurocentric racism is reflected in the, "... imaginative and institutional context that informs contemporary scholarship, opinion and law. As a theory, it postulates the superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans. It is built on a set of assumptions and beliefs that educated and usually unprejudiced Europeans and North Americans habitually accept as true, as supported by "the facts," or as "reality." (Battiste, 2000). A common example of overt Eurocentric racism is when a person of European decent may be condemnatory towards immigrants even though they themselves or their family are immigrants. The racist distinction that exists for them is unspoken animosity towards 'coloured' immigrants that are not of European descent.

7. Fractured worldview crisis: This term coined by the author, which describes the mental fracturing of an ideological perspective when an individual is faced with new information which appears to contradict what is perceived as the 'norm' or truth. The internal processing involved with transforming the ideological perspective towards another cultural perspective generally involves four stages: 1). fracturing of worldview 2). racial identity crisis; 3). search for internal consistency; and 4). cognitive transformation. This theory suggests that radical new information challenges ingrained societal ideologies and can result in unconscious reactions and emotions. Dr. Battiste (2001) suggests that when an individual is presented with new information different from their ideology, an individual will typically process the new information to create a consistency in which they can identify.

8. Internalized racism refers to the unconscious internalization of racism by the oppressed. Internalized racism occurs when societal racist perceptions become so ingrained in the oppressed, that they become real to the oppressed and they unconsciously adopt and accept these racial constructions a part of their identity. It is common for the adopted racial constructions to conflict with their own real identity and therefore manifest in emotions such as, "anxiety, self-doubt, and in extreme cases, self-hatred felt by some members of a stigmatized groups because of the pervasiveness of derogatory stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and other forms of racism." (Fox, p. 45).

9. Ideology is the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions that direct social, political, and religious practice in a society. Ideology is reflected in all aspects of culture, and most visibly seen in social structures, governance and laws, religion, mythology, and all forms of media such as text, images, and film. The term ideology suggests a neutral belief system of a group of people, though ideology can be used as a political tool for the means of maintaining ideological dominance in society which is termed as 'cultural imperialism' by Said (1978). "Ideology provides a framework for "organizing, maintaining, and transforming relations of power and dominance in society" (Fleras and Elliot, 1992: 54 p.16 in Henry and Tator). As a political tool, ideological concepts can perpetuate propaganda and conceal the true nature of social realities by using popular ideological themes and language in an attempt to sway public opinion in favour of political agendas. The use of ideology for political means can be highly effective force on the unconscious collective mindset due to a long-term influence of ideological representations.

10. Intellectual property: There are traditionally five areas of intellectual property: patents, trademarks, industrial designs, confidential information and trade secrets, and copyright (Harris, 2001, p. 2). The Canadian Copyright Act describes intellectual property as an invention, a creation in a physical form: "Intellectual property refers to and protects the intangible or intellectual nature of an object … material that led to its creation, such as

sketches, containing its design or plan ...." The word "intellectual" can be misleading because the word suggests concept, though what is protected is the 'expression' of the idea, not the idea itself (Harris, 2001). In other words, conceptual creations have to be of a physical form in order to be protected.

11. Neo-colonialism is a term used in Marxist discourse, which originated with nineteenth century philosopher, Karl Marx, who wrote on capitalism in society. The discourse analyzes the operations of capitalism of past colonialism. In today's analysis, neo-colonialism implies the continued capitalistic control over nations by using colonial power to control economics, governance and policies in order to dominate less powerful countries. The term neo-colonialism is similar to concepts of globalization in that the capitalist agenda of economic development, such as big business and free trade, results in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer by exploiting the resources belonging to a poor community, such as First Nations in traditional homelands. Neo-colonialism exploits the people for cheap labour, or outright takes or buys the land for a small percentage of what it is worth. Typically, the people do not have the power to change the course of action. The takeover of people's land creates a long cycle of poverty, difficult to rise out of because their resources and financial opportunities are reduced. For the First Nations population in Canada, colonial hegemony continues to govern their people and encroach on their territory for the sake of economic development, and it is justified by using their own policies, laws and referendums.

12. 'Other' and 'other' are terms used in post-colonial theory primarily to define the colonized subject. The term 'Other' is rooted in the "Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity," though, Jacques Lacan (1968) use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other' and 'other' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, pp-169-170). The former 'Other' is described as the imperial centre, imperial discourse, or the empire itself" while the 'other' refers to "the colonized other who are marginalized by

imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the center" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 170).

13. Post-colonialism deals with "the effects of colonization on cultures and societies... [and] is used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2000, p.186). Generally post-colonial theory signifies a position against imperialism and Eurocentrism, and employs a method of "a critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, France and other European imperial powers" (Abrams, 2005, p. 245). These methods "seek to deconstruct the power of Eurocentric ideology, or the 'European Empire'" (Said, 1989, p. xx) that is "said to have held sway over more than 85% of the rest of the globe by the time of the First World War, having consolidated its control over centuries" (Bahri, 1996, para. 1).

The post-colonial discourse also examines the interactions between colonizers of European nations and the societies they have colonized (Bahri, 1996) and the effects of colonization on cultures and societies in the 20th century (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000).

14. Projections are the transplanting of one's own feelings and desires onto another identity. The transplanting of the projector's despised, repressed and idealized self is for the purposes of getting rid of the problem or to live out the fantasy vicariously through another identity. These factious constructions are common amongst stereotypes. "In psychological terms, a projection is defined as unconsciously assuming that others share the same or similar thoughts, beliefs, values, or positions on any given subject. According to the theories of Sigmund Freud, it is a psychological defence mechanism whereby one "projects" one's own undesirable thoughts, motivations, desires, feelings, and so forth onto someone else. The principle of projection is well-established in psychology." (Word IQ, 2005)

15. Representation: In general, the definition of representation is that which stands for something else, that which is a substitution for a object, person or collective group through a recreation of; image, likeness, reproduction, symbolism, simulation, presence, discourse, and statement of an account. These representations can occur in various forms of media such as art, film, photographs, consumer products, academic texts, historical texts, literature, journalistic media and government documents.

Types of representations of people not only include simulation but as well fictional constructions such as racial or romantic stereotypes, or any type mythmaking that may substitute another's reality. Representations also involve topics of inclusion and exclusion.

Representation is a debated topic in post-colonial studies, in which scholars examine the current impact of colonization on colonized peoples. Specific to this text, First Nation artists have been specifically concerned with issues of stereotypical substitutions, exclusion of their representation in exhibits; the western academic framing of their art and the appropriation of their representation of voice and art. While stereotypical substitutions perpetuate romantic and racist notions and myths, exclusion displaces and erases the colonized presence. The western academic framing of their artistic representation superimposes themes from the Western art history paradigm and consequently reinforces these theories that continue the dominance of this discourse. Appropriation of representation lays claims of ownership to First Nations voice and cultural property, such as art production.

16. Racial ideology is racial perspectives and ideology intertwined, which manifest in a system of ideas about a particular ethnic group, based on values, beliefs and assumptions of the definer's ideology, rather than reflecting the realities of the ethnic group. Racial ideology can be used as a political tool to perpetuate discriminatory attitudes and practises that towards the ethnic group.

Racial ideology can promote discriminatory attitudes and practices that perpetuate racist, stereotypical and ethnocentric beliefs. Racial ideology that is racist and ethnocentric can be seen throughout history such as racial wars, slavery and colonization and can be

also observed within the hegemony of institutions, laws, governance, and religion, education and all forms of media. The hegemonic function of, "Racist ideology [therefore] organizes, preserves, and perpetuates the power structures in a society. It creates and preserves a system of dominance based on race and is communicated and reproduced through agencies of socialization and cultural transmission, such as the mass media, schools and universities, religious doctrines, symbols and images, art, music and literature. It is reflected in the very language we read, write and speak." (Henry & Tator, 2005, p.16). The 'invisible' attributes of racist ideology are evident by the minimal inclusion of people of colour within all facets of cultural representation. An example of invisible inequalities would be to note the contradiction of the population of people of color in a downtown centre compared to the number of people of colour employed in institutions and businesses, or to note the number of books in a library devoted to Aboriginals and cultures around the world compared to western literature.

17. Stereotypes: Assigning character traits to the identity of a distinct group defined by culture, race, gender, sexuality, class, and political or religious affiliation. Character traits are usually negative and demeaning or overly romantic. Stereotypes are usually imagined constructions, which ultimately perpetuate myths in the form of prejudice or idealism. Stereotypes can be constructed unconsciously through the influence of a cultural ideology that attempts to live out fantasies vicariously through another identity, and projects and transfers aspects of the collective despised, repressed or idealized self.

18. Systemic (institutional) racism: Systemic racism is a silent form of racism found in the institutions, governance and laws of society that maintain hegemony of a dominant culture and thus prevent equal access and representation of other ethnic or cultural groups. "The network of laws, practices, norms, and values that effectively prevent equal access to education, jobs, legal services, earnings, and respect across ethnic groups." (Fox, p. 44).

19. Unconscious: To be unconscious is to be unaware of aspects of the self. An individual is not aware of the roots of internally-embedded emotions and behaviour, that are influenced by societal conditioning. Thoughts, memories, impulses, desires, feelings, etc are the part of one's psyche which may comprise repressed material.