

EXPLORING AUTHENTICITY IN AMERICAN INDIAN ART AT THE FIRST
AMERICANS FESTIVAL

by

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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Director: Dr. David Kaufman

This is a study in which an attempt was made to develop the models or descriptors that aid in the identification of “authenticity” for selecting the art objects used in a festival. The selected festival in this study was the First Americans Festival that was held in the celebration of the grand opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. At the outset, the application of the term, “authenticity,” was found to be rather loose and upon further exploration of its uses, two models appeared. The two models were identified as “traditional” and “salvage.” The term “tradition” was applied to the first model in which there was agreement between the Indians and non-Indians in the selection of articles that were considered “authentic.” This model includes American Indian art created with materials, methods, and techniques of the past regardless of being developed by outsiders, non-Indian philanthropists, or identified tribes. The second model, known as the “salvage paradigm” is a description that is applied, according to scholars, to the rescuing of a subordinate group by a more

dominant one. Here in this study, the focus is on a t-shirt, created by a renowned American Indian artist which eventually became the most desired item at this NMAI Festival. It will also be shown that this model can be reversed and deployed by Indian artists in ways that open new possibilities to a variety of cultural interpretations and challenge the notion of “authenticity.”

Introduction

“Handmade”.

During planning for the 2004 First Americans Festival in Washington, D.C., a celebration for the grand opening of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the words, “handmade”, often convinced members of the Indian Market Committee that artists applying into the “authentic” art market were traditional, genuine, and “real” American Indians. The purpose of Indian Market was to showcase the range of American Indian artistry from 40 selected regions throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America. Hundreds of thousands of visitors were expected for the First Americans Festival, held on September 21-24, 2004. The Festival was the culmination of over ten years of planning by the NMAI. The new museum featured the history, arts, and culture of over 500 Indian nations throughout the western hemisphere. Therefore, the Festival’s Indian Market Committee, a group composed of staff members from the NMAI, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH), and American Indian organizations, took on the important task of choosing only 40 artists for Indian Market that would represent hundreds of indigenous nations.

During the review of applications, committee members favored artists who expressed their American Indian identity through traditional art forms such as pottery, basketry, and silver jewelry embellished with their interpretations of feathers, buffalo,

petroglyphs, corn, and Four Directions crosses. Items described as “handmade”, created with “traditional” materials, or constructed by using “traditional methods,” were typically considered “authentic” by members of the Committee. However, although images of buffalo and corn (animals and plants that originate in the Americas) appealed to the committee, some elements in the artworks contained elements that do not originate from the Americas such as mirrors, silk threads, beads from the Mediterranean, designs mimicking ancient forms, and digitized landscapes. Why would Indian committee members choose certain types of images and objects to represent “real” Indian culture over others, including “authentic” items created with materials, and imagery introduced by non-Indians/whites?

Since the 16th century Conquest Period, American Indians have integrated, culturally, with many ethnic groups including the Spanish, English, French, African-American, and other indigenous tribes. This intercultural mixing of Indians with numerous groups in the last few centuries should have made Indian Market Committee members realize that, by 2004, “authentic” Indian art could hardly be “pure”. In addition, objects made originally for the tourist trade during the mid- to late-nineteenth century have become incorporated as “traditional” in American Indian culture. Furthermore, the revival of so-called “lost traditions” of American Indian culture (based on archaeological findings and developed by white philanthropists) also challenge the origins of “traditional” Indian art forms and images. Finally, by the early twentieth century, art schools established for American Indians produced native artists who created genres in contemporary art and often trained at fine arts institutions in America and abroad,

learning techniques from European masters. Intercultural mixing, influences from non-Indian groups, the development of “tourist art”, revivals of “lost” art forms, and the integration of Euro-American contemporary styles and techniques have contributed to hybrid works of art made by American Indians. However, regardless of this history, members of the Festival’s Indiana Market Committee saw some works of art as “traditional”, and therefore, more authentic than other works of art.

In the last few decades, anthropologists and folklorists have discarded the notion of “authenticity” and the static view of culture implied by that term.¹ Instead, scholarship on the topic of authenticity and native arts and crafts reveals a complex dialectic that leads us to view the cultural production of native arts as processual and dynamic. There are many studies that examine authenticity in native arts and crafts. For instance, a seminal text by anthropologist Nelson Graburn in 1973, *Ethnic and Tourist Arts*, contains twenty case studies examining authenticity in native art in North America, Mexico and Central America, South America, Asia, Oceania, and Africa.² After decades of discussions, “authenticity” remains an ambiguous notion. However, these cases studies, as well as other examinations by scholars indicate that authenticity cannot be bound by any assumptions or a fixed definition of “real” authenticity.

Why then, after decades of cultural integration and disagreement among scholars regarding authenticity in indigenous art, did American Indians on the First Americans Festival Indian Market Committee consider specific types of art, images, and symbols as

¹ Jay Mechling, “Florida Seminoles and Marketing the Last Frontier,” *Dressed in Feathers: the Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, Edited by S. Elizabeth Bird Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.), 162.

² Nelson Graburn, *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, Edited by Nelson H.H. Graburn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

“traditional”, and consequently, “authentic”? During the vetting process, committee members expressed their beliefs that certain imagery and art forms, regardless of their origin, clearly represented “authentic” Indian culture. Committee members favored some artworks, often argued and defended their choices, and negotiated on the final selection of artists. Their selections reveals what can happen when a group of people gathers together, collaborates, and decides on what constitutes “authentic” Indian culture to a global audience. This project examines how notions of authenticity work in practice of the specific group of American Indians, who were responsible for making decisions about artists for the First Americans Festival Indian Market and for the design of the most popular Festival product, a t-shirt created by an American Indian artist.

In this study, the existence of two models for determining “authenticity” emerge. My project compares these two models for designating the term “authenticity” in the planning of the First Americans Festival. The two models consist of the “traditional” and the “salvage paradigm”. The model of authenticity based on tradition involves an early twentieth century definition by anthropologist A.L. Kroeber (1923) claiming that tradition is “bounded”, like a natural organism, and is something “handed down” or “passed along”.³ This definition is expanded by Edward Shils (1981) who argues that tradition does not remain in a “pure” state and by Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin (1984) who believe that tradition is often “invented” and used by groups of people to define a national identity.⁴

³ A.L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1923).

⁴ Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, “Tradition, Genuine or Spurious”, *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 97, No. 385 (1984).

The second model of authenticity is based on the “salvage paradigm”. “Salvage” occurs when a dominant group attempts to “rescue” or “salvage” the art objects/cultural artifacts of a subordinate group because they believe that the subordinate group will soon disappear. In the late nineteenth century, fear that the indigenous peoples of the Americas might become extinct led anthropologists, scientists and other scholars to study, and attempt to “save”, Indian languages, artifacts, rituals, and practices. The definition of the “salvage paradigm” is presented by four authors. Each author advances his/her own definition while justifying it with relevant examples, and I will mark out the resulting differences and directions and their consequences for definitions of authenticity.

After discussing the two models of authenticity separately, I present a case where the two models play a major role in one specific art commodity at the First Americans Festival. This case refers to the “t-shirt” saga. Here, a presentation of the circumstances depended on the players, the roles, the interests, the objects, the objectives, etc.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the notions of authenticity during the data collective process of planning a festival. “Authenticity” became a term used to describe and define many different things by individuals and groups of people: Indians and non-Indians, museum staff and non-museum personnel, and art specialists and lay people. Some people, secure about their ideas, openly frame their definitions of authenticity. In one group cited in this study, individuals speak frankly about their

thoughts of authenticity—sometimes receiving nods of approval, sometimes producing strong reactions from others who oppose such thinking. For others, authenticity has a “secret” component. It is shared by people of the same culture and excludes people who are not part of the group. Some people are open to different notions of authenticity. Others resist different points of view about authenticity.

The question of what makes artists or craftspersons and cultural objects or practices authentic becomes paramount for those producing festivals like the Indian Market. Is it heritage, ancestry, or the ancient practices, customs, and rites handed down from previous generations? Or is the influence of an Indian community? An Indian artist with “traditional values”, the practices, influences, and methods derived from a “pure” indigenous past, became the most desirable candidate for selection into Indian Market and the festival t-shirt design.

Another question that arose during discussions with American Indian committee members was that of how the authenticity of one group, American Indians, would be viewed by a non-Indian public—an audience attending a national festival. What was authentic for one group of people (insiders) could translate into something different and inauthentic when presented to the public/a different group of people (outsiders). Indeed, finding a way to represent Indian culture that satisfied both insiders and outsiders, would be a challenge.

This study does not take sides or support one cultural group’s definition of authenticity over another’s. Instead, it examines perceptions of authenticity by a group of individuals planning a venue at the First Americans Festival and how notions of

authenticity became important in order to: (1) select “authentic” American Indian artists based on perceptions of tradition, and (2) choose an artist to create the festival signature piece/work of art that expressed an “authentic” Indian identity.

Furthermore, this study examines how American Indians, once considered “outsiders” in the planning of museum projects, became part of the process of selecting “authentic” artists. However, is it possible that “being native” can extend beyond distinct categories of being Indian and non-Indian? When Indians and non-Indians work closely and have different backgrounds, differences between experts and lay people become integral in questions regarding “authenticity”. Established categories of “us” and “them” are often no longer relevant. Within a group making decisions on cultural representation (i.e., selecting Indian artists), any distinction between individuals with expertise and those with novel backgrounds, warrants exploration.

In this study, I argue that authenticity is not a fixed or permanent concept. It is always evolving, often unstable, and it changes, depending on its use. It means different things to different individuals and cultural groupings. Because of this variation in definition, a working conception of “the authentic” will require negotiation and mediation before it can be firmly bound. In the First Americans Festival, “authenticity” became a loose criterion for selecting art commodities—and the Indians, who were able to fashion an identity for themselves that was both recognizable to outsiders and acceptable to insiders. Furthermore, I argue that authenticity requires a to-and-fro movement—a movement forward and away from distinct polarities of “us” and “them” and towards an

understanding of the degrees and movements within the same concept in order to understand terms of difference.

CULTURAL PRODUCTION & REGINA BENDIX

In this study, I examine authenticity through the concept of *cultural production*. Cultural production is not used as a general vague notion but as a process that occurred in the working relationships of individuals and groups developing something “authentic” within a larger site (a museum).

An examination of a process of cultural production in the working relationships during the planning of a national festival is long overdue according to Regina Bendix (1997) who insists that more scholarship is needed in this area and that scholars “should acknowledge their role in the cultural productions they study.”⁵ In this context, Bendix criticized the current continuation of research based on old (or outdated) models that focus on the “study of” things rather than experiences of them:

Cultural research, by virtue of being “the study of” but not the “experience of” behaviors, expressions, institutions, and practices, can then not help but present . . . the inauthentic.⁶

Instead, scholars should engage in or experience the topics of their chosen research in a reflexive process. This reflexive process is suggested in Bendix’s *In Search of Authenticity* (1997), an impressive study that provides a structured genealogy of concepts of authenticity and competing theories in the field of folklore. Here, she focuses on comparisons between Germany and the United States—two countries where folklore

⁵ Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 217.

⁶ Ibid, 14.

developed in different ways but where “the notion of authenticity legitimated folklore as a discipline.”⁷ This legitimization led to a discipline motivated to “search for authenticity” which was fundamentally “an emotional and moral quest”. Part of this quest included a mindset of “salvage”, in which the loss of something justifies its “rescue”:

Declaring a particular form of expressive culture as dead or dying limits the number of authentic items, but it promotes the search for not yet discovered and hence authentic folklore.⁸

Furthermore, this “search” warranted the role of a researcher/folklorist who received recognition as the one who found or “rescued” dying or dead cultures:

Declaring something authentic legitimated the subject that was declared authentic, and the declaration in turn can legitimate the authenticator Processes of authentication bring about material representations by elevating the authenticated into the category of the noteworthy. . . .⁹

Thus, in her exhaustive examples, theories, and the case studies, Bendix summarizes the search for authenticity as a search for the inauthentic. Ultimately, this quest for authenticity remains.

However, Bendix does not negate the field of folklore. Instead, she suggests ways of examining authenticity, arguing that

it is not the object that must die—cultures do not die, at best they change, along with those who live in them and thus constitute them. What must change for cultural fields is how workers in those fields conceptualize the object.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid, 5.

⁸ Ibid, 9.

⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁰ Ibid, 9.

Her plea, then, is for scholars to revisit their practices in studying culture.

Scholars/researchers should cease attempts to authenticate certain cultural behaviors and objects. Instead, they should recognize the close relation between folklorists and other kinds of discourse on culture.¹¹ Additionally, researchers should “retool” their practices for “substantially different research questions and abandon the views of folklore that had made the field attractive to them in the first place.”¹²

Furthermore, scholars should recognize external market forces in the field of folklore that, in turn, bring change important to notions of authenticity. Folklorists resist this because acknowledging the driving market forces means a perceived loss of authenticity. Scholars/folklorists have (historically) considered “market forces as outside agents that debase spoil folklore’s authenticity” and believed that the transformations of the marketplace weaken the authoritative position that researchers of folklore have as authenticators of culture productions.¹³

Lastly, Bendix encourages folklorists/scholars to step beyond the boundaries of academia and address topics in the public sphere as important areas of scholarly study:

Those confining themselves to academia have often failed to recognize their own role in the cultural productions they purportedly studied.¹⁴

Exploring authenticity in areas related to the public makes scholars take responsibility for their own performances for an audience.¹⁵ Bendix believes that scholars have the ability to “weave intellectual work and society” which would transcend issues that divided

¹¹ Ibid, 217.

¹² Ibid, 162.

¹³ Ibid, 9

¹⁴ Ibid, 217.

¹⁵ Ibid.

folklorist practices. Scholarly study of authenticity in the public sphere would include examinations of individuals and groups working together on issues of authenticity and how they use authenticity for their own means:

Of paramount importance is the growing reflexive awareness of how folklorist theories enter the cultural fabric and how disciplinary practices of authentication are appropriated by individuals and social groups.¹⁶

It is important then, to explore the practices as American Indians, as both individuals and as a social group. Studying the practical definition of “authenticity” in a working group of American Indians would reveals how they “use” authenticity, add to it, develop it, and continue to use it for their purposes today. This dissertation provides insight into the negotiations and mediations which occurred during the planning process of a specific *cultural production* involving American Indians at a national festival, the First Americans Festival. For American Indians in the group, their involvement in a national project meant that their definitions of authenticity would be included in the final products (an Indian market and a festival t-shirt design) presented to a global public.

MARY BOUQUET

In the next discussion, anthropologist Mary Bouquet (2001) concurs with Bendix’s suggestions about cultural production and authenticity and how these notions develop between individuals and social groups. Bouquet’s “The Art of Exhibition-Making as a Problem of Translation” (2001) focuses on a site of cultural production: a museum. She points out that the studying cultural production in a museum involves new

¹⁶ Ibid.

approaches and a shift in how we study museums, particularly with the people whose cultures are being represented. This shift involves the balance of power in cultural construction—shifting power away from curators and towards members of the museum staff in different areas working closely with external specialists, non-museum individuals, and groups. Exhibitions, as well as programs and other forms of cultural presentation, should reflect power that should be balanced more equitably. New models of exhibitions should include many different types of people in the working processes of exhibition-making and museum projects:

This tempo of cultural production demands different forms of organization from the past, affecting curatorial authority and work relations more generally.¹⁷

Models that differ from the past and consider the practices of working relationships would change several things. First, former models of museum exhibition-making included a process led by a curator and excluded the involvement of certain groups, including American Indians, even if the project featured their culture. Thus, “authenticity” became questionable because an exhibition presented the perspectives of a self-declared authority and excluded the views of those whose respective culture was being displayed. Second, the typical format of exhibition design favors an educationally privileged group. Instead, museums have a responsibility to present their collections to as wide an audience as possible, rather than exclusively to an educated elite.¹⁸ Third, old models led by a curator typically involved only other members of the museum staff — individuals who held permanent positions as tenured public servants. Usually, these team

efforts resulted in static exhibits that reflected the perspectives of the same people over a long period of time. Static and boring exhibits raises another issue regarding the processes of cultural production: purpose and funding. Many museums, like the Smithsonian, are publicly-funded institutions. Therefore, the lack of attractive exhibits, programs, and events impacts the visitorship critical to a museum's funding and economic survival.

According to Bouquet, a solution to dreary exhibits (which she examines in her study of cultural production), is the temporary exhibit. Temporary exhibits are vehicles with a rapid turnover rate that keeps things fresh and reduce redundancy in representational projects. Temporary exhibits' constant state of flux encourages visitors to return. Museums should develop temporary exhibits if they expect to survive:

. . . museums [in] the culture industry, as a corollary to this democratizing trend means, amongst other things, an almost insatiable demand for new and competitive products to lure greater numbers over the threshold. A constant turnover of new temporary exhibitions (with only a few months' life span) is a major element of contemporary museum policy.¹⁹

In contrast to old models of exhibition-making that use the same people for every project, the process of developing temporary exhibits and festivals requires hiring of outsiders—a temporary staff of consultants, cultural specialists, and technical people can provide different sets of skills, ideas, and newer perspectives. Studying cultural production within a diverse group of people can reveal the dynamics of working relationships in the processes of developing temporary exhibitions. Examining these

¹⁷ Mary Bouquet, "The Art of Exhibition-Making as a Problem of Translation", *Academic Anthropology and the Museum* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 178.

¹⁸ Ibid.

relationships also means studying a *long* process of cultural production, since planning for exhibits, events, and festivals usually begins years ahead of their opening day.

Advanced planning includes conception-making, design of objects (such as t-shirts), and other activities that must be completed *before* the event takes place.

Finally, can studying cultural production through the working relationships and planning processes of museum events, exhibits, and festivals be compared to ethnographic fieldwork, writing ethnographic texts, or writing anthropological texts prove fruitful? Bouquet believes this *is* a possibility and that studying such processes can “make knowledge materialize.” For instance, she believes developing a festival involves similar practices, techniques, and methods used in ethnographic fieldwork methods. Thus, studying cultural production through the people, working relationships, and processes used in developing a museum exhibit, is a valid form of ethnographic fieldwork.

Temporary exhibits, events or festivals, therefore, are ideal sites for studying cultural production. Furthermore, such a study addresses some responsibilities facing museums today: (1) determining how culture is represented to the public since taxpayer money funds museum projects, and (2) building revenue and funding opportunities through increased visitation and public participation since attracting visitors is critical to the mission of a public museum. A museum cannot justify its existence without “authentic” cultural representations, visitorship, and educational participation, and can risk losing financial and public support as an institute of culture.

¹⁹ Ibid.

RICHARD BAUMAN AND PATRICIA SAWIN

Bouquet's concerns about cultural production in museum exhibition-making is shared by folklorists Richard Bauman and Patricia Sawin. They choose to study cultural production in a different venue: folklife festivals. In "The Politics of Participation in Folklife Festivals" (1991) the authors argue that the

folklife festival is a modern form of cultural production that draws upon building blocks and dynamics of such traditional events as festivals and fairs .
...²⁰

Cultural production arises from seeking the authentic and what needs to be preserved. For Bauman and Sawin, "traditional" events such as festivals, involve "the folk"—people who "counterpoise against elite, mass, or official" culture and who possess characteristics of a way of life that is natural and ordinary. The way of life of "the folk" continues age-old practices drawn from their natural environment, family and community traditions, oftentimes seen as outmoded or things we are "losing" from a mass-mediated, technical, modern society.²¹ Thus, examining the cultural production of "the folk" at festivals involves examining the producers and their definitions of authenticity. Decisions regarding what and who is authentic and, therefore, in need of preserving are made by a curator or folklorist who develops (from his/her point of view) the final products—the exhibits, demonstrations, presentations, performances, food samplings, storytelling, gardens, stages, streetscapes, village replicas, processions, and objects on display. Furthermore, folklife festivals reflect their organizer's political and social agendas.

²⁰ Richard Bauman and Patricia Sawin, "The Politics of Participation in Folklife Festival", *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 289.

Too often, the authors note, scholarly studies on folklife festivals reflect the ideas of those in charge—the curators/folklorists. These studies typically exclude others involved in the production aspect of folklife festivals—a range of people with skills in cultural knowledge, technology, fabrication, construction and set design, media, marketing, logistical operations, transportation and shipping, fund-raising and sponsorship, and administration and management.

Bauman and Sawin believe that a sufficient analysis of cultural production (in a folklife festival) should include individuals working in all areas of festival planning. They insist

that an understanding of the political operation and efficacy of folklife festival must take close account of the orientation to the event of all who are involved in it²²

Although Bauman and Sawin’s study focused on the participants (i.e., artists, storytellers, etc) at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, “all who are involved” naturally expands to those who produce, plan, and work at the many venues of the festival, including members of planning committees composed of museum staff, scholars and specialists.

MICHAEL AMES

Finally, Michael Ames (1992) also points out the importance of studying cultural production. However, he chooses sites of study that differ from those of Bendix,

²¹ Ibid.

Bouquet, and Bauman and Sawin (a museum or folklife festival), namely sites “of everyday life” such as marketplaces. Ames also understands that the processes used to develop marketplaces are similar to those used in planning exhibits and folklife festivals. He believes that

...cultural work gets done not only in the established heritage institutions but also in the more popular ‘museums’ of everyday life, such as marketplaces [and] shopping malls.²³

Studying the processes involved in developing a marketplace may appear insignificant compared to the study of an exhibit based on cultural research. However, individuals and groups who work in “popular museums of everyday life” (i.e., marketplaces, malls, etc.), use similar concepts and techniques borrowed from exhibition design such as “repetitive display” and the “promotion of material objects”. Marketplaces often develop display and spatial organizational techniques that incorporate pedestals, showcases, shelving, and special lighting. Marketplaces must also consider budgets and expenditures and also require production teams of different people with various skills and knowledge. Furthermore, ideas regarding plans for marketplaces originate with a group of individuals (those in charge), a similar format used by exhibition team-curating members. Ames argues that what is developed in marketplaces “reproduces at the general or popular level what heritage institutions attempt for more elite audiences.” The messages are frequently the same even though they may differ in the form of representation, styles of display, types of art presented, and/or the use of symbols, icons, and patterns.²⁴ One example

²² Ibid, 290.

²³ Michael A. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 112.

²⁴ Ibid.

could be an upscale boutique-style, clothing store. Individuals working in store may arrange garments in a certain order, similar to a collection, place them on pedestals or unique shelving, and highlight them with spotlights. Another example could be an antique emporium. The staff may choose to arrange furniture in stalls (similar to galleries) and group them by date, type, or material or display them in a setting that replicates a historical period.

Each of the scholars mentioned above understands the importance of studying cultural production through various venues whether museums, folklife festivals, and marketplaces. Each site offers unique opportunities for the study of cultural production and how notions of authenticity are used by individuals and groups working in development processes.

METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, historical research is united with on-site ethnography by working across several categories (i.e., Indian markets, cultural icons and symbols) while focusing on what individuals in this study involved in decisions about “authentic” American Indian art. The term “ethnography” is used primarily for its connotation of participant-observation as a methodology. Qualitative research methods, conducted on site in Washington, D.C. for a period of nearly one year, included observation, participation, and innumerable informal conversations and formal meetings. Discussions and engagements with senior managers, program managers, cultural specialists, coordinators, and agency representatives provided critical insights into conflicting views. Letters, reports, internal

memos, press releases, and other documents supplemented these engagements.

Researching the selection process for Indian Market included documents, questionnaires, juried score sheets, photographs, and laws and regulations regarding Indian arts and crafts. The information collected included telephone conversations, emails, and letters gathered from American Indians living in diverse locations and places: reservations, towns, and cities throughout the United States, as well as North and South America.

When meeting and talking to indigenous peoples, I found it best to use a discreet research strategy. More invasive methods, including the use of recording devices, would have made the conversations uncomfortable. Many Indians, after all, are skeptical of the federal government because of past experiences and remain suspicious of government-sponsored projects and those who manage them. What's more, selecting Indian artists based on certain criteria, for instance, by demanding proof of heritage such as tribal enrollment cards, is a sensitive issue. Given these conditions and my desire to respect the privacy of American Indians, I have given pseudonyms to the artists in this study. In some cases, the professional particulars of their lives have been altered.

Most of the conversations and observations which go into this study are not reported explicitly. I chose this approach in appreciation of those who spoke openly without expectation of having their opinions made public.

RESEARCH MODELS

PAUL STOLLER

This study is an assemblage of social and textual analysis and ethnographic description. Paul Stoller employs a similar strategy in his ethnography, *Money Has No Smell* (2002), which describes the lives of West African traders in New York City street markets. Stoller studies traders who supply and sell “traditional” masks, statues, and “objects [that] embody narratives of travel and adventure.” These traders recreate touristic stories accompanying the sale of their objects rendering the “primitive” attractive, comprehensible, interesting and therefore, authentic. How willing are the traders to alienate themselves from their traditions, for example, by the sale of “wood”—idolatrous objects forbidden sale by the Qur’an, other religious objects, or objects that have been smoked or aged in order to appear antique? The study of symbolic contradictions provides an understanding of how native art products, people, and money transform social landscapes.²⁵

Similarly, my project involves artists for a native market that also takes place in an urban setting. It also explores the processes of selecting native peoples who select art objects for a specific audience. How did Indian artists describe their traditions in order to gain acceptance into the Smithsonian? They described themselves as “traditional Indians” through their professional training, personal experiences, and by including photographs of themselves wearing traditional clothing and posing in a natural environment (i.e., in front of an adobe in the desert). Similarly, tourism is a thread in this thesis as well, fueled

²⁵ Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: the Africanization of New York* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), vii-viii. Stoller’s study also focused on immigration, the informal economy, and the changing nature of communities in North America. His interests include the confluence of symbolic contradictions and how the flow of money, goods, and people—globalization, is transforming social landscapes.

by the desire of individuals to purchase or obtain “authentic” souvenirs of a specific place or event.²⁶

However, there are differences. *Money Has No Smell* looks at street markets, where spaces were controlled by the City of New York but where markets developed organically, meaning, they grew and evolved over a period of time through negotiations and planning, affected by the relationships and interactions of the traders. By comparison, the First Americans Festival Indian Market was a construct, inspired by “real” markets as well as gallery-art markets as models of construction.²⁷ Indian Market’s presentation, style, and structure were designed for the visitor accustomed to the well-ordered curated exhibits and gardens of the Smithsonian. Furthermore, Stoller’s study focuses on those who *sell* in a market. This dissertation includes those who sell (Chapter 2) but involves primarily the producers of a planned market.

Another difference between Stoller’s study and my project involves how traders in *Money Has No Smell* obtained their objects, including mass-produced, factory-made items with suspicious origins, such as kente cloth supplied by Chinese traders in New Jersey. In the Festival’s Indian Market, the art objects were oftentimes created by methods passed down from family elders and thus, commercial items or products with “suspicious origins” were not allowed. Securing objects through illegal and ethically questionable means was not acceptable for Indian Market committee members since

²⁶ Tourism is a feature in this project since the Smithsonian Folklife Festival attracts many tourists, especially during late June-early July, a peak time for summer tourists. Furthermore, narratives related to art objects were shared with the public through signage, tabletop exhibits, brochures, and photographs designed as part of the presentation with the artist’s work.

²⁷ The design of the First Americans Festival Indian Market was inspired by several Indian-organized art fairs, art markets, pow wows, festivals, and events including *Red Earth* Art Market, *Gathering of Nations* Indian Traders Market, *Denver March* Pow Wow Market, three of the largest pow wows in the country, the renowned Santa Fe Indian Art Market in New Mexico, the pow wow organized by the American Indian Center in Baltimore, and *Schemitzun* (Feast of Green Corn and Dance) Pow Wow in Ledyard, Connecticut, the largest pow wow on the East Coast. See “Chapter 2: How Indians Developed an Indian Market.”

American Indians have struggled with art made by “charlatans” and “wannabe” Indians (i.e., people who claim to be Indian but cannot prove it). Also, the selection of Indian art followed procedures according to the Smithsonian’s compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990. Therefore, artworks ultimately selected for Indian Market contained no factory-made items or objects mass-produced in a foreign country.

Several scholars provide significant studies related to authenticity in art commodities, with a primary focus on the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. These studies are helpful in that they offer insight to how the Smithsonian develops exhibits and markets that feature “authentic” cultures from around the world.

BAUMAN AND SAWIN

The role of authenticity at Smithsonian Folklife Festivals has been studied by Richard Bauman and Patricia Sawin (1991) who observed participants that are called upon to adapt and reframe their usual activities so as to make of them a representation intelligible to the festival audience and acceptable to folklorists and to them. The authors focused on the participant’s experience of this reframing process and on the agency involved in their accomplishment of it.²⁸ Although my study does not focus specifically on the topic of agency, there are similarities between Stoller’s *Money Has No Smell* and my project regarding how people negotiated traditions and practices of their respective cultures that were presented to the public.

²⁸ Bauman and Sawin, 293.

ROBERT CANTWELL

Robert Cantwell's dynamic study of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, *Ethnomimesis* (1993), his "word for culture", focuses on his claim that culture is essentially imaginative. According to Cantwell, processes of ethnomimesis originate in the basic human capacity and need for close humanity—a capacity implicated, from infancy, in our neurological and physical development, becoming, as we grow into social beings.²⁹ Through the poetics of his writing, he proposes that the Smithsonian, with its national treasures and attractions, acts as an enclosure, safeguarding the visitor from the outside world. Therefore, ideas about different cultures contained within these enclosures, are re-created and replicated, resulting in constant questioning of "authenticity." Supporting this idea of enclosure and the proposition that ethnomimesis supplies a need for human contact and community, he provides his analysis of the "festival market"—markets, harbor places, the historic districts, tourist attractions, theme parks, suburban tracts, shopping malls, and folk revivals and folk festivals that enclose the visitor and create distinctions between "historic" and "educational."³⁰

However, these admirable studies by Bauman and Sawin and Cantwell do not include an account of the Smithsonian's own "festival market", the venue called Marketplace, and pre-dates the development of the Smithsonian's experimental art markets, The Lotus Bazaar, Haitian Market, and Indian Market. These scholarly studies discuss the program areas, exhibits, and participant experiences but not the working

²⁹ Robert Cantwell, *Folklife and the Representation of Culture* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 6-7.

³⁰ Ibid, 44. In another chapter, Cantwell discusses the Caribbean Marketplace exhibition in the 1974 festival, relating the constructed marketplace to intersections of a community and the place which it sits upon—a street. Cantwell considers the street as part of a festive setting that provides, among other things, a link between home and a place for traders. Therefore, it is a place to deceive, a site of deception, as well as a "theatrical field", a place where a community makes a statement about its cultural identity.

relationships in the planning process of Indian Market or festival memorabilia, such as a t-shirt. Although Bauman and Sawin describe the experiences of the program participants, there are no experiences relevant to the art market. Furthermore, they are unable to include certain cultural groups in their projects:

. . . for a number of pragmatic reasons we were not able to include African Americans or Native American participants in our study.³¹

Cantwell examines a Smithsonian exhibit of a marketplace, but he does not study the Smithsonian's "real" marketplace, something he would call a "complex retail pseudomarket."³²

Much ethnographic work has focused on the curated programs, exhibits, and participant's experiences at Smithsonian Folklife Festivals but none about the market venues or the art objects in these markets. This thesis will hopefully contribute to scholarly studies regarding authenticity but with a different flavor, providing important clues to understanding notions of authenticity and ways artists frame concepts of tradition to gain participation in a national festival's market.

AUTHENTICITY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

The topic of authenticity has produced many studies by cultural studies scholars who have been critical of subject areas including markets and exhibitions, festivals and museums, and tourist attractions. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and studies of the exotic, James Clifford's consumption of the estranged tribal artifact, and Michel Foucault's

³¹ Bauman and Sawin, 294.

examinations of power have laid a foundation in the cultural studies canon through their studies of authenticity related to identity, power, subjectivity, and cultural construction. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *quotidian*, Timothy Mitchell's "fake" Egyptian-Parisian medieval market, Robert Rydell and Curtis Hinsley's "Others" on display at world's fairs, Quetzil Castaneda's pyramids of *inventio* at ancient Chichén Itza, and Umberto Eco's travel encounters in hyperreality are manifestations/cultural objects of study that suggest that "the authentic" is invented, fabricated, or imagined. The distinct perspectives of Dean MacCannell and Susan Stewart describe authenticity in the realms of tourism, experience, and social construction. Nelson Graburn, Bennetta Jules-Rosette, Ruth B. Phillips, Deborah Root, and Graham Huggan all explore authenticity in native art markets and the effects of colonialism, trade, and globalization on the development of art commodities in a world market.³³

CHAPTER OUTLINES

There are three chapters in this study. "Chapter I: Authenticity and Indians in the Decision-Making Process" explores several issues regarding "authenticity" and Indian objects at the NMAI. This study focuses only on the decision-making process to the extent that American Indians were part of it. The chapter begins by looking at the origins of a collection that would one day become the NMAI, and how decisions were made by

³² Cantwell considers historic districts, theme parks, shopping malls, and folklife festivals as "complex retail pseudomarkets" because they "make nonsense" of such functional distinctions as that between "educational" and "historical" or between "commercial", "residential", and "recreational". See Cantwell, 44.

³³ Nelson Graburn's *Ethnic and Tourists Arts* (1976) discusses the impact of direct cultural contact on artistic change, particularly European contact interfacing with indigenous artistic innovation. Similarly, Ruth B. Phillips' *Trading Identities* (1998) provides a major foundation in the study of authenticity about art commodities that became desired possessions for travelers and tourists during the early eighteenth and nineteenth century. See Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998).

one individual/collector, George Gustav Heye. The collection became shrouded in controversy because of Heye's collection practices that included swindling and the exhumation of Indian bodies. The NMAI hoped to quell these controversies by creating exhibitions based on Indian culture but left out a critical element—Indians in the decision-making process. In more recent years, the NMAI attempted to remedy this problem by inviting Indian consultants, also known as “community curators”, to develop the inaugural exhibits for museum's opening in 2004. However, does the inclusion of Indians in the decision-making process guarantee “authenticity” of the culture being exhibited? Scholarly studies on this subject discuss the appropriateness of including Indians in these processes, the consequences that can occur when Indians are excluded, the differences between natives/non-natives and specialists/lay people, and a case study in which Indians (Tlingit elders) participated in a decision-making process but operated in unexpected ways. The chapter ends with a scenario about decisions regarding unique objects for the festival and how an “Endangered Species” committee handled differences in their working relationship in order to reach their goals.

“Chapter II: How American Indians Developed an Indian Market” discusses a model of authenticity based on tradition and examines the interactions, negotiations, and final decisions made by a group of individuals, members of the Indian Market Committee. This committee felt that certain objects fell under the rubric of *traditional* art and were more suitable for the Smithsonian than objects which did not. What parameters were used to measure “tradition” and thus, select “authentic” Indian artists? Scholarly discussions which I present include how “tradition” has been defined in anthropology

since the early twentieth century, tradition described as “naturalism” and “boundedness”, and the suggestion by Handler and Linnekin of “invented traditions” as important markers for national identity. The discussion is followed by a study of the committee that developed the First Americans Festival’s Indian Market. This committee selected artists based on several variables of “tradition” that identified, to them, a traditional Indian. Thus, artworks that fell into these parameters were made by “authentic” Indian artists and in the end, represented American Indian culture at the Festival.

“Chapter III: Native America’s Most Wanted” examines a second model of authenticity— one based on the “salvage paradigm”. The first section explores definitions of the “salvage paradigm” by five scholars. In the model of “salvage”, a dominant group “salvages” or rescues the artifacts or art objects of a subordinate group because they are destined to disappear. However, as demonstrated by one scholar, the “salvage paradigm” can be used to not only recoup traditions supposedly “lost” by a subordinate group, but is reversal, and can rescue something “lost” in the dominant group’s culture. These discussions are followed by a scenario describing the selection of an artist to create an “authentic” Indian t-shirt, which eventually became the most desired object in the Festival. Following an examination of the Festival t-shirt, I then propose that the model of the “salvage paradigm” (in this study) falls short and instead, is a model of “false salvage”.

FIRST AMERICANS FESTIVAL AND INDIAN MARKET—BACKGROUND

By early 2003, the directors of two Smithsonian entities, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH), decided to collaborate on the production of a historic event—the 2004 First Americans Festival. The Festival would coincide with and celebrate the grand opening of the NMAI. Culminating more than ten years of planning, the new museum featured objects from the NMAI—the largest collection of American Indian objects in the world. Community curators (tribal elders, spiritual leaders, historians and writers from native nations throughout the western hemisphere) participated as community curators in developing the inaugural museum exhibits. The architectural design of the new museum, with its undulating curvilinear shape, spaces facing cardinal directions, and features that mimicked nature, rock gardens, water elements, and native landscaping, was the product of Blackfeet, Cherokee/Choctow, Diné/Oneida, and Hopi architects and designers. The structure represented an organic and celestial world of American Indians and became a design symbolizing the building as “a living museum”. Although it is a federal government entity, the new museum, envisioned by American Indians, stuffed with Indian artifacts, and containing new exhibitions curated by Indians, promoted itself as “a native place”. The completion of this unique building, the new, collaborative methods of exhibition-making, and the design of a communal place “dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of Native Americans” required an event of celebratory magnitude.

One of the goals for developing the First Americans Festival was to increase the visibility of the new museum and to dislodge stereotypical beliefs the museum’s

collection represented Indians of the past, a race of people destined to disappear. Instead, the Festival would serve as an entrée, a presentation to the world to show that American indigenous cultures were indeed alive, contemporary, and vibrant.

Collaboration became the means of producing the festival, bringing together the NMAI and the CFCH at the Smithsonian Institution. The CFCH was already renowned as the producer of the highly successful Smithsonian Folklife Festival, staged annually since 1967 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. that featured indigenous and folk cultures from around the world through exhibitions of arts and crafts, rituals, performance, demonstrations, and foodways. The Festival is a convergence of curators, researchers, scholars, cultural liaisons, international associates, consultants and technical specialists who are tasked with representing selected cultural groups each year.

The First Americans Festival followed the framework of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and was a composite festival presenting performances, regalia-making, instrument-making, rituals, and traditions from a variety of indigenous nations throughout the western hemisphere. A massive Native Nations Procession, the largest gathering of indigenous peoples in the history of America, opened the festivities. Dignitaries, including representatives from tribal nations, U.S. senators, and celebrities spoke at the Opening Ceremonies. Some five performance venues were built, anointed with native names (i.e., Raven Stage, Dance Circle, and Potomac Stage) and featured concurrent programs of music, dance and storytelling by more than 300 performers representing nearly 40 nations. A Native Nations Pavilion housing over 40 artists presented traditional methods of producing regalia (traditional, ceremonial clothing and adornment) and

instruments. The Pavilion included artists making items such as turtle leggings, gourd rattles, Sicuri drums, charangos, Chilkat robes, jingle dresses, and Iroquois regalia. The Three Sisters Café, aptly named after corn, beans, and squash (considered traditional sustenance of Indian peoples), offered a selection of native foods including buffalo burgers and sweet potato fries—items specifically geared for the mobile festival visitor. Two market venues were built: the Smithsonian’s Festival Marketplace and Indian Market, 40 artists of arts and crafts representing traditions from different regions in the western hemisphere.³⁴

Indian Market was organized conceptually on the basis of two previous Folklife Festival markets. During the 2002 Silk Road Festival, the CFCH introduced its first experimental art market, the Lotus Bazaar, followed by the Haitian Market in 2004. Both markets were designed to “look and feel” like “authentic” or “real” markets. Artists, secured from both foreign countries and within the United States, were carefully selected to reflect a respective curated program in the festival theme. The Lotus Bazaar featured the art treasures of the Silk Road and included Turkish copperware, Syrian glass, Pakistani stonework, Afghani textiles, Mongolian paintings, Uzbeki embroideries, and many other artworks. The Haitian Market featured elaborate cut-metal work from discarded oil drums, *papier mache*, landscape paintings of the Caribbean, *gigante* Carnivale devil masks, sequined Voudoun flags, and depictions of *Orishas* and saints.

³⁴ The mission of marketplace was to provide a place for indigenous and folk artists to sell display and sell their arts and crafts during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The CFCH staff operated marketplace which used a consignment method. As it evolved, non-festival artists, artists whose “traditional” methods and artwork coincided with the theme of festival programming, were invited to participate, but only through a selection process. In recent years, the Marketplace grew substantially, in terms of building and facilities, and of technological needs, staff, and the increasing number of non-festival artists, including international artists. Selling was not permitted on the National Mall. Therefore, Marketplace and the Lotus Bazaar had to be built on Smithsonian property. Since 2002, the markets were conducted on the lawn of the Sackler and Freer Gallery and the National Museum of American History.

Thus, the Lotus Bazaar and Haitian Market became an extension of the festival's curated programs by providing a "real" market that supported their mission of sustained development of traditional craft production. Space was limited in both the Lotus Bazaar and Haitian Market. Therefore, only a certain number of artists were selected. A screening process, conducted by CFCH's Marketplace teams, curators, and program coordinators, ensured that their artworks, methodologies, and presentation style met Smithsonian standards.

The screening process of these two models changed however, for Indian Market. Typically, the CFCH made all selections and final decisions for the art markets. In contrast, for Indian Market, a committee composed of both Indians and non-Indians from NMAI, CFCH, and external agencies and cultural organizations, selected the artists. Furthermore, this committee planned to select the artist to design the Festival t-shirt—commemorative art that would symbolize the event.

A NOTE ABOUT PSEUDONYMS

For this dissertation, I studied: native artisans and Festival organizers (although there were no curators), native artists from other universities, organizations, cooperatives, or small businesses who were not performing or demonstrating crafts in the Festival Program, liaisons for the native artisans, and American Indian committee members from the Smithsonian and other external agencies.

Pseudonyms have been used for individuals mentioned in the text by nickname, first name or full name. Whenever possible, anonymity for those directly involved in this

study is preserved. However, in the case of government officials—employees from museums, research centers, and offices of the Smithsonian Institution and associated agencies—no pseudonyms were used. Their positions and statements are a matter of public record. No pseudonyms are used for sites.

I. Authenticity and American Indians in the Decision-Making Process

We know that the savage can no longer be considered savage nor the cosmopolitan as cosmopolitan.

—Roberto J. González, Laura Nader and C. Jay Ou (2001)

It is not clear what parameters are employed in making decisions about the “authenticity” of any of the art objects collected. Why was it important to include American Indians in the decision-making process during the 2004 First Americans Festival? An important factor that has been added in recent years is the involvement of American Indians in the decision-making process of what should appear in any marketplace or museum. Such an inclusion was suggested by a couple of authors as will be discussed here.

MICHAEL AMES

Anthropologist Michael Ames has been on the forefront of this movement, urging the necessity of including Indians in projects depicting their culture and history. Ames argues against the problem of museums as “self-appointed keepers of other people’s material and self-appointed interpreters of others’ histories.”³⁵ Because museums are in charge of representing indigenous cultures, they are always enmeshed in questions of control, management, and interpretations of history and culture. Furthermore, museums

are always at odds with indigenous peoples who feel they should have a voice in saying how their culture is represented. In *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* (1992) Ames describes the exclusion of Indians through the metaphor of a “glass box”, a common display apparatus. “Glass boxes” are different types of interpretive forms that anthropologists have used to depict the culture of Indians—exhibits, cultural displays, dioramas, demonstrations, and performances. Museums have typically used glass boxes to display native cultures “in the past”. Therefore, Ames sees glass boxes as “anthropological boxes” that “freeze” indigenous peoples into academic categories and to a myth-making anthropological notion of time called the ‘ethnographic present’.³⁶ These interpretive forms share a common feature of “containing” people within a type of enclosure while allowing visitors to gaze at them, similar to a display in a glass box.

For centuries, American Indians have been “boxed in” by anthropologists and ethnographers who are in charge of developing exhibits and museum programs about Indian culture. In the last few decades, tired of having their culture and history interpreted by outsiders, American Indians took measures into their own hands and positioned themselves in various forms of museum representation. Since the 1980s, after over a hundred years of being boxed in, American Indians began to implement what they had expressed for decades: to get out of the boxes, to have their objects returned, and to control how their history is presented, interpreted, and written whether it was represented through museum exhibits, scholarly literature, public and educational programs, or native art markets. Since those who control history are the ones who benefit from it, people

³⁵ Ames, *Cannibal Tours*, 140.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

should have the right to the facts of their own lives.³⁷ Thus, as Ames points out, museums should “break the glass” and “liberate indigenous peoples” from western-based classifications of their history.

However, Ames also believes that museums should not shoulder the blame for *everything* that occurred in the past. Surely, the native voice, excluded in past projects of museums, needs to be part of today’s museum projects. However, implementing this process means that many new questions would arise regarding cultural production, identity, authenticity, power, and representation.

Ames’ study describes over a decade of changes in museum practices, including case studies of exhibitions, fairs, and events organized by museums in Canada and the United States. These case studies highlight successful results when Indians are involved as well as dire consequences that can occur when Indians are excluded from projects representing their culture.

MARJORIE HALPIN

Including Indians in decision-making processes at museums is supported by Canadian anthropologist Marjorie Halpin who describes the consequences that can happen when Indians are excluded in large-scale museum projects. Halpin’s examination of *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada’s First Peoples* (1988), a controversial exhibit at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, shows what can happen when the concerns of Indians are ignored, especially in a high-profile project with a global audience. The development of *The Spirit Sings* coincided with the 1988 Winter Olympics in Canada.

³⁷ Ibid.

The impressive exhibit covered 15,000 square feet of exhibition space divided into separate halls for six distinct cultures of the First Nations peoples. 650 objects in the *Significant Early Native Canadian Treasures* section were installed in 156 custom-built exhibit cases. The exhibit was “a show of rare and wonderful treasures”, according to Halpin, with one of its messages to show the sheer abundance of Canadian materials the Glenbow was able to repatriate.³⁸ Furthermore, the objects were not ordinary; they were the most “significant” objects that curators could procure.

However, the impressive production aspects hid huge problems associated with *The Spirit Sings*. The exhibit was boycotted by the Lubicon Lake Cree who resented the hiring of non-Indians as curators, criticized the securing of objects without following tribal protocol, and complained about their exclusion from writing contextualizing labels and essays. For instance, exhibition text composed by non-Indian curators described Indians as romanticized creatures of nature in the past:

The exhibition also included objects made in response to the arrival of European populations, and emphasized the adaptive processes involved. Integral to the exhibition were the concepts of wholeness and unity: people shared the world with every other living form and physical element around them. Life was as real in the spiritual domain as in the corporeal . . .³⁹

Clearly, according to Halpin, this “Noble Savage statement” shows differences between an “us” and “them” and attempts to find “life” that was connected and unified in both the natural and spiritual worlds.⁴⁰ Ironically, the romanticized references distract viewers from understanding the processes involved with the objects in this particular section. The

³⁸ Marjorie Halpin, Museum Review of *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, The Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada, January 15-May 1, *Culture*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (1988), 90.

³⁹ Halpin, 92.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

objects were supposed to depict the integration of European influences on Indian culture and the introduction of new methods, materials, and techniques. The objects demonstrate an amazing process of transformation of natural (Indian) and imported (European) materials designed as both necessities and fine accessories. Instead, the romanticized text masks this important information as well as the identities of the makers of the objects: women. Clothing, bags, sheaths, baskets, pottery and other containers made of animal skins, furs, feather, quills, horns, and beads integrated satins, silks, mirrors, ribbons, and glass brought to the Americas by Europeans. The artistry and contributions of Indian women are overshadowed by abstract interpretations of male-dominated cosmology and shamanic topics.

Furthermore, *The Spirit Sings* received over \$1 million in funding from a corporate sponsor, Shell Oil. During the development of the exhibit, Shell Oil was locked in an unsettled land claim dispute with the Lubicon Lake Cree because of drilling on land claimed by the Lubicon. The Lubicon initially called for a boycott of the 1988 Winter Olympics to draw attention to their 50-year dispute over land claims—a boycott that eventually shifted from the Olympics to the Glenbow exhibit. Opposition to the exhibit received widespread attention and public sympathy, including other museums. Twenty-three museums supported the boycott including support from twelve museums that refused to lend over 140 objects for the exhibit. Museum organizers and scholars (anthropologists/ethnographers) were divided. Some scholars sided with the Lubicon. Others supported the exhibit, arguing that the quality of the exhibit had not been affected by the absence of objects from museums that chose not to participate.

Supporters of *The Spirit Sings* argued that corporate sponsors were necessary for exhibitions, especially a corporation offering \$1 million to the museum. Director of the Museum of Anthropology Michael Ames argued to accept Shell Oil's money despite the outcries of the Lubicon:

But where are we if we can't accept government money, or sponsorship money? It is perfectly acceptable to complain, if you want to, about what corporations are doing. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't accept their financial sponsorship.⁴¹

Thus, the museum and exhibit became a type of "spokesperson" for Shell Oil by supporting their involvement in the land claims and legitimizing a political message. The strategy of the Lubicon and supporters of the boycott was to disseminate criticisms of it and the proposed exhibition, effectively turning a debate about land claims into a moral critique of museological prerogatives.⁴²

In summary, the Lubicon Lake Cree argued against the museum's right to:

- borrow or exhibit Native artifacts without their permission, even though these artifacts were legally owned by other museums;
- use money from corporations involved in public disputes [over Indian land];
- ignore contemporary political issues, such as land claims, even if the exhibition presented the culture of indigenous peoples;
- employ non-natives to curate an exhibition about Native culture; and
- claim neutrality in public disputes.⁴³

The exhibition not only included ethnological clichés about Indians and nature but became a vehicle for critiquing political correctness and social responsibility. Excluding

⁴¹ Halpin, 91.

Indians, whose culture was being represented in *The Spirit Sings* demonstrated how a cultural institution can be challenged through a widespread, highly-publicized dispute and the dire consequences that can occur. The boycott affected many museums and specialists on both sides of the debate, those who refused to participate by not sending artifacts and those who decided to participate, despite the boycott. Museum anthropologists and academic anthropologists opposed one another. Museum professionals were put in the position to choose between their cultural perspectives about Lubicon culture and stakeholders, in this case, the Shell Corporation and the \$1 million donation.

Halpin's study describes one scenario when the views of native peoples are ignored in the decision-making process of an exhibition, particularly an exhibit of international importance. Now, let us look at the decision-making process in a museum when the "the native's point of view", which has historically been the view of an outsider, becomes a view that challenges distinctions between native/non-native or expert/lay person.

ROBERTO J. GONZÁLEZ, LAURA NADER, AND C. JAY OU

In "Towards an Ethnography of Museums" (2001), the decision-making process means something different for the collaborators, Roberto González, Laura Nader, and C. Jay Ou, who believe that the diverse backgrounds of all players involved in museum projects should be considered when working together in a group. The divisiveness

⁴² Ames, 161.

⁴³ Ames, 161-162.

between museum organizers and Indians in *The Spirit Sings* is a focus of the authors who compare the position of Indians in *The Spirit Sings* at the Glenbow to the position of “outsiders” at an exhibition in the Smithsonian Institution. The authors study a shift in the role of anthropologists from ethnographic museums to other museums who recast lay people as a type of “Other”. They argue that processes and contestations that occur in the development of ethnographic exhibits can also occur in the development of science exhibits. The topic of their interests involves the 1994 *Science in American Life* exhibit held at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. In their study, the authors argue that:

What is perhaps most interesting about the Smithsonian case is the fact that it illustrates how the condition of being native many now extend beyond a simple division between Western and non-Western peoples; increasingly, divisions are made between lay people and experts . . . ⁴⁴

The *Science in American Life* exhibit presented “exciting and informative” accounts of science that reflected society that had important social, economic, and political consequences.⁴⁵

In this case, the role of anthropologists was to examine the purpose of a science exhibit. Although anthropologists were not experts in the scientific disciplines associated with the exhibits, they were invited because of their expertise as anthropologists/social scientists. Typically, science exhibits that depict scientists and noteworthy discoveries or inventions attract people through scientific wonders or strangeness and educate people about science. Furthermore, science exhibits show results when scientists incorporate

⁴⁴ González, Roberto J., Laura Nader, and C. Jay Ou, “Towards an Ethnography of Museums: Science, Technology, and Us,” *Academic Anthropology and the Museum: Back to the Future*, Edited by Mary Bouquet (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 113.

elements from the natural world and create things that benefit humanity in attempts to educate, expand knowledge, pose questions, and arouse curiosity in exploring the world we live in. However, anthropologists (involved in the project) felt that *Science in American Life* was more about history and less about science and, therefore, did none of these things. Instead of scientific progress, exhibit themes focus on scientific impact on a social level and urged the public to think about scientific “advancements” on display: birth control devices (the contraceptive pill), paint, synthetic fibers and dyes for blue jeans, vaccines and DNA, medical innovations, coal tar products, the atom bomb, aspirin, pesticides, radio circuits, hard water in American communities, and the family fallout shelter—a symbol that represent scientific evil to some visitors.⁴⁶ The anthropologists, invited to analyze and support the exhibits, disagreed about the content and messages developed by museum organizers and curator-scientists.

The authors argue that during the development of the *Science in American Life* exhibit, lay people (the anthropologists) were put in a unique position not so different from the Lubicon Lake Cree in the Glenbow Museum’s *The Spirit Sings* exhibit. In both cases, a high-stakes struggle emerged between the “natives” and a group of experts over the selection of objects, how they are used to represent, and the histories involved in representing culture. At the Glenbow Museum, the Lubicon Lake Cree sought to reclaim how they were being represented by objects used without their permission. At the Smithsonian, anthropologists argued against how things were chosen and displayed which “belonged to them” (the American public)—technologies and inventions often

⁴⁶ Ibid.

subsidized by taxpayer money that also went on display in a public (tax-payer's) space, a Smithsonian's museum. Responses to *The Spirit Sings* required people to look at controversial topics associated with museum exhibits, such as corporate funding and disputes of Indian land. Similarly, responses to *Science in American Life* prompted dialogue on the topics of public health, science policy, education policy, and the environment. Lastly, both groups challenged museum authority because both museums maintained a position of political neutrality.

In summary, the two exhibits, one at the Glenbow Museum and the other at the Smithsonian, describe sharp tensions between natives who formerly had a relative limited power base, and those experts who would seek to objectively represent them.⁴⁷

González, Nader and Ou's study describes one scenario at the Smithsonian and how scholars (in different disciplines) are considered "native"/lay person/outsider. This scenario differed from other scenarios because "outsiders" were no longer restricted to a native person. Depending on the circumstances, a "native"/lay person/outsider can just as easily be an anthropologists/expert/outsider. A comparison would look like this:

<i>The Spirit Sings</i> (Glenbow Museum)	<i>Science in Am Life</i> (Smithsonian)
native = lay person (American Indians) experts = museum curators-anthropologists	native = lay person (anthropologists) experts = museum curators-scientists

In this thesis, American Indians, once considered "outsiders" in museum projects, are part of the selection process for Indian Market (Chapter 2) and in the design of the festival t-shirt (Chapter 3). The committee members involved in the decisions included

Indian and non-Indian NMAI employees and individuals from other federal agencies. The majority of committee members were American Indians. This process of decision-making correlates closely to the suggestions of González, Nader and Ou: being “native” extends beyond having an indigenous heritage. In this project, Indians were already serving on committees and were not excluded from participating in the process. But the backgrounds and experiences of Indian committee members differed. Some committee members had experience, education, and training in the art field regarding art (experts) and others worked in non-art/support museum positions such as finance, programming, and, administration (lay people). Thus, recognizing a distinct “us” and “them” is oftentimes no longer relevant. When a group has diverse backgrounds, the differences between experts and novelists should be explored in order to understand how the group decides on issues of authenticity.

Finally, James Clifford describes the processes between Indians and non-Indians when one group of Indians has a goal in mind (to analyze museum objects) and a group of non-Indians (museum organizers) responds instinctively in unexpected ways.

JAMES CLIFFORD

In *Routes* (1997), Clifford explores a decision-making process while working with a group of American Indians from the Pacific Northwest. In early 1989, Clifford served as a consultant, part of a group of experts at the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Oregon. The project involved discussions about the museum’s Rasmussen Collection, a group of Indian objects amassed during the 1920s along the coast of Canada

⁴⁷ Gonzalez, et al, 114.

and southern Alaska. Several well-known anthropologists/experts on Northwest Coast art and Tlingit elders, accompanied by younger Tlingit translators, had been invited. The Tlingit group included prominent elders from important clans and considered, by the Portland Museum, as “a representative group of Tlingit authorities”.⁴⁸

Clifford, and the other “experts”, expected to obtain important information and histories about the objects that would help them in developing exhibits. For instance, they had hoped to secure information about the tribe used an object or how it was made. Instead, the Tlingit elders examined the objects and began to remember stories, songs, speeches, and poems related to the objects. There were stories about the celestial world, natural environments, and the loss of land. Hero-stories were recited after seeing images of creatures painted on an object that represented enormous monsters that must be destroyed in order to save their group. As metaphors, many of the monsters morphed into state or federal authorities who had imposed rules on fishing, a traditional way of life for the Tlingit. There were stories about different kinds of fish, the bay they fished in for generations, and clan figures, such as Raven who determines protocols associated with fishing. There were songs about loss, death, celebration, adventures, love, family, community, and speeches and recitations from childhood memories. Humor and anecdotes became part of the group’s dialogue. When the elders sang or recited, they invited everyone to participate. The “discussion” about objects in the Rasmussen Collection consisted of shared narratives and emotional remembrances of events—important moments of the Tlingit’s lives. Not much historical information-gathering,

⁴⁸ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188.

normally achieved in museum meetings and sessions, had been achieved. Little had been “accomplished”, that is, according to the expectations of museum organizers and after three days, most of the objects remained unopened in storage boxes on museum tables.

Clifford summarizes the experience by observing that museum organizers had a specific goal in mind that differed from the Tlingit elders. Museum organizers believed that involving the Tlingit would help them with descriptions and histories attached to objects in the Rasmussen Collection. The Tlingit, on the other hand, saw the museum objects not as “art” but as chronicles of their history which were physical manifestations in place of written records and formal “laws”. The Tlingit did nothing wrong. They responded instinctively to the objects and their reactions differed dramatically from what museum organizers expected. The museum now had a problem of translating the experiences of the Tlingit into the museum’s framework of “art” and its presentation to the public. Furthermore, the museum’s inability to procure information from the Tlingit consultations resulted in funding contingencies that delayed reinstallation of the Rasmussen Collection. The process disrupted project management timelines, schedules, and budgets and delayed the exhibit’s opening. The museum, frustrated with the process, had to develop new schedules and find ways to avoid wasting their time and money.

This brief review by several scholars reveals what can happen when Indians are not involved in decision-making processes regarding the “authenticity” of their culture the role of a “native” (as expert or lay person), and when Indians *are* involved in the process but respond in unexpected ways. Next, let us examine the history of the NMAI where the decision-making process involved one individual, a private collector, who

made all decisions regarding Indian objects, to one solution of this problem by featuring Indian exhibits but excluded Indians, and to the present day when Indians, who were invited to co-curate the inaugural exhibits of the new museum, had doubts about their involvement in the process.

THE ORIGIN OF THE NMAI COLLECTION: DECISIONS MADE BY ONE

Representations of Indians and what were considered “authentic” or Indian traditional art and culture had been presented for over one hundred years in the Smithsonian and other museums throughout America. Museum organizers who developed exhibits from historic collections struggled with, according to Janet Berlo (1992), the problem of dealing with vast amounts of indigenous artifacts and information collected during the early twentieth century of great age of museum-sponsored research by the Smithsonian and other renowned museums and institutions. Pieces housed in their storerooms had become canonical objects and too often treated as “authentic” American Indian art, rather than recognizing that each object derives from a particular historical moment in a long and changing history of Native American art.⁴⁹ This “peak period” of collecting, to use Jonathan King’s words, were traumatic periods of American Indian history and has provided the material basis for the definition of what is traditional and what is not.⁵⁰ Indian objects such as basketry, beadwork, and carving collected during

⁴⁹ Janet Catherine Berlo, ed. *The Early Years of Native American Art History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 4.

⁵⁰ Jonathan King, “Tradition in Native American Art,” *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*, edited by Edwin Wade (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), 70.

this time existed in such large quantities that they were used as a general, though often unstated, yardstick by which standards of traditionalism were set.⁵¹

The basis of these museum collections was often derived from a sole wealthy collector who made all of the decisions as to what was deemed “collectible”. These decisions satisfied their personal tastes and whims. Thus, a collection was a like a mirror, a reflection of an individual collector’s perspectives. Typically, when a collector died, his or her collection would be donated to an institution. Objects once held by a private individual were now available to the public. Thus museums became challenged with how to exhibit objects once relegated to private spaces to the public, an audience of many different people. This was the case with the NMAI’s collection—amassed by one man who saw Indians as people from the past that would soon be extinct.

George Gustav Heye was a wealthy New York banker whose collection of American Indian objects became the basis of the NMAI. Heye began collecting in the early twentieth century, securing nearly one million objects which would eventually be donated to the Smithsonian. His insatiable desire to collect Indian objects became featured in Clara Sue Kidwell’s “Every Last Dishcloth: The Prodigious Collecting of George Gustave Hey” (1999). The collection that would one day become the NMAI became known, to use Kidwell’s words, as Heye’s obsession and “ideological myopia” to collect “everything imaginable”.⁵² Driven by the belief that native tribes were disappearing at an accelerated rate, Heye amassed hundreds of thousands of objects by

⁵¹ Julia M. Klein “Lost in Translation,” *The American Prospect*, Vol. 11, No. 24 (November 20, 2000), 43.

⁵² Clara Sue Kidwell, “Every Last Dishcloth: The Prodigious Collecting of George Gustave Heye,” *Collecting Native America, 1870-1960*, edited by Shepard Krech and Barbara A. Hail (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 236.

any means he believed were necessary, including exhumation, grave robbing, lying, and trickery.⁵³

Heye's great wealth afforded him the luxury of money and time to fulfill his desires. He had the means to hire researchers and dispatch them to remote areas to visit "disappearing" tribal groups throughout the East Coast, Alaska, the Southwest, the South, the Caribbean, Central and South America. Many of the Indians, living in impoverished conditions, were willing to depart with ancestral objects or heirlooms for the pittance offered by Heye's workers in exchange for the chance to feed their families with the sale of an object. Heye's expeditions into burial mounds, caves, and graves resulted in the exhumation of Indian bodies, skeletons, and tokens of the dead that would be part of his collection, even though he gave little thought about digging up someone's ancestor or relative. He was once caught grave-robbing in New Jersey; his status and prominence resulted in an acquittal. Heye once found a burial mound on private property and "persuaded" the owner, a farmer, by offering him digging fees while he desecrated the mound, removing more treasures of the dead. Socially, these acts were overlooked because of his wealth and status and he became known as a self-made archaeologist and social scientist. During the early twentieth century, anthropologists believed that research on Indian culture had been exhausted in America and moved away from collecting Indian artifacts in the United States and to the "remote area" of South America in order to examine "racial and cultural development". However, Heye proved that there was plenty of "culture" in America through the massive amounts of Indian objects he amassed in his

⁵³ Ibid.

collection. Furthermore, he accentuated his collection with “weird”, “exotic”, and rare objects. He became a regular client at Ye Olde Curiosity Shop in Seattle, joining a preferred client list with another collector, Robert L. Ripley, the creator of *Ripley’s Believe it or Not!* cartoon and museum.

Heye’s unsavory maneuvers extended to political and professional avenues. He was once approached by a group of Hidatsa elders requesting the return of a medicine bundle. The Hidatsas, experiencing a drought in their community, wanted the medicine bundle returned because they believed its sacred properties could produce rain. Heye agreed to return the bundle and arranged for a press conference to present the bundle to the Hidatsas. The Hidatsas agreed to the public presentation and arrived dressed in full regalia and feathered bonnets. However, after the reporters and photographers left, Heye refused to return the entire bundle and gave the Hidatsas only pieces of it.

His unscrupulous behaviors with Indians extended to his white colleagues. After a disappointed George P. Gordon of the University of Pennsylvania’s museum in Philadelphia heard of Heye’s announcement to open his own museum, Gordon and renowned anthropologist Franz Boas were outraged, believing that Heye, whom they had assisted for many years with research projects and exhibitions, would donate his collection to their respective institutions. Objects were exchanged as a consolation. However, Gordon’s “gift” consisted of “large, crudely made things decorated with what appeared to be house paints.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Another contentious point about Heye's collection, an issue that continues to the present day, involved the provenance of the objects. The lack of provenance or the absence of critical identifiers for the objects was a direct result of Heye's dismissive thinking and unprofessional practices. Heye attempted to record accurate histories of objects. However, when provenance was not available, he felt compelled to provide it. He would guess at the origins of objects yet recorded them as *facts*.⁵⁵ One hundred years later, many of the objects of Indian peoples remain a mystery because of the ambiguous, and oftentimes untruthful, history attached to them. Furthermore, concocted histories meant that "authenticity" attached to the object became undoubtedly questionable.

In summary, Heye sought out every imaginable object he could because he believed that Indians were destined to disappear, securing them by whatever means necessary. Heye's collection practices and behaviors were ignored during his time because of his social position and overlooked today because of his status as the major donor that created the largest collection of American Indian objects in the world.

During early 2000, excitement over the construction of the new museum on the national mall overshadowed the stories about Heye and how Indian objects were stolen, swindled, illegally exhumed, or paid for with a pittance from starving Indians.

PATRICIA PENN HILDEN

One goal in organizing venues for the First Americans Festival was to dispel the controversy and wrongful acts committed by Heye. In 1989, thirty-three years after

⁵⁵ Kidwell, 252.

Heye's death, the Heye Foundation Board transferred ownership of Heye's collection to the Smithsonian—the basis for a National Museum of the American Indian.⁵⁶ The NMAI was also designated as a “living memorial of the American Indian.”⁵⁷ Since then, the George Gustave Heye Center, NMAI, in New York City presented exhibits featuring objects from the museum's collection. For many years, both Indians and non-Indians criticized NMAI's exhibits because decisions in the planning of the exhibits excluded Indians. Although the NMAI tried to diffuse the discrepancies committed by Heye, they ironically continued poor decision-making processes by producing exhibits developed by a single authority (a curator). Even worse, the curators who produced these exhibits were not Indians.

The NMAI was not like art museums or natural history museums as remarked by Patricia Penn Hilden in *Race for Sale* (2000). In her scathing essay, Hilden openly criticizes the “hideousness of the collection” and the NMAI for excluding Indians and scholar-advocates of Indian culture in the decision-making process, arguing the lack of interrogation of the western canon, “truths”, and absolutes. The NMAI exhibits excluded the brutal history of American Indian genocide, slavery, and extermination. Instead, the NMAI exhibits, according to Hilden, bowed down to “Disneyland techniques.”⁵⁸

Furthermore, Hilden argued that the NMAI functioned as a “memorial” and “vast mausoleum” that contained stories of murder, burial, and “resurrection of survivors.” Her reference to a mausoleum refers to both the words describing the NMAI as a “living

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Public Law 101-185, 101st Congress (November 28, 1989), *National Museum of the American Indian Act*, sec. 3, paragraph (a).

⁵⁸ Patricia Penn Hilden, “Race for Sale: Narratives of Possession in Two “Ethnic” Museums, *The Drama Review* 44, 3, Fall 2000 (New York and MA: New York University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology), 24.

memorial” for a group of people who are still alive and to the building containing the exhibits, the “Gilded Age architecture of the U.S. Customs House”. The original storage facility of the collection at the Research Branch in the Bronx also resembles a mausoleum. Objects were categorized by geographic regions inside of vaults—windowless rooms filled from floor to ceiling with shelves and drawers stuffed with artifacts. Vaults were accessible from a single door and, like “cabinets of curiosities”, could only be viewed by a certain group of the people, the workers, scholars, and museum staff.⁵⁹ Hilden’s criticism, reactions from other scholars, and public response about exhibits curated by non-Indians demonstrated that the decision-making process regarding exhibitions of the NMAI needed to be revised.

LAURA LEE GEORGE AND TONY CHAVARRIA

Hilden was not alone. Apprehensions about the NMAI were shared by Indians too, including native consultants who were part of, and made decisions, for the NMAI’s inaugural exhibitions. The NMAI needed to counter past mistakes of curating exhibits without Indian involvement and hired tribal community curators to develop new exhibits for the 2004 museum opening. Community curators consisted of tribal members from specific nations or tribes chosen for one of the three main galleries that represented history, philosophy, and identity of Indian culture, respectively *Our Lives*, *Our Universes*, and *Our Peoples*. Since Indians were now involved with the curatorial process, would the question of authentic or traditional culture remain an issue for the

⁵⁹ After Heye’s death, the endowment for the collection was insufficient to maintain the Research Branch in Bronx, New York. The facility deteriorated over the last few decades thus, ensuring the removal of the collection from the Research Branch to the new

NMAI? Certainly, inviting community curators would “authenticate” the exhibits since Indians now participated in the decision-making process. This was an innovative process for the NMAI although museums throughout America had, for several decades, already incorporated native peoples in exhibitionary practices. However, a question remained regarding *how much* Indian involvement would be included in the exhibitions. The process of *reciprocity*, as noted by James Clifford (1997), involves exploitation and subversions in “asymmetric” viewpoints that arise during processes between Indian consultants and non-Indian/white organizers in museum-related events.⁶⁰ If Indians were involved in making decisions, then indeed their presence would make a difference *if* the NMAI supported their decisions and included them in the exhibits.

Laura Lee George, a Hupa community curator in the *Our Universes* Gallery, repeatedly expressed her concerns about the project. She asked about the inclusion of “America’s colonial, oppressive perspective” on Indians and hoped that the exhibits in the new museum would alter those perceptions. George was proud to be part of the decision-making process but wondered how well the Hupa exhibit on cosmology would communicate the ideas and perspectives of her tribe. Although she was asked to discuss Hupa creation stories and prayers, she was apprehensive about sharing these stories with outsiders, informing the NMAI organizers that Hupa stories are usually reserved only for tribal members because “many are considered too sacred to discuss in public.”⁶¹ Similarly, Tony Chavarria, a community curator for the Santa Clara Pueblo exhibit informed museum organizers that Pueblos considered their religion “very personal,

Cultural Resource Center in Suitland, Maryland.

⁶⁰ Clifford, 191-194.

private, and internal” and that he already knew in advance of the museum’s opening, that the Santa Clara Pueblo exhibitions would not be the “full story.”⁶²

Indeed, George and Chavarria’s concerns are not without merit. Involving Indians in the decision-making process is complicated because of opposing perspectives between Indian consultants and museum organizers. Indian consultants have ideas about how “authentic” their culture should be when presented to a non-Indian audience. On the other hand, non-Indian museum organizers have a responsibility to develop exhibits that address their constituents—visitors to their museum. These visitors, according to Lawrence W. Levine (1992), often impose themselves on the expressive culture they are exposed to, restructure it, change details—mold it to their own needs, and understand it in terms of their own life experiences.⁶³

Furthermore, although Indians were involved in the decision-making process, the NMAI needed to contend with images of Indians from other media formats. The opening of the new museum would be attended by many people whose knowledge of American Indian culture came from media images created in television, film, and art. Since James Fennimore Coopers’ romanticized *Last of the Mohicans*, the “noble savage” has been portrayed in books, advertisements, magazines, toys, television shows, mid-20th century westerns, movies such as *Dances with Wolves* and Disney’s *Pocahontas* that frame the American Indian in different ways, adding to clichés and stereotypes about how Indians look and behave. To dislodge such powerful representations that have accumulated over

⁶¹ Klein, 42.

⁶² Ibid.

hundreds of years in the American psyche would be a challenge. Mass-mediated representations of native cultures, argues Robin D.G. Kelley (1992), constitute a central role of race in the making of American identities and therefore, provide no reason why (non-Indian) audiences should disrupt, reverse, or challenge narratives of conquest.⁶⁴ The *Washington Post*'s Hank Stuever commented that Americans had a strong case of "the Tonto syndrome" created from exaggerated, romanticized, and stereotypical media imagery and that it was anticipated that the typical visitor to the NMAI would be viewing the new exhibitions with "a few centuries worth of red-man baggage."⁶⁵ Museum organizers were apprehensive, even though Indians had been part of the decision-making process.

This has been a very brief review of some decision-making processes at the NMAI. First, the basis of the museum came from a collection amassed by one individual, Heye, who made *all* of the decisions regarding the relevancy of Indian objects. As a private collection, it is no surprise that the objects reflected his personal tastes and interests. However, when the collection became absorbed into the NMAI, the museum developed exhibits led by non-Indian curators and excluded Indians in the process. Recently, new models of developing the inaugural exhibits for included Indians as community curators in the decision-making process. However, several community curators voiced their skepticism about involvement in the process and whether their perspectives would be part of the inaugural exhibits.

⁶³ Levine's example was taken from a woman who had grown up listening to the Lone Ranger on the radio and injecting her own story—in her version, Tonto was given women friends and even a wife. See Lawrence W. Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 5 (Dec. 1992), 1379.

⁶⁴ Robin D.G. Kelley, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Folk'," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 5 (Dec. 1992), 1406.

⁶⁵ Hank Stuever, "In Tonto, the Museum Comes Face to Face With its Biggest Faux," *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2004, C2.

Now let us take a look at a working relationship in a special committee for the Festival that included Indians in the decision-making process. Indians needed to work with non-Indians, experts and novelists in order to make decisions regarding specific cultural art objects.

THE SITUATION

Each year, artists participating in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Marketplace ask about what they can and cannot bring. The criteria for art objects are subject to discretion by the CFCH Marketplace Coordinator. Similarly, for the First Americans Festival's Indian Market, criteria needed to be established for art objects of a "questionable" state including animal and plant products, native weaponry, and endangered species items. For instance, items expected for the Festival included art objects made of bird feathers, sealskin, alligator hides, snake skins, turtle shells, antlers; plant products such as *copal* (resin from trees burned in ceremonies) wrapped in corn stalks, *ixcaco* (raw brown cotton), and seeds. Indian visitors were planning to bring weapons such as war clubs, bows and arrows, adzes (an ancient ax), fur-covered quivers, and hunting knives in beaded animal skin sheaths since they considered these items part of their culture. The selection criteria already established by the CFCH regarding art objects of this nature was not a list of strict rules: objects *Culturally Relevant to the Festival Program*⁶⁶, *Traditional*⁶⁷, *Items That Participants Felt Represented their*

⁶⁶ "Cultural relevancy" was a term open to broad interpretations by the CFCH. Objects under this category needed to be relevant to one of the Festival programs *and* follow the other established criteria. Often, an artwork considered "culturally relevant" or objects deemed "traditional" by an artist was not allowed into Marketplace because of certain restrictions. For instance, during the 2002 Silk Road Festival, miniaturist painters from India submitted gilded paintings with scenes of couples copulating. Similarly, the Mongolian

Culture, they could be traditional, contemporary, or a new innovation; and *Handmade* or made of natural materials.⁶⁸ However, this list of requirements would not work for the First Americans Festival markets because it was vague. There needed to be something more explicit.

Furthermore, as planning for the Festival progressed, other federal agencies became aware of the arrival of these sensitive items but had not received any official information regarding them. One concerned biologist at the Department of Interior wrote:

We were having a biologist's workshop . . . and we were talking about Native American regalia, and someone mentioned that Native Americans are going to be coming from all over on September 21st for a parade to celebrate the opening of the new museum? Can you pass on to appropriate folks that if the regalia contains eagle feathers (or even any bird feathers) or anything from ESA-listed specifics that they may need permits? The relevant laws are MBTA, ESA, and possible MMPA, but we can talk about it . . . [and] can explain and help folks if they have questions.⁶⁹

MBTA, ESA, and MMPA are laws regarding animal and plant products—laws that had not been considered by the CFCH or NMAI. Furthermore, casual references to organized events, such as a “parade”, showed a lack of knowledge and sensitivity to American Indian customs. Evidently, the “parade” referred to the Native Nations Procession. In Indian culture, a procession is considered an important part of an event. It is a cultural expression shared by community and contains many references to ancient

Delegation wanted to sell calligraphy ink paintings of couples in sexual poses. In 2003, a Scottish participant asked to sell Wedgwood flasks filled with whiskey and an Appalachian participant wanted to sell home-brewed concoctions (moonshine). Thus, even if the CFCH agreed with artists regarding objects that were culturally relevant or traditional, they still abided by rules against selling alcohol, unpackaged foods, weapons, and sexually-explicit items. .

⁶⁷ Recent debates in academia on art, artisan crafts, tourist art, and souvenirs also affected the language used in the selection process. For instance, the term “authentic” is no longer used to describe artisan crafts in the MarketPlace application forms, published materials, or in meetings.

⁶⁸ Handmade”, “mass-produced”, and items made of “natural materials” needed to be assessed on an individual basis. For instance, a Turkish coppersmith may design a variety of urns, pots, and jardinières but have them produced in his or her factory in Turkey and shipped to the United States. *Suzanis*, embroidered wall hangings from Uzbekistan, and *saris*, women's clothing from India, are sold in both handmade and machine-embroidered variations. These items are clearly identified as handmade or machine-stitched and the

ceremonial and sacred origins such as processions practiced by the Aztecs in Mesoamerica. Processions are rituals/customs performed at the beginning and end of powwows and special events. Indian processions are not parades. Clearly, discussions outside of NMAI and CFCH were being held by other federal agencies who expected to be involved in the First Americans Festival.

A PROBLEM PRESENTED

The NMAI and CFCH responded to these queries by appointing a committee to handle “illegal” objects for Indian Market and Festival Marketplace. The Native Nations Procession coordinators, Performance and Art Pavilion coordinators, senior managers, the Repatriation Officer, the Head of the Smithsonian Office of International Relations, and the NMAI attorney became part of the newly-created “Endangered Species & Weapons Committee”. The group also included representatives from various federal agencies—experts in zoology, agriculture, botany, geology, and marine biology. However, there was a concern. The representatives from these federal agencies were experts in their various disciplines. Would they be sensitive to American Indian culture? Indian committee members feared that these members may not understand the significance of certain objects considered “illegal” to the government but were not considered unlawful in indigenous cultures. For instance, the body parts of a seal serve a significant role in Yup’ik culture. A sealskin parka, a coat made from dried seal skins, is an essential item needed for a young woman’s puberty rite. Sealskin bladders, tied and

price reflects the difference. In addition, items were considered under other criteria: Saleable, Portable/Hand-Carried, Items “in fashion”, and Durability.

inflated like balloons, are used by Yup'ik hunters as floats in the water. Furthermore, seal or walrus tusks and bone have historically been used as tools, weapons, vessels, and amulets by Yup'ik Indians. Other items under consideration included turtle shells (for ceremonial rattles), animal skins (to make drums, clothing, and utilitarian objects), stones, minerals or corals which is banned from certain regions (but can be used by Indians because of grandfather laws), plant products needed for ceremonial rites, bird feathers, and bald eagle feathers.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: WHAT NON-INDIANS DID

The first meeting of the newly-formed inter-agency “Endangered Species” committee included representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and Department of Interior (DOI), U.S. Fish & Wildlife. During the introduction phase, committee members provided information on their areas of specialization listing multiple doctorate degrees, expeditions and explorations, research and published works, recent articles in science journals, and their many international speaking engagements. The introductions revealed a plethora of personalities and lots of egocentrism. Furthermore, the newcomers reminded Indian committee members of the need to “abide by federal regulations” and ensure “compliance with the law”. Discussions about Indian objects became flooded with terms and phrases regarding government policies, citations, and laws and not about objects that symbolized

⁶⁹ Letter from DOI, dated March 11, 2004.

indigenous culture and history. The atmosphere was formal, tense, and frosty; committee members appeared aloof, stilted, and impersonal.

At the next meeting, the experts brought publications, documents, briefings, and presentation materials to share with the group. The assortment included large documents bound as booklets or in three-ring binders. Among them was a 10-page Question & Answer document, *Marine Mammals Management*, with questions specific to the committee's mission: "How do we define "Alaskan Native"?" and "How do we define "authentic native handicraft"?" *Appendix B: Illegal Items in the District of Columbia* listed twenty-one items including firearms, dynamite, blackjacks, hand grenades, slingshots, sandbags, and "large quantities of illegal drugs". *Appendix A: Museum Prohibited Items* was a list of items that were legal to possess but prohibited in the Smithsonian. This list included 50 items prohibited in all Smithsonian facilities including box cutters, ice picks, BB guns, meat cleavers, screwdrivers, liquid bleach, ski poles, cattle prods, and golf clubs. *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants*, a 60-page publication from the Department of Interior (DOI), listed numerous species of mammals, fishes, snails, and insects by common name, scientific name, historic range, and habitat. *Appendices I, II and III* from the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), a 40-page document provided by the DOI, listed the classification of species of mammals, birds, reptiles, corals, snails and conches, corals, sea anemones, and jellyfish. Over 95% of the list was written in Latin, describing creatures by their biological names. However, a few words were decipherable to

committee members including objects made from elephant trunks, the monkey-puzzle tree, flying foxes, and the northern hairy-nosed wombat.⁷⁰

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: WHAT INDIANS DID

Indian committee members understood that non-Indian committee members, who were experts in their specialized fields, also needed to be informed about Indian culture from a native's perspective. For their contribution to the group, they offered a familiarization process for the experts that included a presentation and tour of the Collections Management Department at the NMAI's Cultural Resource Center (CRC) in Suitland, Maryland. This was the place that contained the NMAI's impressive collection, the objects of both marvel and controversy.

The CRC is one of three NMAI facilities and houses the NMAI's extensive collection (nearly one million objects) in a state-of-the-art facility. Begun in summer 1996 and completed in fall 1998, the architectural design involved the collaboration between Native design professionals and cultural consultants. The building's design mimics forms in nature: the unique organic, curving roof resembles a nautilus shell, and supported by radial walls that look like spider webs. The brilliant red-terracotta color and texture, also inspired by nature, resemble rock cliffs, native desert dwellings, and clay textures of the earth. The museum's curatorial and repatriation offices are located at the CRC as well as workrooms and laboratories for registration, photography, conservation,

⁷⁰ *Marine Mammals Management*, Questions & Answers, www.alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/mmm/qa.htm; *Museum Prohibited Items*, Appendix A and *Illegal Items*, Appendix B, draft from Smithsonian Office of Protective Services (OPS); *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants*, 50 CFR 17.11 and 17.12, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, March 1999; *Appendices I, II, and III*, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), valid Feb 2003, www.cites.org.

restoration, film and video, collections management, and a computer and information resource center, library, and archives. There is a ceremonial room in the lower floor, outdoor clearings, and other indoor/outdoors spaces for Indian cultural, social, and spiritual practices. Showing these spaces and sharing objects at the CRC with these experts would provide a familiarization of art objects expected at the Festival.

Committee members were treated to presentations by the Museum Registrar and Collections Manager and a special slideshow filled with images of magnificent objects not seen by the public, a history of the collection, and a brief discussion on the architecture of the new museum as well as the unique architecture of the building they were in, the CRC. Many committee members were surprised at the vast amount of art objects stored at the CRC.

The group then proceeded to the massive storage area where they privately reviewed the amazing collection of the NMAI. Approximately only 10% of the collection is “on the floor” (on exhibit) at the museum; the remaining objects are stored in the Collections Management Department. Unlike the dark, dirty, and cramped “vaults” of the former facility in Bronx, New York, the CRC contains state-of-the-art storage facilities, with the newest methods and technologies in the protection and care of museum objects. Rising 50 feet into the air, the facility holds the largest artifacts in the collection including several gigantic totem poles, a collection of canoes, dugouts, and indigenous water crafts, the facades, pillars, and mantels from massive timber houses of the Pacific Northwest, colossal heads, stones, and glyphs from ancient Olmec and Mayan temples, and contemporary, life-sized bronze sculptures. Instead of vaults, objects are stored in

drawers, cabinets, and shelving units with specially-designed screens and doors to allow the proper ventilation of the objects. Inside the cabinets, each object resides in its own custom-made acid-free box, board, or container. These storage areas, not seen by many visitors, were now made accessible to members of the committee. Committee members stood in awe at the wonders revealed before them—the hundreds of thousands of objects that could only be viewed at the CRC and a special treat for them. The collections management staff obliged the constant requests from excited committee members, who frequently asked to open special doors, cabinets, or drawers. Several large worktables had been set up as presentation stations, each with a unique artifact, which a Collections Management Assistant (of American Indian descent) discussed to the committee—describing its history, stories related to the object, and preservation techniques. One table featured a giant buffalo hide, tanned and stripped of its wooly fur, with its smooth skin embellished with hand-painted images and figures of Indians, horses, and different events—stories recorded by Plains Indians. These images are “written” histories now considered art. On another table, a giant basket from the Pacific Coast 4 feet in height and 5 feet wide lay in the center of the table, nestled with bundles of grasses and wooden implements used to weave the basket. Another table contained a huge, handmade backstrap loom of a Quiche Maya woman that held an unfinished tapestry with warp and weft threads in cerulean blues, blood-orange reds, purples, and gold.

After the tour, the group gathered in the large rotunda, the main entrance of the CRC that faces east, the cardinal direction that symbolizes birth, renewal, and life. Above the group, in the center of the room, a cluster of four squares served as the pinnacle of the

rotunda, another reference to the four cardinal directions, and an important aspect of Indian culture. Refreshments had been set up and the group happily partook in them. Outside the glass walls of the rotunda, committee members could see out to the front entryway that featured a lane filled with an oyster bed, the shell remains of important creatures to Indians of the Potomac region, that led to a pool filled with water and elongated steps cascading water like a geometric waterfall. The back wall on the west side of the CRC featured native grasses and indigenous trees and shrubs, carefully integrated with the building's architecture to create an unstructured natural landscape. Outside, below the rotunda and partially hidden by trees, a clearing in the forest revealed a circle outlined with large rocks used for Indian ceremonies and blessings. The architecture and landscape represented a native approach and perspectives that emphasized a connection to the natural environment.

Committee members were in a jovial state: Indians and non-Indians eating, drinking, socializing, smiling, laughing and discussing the magnificent artifacts they had just seen and the fine architectural design of the CRC. In a short period of time, the atmosphere of the group changed from formal to friendly, authoritative to enlightened, stodgy to casual.

SUMMARY

Indians feared that inter-agency committee members, although experts in their respective fields, may not understand the diversity of Indian cultures planning to attend the Festival. Furthermore, there was a real concern that Indians would be searched at U.S.

borders or airports, sacred objects would be seized, and that Indians would be detained. It would be insulting and humiliating to have Indians, the visitors and guests of the Festival, stopped, searched and held because they were traveling with objects of significant cultural, historical, or spiritual importance, heirlooms, or family relics.

Ironically, the NMAI collection shown to the experts at the CRC was the compilation of George Gustav Heye—a collection that had been criticized for representing people who would soon be extinct. By 2004, initiatives had been put into place to increase the contemporary art section of the NMAI's collection. However, many of these efforts had been overshadowed by the opening of the new Museum. The group, therefore, saw the original collection of Heye, the objects of “Indians of the past”.

The Indians in the committee needed to offset this risk and to show what they could contribute to the group. They did not have the academic background and experience of the specialists. Nor did they have published books, lectures, and expeditions. However, they had the cultural and experiential knowledge that only they, as American Indians, could possess. Therefore, an important part of their contribution was bringing a different type of knowledge to the group.

Similar to the Tlingit elders in James Clifford's scenario, Indians in this group were not very boisterous, resistant to the discussions, or desiring to overhaul any kind of museum system. Instead, during the meetings, they listened as the experts talked. But the Indians needed these experts to understand Indian culture, particularly from a native's point of view. They responded by sharing their knowledge but in a different format, one through visual culture and decided to bring the experts to the CRC, a place they

considered their own. Objects described in dreary federal regulations, legislations, and policies suddenly “came to life” through the slideshows, tour, and handling of objects during their visit to the CRC. Once inside the magnificent storage area, committee members were privy to objects, spaces, and access to Indian caretakers that were not available to the general public. They were able to handle the objects, talk to preservationists, and open cabinets and drawers upon request. Indian handlers described objects through stories of history, how they were accessioned, and through stories passed down from their grandparents or tribal elders. Clearly, the visitors saw how well the objects were cared for, stored, and protected and how much knowledge and experience the Indian staff possessed. Indians were the experts in this area, as stewards of their cultural objects and possessors of knowledge that could not be found in academic books. Furthermore, the experiences at the CRC eclipsed the notion that Indians were backward, primitive, and extinct. The presentation, tour, and speeches revealed a culture far different from anything else in general museum exhibits and in the media.

Toward the end, they culminated the gathering “Indian style”—with food, drinks, and socializing at a reception. The experts changed status from colleagues to guests and the hospitality shown to them demonstrated respect, cooperation, and hope for a good working relationship. It was a Maussian episode of exchange and reciprocity to ensure their concerted efforts would be successful regarding “illegal” objects, animals and plants, native weaponry, and endangered species objects. Cultural opposites needed to find a median—a way of working together cooperatively for the sake of the thousands of Indians planning to attend the First Americans Festival.

Furthermore, including American Indians in the decision-making process produced several significant points:

- it showed that the NMAI no longer excluded Indians in important decisions regarding their culture;
- the presence of Indians would diffuse the discrepancies of Heye's collection practices which remained attached to the collection (and the reputation of the museum); and
- having Indians involved "authenticated" the decisions of committees and the mission of their projects;

In closing, authenticity, derived from a decision-making process varies according to the individual. In this case study, the experts of the "Endangered Species" committee specialized in their respective fields but they were not experts in the scientific disciplines of other committee members (i.e., agriculture, mineralogy, botany, wildlife, etc.) nor were they experts in American Indian culture. Indians, on the other hand, did not possess the knowledge and professional experience of these experts but were the cultural specialists at the core of the discussion—the objects expected for the Festival.

Furthermore, some committee members were neither scientists nor cultural specialists in Indian culture. Instead, they were specialists in law, policy, and administration related to museology. Thus, this group had to deal with decisions made by Indians and non-Indians, specialists and lay people, and with the complexities of a working committee whose members overlapped in several different areas.

II. How Indians Developed an Indian Market

I wasn't a traditional Indian. I didn't dance or sing powwow or speak my language or spend my free time marching in Indian sovereignty.

—Sherman Alexie, *War Dances* (2009)

In this chapter, attention will be focused on those cases whereby Indians are involved in the decision-making process in the selection of artists and artworks for the Indian Market. It is interesting to note that a wide variety of Indians in different roles are recruited and are involved in the selection of objects and not just a single group. Many were assigned to prior committees in addition to the one that made final selections. The role of the committee was to select artists for the Festival's Indian Market. Only 40 artists could be selected for the coveted spaces. Thus, the committee was tasked with finding the most "authentic" Indian artists which, naturally, needed to be "traditional Indians". This chapter examines a model of authenticity based on tradition.

A glance of the understanding of tradition as interpreted by those in the field of anthropology will be considered first.

AUTHENTICITY AND A MODEL OF TRADITION

A.L.KROEBER

In anthropology, tradition is understood in A.L. Kroeber's classic definition (in *Anthropology*, 1923) to be a natural process, one which corresponds "roughly to hereditary transmission in the field of organic life. Traditions, or "inventions" as he calls them (results of culture), are organic in nature, structured as a unit or part of a whole in which things affects one another and evolve "naturally". As cultural groups evolve, they accumulate "things"— traditions that are:

... handed down in time or passed along" ... by a process ... [where]
"cultural manifestations is spoken of as tradition ... "71

However, this process of how traditions originate, according to Kroeber, cannot be fully explained. Traditions arise, similar to "organic mutations" as "spontaneous variations".⁷² Traditions maintain an analogous resemblance to their origins. Therefore, a specific form of tradition may arise that resembles something from different groups, such as a ritual or form of art. But because they arise from different conditions, circumstances or backgrounds, their cultural origins are questionable as to where they actually originate or to which group the tradition belongs. Thus, it is difficult to explain specifically where a tradition originates.

Kroeber understands traditions as "mutations" or "variations" thus believing that traditions may originate from somewhere but do not remain in a "pure" state, if one existed at all, similar to things in the natural world. Traditions are like organisms, like clusters of things that originate with a group. They are "handed down" or "passed along".

⁷¹ Kroeber, 236.

⁷² Ibid.

EDWARD SHILS

Edward Shils agrees with Kroeber's idea of tradition as something which is "handed down" or, to use his words, "transmitted" from the past to the present. But he is less concerned with the notion of tradition related to naturalism, as a natural or organic variant. In *Tradition* (1981) Shils defines tradition as a *traditum*—"anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present."⁷³ Shils' definition is not strictly regarding the different forms that have been "handed down" such as an object, written material, or oral history. Things that are handed down through tradition include material objects, religious or philosophical beliefs, images of events or people, institutions and practices. It includes, but is not limited to books, machines, monuments, landscapes, sculpture, equipment, implements, stories, buildings or dwellings, paintings, prayers, songs, gatherings, rituals, celebrations, and so forth. His definition also does not clarify how many years or generations it takes for something to be handed down. Traditions include something originating in a society at a certain time as well as things that existed before its possessors encountered or "owned" it.

Unlike Kroeber, who explored the origins of traditions (where they originated, the effects of trading with other tribes, etc.) Shils is concerned with the existence of a tradition in the present and not *how* nor *who* created it. He is less concerned about "acceptable evidence for the truth of the tradition or whether the tradition is accepted without its validity having been established".⁷⁴ This also applies to the creator(s) of a

⁷³ Shils, 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

tradition, oftentimes those who remain anonymous believing that identifying what individual or group created a tradition makes no difference to the tradition:

The most important thing is that, having been created through human actions, through thought and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next.⁷⁵

To Shils, *when* a tradition becomes valid is also not important. For instance, an image of a historical figure or a period of the past is just as much a tradition as an ancient custom or practice being used today. Something might be from the past but becomes part of the present and it is as much part of the present as any very recent innovation.⁷⁶ Although tradition is something from the past or believed to have originated in the past, accepting it does not mean accepting that it actually existed in the past. Too often, objects, images, and practices of tradition become “objects of fervent attachment to the quality of pastness” whether they were created or existed in the past or not.⁷⁷ In other words, Shils is concerned with tradition in the present sense whether a tradition originated in the past or not.

For Shils, the process of “handing down” or “transmittal” involved in the concept of tradition defines what exists in the present and how it can change. For instance, an original work of art or written document, such as a painting or the Bible, when transmitted, remains the same. It is the interpretation that is different. An artistic style, whether in art, writing or so forth, used in the interpretation of an original work, does not remain the same. Transmitting something is a passing down or transference of something—it requires an original and what follows thereafter, whether it is a copy, a

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Shils, 13.

vignette, or certain parts of the original. In many cases, the concept of transmittal means that there may be something “missing” from the original or that interpretations of the original may contain pieces of it, has been reshuffled, or is a fragmented version of the original.

However, change is possible in the transmittal of tradition since it derives from an original and does not (nor is it required to) remain in a “pure” state. Symbols, patterns, and images change through their reception, modification, and in the process of transmission as interpretations are made of the tradition being presented. They also change while in the possession of a recipient. Furthermore, a chain of transmitted elements can also be deemed a tradition: As a temporal chain, a tradition is a sequence of variations of received and transmitted themes, in the contiguity of presentation and departure, and in descent from a common origin.⁷⁸ However, in the course of a chain of transmissions, a tradition usually undergoes change. The essential elements may remain along with how it is combined with other elements. But what makes it a tradition is that these essential elements are recognizable by an external observer as being approximately identical at successive steps or acts of transmission and possession. The external observer has a critical role here: those involved in the development or practice of a tradition are seldom adequate judges of the length of their chain of tradition. An external observer sees many points of identity, as well as filiation.⁷⁹ For instance, clothing or regalia worn by American Indians in pow wows today may have pre-Conquest origins. Later, new innovations were added such as glass beads (possibly brought by Russian traders) as they

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

encountered and/or integrated themselves with other/outside cultures. This practice would have repeated itself for decades and centuries, in different ways and through different forms, creating a “chain of transmissions”. “Traditional” elements such as eagle feathers, bone, and animal hides may be the basis or origins of their clothing which later, were incorporated with mirrors, silver buttons, gold jewelry, stones such as lapis or coral (not found in the continental U.S.), top hats, and uniform jackets as part of Indian regalia today. Worn at pow wows by Indians, they are considered as “traditional” clothing to both Indians (insiders) and non-Indians (outsiders). An Indian dancer may or may not be aware of the origins or introductions of each element. In fact, he or she may simply include certain elements when designing clothes out of instinct—because their parents or grandparents used it. They may use an item that resembles something else (which may be rare or no longer available). He or she may choose to introduce something “new” to their outfit. An external (non-Indian) observer would recognize the possible time periods when an element could have been added to the original “traditional” attire (i.e., a uniform jacket from encounters with the military in the 18th or 19th century or coral from a more recent encounter with native Polynesians) but also understand the combined elements and the histories and uses accompanying them or the “chain of transmissions”, are distinctly American Indian.

In summary, Shils dismisses the organic and natural state of tradition as defined by Kroeber. He does, however, agree with Kroeber that tradition is something “handed down”, passed down, or what he refers to as “transmitted”. He also believes that the past,

⁷⁹ Ibid, 14.

where a tradition may have originated, is not as important as the tradition in its present state. Furthermore, Shils acknowledges that “chains of transmissions” understand that change occurs incessantly in tradition (regardless of origin) and provide a distinctness of one group, those which possess and practice the tradition, which also offers an affinity as being part of that group.

However, this state of affinity, of being part of a group that is recognizable by outsiders through traditions, is an issue that Shils’ questions. Typically, people relate tradition to identity, especially through lineage, claiming they are “descendents” of others. The ancestors are the originators and/or practitioners of traditions that people practice in the present. However, according to Shils, to consider biological filiation in the present traced through the past means to consider parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents and so forth. After several generations, the number of relatives a person can be “descended from” would add up to tens of thousands of people—people, who Shils’ claims, a person would have little affinity with:

But the sense of cousinhood among those linked through five or six generations of common ancestors evaporates long before it reaches the boundaries of those linked by ancestors that far back.⁸⁰

Furthermore, with the exception of American Indians, the indigenous inhabitants of this continent, the majority of people would have tens of thousands of ancestor or forebearers living among different societies throughout different regions of the world. Having an affinity with so many relatives and ancestors,

⁸⁰ Shils, 164.

particular through “shared” traditions invoking a lost or ancient past, is not a reality.

The sense of identity with other members of society, past and present, refers to nothing more than a sense of membership in the society as such, even though primordial images are adduced to refer to it.⁸¹

In other words, people today (in the present) are so far removed from past ancestors and forebearers that they share little to nothing in common with such ancestry, except through “membership”.

RICHARD HANDLER AND JOYCE LINNEKIN

Tradition means something different for Richard Handler and Joyce Linnekin who argue that tradition creates and/or shapes the identity of a group, and it does so in different ways. In *Tradition, Genuine or Spurious* (1984), Handler and Linnekin acknowledge Shil’s theories of tradition but are bothered by an “ambiguity”: does tradition refer to a core of inherited cultural traits whose continuity and boundedness are analogous to that of a natural object, or must tradition be understood as a wholly symbolic construction?⁸² Instead, borrowing from both Kroeber’s and Shils theories, Handler and Linnekin argue that tradition refers to an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity.⁸³

WHAT IS THE CONSENSUS? BOUNDEDNESS AND NATURALISM

⁸¹ Shils, 165.

⁸² Handler and Linnekin, 273.

⁸³ Ibid.

According to the authors there is a problem with identifying things from the past that are related to natural objects or organisms of science. If tradition is to be used as a scientific concept, it fails if it cannot be viewed separate from “western common sense” which claims that tradition lies in a core of ideas and of things handed down from the past—a concept proposed by Kroeber. Identifying tradition with things of the past—for instance culture that is old or new, things that are tradition or modern, is an approach that sees culture and tradition as naturalistic—similar to nature, are *bounded* entities made up of different parts that are themselves bounded. Naturalism describes a “science of tradition” that identifies and describes essential attributes of cultural traits (forming boundaries) instead of understanding our own interpretations.⁸⁴ Although Shils does not view tradition in the formal sense of natural or organic entities like Kroeber, Handler and Linnekin, his arguments regarding tradition that “changes incessantly”, relies upon “the notion of an unchanging, essential core.”⁸⁵ This reliance on an essential core of tradition is similar to Kroeber’s view of tradition and naturalism. A central core and classifications related to this science-related term means that things are encased and “bounded”.

It is this condition of “boundedness” that intrigues Handler and Linnekin. If things were defined as naturalistic, then boundaries would be “fuzzy” or ambiguous. A problem with this concept is that it does not address change. If an object (of tradition) changes it should, logically, become something new and different. Handler and Linnekin understand that boundedness is necessary to satisfy understanding of what a natural

⁸⁴ Ibid, 274.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

object is but it cannot fully describe tradition and the issue of change. Furthermore, identity is not something bound—it requires being “unbounded” in order to evolve.

The authors suggest that there is no essential, bounded tradition; that tradition is a model of the past, and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present. Furthermore, the ongoing reconstruction of tradition is a facet of all social life, which is not natural but symbolically constituted.⁸⁶ To counter the concepts of tradition put forth by Kroeber and Shils and support their argument that tradition is symbolically constituted (not a natural thing), Handler and Linnekin offer two ethnographic case studies, ethnographic field studies, a study of identity in Quebec, Canada by Handler and native Hawaiian identity by Linnekin. However, something “bounded” as a natural entity can also be used to describe identity. Handler and Linnekin observed that people make references to tradition as an organic metaphor, suggesting that traditions are like organisms that grow and change while yet remaining themselves.⁸⁷ These studies are meant (intended) to examine how tradition correlates (or with) identity, and correlates on a national/state level. They argue that metaphors of naturalism exist and are used by those who practice and create tradition. But they build on this concept by arguing that boundedness is transcended when tradition works hand in hand with identity.

THE TRADITIONAL MODEL: HANDLER’S STUDY IN QUEBEC, CANADA

Handler studied how tradition is created in Quebec and found that the Quebecois national identity correlates with how tradition is perceived by, and thus used, by its

⁸⁶ Ibid, 276.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 275.

inhabitants and then the state (government). Handler examines Quebecois culture first through the lens of naturalism—that a nation can be understood as a bounded entity whose distinctness depends on national culture, tradition, and heritage.⁸⁸ As collective units (whether by nations, ethnic groups, etc.), tradition is envisioned as including those who share similar traits that bind them socially and distinguishes them (shows differences) from outsiders. In this perspective, the nation can be seen as a bounded unit as notably reflected by Handler’s informants who claimed, “We are a nation because we have a culture.”⁸⁹ This collective identity finds a means of expression, once again through references of in nature—the collective individual as a living creature.⁹⁰ One naturalistic metaphor refers to collective identity as living creature—for instance, possessing a national “will”, soul or destiny. Another naturalistic metaphor is a reference to the nation as a natural object, for an example, as a tree or a knight, etc. Another metaphor of nature refers to the nation as a species—a nation naturally bounded in the way species are thought to be bound—consisting of individuals who share a set of traits that definitively separates them from other types of individuals.⁹¹ Finally, a naturalist metaphor used by Quebecois refers to traits inhabitants “possess” such as culture, traditions, and heritage that shows difference but cannot specify the content of national differences. Thus, they typically fall back on references of “blood” or what is “in their blood” or birth heritage. Differences are described through natural metaphors such as blood, land, or birth (another natural process). Handler argues that metaphors of natural

⁸⁸ Ibid, 277.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid, 278.

selection and adaptation allow people to claim that what has been fixed will not and cannot change. Therefore, a set of basic dispositions or traits establishes the nation as an entity in relation to all other national entities, and any future developments must build upon this base.⁹² In summary, Handler argues that the worldview of Quebecois nationalism is a nation with an essential identity and one with a core of fixed characteristics that makes it analogous to that of a bounded natural object.⁹³

Quebecois national identity requires the existence of culture. However, a problem exists: it is difficult to specify the “traits and traditions” that constitute that culture. If tradition is a fixed core but also exists in the present in an unbounded state, then how can tradition define a national identity? Since the past is part of the present but if it does not matter when, how, or who created a tradition (from the past), then virtually anything from the past can be used to represent tradition of the present. Furthermore, focusing on something of the past that no longer exists justifies preservation. Therefore, according to Handler, it then becomes the business of specialists to discover and even to *invent* national culture, traditions, and heritage.⁹⁴

Tradition is invented because it is necessarily reconstructed in the present, notwithstanding some participants’ understanding of such activities as being preservation rather than invention.⁹⁵

For instance, notions of cultural preservation or programs meant to preserve tradition(that can be shared with the public) is oftentimes done through cultural programs, that is, folk performances, craft demonstrations, exhibits, and presentations—

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid, 279.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the essence of folklife festivals. These programs are typically developed within a structure, backdrop, or enclosure that replicates a setting from the past such as a dwelling from a village, a barn, or a street from a colonial town.

However, Handler notes that during the 1970s, a major element entered these displays of culture and inventions of tradition—the government. As a central factor and key presence in the preservation of tradition a government entity reinforces how national identity is depicted, and advocates such programs through funding and other means of support. Furthermore, depicting tradition through channels sanctioned by the government brought about a new twist—one, argues Handler, that warrants close examination of tradition and the process involved that moves away from preservation and moves towards invention. This examination suggests we should look at a few specific things regarding the invention of tradition and the involvement of government. First, the things selected to represent traditional culture, which are drawn from the past, are placed out of context from their origin settings. For example, a tribal marriage ceremony or a fishing boat posed and set-up as an exhibit. These are things which are not the same taken from their original environments. Juxtaposed against other objects, “props” and settings, they become something different and new and thus change the meaning. Second, the newly contextualized forms of tradition become new meanings for those involved in its invention—the folklorists, anthropologists and/or researchers, exhibit-makers, fabricators, and technical specialists, the artists and performers who demonstrate, dance, sing, or demonstrate their craft-making, and those who visit and engage in the presentations and activities—the audience. Reinterpreted and reconstructed as “tradition”,

they come to signify national identity.⁹⁶ Third, the invention of tradition has a discerning component: certain objects and items will be selected to represent traditional / national culture. Typically, the objects or items chosen are considered “natural” or “traditional” or that which is “hand made”. Other parts of the past associated with such objects or items are left out or ignored. In summary, traditions thought to be preserved are created out of the conceptual needs of the present. Tradition is not handed down from the past, as a thing or collection of things; it is symbolically reinvented in an ongoing present.⁹⁷

THE TRADITIONAL MODEL: LINNEKIN’S STUDY OF RURAL HAWAII

The concept of “invented tradition” is also examined in Linnekin’s case study. Her case focus is on tradition in modern Hawaii. Linnekin, like Kroeber and Shils, argues that “tradition” in Hawaii encompasses cultural practices that always occur in the present with aspect of the past. The current conception of Hawaiian identity does not depend upon biological descent, but is based on the premise of a shared body of customs handed down from the past.⁹⁸ However, understanding Hawaiian identity is challenging when considering *which* customs are considered “shared.” For instance, Hawaiians are supposed to have an affinity with the land, nature, and rural life styles. However, the rural life-style and attachment to the land is not something many Hawaiians identify with since most Hawaiians live in the city. Furthermore, a shared set of customs “handed down” becomes more challenging when considering the history of conquest and settlement of the Hawaiian Islands and the mixed heritages of Hawaiians who have intermarried with

⁹⁶ Ibid, 280.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 282.

other ethnic groups: there are not many Hawaiians who have a “pure” indigenous ancestry.

Linnekin chose to focus her study on lifestyles of rural Hawaii—places where “genuine” traditions supposedly still exist. The site she chose was Keanae, a taro-growing village on the island of Maui, a place that is known to represent “real old style” for Hawaiians.⁹⁹

Keane residents talk about a life-style distinct from outsiders, with practices such as their “traditional” diet of fish and poi and the practice of “exchange-in-kind”, a communal system of giving instead of selling and the opposite of commercial transactions that occur in cities and towns. The exchange-in-kind practice resembles the gift-giving and exchange practices of archaic cultures of Pacific Northwest tribes described by Marcel Mauss in 1967. Residents of Keanae develop and reinforce personal and social relationships through processes of giving and reciprocity through the exchange of native products such as fish, fruits, bananas, and through services.

But perhaps the most striking and impressive practice symbolizing tradition in Keane culture, for both residents and outsiders, is the *luau*, the Hawaiian feast. The luau involves the preparation, consumption, and giving away of an abundance of food. Groups of friends and family members work days in advance in cooking and preparing dishes which they consider traditional and uniquely Hawaiian. For residents of Keane, the luau is considered the quintessential native activity and they are renowned for knowing how to “make a luau”. Luau dishes include foods that pre-date European settlement and dishes

⁹⁹ Ibid, 294.

used during native Hawaiian rituals such as *kālua* pig, which is cooked in an underground oven and *kūlola*, a coconut-taro pudding. Luau workers are treated to *laulaus*, beef or pork wrapped in *ti* leaves—similar to offerings to gods that were also wrapped in *ti* leaves.

The foods presented at luaus therefore, are related to past practices. One luau food related to the past is a red fish used for offering for the gods called *kūmū*. In Hawaiian religion, red was a ritually high color.¹⁰⁰ *Kūmū* is not served in luaus of today. Instead, there is the *lomi-lomi* salmon, made from red salmon, tomatoes, green onions, and crushed ice. The salmon, tomatoes, and green onions are not native to Hawaii but are imported products. Also, crushed ice would not have existed in pre-contact Hawaii. Many Hawaiians probably do not realize that *lomi-lomi* is a substitute for the *kūmū* dish. But for today, the absence of the *kūmū* in its historical role appears unimportant; the *lomi* salmon is just as traditional as the *kālua pig*, *kūlola* (coconut-taro pudding) or the *laulaus* wrapped in *ti* leaves. In addition, music is typically played at luaus with “traditional” instruments such as the ukulele and the slack-key guitar. Both represent musical styles introduced to the island by outsiders, but residents of Keanae, other Hawaiians, and outsiders recognize these activities as characteristically Hawaiian.

Handler and Linnekin show that tradition has origins in ideas of “naturalism” and that many scholars, as well as lay people, believe that it is something “handed down”. Their studies reveal that tradition is used as a marker for national identity and that certain cultural aspects related to naturalism, such as ancestry and blood or associations with the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 284.

land, natural objects, and organisms, are borrowed from theories of naturalism. However, other cultural elements (i.e., events, feasts, objects, food, music, etc.) are symbolically-constituted and often “invented” by a group to support their goals of a national identity. Furthermore, their studies reveal that identity does not need to involve an entire “nation” nor be agreed upon by an entire cultural group. Instead, cultural objects and things are selected by a group (consciously or unconsciously) because *they* feel it is traditional and defines their identity, and thus helps define their roles in a larger group/nation.

How do things translate into the planning process that occurred at the Festival’s Indian Market? Creating an identity based on tradition became a challenge when the Indian Market committee, composed of NMAI staff, Indians and non-Indians from federal agencies and organizations, needed to select 40 artists for the highly-coveted spaces of Indian Market. Photographs and art samples sent by artists revealed an array of artworks that would be part of the Festival—pottery, beaded jewelry, sculpture, button blankets, feathered headdresses, silver cuffs, quillwork, leather garments, basketry—all claiming to be “traditional” Indian art. If things fell into the parameters of the tradition, then by default, they were authentic.

Let me begin by describing the work of three artists who applied for a booth in Indian Market and share the commentary provided by members of the Indian Market committee who were seeking “traditional Indians” for the Market.

CRITIQUING THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

Dressed in “traditional” clothing of buckskin, beads, moccasins, and headbands in “soft” colors of grey blues, browns, persimmons, and yellows stand Indian women, created by an Oneida artist, in a style described as “sculptural watercolors” of Eastern Woodlands “women’s aspects”.¹⁰¹ With denizens of the forests—turtles, deer and other animals flanking the women, tall stalks of corn plants swirled, like satin ribbons carried upwards by the wind replicated by the women’s hair, curvilinear tresses whirling upward, a life all their own. Celestial skies full of stars completed the scenes—a compilation of women, plants, animals, and the heavens. Watercolors are not a traditional medium for American Indian artists but ignoring this, as well as the flat, linear figures historically familiar from Plains ledger drawings, tipi paintings, and Pueblo scrolls, the paintings possess influences of Art Nouveau figures imagined by Aubrey Beardsley—same flowing garments and beads with different fabric and a different fit.

Portraying Eastern Woodlands culture in a different way, a Tuscarora mixed-media artist, using collage, composites, conglomerates and a palette of dark grays, umbers, blacks, and deep greens proudly displayed ragged edges, ripped images, tilted shapes, multi-layered paper, paint, and textures that hid literal depictions. Digitalized deer, turtles, animal skulls, and feathers, torn up and rearranged into misshapen elements, “destabilized linear planes” and ventured “beyond conventional parameters of “expected” Indian imagery with themes that reflected the

¹⁰¹ Indian Market application, artist’s description.

displacement of . . . Indian ancestors, bringing to light aspects of a distinct but underrepresented southeastern Native experience, one whose basic worldview is rooted in Mississippian mound culture.¹⁰²

“Modern”, “Vibrant and striking”, “Contemporary” and “Pan-Indian” were the comments. However, what was the relationship of her heritage—the Eastern Woodlands region with ancient cultures in Mississippi, in the southern United States? Furthermore, how is the use of contemporary-modern technologies to alter images considered “traditional”?

Pressing and twisting coils and furred wires into organic shapes from silver and using stones of turquoise, onyx, and amethyst—staples of Indian jewelry, one Mohegan jeweler described her art as contemporary and abstract, choosing to exclude “traditional” images such as feathers, eagles, and deer. Instead, her designs were intangible—shapes curled, pressed, flattened, tipped, elongated, and cubed. Committee members described her work as “strange,” “appeared to be more Irish”, or “something from *Lord of the Rings*.” Perhaps the work was *too* contemporary—so contemporary that it did not “look” American Indian?

Eventually, Oneida watercolors and Tuscaroran collages would be selected for Indian Market and Mohegan jewelry would not. Although her resume reflected exhibitions at many juried art markets, galleries, and museums, her abstract style clearly did not convince committee members who apparently preferred the literal over the abstract, shapes easily recognizable, and subjects that communicated traditional Indian culture. The Committee believed that artwork should “look traditional” and should be a

¹⁰² Indian Market application, artist’s description. The committee wondered why this artist applied into the “Eastern Woodlands Region” instead of the “Southeast Region” since Tuscarora Indians traditionally inhabit areas in North Carolina and north to the Great

“good representative” of a specific tribe or tribal region since these characteristics authenticated a work of art.

After the Mohegan jeweler was informed of not being selected, she inquired as to the reasons why. When she received some of the comments from committee members, she responded that her non-selection “was okay” because “it happens all of the time.”¹⁰³

If “traditional” included the use of non-Indian medium (watercolors), style (Art Nouveau), incorporating certain subject matter (animals and birds), new technologies (digital photos), inter-geographic-tribal representations, abstract art but not too abstract, then what would be the marker for determining “authentic” art for Indian Market?

HOW DOES ONE SELECT “TRADITIONAL” IN TODAY’S WORLD?

Rather quickly, questions emerged regarding the Market. What would be used as to measure, evaluate, qualify, and assess the interested contenders? Which tribes would be chosen to represent Indian culture? The search for models revealed several points of departure. The CFCH was not interested in an Indian Market that was strictly art nor Indian, pow wow or festival— but a combination of Indian-organized art fairs, art markets, pow wows, festivals, and events. *Red Earth* Art Market, *Gathering of Nations* Indian Traders Market, and *Denver March*, some of the largest pow wows in the country, became some models to consider. In addition, the committee thought about the renowned Santa Fe Indian Market, a highly-competitive, juried 2-day art market event that featured

Lakes region. Furthermore, her application described a “southeastern Native experience” and Mississippian mound culture.”

¹⁰³ Telephone conversation with artist.

over 1200 artists and attracted over 100,000 visitors from all over the world each year. The American Indian Center in Baltimore offered another example of a nearby urban center that held an annual pow wow. However, there was one art market familiar to many committee members: *Schemitzun*, the annual powwow held each summer in Connecticut and the largest on the East Coast.

Schemitzun, also known as the Feast of Green Corn and Dance, takes place each August in Ledyard, Connecticut near Foxwoods Hotels and Casinos, owned by organizers of the pow wow, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe. *Schemitzun* attracts Indians throughout the region including Mohegans, Mashpees, Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Penobscots, the Abenakis of Vermont and Maine, and other Northeast/Eastern Woodland tribes.

Committee members considered *Schemitzun* a “real” pow wow and art market. Thus, they believed that many of *Schemitzun*’s characteristics should be considered for the First Americans Festival Indian Market. Upon arriving at *Schemitzun*, a visitor would encounter a parking area on the large grassy field, yellowed and dried with rutted pathways of mud hardened from August sun, though cleared for the event. Climbing over lowered timber used as blockade one encounters large cattle cars. Enormous bulls penned inside are eerily still, moist nostrils flaring and visible between the wooden horizontal slats of the wagon container, and large brown eyes that are strangely calm but warning of approach. The behemoths, members of the Michael T. Goodwin Memorial Buck-a-Rama Indian Rodeo, captivated rodeo visitors every evening during the pow wow. Some of the

best American Indian cowboys throughout the country compete in bull riding competitions for prize money awards and recognition as champion riders.

The food vendors were the first structures I encountered, two rows flanking an open median, a face-off of nearly twenty booths emitting the sounds, sights, and smells of traditional Native foods: roasted corn on the cob, quahogs, buffalo burgers, reindeer, smoked salmon, purple corn, venison, moose, purple corn, poppasquash, and the popular pow wow treat—Indian fry bread. Within view is a collection of blue Pot-o-Johns all lined up; conveniently located.

Also conveniently located next to the food vendors is the massive performance tent, the size of a football field, replete with bleachers inside. This arena hosted the dance demonstrations, competitions, and the daily Grand Entrances, where members from each tribe march in full regalia, encircling the sacred fire. Nearby, a re-created Pequot Village allowed curious visitors to explore “authentic” reproductions, as promoted by the Pequot, longhouse structures that showed how Eastern Woodlands natives lived, emphasizing an environment different from the West. Regional differences offered learning experiences for visitors to partake in—clam bakes, making dugout canoes, craft making, and storytelling.

Adjacent to the food vendors, a bustling Indian Market features more than 100 artists and their handmade art works. The range is astounding—spiny oyster shells in brilliant oranges and rare purples, silver rings with in-lay and wide-band cuffs, beaded leather moccasins and leggings that peeked between the fringed side slits of matching leather tunics; split white oak and other types of basketry; netted hoops of dreamcatchers

in a range of colors: ruby, teal, deep amber, emerald, midnight so that something appealed to all; great bronze sculptures, larger-than-life warriors perched on rocky cliffs, sinewy bodies drawing bows with upward glances and eagles with exaggerated wingspans silhouetted against the mid-day sun; contemporary spirit horses in porcelain, peppered with mottled colors of smokey blue/white, melon/plum, or graduated flaxen and grey, arranged in a pattern for display, all facing left, dozens of them all at once, as if they are stampeding and cannot be confined on the wall of their cramped quarters; amethyst, onyx, coral, and turquoise rings in raised brilliant settings of filigree; native flutes and wooden instruments; plumed headgear; paintings of gouache; woven woolen carpets; graphic illustrations of Indian youth; wedding vases and clay pottery; brightly colored blankets and buffalo hides; carvings from animal horn, bone, and antlers.

However, amidst this cavalcade of “authentic” Indianness, there are deficiencies within the perfection of artworks. Tents, in various colors, materials, and condition, reveal impromptu supports—posts erected and roped with tarps, and the undulating row of tents, once linear but creating its own arrangement. The Art Market lies alongside food tents so there is no clear delineation where food venues end and where the art market begins. RVs and motor homes are parked amidst vendor tents. Families cluster about, working on crafts, weaving baskets or carving a wooden statue, with shavings or threads that fall haphazardly to the ground. Artists work busily while sitting on lawn chairs or converse with others in pop-up canvas chairs with built-in cup holders on the arms. A dancer, emerging from an RV and half-dressed in regalia, heads to the dance arena but stops to greet and shake hands with an acquaintance. Some family members cook food,

the air billowing from smoke, and of course, share meals with friends and neighbors. Laughter and merriment fill the air. Pow wows are, after all, community affairs, and those in the circuit look forward to rekindling friendships and enjoying the festive air that defines “Indian” in the cultural compilation of dance, song, sports, food, and of course, art. One artist at *Schemitzun* observed:

As I set up my stand people would come around and get me caught up on the latest gossip. Then I would go around and do the same. Some people we know are just there to dance, not to compete in the dancing, but to dance for the pure joy of it. These people would ‘hang out’ at our booth and spell us at times during the event. As good, old friends that we love, we would usually end up laughing all day. Friends are one of the best things that makes powwows special. And then there is the food, the aromas, the music, and camaraderie.¹⁰⁴

The non-symmetrical layout of tents and parked RVs, atypical of *Schemitzun* as well as other pow wows, appear to accentuate the jovial atmosphere:

When you get there, you see acres and acres of wigwams, teepees, and RVs, a beautiful sight.¹⁰⁵

The site of the *Schemitzun* pow wow stands in sharp contrast to the glass, steel, and concrete structures of the Foxwoods complex. Like a modern Land of Oz, the gleaming towers of Foxwoods rise above the thick canopies of Connecticut forests, beckoning gamblers as they approach the collection of structures, the largest casino-hotel complex in the country. A short distant from, but easily accessible to the pow wow, visitors tired of the daily activities can hop on a convenient shuttle that loops to and fro, linking the grand casino to the earthen pow wow. The imposing casino complex is the opposite of the pow wow site—made of stone, modern, shiny, with fiber-optic light fountains, and a

¹⁰⁴ Dale Carson, “Powwows: Social, Cultural and Spiritual Celebrations,” *CrossPaths*, Summer 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Main Street shopping center—a structure that is part-public, part-private but, like the pseudo-Greek palaces, golden fantasies, exotic marinas and Margaretville’s of Atlantic City, cater to a wide-range of constituents, not strictly American Indians. Man-made and natural, fabricated and real, strange and familiar, the casino complex and the pow wow are the dichotomies of Indian-owned and operated entities—a “real” Indian community event versus commercial venture.

Returning to Washington, D.C. The NMAI would present a similar contrast to the Indian Market as Foxwoods Casinos did to the *Schemitzun* Pow Wow: Indian owned and operated art booths (in Indian Market) situated near an imposing structure designed not solely for Indians, but for a wide range of constituents. And so, the Museum itself served as a parallel Foxwoods—imposing and grand, and open to all visitors. Although considered “a native place, it was after all, a Smithsonian structure that symbolized power, wealth, prestige and privilege.

But the First Americans Festival Indian Market would not parallel *Schemitzun*’s Indian Market. No RVs or motor homes would be allowed. There would be no Indians “hanging out” and “laughing all day” in a booth, no aroma of food in the area or the sounds of music since the songs and melodies of native peoples occurred far from the Market, on center plots in the National Mall. No cowboys, cattle, longhorns, or buck-a-roo rodeo. No Pot-o-Johns within sight, no mismatched tents, no replicas of Indian dwellings would be allowed on the property near this grand structure: it would be a sanitized Indian Market.

Looking at *Schemitzun* as a model for Indian Market revealed certain aspects that could be mimicked for the Festival's Indian Market. But the relaxed social atmosphere, animals, motor homes, and informal displays were not desired by the CFCH, the producers of Indian Market. From the beginning of the planning process, committee members were reminded that this Festival "was not a pow wow", to avoid "pow wow mentality", and to think differently about presentation, the type of art to be selected, and the atmosphere of Indian Market. In short, since Indian Market would be part of the Smithsonian, the Committee needed to understand the importance of an "image" of an "aesthetically pleasing" market.¹⁰⁶

LANGUAGE

A system would be needed to solicit artists throughout the western hemisphere, for a means to announce the competitive spots and to judge the criteria of work—the goal to eventually choose artists for the Festival's Indian Market. NMAI Indian committee members argued that their identity should not rely on conceived categories made up by anthropologists who lumped Indian cultures into neat categories or grouped them into major language groups. Certainly, the academically-established restrictive language groups, according to the committee, did not fairly describe over 500 nations in the western hemisphere. Even if Indian artists were defined by a geographic region, there would be an array of indigenous customs, practices, and art. How could one distinction

¹⁰⁶ Notes from production meetings, March and April 2004. These concerns dealt with security issues related to the federal government property as well as aesthetics and an "image" desired by the Smithsonian. The comments about "pow wow mentality" referred to the presence of RVs/motor homes, raggedy tents and tarps, and behaviors around artist's booths including camping out, eating and drinking, smoking, and laughing loudly. The design and presentation of booths had been successfully accomplished by The

define the Pacific Northwest tribal groups of the Bella Coola, Haida, Kwakiutls, Makah, Nez Perce, *Nisqualli*, Nootka, Quinault, Puyallup, Salish, S'Klallam, Snohomish, Spokane, Shuswap, Swinomish, Tlingit, and the Tsimshian? These tribes have an affinity with the salmon, deer, bear, eagle, moose—iconic animal figures, archetypes, and sacred beings that represented apical ancestors of clan societies. Their thick forests yielded massive timbered logs that they carved into poles, stacked with animal figures, or more commonly known as totems. Massive wood houses harbored numerous families during long, cold winters—their seasonal hibernation promulgating the idiosyncrasies of rituals and ceremonies of masked societies and the *potlatch*, so eloquently described by Marcel Mauss—the exchange practice of power and privilege, intriguing and complex but disturbing in its means of encapsulating status, wealth, debt, retribution, death, and revenge.

How could one area describe the cultural groups of the Six Nations, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy or Iroquois League? The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora of the Great Lakes region renown for their organizational ingenuity of government matters, diplomacy, and policy. The “People of the Longhouse”—fought for the French and English and some allied a young America seeking freedom from British reign. Their corn husk dolls and figures—effigies of a Sacred Mother from origin myths who sacrifices her “flesh” to feed the populace—symbols of her sacrifice to offspring that will populate the world.

Lotus Bazaar and Haitian Market artists who created outstanding booth presentations with bamboo, fabric, plants, and painted backdrops.

How could Indian cultures throughout southern United States be lumped together as one group? Here were the descendants who fought the Spanish, provided refuge to escaped African-American slaves, and survived colonial encroachment by hiding deep in the swamps and everglades. This was the homeland of the Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee-Creek, Seminole, Choctow, survivors of the *Nunna daul Isunyi* or more commonly known as “The Cherokee Trail of Tears”—Andrew Jackson’s enforcement of the Indian Removal Act of 1830—which exchanged Indian land in the East for lands west of the Mississippi River, but which was never accepted by Indian leaders or a majority of the Cherokee people. During the forced removal and relocation of the tribes, from the southeast to Oklahoma, Indians suffered from starvation, exposure, and disease. Many died, including over a third of the Cherokee nation.

Now, in a position of power to control *something* in this Festival—Indian Market Committee members desired to show how diverse Indian cultures really were. Homogeneity may be the stuff of human biology but not human culture. But the myth of harmoniousness that Indians are the same and have few conflicts was not the intended message. Dividing artists and their respective artworks into categories of their own decision was part of creating an identity that would be revealed to a global audience of Festival visitors. And so they decided, as a committee, that Indians would not be lumped into language groups, but by a category they called “Regions of Representation” in an attempt to represent all Indian cultures in the western hemisphere. The committee decided on twelve categories: Alaska, California, Eastern Woodlands, Great Basin, Great Lakes Region, Hawai‘i, Northeast, Pacific Northwest, Plains, Southeast, Southwest, and

Other, a category reserved for the Canadian/First Nations groups, the Caribbean, or Latin American.¹⁰⁷

However, despite their argument about Indian culture being lumped into groups “made up by anthropologists”, the final decision of the twelve categories was not unique. being lumped into a Akin to William C. Sturtevant’s monographic series, *The Handbook of North American Indians* (1978). Furthermore, in 1923, Kroeber developed classifications for American Indian groups that he called “culture-areas” or “culture-centers”. He does not specify why Indians are grouped in these regions:

These geographically defined types of culture are gradual and empirical findings. They are not the product of a scheme or imagination, nor the result of theory. They are not even the formulation of any one mind. They do represent a consensus of opinion as to the classification of a mass of facts, slowly arrived at, contributed by many workers, probably accepted in exact identity by no two of them but in essential outlines by all; in short, a non-philosophical, inductive, mainly unimpeachable organization of phenomena analogous to the “natural” classification of animals and plants on which systemic biology rests.¹⁰⁸

The culture areas, centers, or types “recognized” by Kroeber are:

1. Arctic or Eskimo: coastal
2. Northwest of North Pacific Coast: also a coastal strip
3. California or California-Great Basin
4. Plateau: the northern inter-mountain region
5. Mackenzie-Yukon: the northern interior forest and tundra tract
6. Plains: the level or rolling prairies of the interior
7. Northeast or Northern Woodland: also timbered
8. Southeast or Southern Woodland: also timbered

¹⁰⁷ Published articles and Letters of Reference became optional but recommended. Decisions regarding booth fees for the Indian Market artists were based on extra costs to the artists for travel, accommodations, parking, and meals in Washington, DC. Because of the problems with Haitian Market, booth fees and costs were comparable to similar pow wows and art markets. Notes from meeting, February 2004. The categories for Primary Medium included: Basketry, Beadwork, Dolls or Toys, Illustration & Drawing, Instruments, Jewelry, Painting, Photography, Pottery, Sculpture & carvings, Textiles & Attire, Mixed Media, and Other. Many American Indians who worked in the Museum were from the Southwest as were many well-known artists. The Call for Artists asked for a description of artworks, how they incorporated materials, methods and techniques, and any historical and cultural significance of the items. Including Personal Statements, resumes, and photographs in the application process would enhance these descriptions. In creating the different categories in the Regions of Representation, the Committee hoped to improve the pool of artists since there would be more areas for artists instead of fewer areas. In addition, the Committee did not want to select too many artists from one a single region which, they believed, showed favoritism.

¹⁰⁸ Kroeber, 336.

9. Southwest: the southern plateau, sub-arid
10. Mexico: from the tropic to Nicaragua

A comparison of the areas designated by the Indian Market committee members to Kroeber's classifications reveals nearly identical lists of geographic regions. Kroeber hints of devising his categories by a type of "natural system" but otherwise does not provide concrete reasons for the selections. Similarly, committee members of Indian Market did not give specific reasons for creating their categories, including similar and/or cultural differences between Indians in the regions, and whether they were influenced by Kroeber, Sturtevant, or any other scholars.

TRIBAL AFFILIATION

For the Festival's Indian Market, authenticity meant that a work of art or craft should be made by an Indian, not by a non-Indian nor sold by a trader. This criterion had one big obstacle: proof of heritage through tribal enrollment, state or federal and thus confirming the authenticity or "genuine ethnicity" of an artist. Typically, Indian art markets require the submission of a tribal enrollment card as proof of Indian heritage. Including the card, the committee believed, would dissuade "traders or other people who just buy art and make the money instead of the artists."¹⁰⁹ However, not all indigenous groups have tribal enrollment cards including native Hawaiians nor indigenous groups in Latin America such as the Quechua (Peru, northern South America), the largest indigenous group of the western hemisphere and the Maya (Guatemala and Mexico), the second largest group. Some Indians in the United States, such as the Piscataway of

Maryland are neither a federally recognized nor a state-recognized group. To require proof of tribal heritage by identification cards meant that these groups, and many others, would not be considered.

Many Indians believe that tribal enrollment requirements contribute to the cultural preservation, unique traditions, and distinctiveness of each tribe. Enrollment criteria differ for each tribe; no uniform membership exists. Criteria for each tribe are found in tribal documents, constitutions, and articles; membership criteria are established on traditions, customs, and language. Typically, blood quantum or lineage must be determined by proof/documentation of their family genealogy, which describes how one is connected to the tribe by blood or marriage, relationship or decedence from a tribal member.

The Committee also questioned the contentious wording on tribal identity was another sentence added by senior management

Please attach documentation to establish that merchandise is Indian-made in accordance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act.¹¹⁰

The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 describe Indian products—art works and crafts as “made by an Indian that are in a traditional or non-traditional style or medium.”¹¹¹ The Act serves as a basis for determining what should be considered an

¹⁰⁹ Notes from meeting, February 13, 2004.

¹¹⁰ NMAI senior management asked Smithsonian lawyers to review and approve the *Call to Artists* before its release to the public. The bottom of the prospectus included information about the Indian Arts and Crafts Act: “The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-644) prohibits misrepresentation in the marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States. It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian tribe or Indian arts and crafts, organization, resident within the United States. For a first time violation of the Act, an individual can face civil or criminal penalties up to a \$250,000 fine or a 5-year prison term, or both. If a business violates the Act, it can face civil penalties or can be prosecuted and fined up to \$1,000,000.00. Under the Act, an Indian is defined as a member of any federally or State recognized Indian tribe, or an individual certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe.”

¹¹¹ This definition is under §309.2 The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 was established by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) which was created in 1935. Public Law 101-644, 104 Stat. 4662. See Federal Register, Vol. 68, No. 114, June 12, 2003. A craft item

“Indian product” and what is not and makes it illegal to sell any art or craft product that falsely suggests it is Indian-produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian tribe. The law leans towards products that are *Indian made*—only by Indian labor and Indian production but does not include ideas, concepts, or materials (i.e., beads) nor does it protect the use of traditional or sacred cultural symbols, patterns, and designs.¹¹² In 2003, an amendment to the Act removed confused words including “Indian style” and “Indian inspired” and addressed the issue of non-Indians producing Indian-styled products. The committee questioned inserting the Act but relieved that the Act also stated that non-Indians *may* produce products that “look” Indian but cannot be marketed as made by an Indian and should be clearly marked as “non-Indian made.”¹¹³

How then, to revisit the models for Indian Market, did *Schemitzun* and other Indian Markets handle the issue of tribal identity? *Schemitzun* featured “certified Native American artists”. Artists interested in the highly-competitive and well-juried Santa Fe Indian Market (that selects 1200 artists) must submit a CIB number of Certificate of Indian Blood: All applicants must be enrolled members of a U.S. Federally recognized

created before 1935 is exempt from these regulations through the grandfather clause. The Act also states criminal penalties for the misrepresentation of Indian-produced goods and products that are punishable by fines, imprisonment, or both.

¹¹² See §309.2.2. There is also much latitude to product types, designs, and materials that can be used and even addresses “art forms to be developed in the future.” Commercial products such as beaded ink pens, key chains, or desk accessories are also included. These items are considered Indian products so long as they are made *entirely* by Indians. Reproductions of original works of art made by Indians (i.e., prints or small statues) are also considered an Indian product as long as *every person* involved in the production process is Indian. Indians are also allowed to use commercially-produced items, such as tin cans, kitchen utensils, and bottles so long as they are “substantially transformed entirely by Indian labor into an art and craft object, such as sculpture, the result is an Indian product.” See §309.6. The Act was amended on September 10, 2003 and addressed many issues that were not included in the original act.

¹¹³ See Definition of an “Indian Product,” §309.2(d) While the IACB acknowledged the significant concerns cited by the respondent, the protection of Indian cultural symbols, patterns, and designs, and related cultural property of an Indian tribe, clan, or moiety is a matter of cultural patrimony and beyond the scope of the 1990 Act, unless misrepresentation is involved. Examples of *non-qualifying products* include:

- (i) A product in the style of an Indian art or craft product made by non-Indian labor;
- (ii) A product in the style of an Indian art or craft product that is designed by an Indian but produced by non-Indian labor;
- (iii) A product in the style of an Indian art or craft product that is assembled from a kit;
- (iv) A product in the style of an Indian art or craft product that is assembled from a kit originating from a commercial product, without substantial transformation provided by Indian artistic or craft work labor;

Tribe or Alaska Native Corporation. The *Gathering of Nations* Indian Trader Market, which features over 800 artists, accepts applications on a first come/first served basis but cautions that “Only authentic Indian arts and crafts will be permitted to be sold.” *Red Earth* Pow wow requires

A clear copy of one of the following: Tribal Membership Card, Official Document Certifying Indian Artisan, Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood, Federal, State or Tribal Document establishing Indian Lineage” with a blank line for “Tribal Affiliation” and “Enrollment Number.

The Committee stalled as they wanted these groups to be eligible for application.

Clarification on this touchy subject reached higher echelons as upper management of both the NMAI (Grand Steering Committee) and the CFCH pondered the question—and for several weeks. Finally, they responded with a controversial decision: there would be *no* requirement to prove Indian heritage. Instead of asking for tribal enrollment cards, the application would ask for “Tribal Affiliation(s) Represented in Merchandise.” This confusing and made-up term meant that groups neither federal- or state-recognized nor the indigenous groups outside of the U.S and could apply. But it also meant that an Indian from one tribe/nation could sell work from a different Indian group and that *any* person, including non-Indians and traders, could also apply. The Committee was disappointed by this decision but had to obey as they were overruled by senior managers.

It took weeks for the Indian Market Committee to finalize the prospectus/application. And it took several more weeks for senior managers to decide on the contentious “Tribal Affiliation” requirement, thus further delaying public release of

(v) A product in the style of an Indian art or craft product that is produced in an assembly line or related production line process using multiple workers not all whom are Indians. For example, if twenty people make up the labor to create the product(s), and one person is not Indian, the product is not an “Indian product.”

the prospectus. The issue was resolved only two weeks before the scheduled application deadline allowing a ridiculous window of time for interested Indian artists to apply into a *national* Indian Market. By the time the prospectus was released to the newspapers, the Internet, and on the radio, only the most adept artists, especially those accustomed to government processes, made the deadline. The limited timeframe resulted in many negative responses from the Indian community, including *Indian Country* which saw this as a political maneuver that favored Indians who had contacts at the NMAI. Artists needed time to prepare application packets. Many could not meet the deadline.¹¹⁴

LOCATION

However, many tribes are not federally recognized but maintain state recognition. There is no tribe in Virginia that is federally-recognized and the Lumbee of North Carolina have partial-federal recognition.

FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

There are over 500 federally recognized tribal governments composed from bands or tribes in the United States. Originally, the tribes were recognized through treaties, presidential proclamations, and executive orders until the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, an important component in federally recognizing legal status, particularly to those tribes which had already established a relationship with the government. Federal

¹¹⁴ The CFCH established a deadline based on contractor estimates and on a schedule that would not interfere with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, their annual event that was operating during this process of selection. Meeting the deadline was critical as it impacted the schedules and duties of Festival staff who were working simultaneously on *both* the Folklife Festival and the First Americans Festival.

recognition acknowledged the right of tribes to self-govern, to develop tribal sovereignty, and to exercise the freedoms and independence accompanying self-determination.

Federally-recognized Indians receive federal benefits, health programs, education/funding, monies from the federal government to pay certain tribes' royalties for leased properties, mining rights, water rights, etc. Casino gambling on tribal lands has provided a dramatic economic base for tribes, whereas tribal members share in the revenues and increasing competition by tribal groups to gain federal recognition and the right to operate gaming on reservations. Gaining recognition is a way for Native American groups to assert their identity, their Indianness.

COMPETITIONS BY WHITE ORGANIZERS

In the early twentieth century, white organizers held competitions to find “the best” Indian artists. Indian crafts fairs, organized by reservation traders, was designed for white patrons and later developed into an idea of creating arts and crafts competitions. Certain traders realized that they could ensure both the quality and quantity of particular native products, by instilling in the craftspersons a competitive spirit. Competitions, such as Feast Days traditionally provided the public stage for warriors to play out their personal rivalries. Now, the trader could acknowledge the workmanship he preferred through the selective awarding of small prizes of foodstuffs or currency. In addition, winners received recognition for their exemplary skills among tribal communities, as the winning item would be placed on public display.¹¹⁵ According to J.J. Brody (1976), who

¹¹⁵ C. Amsden, *Navajo Weaving*. Santa Ana, CA., 1934.

studied the Hopi Craftsmen Shows from 1931 to 1941, art market competitions did not depend on the idea of selling. The practice of weaving traditional items “with an eye to sell them to white buyers” did not appear to have operated as a factor in the Indian’s survival since much of the material on display at these shows was marked “not for sale,” showing a desire to compete for recognition and awards, but not to sell.¹¹⁶

However, contests and competitions among indigenous artisans extended beyond the “warrior spirit” and the need for recognition within the community. Competitions also benefited organizers and affected designs, styles, and types of products developed by artisans for competitive (and later sale) purposes. However, there were drawbacks in developing art to accommodate white standards. Constant exposure and competition with the dominant culture tended to, says Graburn, “down-value” indigenous standards, a process that eventually could “stifle the expression of a self-image, replacing it with one representing the values of the dominated culture.”¹¹⁷ Among these values was the tendency to divide indigenous art into categories that suited the tastes of white patrons.¹¹⁸

Early twentieth century competitions were organized by philanthropic groups, according to Edwin L. Wade (1985), whose mission was “to convey the unique and special qualities of the Indian and to show the nation that this was a heritage worth preserving.” Such exhibitions were ostensibly for the betterment of Indian people, but

¹¹⁶ J.J. Brody, “The Creative Consumer: Survival, Revival, and Invention in Southwest Indian Arts,” *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, ed. Nelson H.H. Graburn, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 92. The Hopi Craftsmen shows were held at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff. Brody’s material derives from an analysis by Dr. Alfred Whiting (1942).

¹¹⁷ Graburn, 360.

¹¹⁸ Néstor García Canclini, *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 29. Canclini believed that although high art and low art/crafts came together formally during moments of national unity, they were separated into two categories—setting up different ways for their management, awarding prizes, or representing their country abroad. Crafts were typically entered into competitions or popular art; works of art were set up in exhibitions.

each year the events tended to be more *about* Indians, and less *for* them.¹¹⁹ Two distinct groups who were interested in promoting Indian competitions: *humanists* and dealers or *traders*, differed in their means of promoting Indian art. Humanists argued that the preservation of Indian culture was the most important aspect of artisan production. To them, arts and crafts were inseparable from the culture and if permitted to die or degenerate, would take with them a significant part of the culture. Dealers or traders were less concerned about the stability of Indian societies. Instead, they sought to create a product popular enough to provide a relatively stable economic base for the reservation—since more money for Indian artists meant more money in their own pockets. To achieve commercial success they were willing to have native artists discard traditional and generally time-consuming techniques, such as using vegetable dyes in textiles, or ancestral designs of limited interest to Anglos.¹²⁰

The goals of these competing groups resulted in selection criteria used to accept items for competitions that emphasized the *quality* of products. Humanists, who collaborated with museums, imposed strict criteria for judging items. In the case of ceramics or pottery-making, for example, they measured the thicknesses of clay, judged firing and surfacing techniques, and looked for “balance of design”. Similar standards applied to basket designs and the use of aniline (synthetic) dyes instead of natural dyes.¹²¹ Traders, on the other hand, did not care for such things, had difficulty selling certain objects like Hopi blankets because asking prices were high due to the labor involved and

¹¹⁹ Edwin L. Wade, “The Ethnic Art Market in the Southwest,” *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, Edited by George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 178.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 180.

customers found traditional patterns boring. Similarly, traders rejected attempts to reinstitute natural dyes, techniques, and patterns by Navajo weavers because they had a steady market for Navajo rugs—a position which they were not willing to compromise because of the humanists’ demands.¹²²

Throughout the twentieth century, the desire by both Indian artists and traders to create products for monetary sales increased. According to Wade, financial success attracted the most talented native artists away from the humanists. The larger the sales, the greater commitment of the artists; the certainty of an object’s purchase, since it conformed to the ideals of Art Fair sponsors, guaranteed that its style would emulated.¹²³ Well into the next millennium, Indian artists were independent business owners and vendors in Indian markets throughout the United States. Small wonder then, to return to the Indian artists who successfully applied to Indian Market, that the art reviewed by the Committee would reveal a range of artworks, many of them influenced by this marked history and the desires and goals of humanists and traders.

THE FINAL DECISION (IN DETERMING THE TERMS OF “AUTHENTICITY”)

During a one-week period, Committee members traveled to the CFCH Office for the review and rating process. Unlike a formal panel review where members assemble as a group, discuss issues, and make final decisions, Committee members came at different intervals, basically whenever they could find time from their everyday responsibilities.

¹²¹ Synthetic dyes had been introduced to Hopi weavers and basket makers since the late 1800s. Blankets with aniline dyes were rejected for competitions since they did not use traditional, natural, or vegetable dyes that were more costly and labor-intensive. However, humanist groups insisted that weavers adhere to these processes to assure the quality of their work.

¹²² See Wade, 181-182. According to Wade, white patrons found little use with the traditional flat-style baskets produced by southwestern Indians and instead preferred the deep “wastepaper basket” shapes.

Therefore, not all applicants were rated by every committee member; some applicants had more and some had fewer rating sheets than others. A percentage system, designed to remedy this dilemma, considered the number of Raters times the maximum points possible. Next, the maximum points were divided by the actual score by the Raters. For example, if there were 6 Raters, the maximum score would be 120 points (6 raters @ 20 points each = 120 points). If an Artist received a total score of 70 points out of the possible 120, then 120 divide by 70 would be 58%. Then, the “Region of Representation” was reviewed which revealed that regions were well-represented and other regions were not. The Committee responded by changing the original Regions category to reflect the pool of applicants they had received, resulting in “getting rid” of some categories, adding new categories, or switching artists to benefit the new categories.¹²⁴

Questionable maneuvers by the committee continued with reviews of artists who had a previous relationship with NMAI or personal acquaintance; approving of artists who “looked Indian” from photographs; favoring artwork connected to an ancient Indian past, historical moment, or archaeological object; and supporting art objects produced from the earth, especially from Indian reservations.

Mircea Giordi, a Pacific Northwest artist, submitted only four photographs of her clothing designs and no images of her proposed booth design. Giordi, one of only a few American Indian fashion designers in the country and well-known amongst the committee members, earned high scores. Confused, when the Committee was asked

¹²³ Wade, 184-185.

¹²⁴ The new Regions and the number of artists per Region consisted of: Alaska (2), California (2), Canada (6), Northeast (2), Pacific Northwest (1), Plains (4), Southeast (2), Southwest (6), Latin America (5), (6)Eastern Woodlands (2), Great Lakes (1), Hawai‘i (1).

about her incomplete application and high scores they responded, “Yes, but she is Mircea Giordi!”¹²⁵

Photographs were meant to enhance an artist’s description of their work. But when Teresa Rodrigo, a Kumeyaay/Southern Diegueno basketmaker sent photographs with her application on a CD, the committee never looked at them. Written on her score sheets were comments including “Not enough photos of her work” and “Application does not include photos of booth”. Nevertheless, she still scored “Excellent” on the quality of her artwork and her booth design. How could there be high recommendations when no one looked at her digital photos? After much insistence, the her photographs were reviewed which revealed images of the broad selection of baskets she had designed. Clearly, Rodrigo possessed impressive technical skills demonstrated in the fine artistry and excellent quality of her work. When committee members were asked why they selected Rodrigo without looking at samples of her work, several of them replied, “Yes, but we *know* Teresa.”¹²⁶

Furthermore, Rodrigo’s photo revealed another element that influenced reviewers who did not know her: she *looked* Indian. Her digital photographs included two different types of images: portfolio-style high-res solitary images of art, and photographs of her family, children, and friends. Dressed in traditional clothing, Rodrigo stood in front of adobe dwellings in a southwestern environment—mountains behind her, desert lands, and cactus and also shared photos holding baskets with two white patrons.

¹²⁵ Notes from meeting, May 25, 2004.

¹²⁶ Notes from meeting, May 25, 2004.

Another southwestern artist, Charlie Livingstone, a *katsina* carver, also included photographs of himself. Livingstone, wearing a red headband and posing with one of his carvings, stood in the midst of his kitchen holding one of his katsinas. The photograph shows a cluttered kitchen with outdated cabinets, many large metal cooking pots, plastic hanging over a door, and 1950s vinyl kitchen chairs. No one on the Committee criticized the photographs which were clearly not portfolio quality. However, several committee members jokily discussed Livingstone's unique space:

"Hey, this is a typical Indian kitchen."

"This looks just like my grandmother's kitchen."

The photographs of Rodrigo and Livingstone, in their traditional clothing, adobe buildings, and Indian homes convincingly showed the Committee that these artists were "authentic" Indians. These photographs became a powerful form of communicating traditional culture to the Committee because they showed an artist that *looked* Indian. With her braided hair, clothing, and moccasins, Rodrigo could not be mistaken as anything other than a "real" Indian as well as Livingstone, posing in an unmistakably "typical Indian kitchen."

However, although the Committee was convinced that they were looking at "real" Indians, there is a danger, according to Graburn, when "everyday objects and portraits of village life" became "an important part of other commercial forms." He cautioned the use of images claiming that the "need for understanding and realism, combined with the romantic impulse, is behind the popularity of certain completely non-native assimilated

arts.”¹²⁷ Images of Indians, such as the ones submitted by Rodrigo and Livingstone, could be taken two-fold—as a document showing a native artist in their everyday lives, or that items in photographs (i.e., adobes, headbands, braids) added to clichéd images of Indian culture. Similar, Wade agreed that “costumes” enhanced the image of Indians to non-natives/tourists and when Indians were “out of costume” they “were too much like other poor Americans,” devoid of magic and the “nobility of the savage.”¹²⁸

HOW THE COMMITTEE REACTED TO DIFFERENT WAYS OF DEFINING THE MEANING OF “AUTHENTICITY”

The Committee favored art work connected to an ancient Indian past, a historical moment, or archaeological object. However, little did they realize that many of the things they favored originated with non-Indian preservationists. Part of the work of the humanists during the early- and mid-twentieth century included programs for Indian artists, in order to preserve “traditional” techniques, materials, and methods, and *revivals*—or the development of art based on an unrelated ancient past. For instance, in the 1950s, archaeologists excavated prehistoric Anasazi and thirteenth-century Mimbres earthenware sites near the Acoma Pueblo Indians who began incorporating the Mimbres style into their work. This earthenware influenced the work of several pottery-making families who eventually became well-known for this specific type of “authentic” ancient pottery. However, even though the archaeological sites were hundreds of miles from the reservation and there was little evidence that the Mimbres were ancestors to the Acoma

¹²⁷ Graburn, 17.

¹²⁸ Wade, 179-180.

Pueblo Indians, these influences resulted in styles, designs, and patterns that would eventually be considered ancestral and traditional. Since the 1950s, the Mimbres designs have been directly correlated with Acoma Pueblo Indians, even though there is no proof of any relationships between the two groups. These influences continued throughout the twentieth century and into the art of the Acoma Pueblo today.¹²⁹

Yet the Acoma Pueblo are not the only group to develop artwork influenced by an “ancient” history shared by many artists working in pottery as well as basketry, painting, and jewelry-design. Indian Market committee members believed that art based on an ancient past represented “pure” Indian culture but would also be easily recognized by non-Indians because of its archaeological content.

It was no surprise then that Indian Market committee members were impressed by the ancient, pre-Conquest/pre-Columbian influences of the work of Bob Carlington, a southeast shell carver whose:

. . . hundreds of unique replicas and personal interpretations of Native American design are based on artifacts such as burial grounds, ornaments, and ceremonial objects that have survived the ravages of time in the Southeast.¹³⁰

Carlington based his “traditional iconography” on the Mississippian Period (1000 to 1600 A.D.). High-quality photographs of his designs included commentary from archeologists, anthropologists, and wildlife writers. Committee members described his art as “beautiful and unique,” “stunning, gorgeous,” and “detailed and different.” The quality of Carlington’s outstanding work and his reputation sanctioned by specialists in the

¹²⁹ According to Graburn, the “revival of archaic traditions” brought about “a sense of unique identity” that would link people to a past perhaps more glorious than the present. Graburn criticized this deliberate attempt to imitate and revive styles of ancient and glorious pasts as “archaism” and “a variant of ethnic entrenchment.” See Graburn, 25.

museum and archaeology fields virtually ensured Carlington a coveted spot in Indian Market. However, he did not include photos or drawings to show “Quality of Presentation/Booth Design” nor documentation for the question: “Does the applicant have the ability to manage a large volume of sales (for the six-day duration?)”. He scored a “0” (Not Included) on this question although two raters “presumed” he could do this task because he was “well-known” and “a professional.” Although his application was incomplete, Carlington still garnered a spot in Indian Market because of his outstanding artwork, expertise, technical skills, and professional experience. Furthermore, there was a shortage of applicants from the “Southeast” region, giving Carlington few competitors.¹³¹

Like Carlington’s ancient designs, medicine bags, though not ancient artifacts, but an integral part of Indian spirituality were items considered highly-traditional and authentic. Joliet McIntyre (Mohican) made only one type of item—small beaded amulet bags that *looked* like medicine bags. Claiming some “were historical, some are contemporary” with “a history from the early 1800s”, something that enhanced their unique qualities. Each bag required 4000 to 6000 delica beads and incorporated innovative methods, such as peyote stitch beadwork, which was “not considered the traditional style” of the Mohicans. Furthermore, she claimed, “This is art” marking each bag with a number and title (i.e., “Hiawatha Wampum Belt Design” or “Historical Menominee Design”). An article from a U.S. Department of Interior newsletter featuring her as Indian Artist of the Month, described her as a “contemporary bead worker” whose work was not “traditionally” Mohican, declaring that “Native American art need not be

¹³⁰ Artist’s promotional booklet.

¹³¹ Comments from artist’s evaluation.

“traditional” to be beautiful, relevant, and collectible.”¹³² Perhaps their identity removed them as “traditional” Mohican, but the close resemblance and function to medicine bags lent them an importance as cultural items based of early American Indian history.

Art objects associated with American history, especially with specific events or a work of art correlating with the Museum, convinced committee members that there would be both an authenticity attached to an object and an exceptionally recognition to non-Indians.

Describing his specialization in the “traditional medium of wampum” Lenape artist, Stephen Wolfe’s silver jewelry featured the carved polished artistry from the purple centers of quahogs—clams found along the northeast Atlantic coast “traditionally used by Eastern Native American Indian tribes as the source of wampum.”¹³³ Wampum, beads designed and arranged on strings and typically into elaborate “belts”, were used by American Indians during the colonial era as payment (“cash” wampum) for trading and sales, including land sales, or as objects of agreement or as treaties (“formal” wampum) between respective Indian nations and Americans. Formal wampum had meaning that extended beyond the cash value of the beads, not solely for economic transactions, but presented for special requests calling for cooperation and joint efforts. Colonial documents recorded numerous references to meetings or treaty signings at which strings of wampum or the more significant “belts” exchanged hands. Thus wampum was used, in lieu of a written treaty, as a form of commerce, negotiation, and agreement.

¹³² U.S. Department of Interior newsletter, Indian Craft Shop, February 2002.

¹³³ Letter from artist, May 17, 2004. In his statement, the term “wampum” is used to describe a type of jewelry design as well as its historic role—as a valuable Indian item used for trading, particularly as exchange gifts between tribes vowing allegiance or between Indians and whites who agree on peace. Wolfe also teaches people about the significance of wampum, the importance of preserving American Indian culture, and imitations and “fake” Indian art.

Benjamin West's 1771 *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians* shows the presentation of formal wampum, a special beaded belt, to Penn from officials of the Lenape Tribe. Meant to depict friendship and peace, the painting shows Penn amidst an Edenic harmonious world of nature and Indians. Historians argue whether the event took place at all and doubt that if it did occur, it would not have looked like the scene in West's painting. The well-known William Penn wampum belt, if presented to Penn, would have been given in conjunction with any of a number of possible requests. The West painting shows the joint efforts of two unified groups, even if it was imagined.

Historically, wampum represents mutual understanding, agreement, and trust. Over two centuries later, another work of art located inside the newly built NMAI depicted wampum in the same way, focusing on a contribution of Indians in colonial America.

A landing spot on the fourth floor of the new NMAI hosts a 19 ½ foot, 2200 lb. “bronze embodiment of friendship” statue of General George Washington holding a wampum belt with two members of the Oneida Nation, Skenandoah also known as Shenendoah, wampum keeper and inaugurator of government-to-government relations with the colonists during the Revolutionary War, and Polly Cooper, who accompanied Washington's soldiers during a 400 mile journey from upstate New York to Valley Forge, providing them with and teaching them how to prepare a valuable subsistence: corn. The statue commemorates the bonds between two nations—the Oneida Nation, allies of a young America who fought in several battles with Americans during the Revolutionary War. The bent arm of Washington shows a wampum belt draped, a symbol

between the two nations acknowledging mutual agreement regarding international affairs of each other. Several objects in the intricate sculpture also depict symbolism in Indian culture: a white pine tree towering over the grouped figures (a symbol of peace among the Oneida Nation and other nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy), an eagle, arrows (symbolizing unity), a rock (a marker), a turtle, wolf and bear (representing the three clans of the Oneida Nation), a little girl clutching a doll (the future), and corn, beans and squash, also called The Three Sisters—the sustainers of life for Indian peoples.

Corn, beans, and squash, as products from the earth/land have significance to Indian peoples as objects that yield from the earth/land. For committee members, objects from the land, especially those regarding political-legislative issues of protected Indian land, preservation, and sustainability as well as products from once-worthless reservation land would be important in representing Indian culture at the Festival's Indian Market. No market would be complete without including elements of nature's glorious bounty—cultivated, fashioned by Indian hands—representatives of the land and, like Indians, survivors of extreme conditions and events. Or so the committee imagined.

Wild rice, grown in the Lake Vermilion Reservation by the Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa, provided a model of an Indian program developed on reservation acreage established in an 1866 treaty. Tribal members-growers wearing wide-brimmed hats and long wooden poles riding out onto Nett Lake in hand-hewn canoes floating amongst grassy bundled tops emerging upward from still dark waters described a rice program organized by a multi-generational family. The program supported unemployed family members and put several children through college. However, images of the family

working in harmony, ending the day sitting in a circle heating wild rice that “popped” like popcorn disguised the very labor intensive methods needed to harvest the rice: “push poling” or “knocking” the rice into the canoe, an 8-10 hour a day process; hand-parching or processing by hand in a shallow pan over an open fire (1-3 hours); “finishing” or trashing and fanning the rice (4-8 hours); cleaning, packaging, and shipping.¹³⁴

Products from native lands included ni‘ihua shells—tiny shells from Kauai, reinstated through the efforts of native Hawaiians whose recent success in passing legislation included the protection of island coastal systems, preserved the ancient tradition of ni‘ihua leis, and made it illegal to market ni‘ihua imitations and for non-natives to sell ni‘ihua leis.¹³⁵ Few would imagine that ni‘ihua shells were nearly extinct because of white settlers. But native Hawaiian, once banned from collecting the shells, made valiant efforts to save this resource, stop wannabes from illegally marketing ni‘ihua imitation, and disallowing non-natives from selling ni‘ihua leis.

The smell of Moa‘ula (“Red Rooster”) Ka‘u Cloud Rest Coffee could bring images of verdant mountains, cerulean skies, tepid winds, and palm trees—a clichéd Paradise to some but the home of growers of newly-established coffee farms near the small, isolated town of Pahala. In 1866, Mark Twain, wrote about the residents of Pahala who demonstrated “a spirit and an independence not elsewhere to be found in Hawaii-

¹³⁴Vermilion Native Crafts began at the Lake Vermilion Reservation of the Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa. Wild rice is grown in the Nett Lake Reservation, located in northern Minnesota. See “Minnesota Indian Reservations,” Minnesota Statutes Chapter 888, Section 2 [now Section 3.922]. Bois Forte (Nett Lake) Reservation was established by an 1866 treaty with the U.S. Government and has 30,035 tribally owned acres and 11,744 allotted acres. Its acreage at Vermilion Lake was set aside as the Vermilion Lake Reservation by executive order on December 20, 1881. The rice project is part of a program administered by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. The Council claims that the Nett Lake area “is famous for wild rice that is reserved for the reservation members.” Vermilion Native Crafts started as a part-time, family business and expanded when many people asked about purchasing the rice. Wild rice harvest is “a huge family time for social togetherness along with the labor of the process of hand parched wild rice.” Letter from Mary Strong and Tracey Dagen (Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa), Vermilion Native Crafts, April 20, 2004.

nei”. This spirit was shattered during the recent shutdown of a sugar mill, the “lifeblood of the district” that supported the region for over 130 years and left the local residents devastated, without jobs, and economically oppressed. Ignored by their administrators who did little in developing their region, local natives organized themselves and created the “Red Rooster” coffee cooperative, proud of their project and hoping that exposure at the First Americans Festival would help their new venture.¹³⁶

A major element that impressed the Committee was the ability of these artists—Vermilion Native Crafts, Waimea Canyon General Store, and Moa‘ula Ka‘u Cloud Rest Coffee Farm and to produce occupational art products from their natural environment, finding ways to sustain cultural traditions, and produce an economically viable product. These artisans challenged the belief that Indian land given by the government could become something that was not worthless.¹³⁷

Furthermore, developing products from reservation and/or native-owned land correlated with Indian philosophies, building on the belief that tribal histories are land-

¹³⁵ Ni‘ihua shell leis and jewelry are sold with a Certificate of Authenticity. This group sold jewelry made by traditional methods without deviations to modern additions.

¹³⁶ Decalio, a displaced truck driver of the sugar mill, joined a program where old sugar cane fields could be transformed into coffee farms. Former sugar land (seven acres) was leased to Decalio for 15 years. The coffee farm began as a project to revive an economically oppressed region. In 1996, the closing of the C. Brewer Ka‘u Sugar Mill in the small town of Pahala, left many local residents without jobs. The shutdown forced many residents to drive up to 150 miles a day to larger areas, such as Hilo or Kona, where they found marginal work. The loss of jobs from the closing of the sugar mill has been described as a “wrenching experience” for its workers. Pahala is a relatively isolated area in Ka‘u, a region in the southeastern coast of Hawai‘i, and has a population of 5,607 residents. In 1866, Mark Twain wrote in the *Sacramento Union* about the uniqueness of this region: “The natives of the district have always dwelt apart from their fellow islanders—cut off from them by a desolate stretch of lava on one side and a mountain on the other and they have shown a spirit and an independence not elsewhere to be found in Hawaii-nei.” Residents, worried about losing their hospital, the future of their children, were divided between ideas of tourism, and angered by administrators who did little in developing their region. See Hunter Bishop, “Making Do in Ka‘u,” *Hawaiian Tribune Herald*, Hilo, Hawaii December 13, 1999. Although growing the coffee appeared to work well, marketing was a problem for Decalio and other coffee growers. Farmers were prohibited from using the name “Kona” or Kona-brand coffees (although they inhabit the Kona region) and had to find their own niche. In addition, coffee beans from Hawai‘i cannot be mixed. Some growers turned to the Internet, but found encountered problems with the slow pace of electronic marketing. After Decalio was invited to participate in the Smithsonian’s First Americans Festival MarketPlace, he sent 100 pounds of his “high elevation” Mauna Loa Volcano coffee that he describes as “hand picked, sun dried, and hand packaged.” See brochure, *Moa‘ula Ka‘u Cloud Rest Coffee*, December 2004. Today, the Farm harvests over 35,000 pounds of coffee beans per year. For Decalio, being part of the First Americans Festival meant exposure to his new business venture and aided him greatly with marketing dilemmas related to his island product.

centered. Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. believed that an understanding of land should extend beyond dominant western perspectives. In *For This Land* (1999), he argued that tribal histories, for the most part, are land-centered. Every feature of a landscape has stories attached to it. If a tribal group is very large or has lived on a particular piece of land for many generations, natural features evoke many stories attached to them. Tribal histories and land are spaces which involve ceremonies, thousands of years old, that are deeply imbedded in issues of community—an integral and critical component of Indian life.¹³⁷ According to Deloria, most ceremonies revolving about the calendar year and involving plants and animals were communal.¹³⁸ Furthermore, it was a unique accomplishment, according to Deloria, for Indians who found ways of sustaining their communities by using local resources and traditional methods of agriculture because it opposed the belief that Indian land should be developed in order to “tame the wilderness”.¹⁴⁰

SUMMARY

¹³⁷ Deloria argued that Indians “hold their land at the sufferance of the non-Indians. The typical white attitude is that Indians can have land as long as whites have no use for it.” See Vine Deloria, Jr. *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf* (New York: McMillan Company, 1970), 181.

¹³⁸ Vine Deloria, Jr., *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 252. Deloria insisted on an understanding of land that extended beyond dominant western perspectives. He argued that tribal histories, for the most part, are land-centered. Every feature of a landscape has stories attached to it. If a tribal group is very large or has lived on a particular piece of land for many generations, then natural features have many stories attached to them. Tribal histories and land are spaces which involve ceremonies, thousands of years old, that are deeply imbedded in issues of community—an integral and critical component of Indian life.

¹³⁹ According to Deloria, most ceremonies that occurred during specific times in a calendar year (i.e., seasons, solstices and equinoxes, etc.) and involving plants and animals, were communal in nature while ceremonies that dealt primarily with the individual involved family needs. See Deloria, 183.

¹⁴⁰ Vine Deloria, Jr., *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf* (New York: McMillan Company, 1970), 180. Deloria argued that since land is completely industrialized, the wealth of natural resources and technological invocations would force people to live in small tribal groups because it would be the only way to survive. Thus, whether the land is developed or not and whether the people desire it or not, the land determines the forms by which societies are able to live on this continent.

These are some things important to Indian peoples—the land, the environment, sustaining tradition, and providing a viable economic means to support their families and community. However, the selection of artists who provide products from Indian lands serves a double-message here: on one hand, items such as rice, coffee and shells become symbolic of political and social statements and communicate issues integral to Indian communities.

On the other hand, the selection process of Indian Market demonstrated that Committee members operated independent of a formalized process and selected art work by artists whom *they* felt were the most representative for the Festival—so long as they were “traditional”—whether they were art objects or products from native lands. The Committee took it upon themselves and created their own variables that defined a “traditional” Indian whether it was a tribal enrollment card, written texts or supporting documents from archaeologists and academics, photographs that showed a “real” Indian, or if they knew the artist as a personal or professional acquaintance. Ironically, even though the Committee wanted to steer away from categories “made up by anthropologists” and create their own Regions of Representation, their final list of Regions was nearly identical to categories created by A.L. Kroeber over 80 years ago.

Furthermore, since this was considered a Smithsonian market, committee members selected artworks that framed a national identity. Similar to what Handler and Linnekin found in their case studies, the group decided to use things bound in heritage and ancestry (“handed down”), based on “naturalism” or natural elements, and incorporating a government law (the Indian Arts and Crafts Act). This maneuver has real

ramifications for all those involved—the Indian artists, the committee members, and the Museum, that include recognition and notoriety, benefits, economic and professional opportunities, and revenue and funding opportunities from increased visitation.

Finally, although Committee members felt that they achieved the goals they set for selecting traditional artists, their choices did little to change imagery associated with American Indian culture—images of buffalo, birds, pottery, and feathers. Let us return to the Mohegan jeweler who did not get chosen for the market because her artwork appeared “strange” or “something from *Lord of the Rings*.” The artist was not criticized on the quality of her jewelry (silverwork and semi-precious stones), the techniques she used (methods “passed down”), or professionalism (awards, acceptance into juried shows, etc.). The major concern regarding her work was that it did not “look” Indian. Therefore, her “look” would not “fit in” with the rest of the artworks chosen by Indian Market committee members.

Tradition means different things to different people. In this study, tradition came to a consensus by a small group of people in a larger framework who felt that what they chose was not only “authentic”, and thus, a good representative of Indian culture, but a marker of group identity—elements of their own perspectives as to what would define them (as a group) as “Indian” to a global audience.

III. Native America's Most Wanted and the Authentic T-Shirt

This is going to be a design melee

—Richard Kurin, *Director*
Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

While the “traditional” model described in the last chapter focused on the participation of experts as well as American Indians, the “salvage paradigm” model involved outsiders who were under the impression that they were saving, rescuing, or recovering what they believed was something that was about to be lost. This chapter examines a model of authenticity based on the “salvage paradigm”.

A glance of the understanding of the “salvage paradigm” as interpreted by those in the field of anthropology and art history will be considered first.

AUTHENTICITY: A MODEL OF THE “SALVAGE PARADIGM”

JAMES CLIFFORD

James Clifford (1987) defines the “salvage paradigm” as “a desire to rescue ‘authenticity’ out of destructive historical change.”¹⁴¹ The “rescuing” is done by a dominant culture which perceives that a subordinate culture is dead or is dying from disease, encroachment, war, or displacement and attempts to save or *salvage* it from

¹⁴¹ James Clifford, “Of Other Peoples: Beyond the “Salvage” Paradigm,” *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 121.

oblivion. For Clifford, the “salvage paradigm” recalls early 20th-century anthropology and the “salvage ethnography” of scholars who documented cultural practices of Indians whom they believed would soon “disappear”. A.L. Kroeber and his Boasian colleagues recorded languages and stories of California Indians while in the Pacific, Bronislaw Malinowski recorded ““authentic” Trobriand Island culture, believing that it would soon perish.

The practice of “salvage” continues today with ethnographies and travel accounts that describe indigenous cultures undergoing “fatal” changes. However, academia and ethnographic documentation are not the only practitioners of “salvage”. “Salvage” is practiced in the connoisseurship and collections of the art world and in a range of familiar nostalgias.¹⁴²

The “salvage” model operates on a western concept of time—a linear model where the past holds “the real” to which we can no longer return. The past is imagined and re-imagined endlessly through replicas and reproductions produced through ideas of nostalgia, classical, vintage, or retro. The “authentic” past, constructed through the preservation of objects and documents in museum collections and archives, occurs in a present that is always changing, often quite rapidly, and moving in a forward continuum.

The histories and categorizations of Indian culture used in ethnographic formats (i.e., exhibits, art, and literature) focus essentially on the past. They represent moments of historical distinction or “traditions” that are “always about to undergo the impact of disruptive changes” brought about from trade, tourism, globalization, the media,

¹⁴² Ibid.

missionaries, travelers, ethnographers, commodities, commercial enterprises, global art markets, and so forth.¹⁴³

In the salvage model, indigenous peoples are a marginalized group. They are not part of a cultural center and, therefore, do not experience the same opportunities as those in the center. “Salvage” is possible because authenticity in art exists as the past, prior to the present, but not completely decimated. Therefore, marginalized/indigenous peoples maintain a livelihood of the “past” and in need of preservation. However, when indigenous peoples “enter” the modern world, the results are typically inevitable: historicities are swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist west and by various technologically advanced socialisms. What is different about people moving out of “tradition” into “the modern world” remains tied to inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it.¹⁴⁴

SALLY PRICE

Sally Price (1986) agrees and expands on Clifford’s concepts of “salvage”. For Price, the principles of “salvage” include perceptions of how people look at and try to understand art that appears foreign or “strange” to them (native art). Price is sympathetic with the viewer and the tensions that occur when looking at something from an unfamiliar culture:

For the understanding of art from one society by people who live in another is based, almost always unconsciously, upon assumptions that are built into the cultural categories of the interpreters.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 122.

¹⁴⁵ Sally Price, “Primitive Art in Civilized Places”, *Art in America* 74, No. 1 (January 1986): 10.

According to Price, non-native viewers, whether consciously or unconsciously, reconstitute a native work of art based on their own [western] perspectives—producing “reactions” that reveal the influence of “Western expectations about the arts of so-called primitives.”¹⁴⁶ For Price, “salvage” involves these perceptions and how native art is transformed into a western framework, in order to understand it. She believes that objects from a different culture are automatically and inadvertently transformed. Price suggests four types of transformation: (1) an object converted to an *economic commodity* and thus loses its original function; (2) the appearance of an indigenous work of art is *modified*, typically to “improve” it and enhance their value; (3) the *past history of a work of art is erased* resulting in a loss that may be central to the meaning of the object (such as spiritual objects); and (4) native artworks, once implanted into a non-indigenous culture, frequently fall prey to clichéd views of a “primitive” culture and typically misunderstood.

Price refers to these transformations as a form of “rescue” since the process of transformation involves obtaining native objects (from those that need to be “saved”) and buying, selling, or exhibiting native objects (by those who are the “rescuers”). When indigenous objects are removed from their original contexts, the dominant culture imposes its interpretations on the objects in order to provide a different context. Thus, the absence of an object’s original framework requires a viewer to provide his or her own contexts—interpretations based on his or her own experiences, assumptions, or understanding of a native group’s culture. Even if a native object is salvaged, how it is

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

transformed (for interpretation to non-Indian/western viewers) is part of the problem of the “salvage” model. To remove something and then place it into a purely western environment, affects the way it is communicated for interpretation and typically keeps the object, the histories, and culture of those who created it, frozen in the past and in a constant state of needing to be “rescued”.

VIRGINIA DOMINGUEZ

Virginia Dominguez (1987) is pessimistic about the “salvage paradigm” arguing that when “we assert the need to salvage, rescue, save, preserve a series of objects or forms, we announce our fear of its destruction, our inability to trust others to take appropriate action, and our sense of entitlement over the fate of the objects.”¹⁴⁷ Dominguez believes that the concepts of “salvage” rely on unbalanced relationships between dominant and subordinate groups. A major problem is that the concept of “salvage” relies on criteria developed by a dominant group using a Euro-American view as the *only* worldview. The *representation of historicity*, as she calls it, is a particular representation of history rooted in western traditions. In short, dominant societies write histories of others in the terms of a dominant society.¹⁴⁸ Dominguez summarizes that although well-intended, the actions of “salvage” tend to patronize subordinate peoples—the ones scheduled for salvage.

¹⁴⁷ Virginia Dominguez, “Of Other Peoples: Beyond the “Salvage” Paradigm,” *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 132.

TRINH MINH-HA

Another critic of the “salvage paradigm” is Trinh Minh-ha. Minh-ha (1987) who believes that the study of the “salvage paradigm” is “necessary to open up a critical space” within western practices of portraying and collecting indigenous cultures. “Salvage” is necessary because it “speaks” or is presented in a way for those who “rescue” others, to recognize. Opening space fosters dialogues, analysis, and possibilities of transcendence.

However, Minh-ha disagrees with the polarity of positions within the “salvage paradigm”. “Salvage” operates on distinctions of an “us” and “them” or westerners versus nonwesterners, Indians and non-Indians, the insider versus the outsider. These distinctions understand separation and opposition rather than understanding difference. For example, Indians do not exist independent of, or in isolation, from non-Indians. When people of different cultures work together, these polarities promote suspicious behaviors with the “other”—questioning every gesture they make and every single concept they conceive. Instead, Minh-ha suggests to view difference not in terms of dualities or conflicts, but in terms of degrees and movements within the same concept, or better, in terms of differences both within and between entities. The two positions need not conflict with each other nor merely complement each other.¹⁴⁹ Minh-ha argues that exploring one’s culture in its interaction with another’s culture is a vital process. Authenticity then is produced, not salvaged, from the interactions between this type of movement. Unawareness of the to-and-fro movement between authenticity and

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

inauthenticity in every definition of authenticity leads to a legitimization of a notion of tradition as reduced to the past and to a rejection of, or a nostalgia for, so-called lost values.¹⁵⁰

JOSEPH TRAUGOTT

Joseph Traugott expands on Minh-ha's notion of the "salvage paradigm" and the suggestion of a "to-and-fro movement" as it relates to American Indian art. "Salvage" denotes a search for the authentic at the core of collecting forms of the Other in order to understand their culture.¹⁵¹ Generally, "salvage" is part of a dominant culture's relationship to subordinate cultures. However, in *Native American Artists and the Postmodern Cultural Divide* (1992) Traugott argued that "salvage" is not limited to "a universal form of understanding behavior" but can be a tool that subordinate cultures could use. American Indians can salvage parts of the dominant culture, as well as their own culture, to further their own identity, in opposition to the influence of the dominant culture. However, they borrow from the dominant society and their own indigenous past to promote a view of nativeness that resists the influence of the dominant culture, to become more like Euro-Americans.¹⁵²

For Traugott, contemporary American Indian artists employ the mechanisms of "salvage" for their own objectives. Therefore, the use of "salvage" provides Indian

¹⁴⁹ Trinh Minh-ha, "Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage' Paradigm," *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 140.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Joseph Traugott, "Native American Artists and the Postmodern Cultural Divide," Vol. 51, No. 3. *Recent Native American Art* (Autumn 1992), 37.

¹⁵² Ibid.

artists, including contemporary painters, with a means to interpret the culture of “outsiders”:

Thus, we could interpret the appropriation of Euro-American painting style by Native American artists as a form of cultural salvage. But just as the Cubists could tear tribal images out of their cultural contexts, Native American artists can appropriate, totally out of the context of modernism, the cultural forms and aesthetic values of Euro-American consumer culture. These works transform aspects of elite Euro-American art into manifestations of Native American philosophy and incorporate the look of the Euro-American culture to attack the cultural dominance that it represents. From this perspective, the marks of modernism, or postmodernism, exist not only as a sign of similarity, but also as a parody.¹⁵³

In his essay, Traugott analyzed the “salvage paradigm” through three different models to support his argument. He examined the process of “salvage” in the work of Indian artists Emmi Whitehouse, Bob Haozous, and Felice Lucero-Giaccardo.

Salvage style in *#162 from the Kin nah Zin Series* (1982) by Navajo artist Emmi Whitehorse reveals mixed-media techniques and an Abstract Expressionist approach that depict the experiences of her early years and the natural environment of her childhood home on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico. Whitehorse uses forms and shapes, sheer veils of color, and thin lines that, according to Traugott, reveal a tension between her inner self and her life in an urban environment—an environment that differed from her childhood but an environment that helped her produce such a style. *#162* contains marks and textures that closely resemble etchings and scratches of Navajo pictographs in the Colorado Plateau—markings that show abstract “remnants” of her homeland and unique environment without revealing literal content of her personal experiences.¹⁵⁴ However, the markings become symbolic forms of place—a homeland where her

experiences and emotions originate. According to Traugott, the use of Abstract Expressionistic techniques offers Whitehorse a conceptual space which allows her to abstract Navajo attitudes and philosophies. Whitehorse's markings delineate a part of her Indianness. However, they simultaneously represent, and rescue, a lost mark-making tradition in non-Indian culture.

Similarly, Traugott's analysis of "salvage" in the work of Santa Fe artist Bob Haozous looks at the use of parody in Euro-American-themed large sculpture. Haozous' "dry" sense of humor is incorporated into his work, teasing a viewer as to whether a work of art should be taken seriously or viewed with "devastating satire." Haozous' *David* (1991) is a 4' cut plate steel figure and part of the *Apache Toys* series. The "toy series" mixes cowboys and Indians childhood games with conventional techniques of Euro-American high sculpture. Haozous' *David*, a satire of Michelangelo's 16th century *David*, is shown as a nude figure posing in a similar stance but wearing cowboy boots, a cowboy hat, and holding pistols instead of a slingshot. Die-cut circles in *David's* chest resemble shotgun holes, a suggestion by Haozous of being "shot in the back". *David* is a reversal of stereotypes that, Traugott argues, non-Indian viewers may find uncomfortable.¹⁵³

However, *David* is only one example of how Haozous uses "traditional" Southwest symbols to play with a viewer's personal interpretations of native art. His cut plate steel coyotes present opposing viewpoints for non-Indians of a figure that, on one hand, is viewed as local folk tradition and true sign of "Santa Fe-ness". On the other hand, the coyotes are a type of tourist-kitsch item that symbolizes everything wrong with New

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 38.

Mexico tourism.¹⁵⁵ For Indians, the coyote is oftentimes the figure of Indian trickster stories—a practical joker and maker of hoaxes. Thus, Haozous' figures, such as the coyote, are contradictory and open to a variety of interpretations. A viewer must resolve their own perspectives by analyzing it through their own cultural assumptions and bring content to their thoughts in order to dismantle the unfamiliarity of strangeness.

Lastly, Traugott presents another form of “salvage” by analyzing the work of Pueblo artist, Felice Lucero-Giaccardo who integrates Pop-art techniques with symbols and figures from a prehistoric Indian past. Her drawings and paintings include images that resemble petroglyphs but are not meant as literal ancient Indian drawings. Instead, the markings, according to Traugott, become signs and symbols open to a variety of cultural interpretations. In one example, Traugott examines Lucero-Giaccardo's techniques in 1930s postcards. In *Untitled* (1986), Lucero-Giaccardo designed a touristic postcard depicting the words “Greetings from Indian Country of the Great Southwest” in the center of the work. Clichéd images of Indians wearing war bonnets or wrapped in blankets are pictured in the bold upper-case letters of the words “Indian Country”. A message written on three lines above the postcard is scratched out, making the message indecipherable. A horizontal rectangle at the top of *Untitled* shows stenciled letters of “O + ☼!” sitting atop a ruler typically used by a child in grade school. A second “+” (the native Four Directions symbol) outside of the rectangle is connected to the “+” in the words with a dashed arched line. To the right of the postcard, a face, half-skeletal, half-human and comically depicted with spiked hair, bugged eyes, and a moustache, clenches

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 39.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

its teeth. A scrawny balloon, the same used in comic strips containing a character's words, is near its mouth with the words "Greetings to U". Other images include a sheet of metallic stars used by elementary school teachers, stenciled letters, a handwritten letter, and scribbled words: ". . . only true path to happiness?" For Traugott, the pictures and messages joke about travel, happiness, love, and death. The integration of images and words demonstrate a sardonic message between the romanticism of Southwestern tourism experienced by non-Indians and the severity of Southwest reservation life experienced by Pueblo Indians. Lucero-Giaccardo's use of "salvage" in *Untitled* is an affirmation of the present juxtaposed in terms of an Indian past. Lucero-Giaccardo's artwork integrates ancient symbols such as petroglyphs, skeletons, markings that resemble sand, and Pueblo pottery, with images and contemporary themes of travel and tourism. The repetitive use of children's handwriting and elementary school objects represent another painful reminder for Lucero-Giaccardo and Pueblo Indians: the American school system. Thus, "salvage" in Lucero-Giaccardo's *Untitled* appears through sarcasm depicting a contemporary world with an ancient Indian past, and her own personal painful experiences (of an educational) system imposed of her by a dominant culture.

In summary, Traugott's analyses of three different artists show how they incorporated "salvage" strategies in their work. Whitehorse integrates stylistic techniques found in Expressionist painting. Haozous borrows recognizable images from Euro-American themed art that he develops into parodies in metal sculpture. Lucero-Giaccardo depicts assimilationist experiences through mixed imagery of ancient Indian past and contemporary themes executed through Pop-art methods. These examples show how

American Indian artists were able to “reverse conventional definitions of the salvage paradigm to expand the meaning of nativeness in the contradictory context of contemporary society.”¹⁵⁷ In these examples, Traugott demonstrates how Indian artists who integrate both Indian and non-Indian imagery, icons, themes, and methods can reverse the form of “rescue” implied by the “salvage model” and deliver nonliteral messages about their cultural heritage without compromising their “Indianness”.

NATIVE AMERICA’S MOST WANTED

Up to now, discussion about the two models of “authenticity” occurs separately. In each case, the definitions and uses were pointed out according to the authors who focused on them at length. Here, now is presented an example of how the two models intermingle when applied to one major case where the circumstances varied heavily with respect to the players, the objects, and the roles, interest, and inclinations of the artisans, and the curators.

It all started when there was a search for a special art object at the Festival.

On September 21, 2004, Opening Day of the First Americans Festival, 650,000 people filled the National Mall. Visitors occupied a landscape filled with richly colored images of *Anthem*, a mixed media painting commissioned specifically for the Festival by renowned Navajo artist, Tony Abeyta. Although originally intended solely for the t-shirt design, parts and parcels of *Anthem* delineated spaces of Festival venues, guided visitors with signage, spanned bridge trusses with banners, promoted and publicized the event on

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 41.

posters, brochures, and ads. Festival staff proudly wore special identification badges, enviable credentials to wear during the Festival. The badges symbolized the status of working for the Smithsonian and provided privileges, such as access to non-public spaces of America's Attic. However, more importantly, the badges displayed the extracted imagery of *Anthem* with their names and titles printed alongside "First Americans Festival" that they clipped onto their lariats, resting atop and covering their every day, mundane, government IDs.

The earliest events, the Native Nations Procession and Opening Ceremonies, ended before scheduled performances began and so the crowds, unable to enter the closed venues, clustered around the cordoned boundaries of the Indian Market and Marketplace complex. Impatient and demanding to enter, they shouted: "Let us in!" and "You should open by now! Why can't we come in?"

A call came in to "open Marketplace ahead of schedule" so that the unruly masses had "somewhere to go." Once the gates opened, visitors poured into the market complex, inundated Marketplace, and filing directly to the t-shirt area where hundreds of t-shirts imprinted with *Anthem* were available for sale. Within ten minutes, the Marketplace tent reached full capacity. The masses of people, their bodies pressed upon one another, entered without knowing how difficult it was to exit. The crowds grew thick; blocking aisles so that anyone wanting to leave fought through a sea of people to reach the exit doorways. Someone fell, quickly picked up by a companion, and avoided possible trampling. Others, who managed to secure one of the precious t-shirts, emerged from the mass of humanity clutching their prized t-shirt close to their bodies. The tent, and the

frenzy that ensued, became a hazard for the elderly and families with small children. The Washington, D.C. Fire Marshall threatened to shut down the tent.

Within minutes, a cavalry of CFCH staff, summoned by Festival Directors, converged into MarketPlace where they rapidly set up steel barricades, secured entryways, and shouted out directions on blow horns, directing people to cash registers and exits. Within two hours, the entire inventory of *Anthem* t-shirts, posters, and tote bags sold out completely.¹⁵⁸

This scenario repeated itself daily throughout the six days of the Festival. Each morning, before the Festival opened, crowds lined up at the front doors of MarketPlace, eager to purchase the *Anthem* t-shirt. Although the CFCH re-ordered shirts several times throughout the Festival, they were constantly in short supply. The frenzy of the crowds was so intense that when the new orders arrived, MarketPlace staff worked covertly—not announcing any new arrivals and hiding the shipping trucks in the back of the tent until they could secretly unload and prep the shirts for sale.

The pandemonium at MarketPlace culminated months of planning the festival t-shirt that would represent the cultures of hundreds of indigenous peoples from the western hemisphere. Although the popularity and rapid sales of the festival t-shirt was seen as a success, what preceded the elation of successful sales was months of bureaucratic internal strife and power struggles in choosing a “real” Indian artist to design the shirt—a maneuver that would ensure the “authenticity” of the item as well as the messages attached to it. The process of finding an artist for the First Americans

¹⁵⁸ Because of the concerns with the Fire Marshall, an urgent call went out to additional Festival staff, who arrived quickly, secured entryways with steel barriers, and assisted with crowd control.

Festival t-shirt involved a confusing circle of politics and players jockeying for involvement of an identity piece that would represent a national Indian museum. *Anthem* unexpectedly became *the* signature image for the Festival. Viewed as “more than a t-shirt,” *Anthem* became the visual icon of the Festival—the brand that symbolized the historic event, indigenous identity merchandise, and the most wanted festival item that turned Marketplace into a site of mayhem every day.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MARKETPLACE

Authentic and fabricated, part-museum display, part-street fair, the Marketplace, portrayed as an invention of the Smithsonian, contains characteristics of other popular Washington celebrations—Cherry Blossom Festival, Barbecue Cook-off, Jazz Festival, Environment Film Festival, yet has a uniqueness (found in the objects it houses) that warrants spectatorship of the rare, unfamiliar, and strange, including American Indian culture. Marketplace is not a traditional construction of a “real” market. There is the absence of sounds, sights, and smells—the aroma of cooked food, pick-ups, vans or cargo vehicles, garbage, crates, boxes, or paper wrappings. There are no planked tables, pop-up tents, or umbrellas. Nor are there vendors shouting out the bargains of the day because there are no vendors present at Marketplace since it operates on a consignment system. The absence of artist, maker, or owner means that the art objects are entrusted to employees who have the responsibility as stewards of the objects—objects owned by other people.

There are, however, aspects of an “authentic” market that include, for instance, commotion, ruckus, and overcrowding. There is noise, though, of customers milling about, employees describing art, the ring from cash registers, and the sounds emitting from the latest Folkways ethnomusicology CD. The *Anthem* t-shirts were kept in the t-shirt corral: an enclosure designed to keep t-shirts organized on shelves and to keep visitors out. Mannequins were fitted with t-shirts and placed on the tallest shelves to increase visibility to anxious customers. Surrounding the shirts were framed posters of *Anthem* and tabletop signs that described the artist’s vision in creating the work.¹⁵⁹ Baker’s racks, not purchased to cool loaves, served as ideal shelving devices. The t-shirts, in dire need of constant replenishing, came rolling out from the back of the tent into the corral and already folded, stacked, and marked by size. Meanwhile, empty racks, stripped of the last shirt, were rolled into the back area, disappearing through the wavering panels of pipe-and-drape into a space marked for “Employees Only”. Therefore, the constant elliptical movement of racks, people, and shirts cycled repeatedly every day throughout the festival—a system of deprivation and bounty, empty and full, absence and completion.¹⁶⁰

Unlike other outdoor markets, Marketplace contains a Consignment Section that controls inbound and outbound inventory of all art objects; that produces bar codes for each item; and stocks surplus artwork. Ceiling fans, track lighting, and air conditioning

¹⁵⁹ The Center for Folklife, who paid to produce festival products, had lost money on t-shirt sales in previous years. Therefore, they ordered a limited amount of shirts for the First Americans Festival. There were six t-shirt designs: The turtle printed on taupe (for women), blue (for men), and blue-green (for children), the Staff t-shirt, and the General Festival t-shirt, black with four images, and a woman’s fit t-shirt. The CFCH considers what the public might prefer when selecting colors, symbols, and t-shirt textures (i.e., stone washed textures) that appeal to different groups (i.e., men, women, children, elders, tourists, teachers, etc.).

¹⁶⁰ The CFCH purchased the baker’s racks in recent years as an affordable but efficient shelving devices—sturdy but portable. The baker’s racks allowed air to circulate around the folded shirts, a helpful thing during humid Washington, D.C. weather. The baker’s

are luxuries not found in outdoor markets. Fixtures, of various types, provide ways of displaying the range of art forms: glass showcases, exhibit pedestals, steel garment racks, gridwall panels, jewelry carousels, and display tables.

The Marketplace, then, is less farmer/flea market, but typifies more closely outdoor markets found at Eastern Market or Adam's Morgan's *Crafty Bastards* Market—other art markets. It resembles an outdoor store-market. Yet unlike a store, the sense of permanence is absent: Marketplace is ephemeral in that it only stands for 10 days once a year but “returns” about the same time each year. It is a changed state, that is, with different products—cultural art objects dictated by what curators feature that specific year in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. In fact, the CFCH considers Marketplace as a “curated” venue—a collaboration with curated cultural programs on display on the National Mall. The CFCH considers crafts as an extension of their well-planned cultural programs accompanying activities, events¹⁰, demonstrations, presentations, and lectures. Text captions encased in acrylic frames resembling wall placards in the Museum, describe a work of art on tabletop exhibits. Informative brochures, promotional flyers, or business cards add to the display and describes the arts and crafts of artists from international groups and non-profit cultural organizations. For part of the mission of Marketplace, after all, is to support sustained development of artisan crafts and continuation of traditional forms of art, methodologies, and use of materials. The provision of print information about the many NGOs, international organizations, and

racks served not only as an organizational device, but also as a means of security for the employees selling the t-shirts: portable “walls” of the t-shirt corral that separated them from throngs of hungry buyer.

cooperatives, was an idea borrowed from the museum and global market stores a la *Pier One* or *World Market*. There might be less gloss but it is the same concept.

As an outdoor store-market, Marketplace became an ideal site to house the prized *Anthem* t-shirt. Indian visitors would be more familiar with a venue that resembled trading posts, pow wow markets, and art fairs. It was also familiar to Folklife Festival visitors who returned each year to see the unique works of art available for that specific Festival.

The cultural encounter—the largest gathering of Indians in one location in American history, was a sight that matched an epic Hollywood movie. Yet this was not a shootout at Wounded Knee, protests of reclaiming Indian land on a rock called Alcatraz, or the takeover of a federal government building (1972 occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs). Indians marched in their glory, adorned in regalia, many elaborately decked in dedication to respective clan icons: raven feathers reflecting evergreen hues, the heads of wolves with fur hide and paws draped over shoulders, massive wings like a hawk spanning open as marchers pranced in circles, and buffalo hides draped as cloaks. Chiefs and tribal leaders donned elaborate bonnets made of bald eagle feathers, comparable Medals of Honor worn as badges of recognition. Aztec warriors walked collared in iridescent plumes of peacocks, and the Pow Wow Princesses, tribal representatives crowned in similar fashion as a homecoming queen or a Rose Bowl Parade Princess, glided in their heavily-beaded dresses, bejeweled silver belts, and crown-headaddresses.

Many of the objects worn by the Indians—adornments, clothing, implements, and accessories, found a place in Marketplace as indigenous works of art since the Festival featured artists in the regalia- and instrument-making pavilions. Festival spectators, hungry to secure and take home something from “real” Indians, flocked to the market areas to buy “authentic” cultural artifacts—things worn, carried by, or made by “genuine” Indians that would summarize the totality of their experiences at the First Americans Festival.

However, the most popular item of the entire Festival was not one made of feathers, jewels, or buffalo hides. It was the images from the *Anthem* painting placed on a simple and inexpensive garment popular in American culture.

THE T-SHIRT: TRUE AMERICANA

Since the 1800s, the undergarment known as the union suit, evolved into what would become a staple of concerts, tourist visits, protest marches, artistic expression and “instant messaging”. No other piece of clothing in the American wardrobe has the flexibility, durability, and fashion status as that of the t-shirt. Once considered solely as an undergarment, the t-shirt’s role as a work garment for farmers, sailors, and miners evolved into pop status once Marlon Brando and James Dean donned shirts for screen viewers, forever changing the way Americans looked at t-shirts. Lettered by colleges, followed by military and professional athletic teams, the ability to label one’s club, squadron, or football team coincided with advances in printing technology, extending the sense of belonging and camaraderie to the masses. Anyone interested in association could

be part of the group by the simple words or images on a wearer's torso. The t-shirt is considered a form of media—a walking billboard that communicates specifically through direct messaging, literal forms, or abstract images.¹⁶¹

And so the *Anthem* t-shirt joined ranks with the same fervor as other t-shirts popularized in the museum industry—whose peculiar use involves, to use Lawrence Levine's summation, of putting the high-brow on a low-brow object. A t-shirt is a vehicle for a Museum to circulate its message, regardless of its constituents' class: Picasso's *tromp l'oeils*, Da Vinci's bodies of gods and men, the golden mask of a boy King Tut, or a *Starry Night*, water lilies, or haystacks of once-radical Impressionists.

¹⁶¹The t-shirt began as a functional piece of clothing in America. Although many scholars and clothing experts believe that the garment evolved spontaneously, one claim involves the evolution of the t-shirt from undergarments worn during the 19th century. The union suit was a button-front, one-piece undergarment made from cotton or wool that covered the body from the neck to the knees. By the 1920s users of the union suit cut the garment, separating the top from the bottom with the top long enough to tuck under the bottoms. One explanation claims that users cut the union suit in half for comfort and convenience. Another explanation regarding the transition of the t-shirt during this time suggests that the union suit began to change as Americans changed their lifestyles with advancing technology in their homes. In early America, homes heated with fireplaces required residents to wear heavy undergarments in order to keep warm. This changed when houses incorporated automated heating and people began to wear lighter undergarments. By 1932, the producers of the union suit, Union Underwear of Bowling Green, Kentucky began manufacturing undershirts. During the 1930s the idea of putting words on the undergarment meant that people could joined as a group by wearing an identifier—printed words on a t-shirt. In 1933, Champion Products of Rochester, N.Y sold its first order of printed t-shirts to the University of Michigan. Sweaters had been the most popular garment for printing names of athletic teams however; the t-shirt could be used as an undergarments, could be dirtied during playing sports, could be worn by fans as well as athletes, easy to clean, portable, and cheaper to print. As printed t-shirts gained in popularity, producers began using the screen-printed method. It was also during the 1930s when the t-shirt arose as an advertising and souvenir tool. An early example is the *Wizard of Oz* t-shirt, a souvenir that coincided with the popular 1939 film.

In the 1940s, Champion Products, who had success with printed t-shirts at university campuses, found a new market for the garment by imprinting them for servicemen with the names of different military posts and camps. The t-shirts were also easily accessible at the PX (Post Exchange), the base store where military personnel purchase clothing, personal items, and gifts.

By 1942, the U.S. Navy ordered t-shirts for the men who served during World War II. These shirts were short-sleeved, crew-necked white cotton shirts worn under a uniform. This became an ideal garment for sailors who could work under conditions such as steamy kitchens or in tropical climates where they could remove their jackets and work only in their t-shirts. Other branches of the military also began using the t-shirt. Outside of the military, the t-shirt became popular in farming, ranching, mining, and other occupations where a person could work in, and soil, a lightweight garment.

However, off campus and off military bases, t-shirts were still too novel for the public since many people still considered the garment as underwear. In the 1950s, images of Marlon Brando and James Dean shocked Americans by wearing underwear on film made it acceptable to wear the t-shirt as a stand-alone, outerwear garment. The 1950s also saw the beginning of printed t-shirts for tourist sites and resorts, including popular characters for Walt Disney, thus creating some of the earliest examples of the t-shirt as a souvenir for a tourist destination. By the 1960s, advances in screen-printing provided opportunities for the printed t-shirt including messages and images of the social movements, environment and ecology, and the Vietnam War. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, printed t-shirts became lucrative commodities for rock bands and athletic teams who sold custom screen-printed t-shirts for commemorative events including concerts and championship games. Many t-shirts from the 1970s became part of American popular culture including the Happy Face or yellow smiley face t-shirts, *I Love New York* t-shirts, and t-shirts with images of rock stars. Today, printed t-shirts have become part of nearly every American's wardrobe. They continue to evolve as souvenir products for the sports industry, commemorative events, and tourist sites and celebrating images and sayings from popular movies, television, and the media.

No mere design would work for this festival. The t-shirt needed to represent the culture of hundreds of Indian nations in the western hemisphere. It needed to send a message that diffused the Museum's past of its collection and atrocities by the government. This special t-shirt would serve a purpose: to reinforce a new identity of Indian peoples—launched by the opening of the Museum. The t-shirt, a miniaturized variation of *Anthem*, operated much like the little objects and memorabilia one finds outside of historic landmarks or cultural tourist sites: Taj Mahal, Tower of Pisa, and Statue of Liberty. The cluster of small souvenir tents and kiosks at the base of such worldly structures invite visitors to browse and buy. After all, buyers must take home a piece of their adventure, a token, albeit a smaller variation, of the grand structure they have visited. However, in this instance, it was not a mini-replica of the National Museum of the American Indian that visitors desired—it was the offspring of a work of art inside the museum, the *Anthem* painting.

Because of its importance, the Festival t-shirt could not resemble Indian-themed shirts that saturate the internet web sites as none of these commercialized images would work for the First American's Festival most valued art object. Clichéd depictions of tall, sinewy warriors, Indian women with wind-blown tresses leaning on bare-chested braves standing on the rock against a giant moon—the Romantic Warrior, Indian Maiden or Indian Princess were also not appropriate for these shirts because they, according to Tuscarora scholar Richard Hill, reinforce images of indigenous women often seen as “a passive, beautiful Indian princess waiting to serve her man.”¹⁶²

¹⁶²Richard Hill, “Savage Splendor: Sex, Lies and Stereotypes”, *Turtle Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 1991.

Indeed, there is an extremely offensive type of Indian imagery certain to be excluded: sports mascots. For there was no place for the cartoon, caricatured toothy-grinning, big-nosed face of the University of Illinois' Chief Illiniwek, Florida State Seminoles', Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, or the local cohort, the Washington Redskins.¹⁶³ Caricatured Indians reinforce stereotypes of the dangerous and savage exotic, according to collaborators Jason Black, Richard King, and Charles Fruehling Springwood (2002) and Mark Connolly (2000). These authors describe the appalling and blasphemous use of indigenous sacred symbols, such as the eagle feather (comparable to a Christian cross or a Jewish Star of David), in sports events and their depiction on sports memorabilia products, including t-shirts. The use of images on associated merchandising products is more offensive when considering household items such as drinking cups, like those sold by Burger King with Pocahontas' image that eventually turns into garbage—the antithesis of a commodity.¹⁶⁴ Even worse is toilet paper, as recalled by Clem Iron Wing (2000) who describes how the eagle feather, depicted with Chief Illiniwek, wipes human excrement.¹⁶⁵

Nor were Committee members interested in images in the American market found in New Age spiritual products and mythical tales. Indians are oftentimes members of fantasy characters popularized in gaming technologies: mystical/fairy tale creatures, science-fiction aliens, monsters, samurai swordsmen, wizards and sorceresses, or hybrid

¹⁶³ Jason Edward Black, "The Mascotting" of Native America: Construction, Commodity, and Assimilation," *American Indian Quarterly* (Fall 2002), Vol. 26, No. 4; C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood, *Team Spirits: the Native American Mascots Controversy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 2001; Mark R. Connolly, "What's in a Name? A Historical Look at Native American Related Nicknames and Symbols at Three Universities," *Journal of Higher Education* 71, No. 5 (2000).

¹⁶⁴ Kent Ono and Derek Buescher, "Deciphering Pocahontas: Unpackaging the Commodification of a Native American Woman," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 18, No.1, March 2001, 23-3.

¹⁶⁵ Clem Iron Wing, "University of Illinois Wipes Its Rectum on the Eagle Feather," *American Comments Magazine* (2000): 1.

heroes in techno-Renaissance worlds. Surely, characters change. Helmets and body armor is replaced with headbands and buckskin; the mold remains the same but the faces and clothing undergo change. Thus, the Indian becomes a being in another player—an avatar of desire or a conjured-up character with interchangeable parts.

What then was the best way to design a t-shirt free of clichés, stereotypes, and caricatures? Could there be an “authentic” t-shirt design created by an American Indian artist that captured the identity of Indians but also appeal to non-Indian visitors?

In referring to these problems, I will discuss two similar situations where native artist created their own t-shirt designs and avoided the use of clichés and caricatures in representing their “traditional” culture. The first case model examines t-shirt designs in Hawaii and the next study looks at designs worn by the Chicano youth in Texas.

T-SHIRTS AND IMAGES: JOYCELYN LINNEKIN AND HAWAII

In “Consuming Cultures: Tourism and the Commoditization of Cultural Identity in the Island Pacific” (1997), Jocelyn Linnekin explores “authenticity” in “Hawaiian strength t-shirts” and “traditional” imagery, chosen by native artists. The goal of these artists was to design t-shirts that broke away from clichés of native Hawaiian and Polynesian peoples, the results primarily from island tourism. In response to the tourist consumption of Hawaii, most prominently through the land and performance (the hula), artists designed their t-shirts to combat the myth of island harmony or more commonly, “aloha spirit”. Hawaii represents the plantation colony turned tourist destination.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Jocelyn Linnekin, “Consuming Cultures: Tourism and the Commoditization of Cultural Identity in the Island Pacific,” *Tourism, Ethnicity, and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 228.

Typically, the landscapes of the Pacific Islands are the most popular attraction and native peoples are a strong secondary attraction. These attractions, designed as clichéd images on t-shirts that represented Hawaiian identity, include the ocean, palm trees, hula girls, pineapples, caricatures of native islanders, and crass messages printed with images (i.e., “I got lei’d in Hawaii.”).¹⁶⁷

Native artists chose to discard such imagery and design shirts outside of the tourist market of non-natives. Their shirts appealed to a specific audience—local Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Fijians, and Filipinos. Thus, their identity t-shirts are not mass-produced items for a broad audience but geared towards native peoples and worn locally.

Instead, native artists developed images based on their beliefs of heritage and ancestry: a primordial homeland. T-shirt designs include muscular warriors wearing loincloths and headbands, wielding swords, daggers, and shields, and wearing a “universal” symbol of power—a helmet. Warrior helmets are made from gourds with a row of feathers on top and long, slender strips of *tapa* cloth, a ceremonial cloth made from tree bark in Polynesia, attached to the lower edges like fringe. Warriors standing upright with raised arms and biceps bulging resemble bodybuilders. The close resemblance to ancient Greek or Roman soldiers, or the “hypermasculine traditional archetypes”, is unmistakable. However, these figures differ from Greek/Roman warriors. Usually, arms are raised overhead (upward to “the heavens”), often holding a dagger or large spear, or with hands balled into a fist. Often, warriors are depicted with flames—a symbolic element of power because of it refers to Hawaiian volcanic and fire gods, part

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 237.

of island lore. Often, *tapa* cloth, tribal patterns, or the semblances of tribal motifs in geometric shapes act as backdrops for the figures. Petroglyphs or “ancient” markings enhance the imagery. Messages on the t-shirts consist of few words including “Hawaiian Power” or “Total Sovereignty” printed with silver or white typeface on a black background.

Native artists wanted the t-shirt designs to depict native identity. However, not all of the images originated from an ancient “primordial homeland” nor are they native to Hawaiian culture. For instance, the most popular image in the shirts is the warrior helmet. In the past decade, this helmet has become the quintessential symbol of Hawaiian identity, evoking connotations of spiritual power, mystery, and cultural revival.¹⁶⁸ The helmet is used as a logo for several trademark titles such as “Local Boyz Rule” and “Kapu—Forbidden Territory”. Mall stores sell replicas of warrior helmets made from coconuts hollowed out, polished, and with dyed feathers. Small helmet icons, used as tokens, hang from rearview mirrors of vehicles. Linnekin’s research revealed that there are no references to warrior helmets existing in the history of pre-Conquest Hawaii. The helmet appeared in descriptions during Captain Cook’s visit and only on the island of Hawaii. Engravings of the visit reveal that several men wearing the “helmet” were most likely priests of the island god, Lono, who was peaceful and forbade warfare.¹⁶⁹

Although the helmet has an ambiguous place in island history, some of the images and messages in the identity t-shirts never existed in ancient Hawaii but are contemporary images, such as motorcycles and pit bulls. Pit bulls show snarling, baring fangs, wearing

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 239.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 239-240.

spiked collars, and held by large chain-link leashes. Many t-shirt designs identify with other oppressed groups. For instance, red, black and green are colors related to the Black Power Movement from the 1960s. The use of the word “Power” with the images (as in “Hawaiian Power”) is reminiscent of the “Black Power” motto.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, some shirts, using the images of warriors, weapons, *tapa* cloth, and pit bulls, use different messages such as “Filipino Strength”, “Samoan Strength”, or “Pinoy Spirit” (a Filipino born in the Philippines).

These t-shirt designs were meant to reach out to other disadvantaged groups in Hawaii including Samoans, Filipinos, and Fijians. Strength, power, spiritual affinity, and native ancestral heritage are characteristics symbolized in t-shirt designs. Using contemporary images associated with power and strength of economically oppressed groups conveys a connection through group strength, not merely by race, but association by custom, even if customs in the designs do not necessarily reflect an ancient native past.

T-SHIRTS AND IMAGES: DORIE GOLDMAN AND CHICANO YOUTH

The second case model examines the use of “traditional” imagery used by another marginalized group to frame their identity: Chicano youths. While teaching in Texas, Dorie S. Goldman’s curiosity piqued when she noticed the uniquely designed t-shirts, intricately detailed with a proliferation of images that she called “barrio art t-shirts.” Her study, “Down for La Raza”: Barrio Art T-shirts, Chicano Pride, and Cultural Resistance”

¹⁷⁰ During the 1990s, messages on distinctive local t-shirts became less subtle, more ethnically specific, and more politically charged. According to Linnekin, this trend paralleled Hawaiian political resurgence, especially with the movements in sovereignty and an

(1997), focuses on these t-shirts worn by young people in Texas and Arizona and how they relate to Chicano identity. These t-shirts are very different from stereotypical images of Chicano/Mexican culture of cactus and coyotes, brightly colored sombreros, bullet-strapped banditos, sexy señoritas in billowy dresses, and toothy-grinning Uncle Julios. Instead, they depict a cavalcade of birds, classic cars, flowers, beautiful women, tattooed men, brick walls, hats, armed youth, skeletons, low riders, eagles, serpents, pyramids, and gods—a conglomerate of images common in Chicano history, religion, and culture. Goldman argued that these shirts are forms of self-determination and wearing one becomes an act of resistance against Euro-American dominance.

Goldman analyzed identity and found “authentic” images related to an ancient past, syncretic religious practices, and symbols of oppression and revolt, and popular culture artistic works. Unlike Linnekin’s study of Hawaiian identity t-shirt designs, the artwork on Chicano t-shirts do not draw from an ancient primordial homeland, but instead, depict images that are part of Chicano history and culture. Goldman argues that both the form of the mages and the images themselves, are folkloric in nature traced back to many Mexican / Mexican American / Chicano artistic traditions. She justifies this through “endless combinations of images” based on the content of the imagery (flowers, mythical beings, stylized human figures) and the folk genre of tattoos and tattoo art, printing similar resembling wood cuts, and the resemblance of mural painting, an art form prevalent in Mexico political movements and Chicano social movement.¹⁷¹

increasing dissatisfaction with the tourist industry.

¹⁷¹ Doris S. Goldman, “Down for La Raza”: Barrio Art T-shirts, Chicano Pride, and Cultural Resistance,” *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1997), 124.

Goldman claims that the images fall under a dualistic framework because they refer to either oppressive conditions or positive affirmations of culture.¹⁷² She believes that one does not exist without the other and one is a reflection of or mirrors, the other. She relates the dual, negative / positive aspect to many of the images. For instance, *skulls or skeletons* symbolize a strong belief of life / death. During her interviews, Goldman's informants discussed an "open view of death", accepting it as an inevitable part of life and not fearing it. Skulls are "a salute" to people who have died and have a significant meaning in relation to history. Mexican / Mexican-American history is full of and shaped by resistance movements and deaths caused from culture and political wars. For instance, the deaths of Aztecs at the hands of the Spanish, death of peasants during the Mexican revolution, deaths of Mexicans and *tejanos* (Mexican-Americans in Texas) by Texas rangers, and today, deaths of young Chicano/as who are involved in gang violence.¹⁷³ Images of skulls and skeletons in everyday life represent the commonality of life/ death perspectives in Mexican /Mexican-American culture. The Mexican artist Jose Guadalupe Posada depicted skeletons not as morbid figures of death but in humorous scenarios similar to the living: walking, riding, socializing, eating, drinking, etc. Cultural celebrations and rituals include skull objects as clearly depicted during the *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebrations where candy sugar skulls, skeletons, and cakes are made and figures and dioramas of skeletons depict every day life, typically in a humorous fashion.

¹⁷² Ibid, 128.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

The dual framework of oppressive conditions / positive affirmations continues in Goldman's comparison of jails and low riders. Images of oppression include brick walls, jails, prisons, watchtowers, and wire fences. One suggestion is that prisoners while incarcerated make some of the drawings or that the prison images integrated with faces of family members, cars, and landscapes are the things one hopes to experience when released from prison. Goldman suggests that images of prison are both actual and metaphorical representations of social reality—symbolic of Chicano culture that exceeds their relative proportion of the population. Not only do images of penitentiaries represent actual prisoners, they also represent those who marginalized or “imprisoned” in society—Chicanos imprisoned by a system that keeps them in poverty and without hope, dignity or self-worth.¹⁷⁴

The dualistic opposite of the jails or images of affirmation, are those of classic cars or *low riders*. These are positive images, according to Goldman, that affirm Mexican-American culture and respond to images of oppression, such as the penitentiary. Goldman suggests that images of low riders counter the images of prisons because they offer allowances on *limitations of mobility* and thus respond to confinement represented in prison imagery. In addition, low riders are objects of decoration, adornment, and ornamentation. The low rider exemplifies a particular Mexican-American automotive aesthetic in that the Euro-American obsession with speed and minimalism is replaced by an obsession with slow movement and large, opulent vehicles.¹⁷⁵ Goldman summarizes

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 129.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

that t-shirts with images of low riders inform observers that the wearers are not only proud of Chicano identity but also challenge aesthetic values of the dominant culture.

Other imagery that fall under Goldman's category of "affirmation motifs" includes pre-Columbian images and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Goldman found that the most common images referring to pre-Columbian culture include the Aztec Stone of the Fifth Sun, jaguars, birds, and feathers with a serpent, an image that may have several meanings. Its most common referent is an eagle perched atop a cactus holding a snake (depicted on the Mexican flag), with origins in ancient Mexican legend—the eagle and snake were a sign from the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli indicating to the Aztecs the location of their homeland.¹⁷⁶ However, the symbol is ambiguous, possibly metaphorical representations of Quetzalcoatl, the Toltec god known as the feathered serpent. However, informants did comment that the eagle and serpent "signified something powerful". Goldman suggests then that this image, as well as images of Aztec warriors, pyramids, and ancient deities denote indigenous heritage of Chicanos and are symbols of pride, as well as power, and combat feelings of powerlessness.

Perhaps some of the most popular "affirmation motifs" are images of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The Virgin of Guadalupe appeared at Tepeyac Hill to an Indian youth named Juan Diego. After Guadalupe appears, Juan Diego tells Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga about her appearance. Archbishop Zumárraga does not believe Diego. Upon her next appearance, Guadalupe instructs Diego to gather roses from Tepeyac Hill and bring them to the Archbishop as evidence of her appearance. Tepeyac Hill was not fertile

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 129.

land, producing only cactus and shrubs. However, Diego found roses that Guadalupe “created”, wrapped them in his cloak, and brought them to the Archbishop. Upon presenting the roses, Diego and the Archbishop found something else inside of Diego’s cloak: an imprint of the Virgin. Thus, the Archbishop was convinced of her presence.¹⁷⁷

The Virgin of Guadalupe serves many purposes, among them as a mother-figure and symbol of political and cultural struggle. In 1810, Miguel Hidalgo led Mexican masses against the Spanish ruling class, carrying the Virgin of Guadalupe as a symbol of hope and protection. In 1910, followers of Emiliano Zapata carried Guadalupe during the Mexican Revolution. In the United States, César Chavez used the Virgin of Guadalupe as a principle symbol for the farm workers’ strike in the 1960s.

Chicano art t-shirts carry the image of the Virgin, a dark-skinned figure, as well as roses, the “miraculous” symbol in the Diego’s story. The t-shirt designs examined by Goldman revealed images of roses oftentimes more than the figure of the Virgin, typically tucked into scenes with cars, faces, and birds. However, Goldman discovered that few Chicano youths understood the relationship of the roses and the Virgin figure. In fact, most of her informants believed the image to be the Virgin Mary from Catholic practices and not the Virgin of Guadalupe from Tepeyac Hill. Many of her informants did not connect the roses to the story of Diego and the Virgin. Instead, to them, the roses represented characteristics such as love, beauty, unity, and peace. Goldman believes that the roses and Virgin demonstrate a connection between members of the Chicano

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 130, 135.

community. Moreover, wearing the icon of the Virgin on a t-shirt represented “community solidarity”, an aspect of Chicano identity.¹⁷⁸

SUMMARY

The descriptive studies by both Linnekin and Goldman point out cases where t-shirt designs express cultural identity. In many instances, the collection of images demonstrates an opposition to dominant culture. A common element in both studies is imagery considered native “traditional” culture, heritage, and history and the mixing of these images with contemporary elements familiar to both natives and non-natives (i.e., pit bulls, low riders/classic cars, etc.). In Linnekin’s study, tribal patterns mix with Greco-Roman warrior weapons, bodybuilding poses, pit bulls and motorcycles. In Goldman’s study, ancient gods and figures from an indigenous past (the Virgin Mary/Virgin of Guadalupe) mix with classic cars, low riders, structures, and contemporary clothing to explicate Chicano identity through t-shirt designs.

FINDING THE ARTIST FOR THE FESTIVAL T-SHIRT

From its beginnings, early in the 1970s, a Festival t-shirt (later to be joined by bags, posters, and hats), had been part of the CFCH’s cadre of art commodities—souvenirs that visitors could take to remember their experiences at the Festival. Typically, the CFCH maintained the control of the t-shirt design, production, and sales and experienced relative success in their venture since t-shirts were the highest selling items

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 131.

in past Festivals. However, for the First Americans Festival, members of the Art Market Committee expressed that they should be an integral part of the t-shirt design since it was, after all, the signature piece that represented Indian culture.

The CFCH saw few problems with complying. However, they were concerned with NMAI's inability to develop a quality design for a festival t-shirt. During the 2002 NMAI Pow Wow, t-shirt designs were largely ignored, resulting in unattractive (and undesirable) shirts.¹⁷⁹ There were no senior managers from the NMAI or CFCH involved in these early planning stages.¹⁸⁰ Comfortable with this decision, the CFCH announced that they would produce the t-shirt but the Art Market Committee, following a similar process as Indian Market, would select the artist:

CFCH design and production teams are aware that the NMAI Art Committee will be selecting designs for these products.¹⁸¹

However, in the environment of governmental procedures and hierarchal decisions—many of which remain never fully explained to lower-level employees, outcomes differ from anticipated visions of communal and comprehensive choices on the artistry of such an important piece. From its early beginnings, the selection process was unofficial and informal since senior managers and the Grand Steering Committee were not involved nor consulted in the initial plans and appeared unconcerned with matters related to the Festival's t-shirt design. Designing a t-shirt was overshadowed by the

¹⁷⁹ A festival t-shirt had been a part of the CFCH's 40-year history. T-shirt designs focused on themes in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival programs. Tote bags, baseball hats, and/or posters shared the same designs created by in-house graphic artists. The CFCH did not allow the sales of t-shirts from invited Festival artists. The Smithsonian also retained the rights to any designs or artwork. The 2002 NMAI pow wow t-shirts were hastily designed with cartoon-like images. These t-shirts waned in comparison to the NMAI Groundbreaking Ceremony shirt designed by Navajo artist Tony Abeyta.

¹⁸⁰ Email letter from Linda Martin, NMAI who wanted to begin setting up meetings.

¹⁸¹ Report from Rachel Delgado to the NMAI Art Market Advisory Committee, Vendors Subcommittee, and Products Subcommittee, dated January 28, 2004.

planning of the Festival Program that featured dignitaries, high-profile performers, and celebrities.¹⁸²

The Art Market Advisory Committee formed a subsidiary —the Products Subcommittee, composed of the same people serving on the Indian Market Committee. The informality of these groups became apparent after a few meetings: discussions of t-shirt designs occurred in Indian Market meetings instead of Product Subcommittee meetings, suggestions and comments came from people who did not serve in either committee, and important decisions were made by committee members who never showed up for any meetings.¹⁸³

A main concern for the t-shirt was similar to the artworks evaluated for Indian Market: it should be “designed by an Indian” and should show “traditional” Indian imagery.” For a month, the committee discussed t-shirt designs. One member raised the topic of a “signature exhibition image” whereby t-shirts and other products designed for the museum should resemble its exhibits. Another member informed the group about a document stating that any designs for a Smithsonian product required the use of a “preferred palette of colors and designs.”¹⁸⁴ One member reminded them that their “team becomes responsible” (for product design) contingent on “approval given by the Grand

¹⁸² The planning of the Festival Program areas involved the Grand Steering Committee at NMAI and directors of the CFCH, the highest approval authorities of the Festival. During Production Meetings, the t-shirt design was typically addressed at the end of the meeting, either briefly or not at all.

¹⁸³ The Art Market Advisory Committee consisted of two subcommittees: the Vendors Subcommittee who selected artisans for Indian Market and the Products Subcommittee, who would solicit ideas for the festival t-shirt. Since the Art Market Advisory Committee and Vendors Subcommittee were already conducting weekly meetings, the Products Subcommittee decided to discuss their ideas in the same meeting. Ideas for t-shirt designs required review by the Assistant Director for Public Programs who did not attend one meeting.

¹⁸⁴ According to NMAI employee Tanya Thrasher, SBV was also designing festival products for the museum gift shops. They were interested in the ideas of the NMAI Products Subcommittee. Thrasher sat on SBV’s product committee and offered to act as a liaison between the two groups to avoid crossovers.

Steering Committee”, the higher management of the Festival, including the NMAI Director, W. Rick West.¹⁸⁵

As meetings continued, ideas emerged. One suggestion involved the NMAI logo, a sun encircled with hands, and to use different colors and patterns so that the various hands would represent indigenous cultures throughout the hemisphere. Another idea would “fill” the hands with images from Indian culture including turquoise stones for the Southwest, corn for the Eastern Woodlands, salmon for the Pacific Northwest, and so forth. Another idea involved the new “Welcome Wall” under construction outside of the Museum and translating the word “Welcome” into hundreds of indigenous languages. Other suggestions included using art from the NMAI Artist-in-Residence Program, choosing objects from the Museum’s collection, or having a Committee member design the shirt since some of them were visual artists. An idea everyone agreed upon was the use of several images instead of one image since it would be difficult to have one image represent all indigenous peoples. Members agreed that the image should be something special—a “striking image” that would truly “represent the Festival.” Committee members also agreed that the selection of the image should be by a majority vote.¹⁸⁶

For more than two months, the Committee enthusiastically reviewed samples of artwork and discussing possibilities in addressing the problems of Indian identity in one t-shirt design. Then, a change in the process surprised the group: a new committee had

¹⁸⁵ Email correspondences from Tanya Thrasher between NMAI committee members dated February 6, 10, and 11, 2004. Thrasher informed the group that there was an approval authority higher than the Steering Committee (which she sat on as Festival Program Co-Coordinator) —the NMAI Grand Steering Committee, which included the Director of the NMAI. Furthermore, the email correspondences revealed that additional people had been included in the discussions: Festival Co-Coordinator Howard Bass and two members of the NMAI Office of Public Affairs, who were not members of either the Vendor or Products Subcommittees.

¹⁸⁶ NMAI Product Meeting Report sent on February 17, 2004. The committee’s “wish list” included six different t-shirt designs (to reflect different regions in the United States), a polo-style shirt, tote bag, poster, umbrella, and two types of hats, baseball and bucket-style. The Committee believed that the t-shirt design would be applied to these products.

been organized that excluded the existing committee members and replaced them with NMAI employees from the Office of Public Affairs who had expressed concern about the identity issues of the t-shirt.¹⁸⁷ This new committee would be in charge of selecting the t-shirt design. CFCH Director of Administration, Barbara Strickland delivered the disappointing news to the Products Subcommittee and informed them that all of their ideas “would now pass through the NMAI Grand Steering Committee and the Office of Public Affairs” since the festival t-shirt needed to “fit in with an identity brand.” However, she did not dissolve the Products Subcommittee and encouraged the group to continue brainstorming ideas for the t-shirt.¹⁸⁸

Following this news, NMAI Festival Coordinator, Howard Bass, explained that the “new model” included teams concerned with how “the look” of the t-shirt represented the Museum during the Festival and its future endeavors. No new committee was formed and there were no new players. Rick West suggested that Tony Abeyta be the artist to design the t-shirt—an idea not everyone was “entirely comfortable with.”¹⁸⁹ Bass then contradicted himself by saying “the Products [Sub]committee does not really exist.”¹⁹⁰

At the weekly CFCH production meeting, Festival Director Diana Parker informed the entire Festival staff that the “Products Subcommittee had been dissolved.” When asked who was now in charge of the Festival t-shirt design, she perfunctorily stated that all questions on t-shirt designs “would fall on Barbara [Strickland], including final

¹⁸⁷ Telephone conversation with Linda Martin, dated February 25, 2004.

¹⁸⁸ Meeting notes on February 26, 2004.

¹⁸⁹ As a critically acclaimed artist, Abeyta has been called by his admirers as “unquestionably one of the most talented and celebrated young artists of today”, “remarkable”, and “a genuine prodigy” (*Washington Post*). Adobe Gallery in Santa Fe, NM and Tribal Expressions Art Gallery describe his work as “serenely posed between ancient and modern worlds” who uses “primitive power, traditional sensibility and modern attitude” in his work.

decisions” only to be followed by Strickland’s low-key response that she “knew nothing.” Parker next announced that, “Rick West has already asked Tony Abeyta and wanted his art on the t-shirt.”¹⁹¹

The “official” announcement of the shift in decision-making process left the Products Subcommittee stunned and disappointed. Committee members questioned this maneuver. Initially, they would undertake this task. Now, suddenly, the Grand Steering Committee took over—the same group that conjured up words for tribal identification during the Indian Market process and had asked lawyers to approve both the Call to Artists and the score sheets for Indian Market. Furthermore, Abeyta’s artwork had already been used on an important t-shirt—the 1998 NMAI Groundbreaking Ceremony Event where Abeyta’s *Four Directions* appeared on the shirts.¹⁹² The Committee had hoped that a different artist or several artists would design the Festival t-shirt. If it was a goal of the Festival to include native hundreds of nations throughout the hemisphere, why was only one artist being favored? They still believed that the images on the t-shirt should represent perspectives from *all* or many Indians, not just one.

By March 5th, I was informed that Tony Abeyta would be the only artist to design the Festival t-shirt. I would then work directly with Richard Kurin who would meet with members of the NMAI Grand Steering Committee including Rick West. No one from the

¹⁹⁰ Telephone conversation with Howard Bass, dated March 2, 2004. I am not sure if Bass is informing me that the current Products Subcommittee is now defunct or if the Products Subcommittee never existed in the first place. If the Products Committee never existed, then the “committee” was a group of NMAI employees who organized themselves without “official” knowledge or approval

¹⁹¹ Notes from CFCH Production Meeting, dated March 2, 2004. Diana Parker’s perfunctory response to “work with Francene” meant that even she was unsure as to who I needed to work with. Francene Blythe, Program Manager of the Festival, CFCH, knew little about the festival products. She was not involved in the meetings or decisions.

¹⁹² *Four Directions*, created specifically for the Groundbreaking Ceremony Event, appeared on t-shirts, tote bags and hats. After the Groundbreaking Event, NMAI staff used the products as gifts for sponsors or as exchange gifts for Indian visitors, tribal delegations, museums and other organizations they worked with. Gift exchange is a common among indigenous peoples. Therefore, the Abeyta art products, circulated throughout the western hemisphere, became images associated with the NMAI Indian Market/Vendors

NMAI Art Market Advisory Committee, Vendors Subcommittee, or Products

Subcommittee would be involved. I could provide updates to them. However, I was to immediately cease the process of soliciting ideas for t-shirt designs from these committee members.¹⁹³ The festival t-shirt design process, which began with a small committee and ignored by senior Festival organizers, would now be decided and handled by the NMAI Grand Steering Committee, the Director of the NMAI, and the Director of the Center for Folklife—the highest approving authorities of the two Smithsonian entities.

CFCH WANTED SOMETHING TOO . . .

Playing “middleman” is not pleasant. As the opposing groups at the NMAI hashed out ideas and decisions as to who would design the t-shirt, the CFCH had another concern, primarily designing a t-shirt that would be acceptable to Indians but also appealing to the larger group of Festival: non-Indians. Their goals included: *Developing a t-shirt design that would be cultural relevant to the Festival and appeal to a broad audience, Indians and non-Indians*, completed by designing more than one shirt, but several shirts that combined specific images with colors and textures (i.e., the turtle on a blue stonewashed t-shirt that appealed to children and men, the bear claw on a crimson red shirt, and the thunderbird on a sand-textured ivory/taupe-colored shirt); *Developing a product with longevity*, a shirt that could be sold after the Festival ended in the Museum shops;¹⁹⁴ *Develop artwork that followed the regulations of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act*

Committee members became concerned that Abeyta’s work would become a kind of “brand” for the NMAI—something that they felt was unfair since the Museum should choose artwork that represents many Indian nations, not one artist.

¹⁹³ Meeting with Richard Kurin, dated March 5, 2004.

¹⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, certain images excluded in the selection included the Botticelli-style woman’s head or the blue ware with the Japanese pagoda. After the Festival, the Smithsonian Business Ventures (SBV), the organization that operates the Smithsonian gift

of 1990, by ensuring the artist was a registered Indian as well as the production of the t-shirts, handled by Lakota Designs, an Indian owned and operated business; *Quality* of the shirts; *Color*, a reproducible element to match the precise colors from *Anthem*; *Sizes*, expanding standard sizes to include children's sizes, women's fit, and 3XL for an Indian audience, a size never supplied in previous festivals; *Supply and Expediency*, to re-print shirts and ship orders quickly.¹⁹⁵

In short, the CFCH was concerned about having commercial aspects of a t-shirt design that was appealing, affordable, and saleable. Although the CFCH agreed with the NMAI regarding authenticity issues about the artist, they were also concerned with t-shirt sales. Not only did they need to break even from production costs, they hoped to make a profit. After all, they were paying for the t-shirt design, printing, and distribution, not the NMAI. Although they had mixed feelings about Abeyta's selection, they understood his selection. Abeyta's background portrayed a strong history of painting in American Indian arts mixed with his professional training and experiences in the non-Indian art world. His background includes a degree from the Maryland Institute of Art and training at the Chicago Art Institute as a Ford Foundation Scholar, the L'Ecole de beaux Arts in France, and Venice, Italy. Critics claim that his work has a "European" quality with cross-cultural influences. Although Abeyta's work is "contemporary", it contains aspects of what considered as abstract art. However, according to Christian Feest (1992), elements used in abstract art have existed in American Indian culture prior to European contact. In

shops, would sell the t-shirts. The SBV hoped that the new NMAI gift shops would boost sagging sales experienced throughout the Smithsonian museums.

¹⁹⁵ The CFCH had successfully used this model in the past: the stonewashed blue shirts appealed to many men. The red shirt appealed to men, women, college students, and youth. The taupe shirt appealed to women, non-Indians, and elders. In addition, the CFCH wanted the black t-shirt printed on a Women's Fit t-shirt.

addition, many techniques and processes used by Abeyta including dry painting, mosaics, and inlay, pre-date European settlement.¹⁹⁶

AMERICAN INDIAN PAINTING

American Indians painted as a form of expression and communication for thousands of years. Paintings found in the pyramids and ancient structures of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca reveal that it was part of Mesoamerican culture. In America, some the earliest forms of Indian painting on two-dimensional surfaces existed on tipis, buffalo hides, pottery, and ledger drawings. Since the 1600s, explorers and traders became interested in these items and the painted imagery that depicted historic events, encounters with whites, natural phenomena, winter counts, and village life. By the 1800s, painting, as an aesthetic (not functional) form, developed to suit the tastes of white patrons.

During the early twentieth century, schools of painting developed for American Indians.¹⁹⁷ Two different painting traditions emerged—one in Oklahoma, the other in New Mexico, where Abeyta grew up.¹⁹⁸ The Santa Fe Indian School also known as “The Studio” became one of the most influential institutions in Indian art. This school produced generations of Indian artists, including Abeyta’s father, Narcisco Abeyta.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Christian Feest, *Native Arts of North America* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 23 and 34-37.

¹⁹⁷ These artists, however, imitated the work of white artists; their work was short-lived. Many of the first works produced from these schools resembled the work of white painters. The mimicry of white art and lack of individualism led to a brief period of work for these Indian artists. The painting schools in Oklahoma and New Mexico developed between 1910 and 1920.

¹⁹⁸ Instructors guided Indian artists in the use of art media typically used by white artists. At the pueblo of San Ildefonso, artists at the day school experimented with watercolor techniques that quickly influenced artists throughout the region. At the Santa Fe Indian School, themes included representations of religion, landscapes, and tribal culture. Artists were also concerned with transitioning their work, moving away from naïve portrayals to distinct, individual styles. See Feest (1992), 86.

¹⁹⁹ In 1932, The Studio, led by Dorothy Dunn, a former Indian Service teacher and the first director of the school, is credited for developing the school and is viewed as the most influential individual that would produce a generation of Indian painters. Prior to the Reorganization Act of 1934, the quality of pioneer art teachers was low. The success of art schools had typically relied on teachers who taught art classes in government Indian Schools only at the primary level. However, quality teachers were in short supply since

By 1962, The Studio became absorbed by the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). Artists from IAIA worked on innovations in media and experimental methods that set them apart as Indian artists and not merely as artists who mimicked the work of white painters.²⁰⁰ They also wanted to create art that disputed ideas of what society considered “Indian”—symbols, imagery, and styles that had become popular during the era they were created, but eventually became clichéd and stereotypical. More importantly, Indian artists struggled with the changing notions of what Indian art *should* be in relation to their indigenous cultures, dominant (white) society, and the fluctuations of the art market.²⁰¹

the Indian Bureau viewed formal art classes viewed as acts of opposition to their policies. Under the leadership of Dunn, artists explored new methods and techniques, wanted to break through stereotypes, and create individual styles. They adopted a two-dimensional, flat, style of Indian art—a style which would be recognized as “Studio style.” Some of this style incorporated patterns from prehistoric pottery designs and murals painted on ceremonial structures (kivas). Other work, considered more decorative and depicting scenes of natives in an idealized past, became popular to white buyers. “Studio style” typically used pastel colors. Over 700 major artists emerged from the school. These artists continued to paint or teach for decades, thus influencing new artists and the growth of a distinctive style of painting developed during Dunn’s five-year tenure, 1932-1937.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the lack of experimentation at The Studio, the absence of Dunn, and the growing demand of paintings by white patrons resulted in stereotypes of the painting style that had made The Studio famous. By 1962, The Studio became absorbed into the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). A group of IAIA artists wanted to break free from the Studio Style—a style they called “Bambi art” because of its decorative techniques, the lack of individuality, and clichéd subject matter. Narciso Abeyta experimented with the techniques he had learned, dissecting, and re-working elements. He became one of the most innovative artists to achieve a particular style. His work reflected the lines, flat color and forms from The Studio. However, he broke the solid lines into undulating lines of varying widths, used flat colors but applied shifting hues, incorporated patterns convoluting in landscapes, and used figures that critics have commented were “more personal” rather than expected and stereotypical. Like Howe and Herrera, Narciso Abeyta earned a BA at the University of New México, and became influenced by abstract expressionist, Lez Haas.

²⁰⁰ This group of artists challenged the question of subject matter (*what* to paint) and experimented with different types of medium and style. They wanted to build on the linear, flat, and tonal qualities of The Studio but desired to be more expressive rather than decorative. Many of these artists wanted to study outside of Santa Fe in order to expand their creative growth and to find ways of deviating from The Studio. Oscar Howe (Sioux/Yanktonai Dakota) left the Studio and earned an MFA from the University of Oklahoma. He received recognition for his style of neo-cubism and the use of surrealist abstract forms. Jackson Pollock and other American artists had influenced Howe during the 1940s and 1950s. Joe H. Herrera (Cochita Pueblo) studied at the University of New Mexico, earning his BA and MA while studying under pioneer abstractionist Raymond Jonson. Herrera’s work became the combination of disparate parts, an attack of the formal elements of The Studio. He borrowed the ideas of Klee and Kandinsky and used geometric forms as cryptic codes—things to be understood rather than interpreted through his culture. The mystery of the subject matter for these artists, the deviation and rupture of style from The Studio, and the expressive meanings were some of the goals for these artists.

The IAIA took over the role of training artists from the now defunct Studio. In 1961, a major influence of Indian painters came through the guiding principles of the Scottsdale National Indians Arts Council—an organization formed to promote Indian art through its annual competition. However, unlike competitions of the past, the Scottsdale National encouraged experimental and expressive painting, to break away from stereotypes, and to challenge a debate about the nature of Indian art—the notion held by Conservatives that Indian art must appear Indian. The Studio had been the leading institution for Indian painters. The Scottsdale National set the standards for experimentation and exploring—ideas that the Institute found compelling to add to the standards developed by Dunn. See Brody, 196-198. Other artists that emerged during this time include Harrison Begay (Navajo), Andrew Tsinajinnie (Navajo), Allan Houser (Apache), and Pablita Velarde (Pueblo).

²⁰¹ During the late 1960s and 1970s, Indian artists, influenced by the civil rights movement and “Red Power”, created paintings that commented on the plight of American Indians. However, their work, once viewed as reactionist and political, eventually became stereotyped. Indian artists from this era would be typecast, their later works dismissed because they did not fall under dominant

Trained at IAIA, Abeyta's work shows influences from painting styles of the southwest that are distinct from other styles of Indian painting in North America. Much of his work incorporates the abstract with literal/natural elements. Exploring this idea, Christian Feest (1985) compared abstract versus representational designs from an evolutionary point of view in North American Indian art. Feest analyzed examples of Indian art and argued that there is a priority of abstract styles and certain instances where dated sequences of art appeared. Although the evidence was not conclusive, it showed a continuum from abstraction to representation, a notable regional distinction, according to Feest, between graphic and painted styles: the East emerges as a typically graphic region while genuine painting traditions are best represented in the Southwest. Another important distinction between graphic and painted styles is the presence or absence of polychromy or multi-colored works. Polychrome rock art and mural painting is an almost exclusively southwestern phenomena—a phenomena that may also have been influenced by ancient Mexico. Furthermore, Feest argues that the prevalence of mythological or ceremonial subjects may typically indicate a male influence on the artwork and mural painting of ancient Mexican civilizations may have influenced technique, style, the use of colors in southwest painting traditions. Other notable techniques from the Southwest include dry painting, also known as sand painting, mosaic, overlay, inlay, and cut-outs.

society's idea of Indian art. Two of the most prominent artists of this time were Fritz Scholder (Luiseno) and his student, T.C. Cannon (Caddo/Kiowa). Scholder and Cannon, considered modernists based on the similarities of their style to western artists, achieved success as contemporary artists. They experimented with different subject matter and styles. However, art critics dismissed their later works because they did not consider them "Indian art"—since the art did not reflect what dominant society considered Indian subject matter.

During the 1980s, a major shift occurred. A generation of artists, who understood the categorization contemporary Indian artists, experimented to break away from stereotypes that had inhibited native artists preceding them for decades. Part of their belief was to create art that would no longer be recognized as Native American art, but simple as *art*. They also wanted to break away from institutionalized canons of art and the ethnocentrism in the art market that had plagued Indian artists once their art became mainstream. These artists included Emmi Whitehorse (Navajo), Bob Haozous (Chiricahua Apache/Navajo), Jimmie Durham (Cherokee), Felice Lucero-Giaccardo (San Felipe Pueblo), Kay Walking Stick (Cherokee), and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (Flathead).

Dry painting, an essential part of Navajo healing ceremonies, combines painting and mosaic and uses multi-colored sands, religious symbolism, and graphic patterns. Dry paintings contain three major patterns of composition: linear arrangements of figures in one or two rows, radial arrangements oriented towards the cardinal directions around a centre with equivalent use of the resulting quadrants, and compositions in which a dominant central motif takes up most of the pictorial space. This central motif is typically a figure or “guardian” surrounded with a circular or arched element resembling a rainbow with openings towards the East, the direction of beginnings, birth, and renewal. Dry painting is also practiced by other American Indian groups in the southwestern United States, southern California, some Plains Indian groups, by Australian aborigines, Tibetan monks, and by some Latin American groups during specific Christian holy days.²⁰²

The issue of “authenticity” of an artist’s stature, such as Abeyta, is also complicated by the decision of Indians who “stay” and those who leave and are influenced by “the outside world”. It is difficult to consider Abeyta as a “reservation Indian” since he left his homeland and was trained at renowned art academies in the United States and Europe that influenced him to develop a style many consider mixed, integrated, or hybrid, but not “pure” Indian. Indian art created by an individual for decorative and solely aesthetic purposes was a problematic for contemporary Indian artists, for Abeyta as well as others. Culturally, tribal art did not “belong” to a single individual since tribal art was a product of the community, social relationships, and

²⁰² Feest, Christian, “Mexico and South America,” *The Origin of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, Edited by Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 101-104.

therefore, anonymous. Thus, an Indian with individual distinction was an oddity. It was not possible, according to J.J. Brody (1971) for an American Indian artist to maintain both tribal and individual distinction. The forms and motifs of traditional Indian art of all regions evolved out of and were dependent on isolated, homogenous social conditions. The Santa Fe Indian School and the paintings produced therein were not part of every day life. Artists worked under a new set of social conditions—dominated by conquest, displacement, assimilation, and numerous cultural changes. The expectation of new art to evolve from the traditional and to be “in character with the old” argued Brody, was to ask for either the impossible or a mindless formalism. If their (American Indians) art were to have social meaning to changing Indian communities, the artist would have to develop new art that could not be bound by that of the old.²⁰³

IMAGES OF THE PEOPLE: THE T-SHIRT DESIGN

Thunderbird, phoenix, quetzal, bear claw, turtle, terrapin, Sacred Clown, Pueblo Clown, trickster-figure—the subjects of legend and lore, of writings, artifacts, and art. These are sacred animals and beings of native cosmology and characterize native identity—strength, power, courage, birth, creation, regeneration, cleverness, stealth, and community. They are figures of totemic clan leaders and apical ancestors. The bear, for instance, became the figure representing strength and power of the Plains Indians and First Nations peoples (Canada). The thunderbird of the Pacific Northwest, a legendary powerful bird that controlled the heavens, also transcends into the Southwest as a phoenix

²⁰³ Brody, 129.

with its regenerative qualities and multi-facet personalities, and in Central America as the quetzal. The Algonquians, dozens of Indian tribes from the east coast of America to southern Canada, revere the turtle for its origin story that tells of the creation of the world on its back. The Turtle, a solitary figure flying in the heavens, pulled up mud, plants, and water, flinging it onto its back. Slowly the elements merged and evolved into land, sea, and skies—what we know as Earth. The Pueblo Clown or Sacred Clown, a trickster-figure of kachina religious practices of the southwest Pueblo Indians (i.e., Hopi, Zuni, etc.) reveals only a face, sans its black-and-white striped body. However, how easily this face represents the masked societies of the Pacific coastal tribes, the longhouse peoples of the Six Nations, Alaska natives, burial masks of indigenous peoples of Mexico, and the carved faces of stelaes and sacred posts of Algonquians, Mayans, and the Mapuche of Chile.²⁰⁴ These are only some of the panels in *Anthem*, a mixed-media painting by Navajo artist Tony Abeyta specifically for the First Americans Festival.

Several images were used to address concerns of cultural diversity and to represent as many as possible instead of one. The images in *Anthem* already existed as single panels; the transference easily placed two to eight panels in the t-shirt's design. Passed down as stories through the generations, the instinctive nature of these animals and beings—birds, bears, feathers, stars and moons, are deeply embedded in Indian culture but are also familiar to non-Indians. Furthermore, the subject matter uses figures, shapes, and patterns recognizable by non-Indians: feathers, birds, bears, stars and moons. Interest in environmental protection and preservation of natural wildlife brings awareness

²⁰⁴ Algonquian Indians are grouped by language and includes dozens of groups from northern North Carolina to southern Canada. There are over two dozen Mayan groups.

and responsibility towards nature's creatures, an acknowledged reveration of animal life similar to native beliefs. Cross-cultural comparisons are chancy, but perhaps we can agree that celestial bodies are transcendent images that expand beyond native cosmology to the array of belief systems in American culture and throughout the world. Something is missing from *Anthem*, a feature in other Abeyta paintings—spiritual deities of his own contemporary adaptation, anthropomorphic faceless figures that dance within the constraints of the canvas or peer at the viewer, choosing instead to use objects and animals in lieu of people.²⁰⁵ Animals and objects representing spirituality contribute to its cross-cultural appeal.

Some things that would *not* be part of the painting was any reference to battles, massacres, drunkenness and symbols of disparity, poverty, lack of education, or sickness—reminders of the past and current issues plaguing Indian communities. This festival celebrated, and did not provoke reminders of misdeeds and crimes of the past. Instead, there are patterns, shapes, and colors considered “Indian” but with more of a Renaissance flair: geometric shapes within grid patterns and a linear arrangement of horizontal and vertical axes, squares within squares, rectangles that frame circles and ellipses as if kin to Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks*. The black background also presents a visual ploy as to whether the painting is a mosaic—inlay shapes atop a

²⁰⁵ According to anthropologist Emile Durkheim the ability to depict gods and spirits that appeal to a board constituency is a powerful genre for any artist since it addresses a deep-seeded desire in human beings to understand the supernatural (Durkheim 1915). See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London: 1915).

Supporters of Abeyta have commented on the strength of his work—combinations and experimentations of medium and his unique subject matter: spiritual deities. Significant components of Abeyta's work are the mythological and religious images of his own contemporary adaptation since Abeyta believes that the depiction of a particular God would be sacrilegious. Nevertheless, he chooses to “reinforce the ideology of Indian religion, its strength, its beauty and semblance” and believes that “ritual belief is the most important basis in Indian culture and ensures its infinite existence.” See “Tony Abeyta: Featured at Turquoise Tortoise Gallery Spring Show in Sedona, Arizona.” Article on “Gateway to Sedona”. www.gatewaytosendona.com/article/id/652/page/1. April 25, 2006. Some of Abeyta's paintings with mythic and/or religious themes include *Sacred Corn*, *Spring Sentinel* (1990-1995), *Remembered*

black base or if the panel of images are part of a die-cut; square and rectangle cut-outs on the black spread with images *behind* them, a similar device used by Abeyta in other paintings.²⁰⁶ In space between panels, a thin yellow line forms a cross replicating the quadrant of panels to represent the Four Directions, the sacred cardinal points of Indians.²⁰⁷ Printed over the top left panel, “First Americans Festival” with “September 21-26” under the bottom right panel, the only typography on the shirt, suspiciously excludes the year (2004) which clarifies its status as commemorative but timeless. What goal would it serve to potential buyers to ponder an outdated garment instead of a marvelous souvenir of Indian art?

Unlike the dark, shadowy shapes used by Rembrandt, the palette is a marked resemblance to the Sistine Chapel that is, after its restoration from centuries of candle smoke soot that masked its brilliance, revealed hues of corals, blues, greens, and golds of the heavens. Coincidentally (or not), the colors and textures also reflect the southwest: the warm siennas of its desert sands, the blues of its expansive sky that turned black in the evenings, and rosy pinks and reds of the sunrise and settings. Abeyta typically incorporated bits and pieces of other natural materials into the paint itself, including an important element from his homeland—sand. There are no twisted or uneven landscapes,

Ancients, *Voices from the Underworld*, and *Arrival at Creations Portal*, and many paintings with Navajo *Yei* figures. Artist’s Profile, Elk Ridge Art Company.

²⁰⁶ In *Night Fertilisation*, Abeyta’s featureless feathered beings appear to look out at the viewer. Abeyta incorporates rectangle shapes that act as windows, challenging the idea if the viewer is peering in or if the characters in his paintings are looking out at the viewer. Similarly, *Anthem* teases the viewer into questioning the layers that exist within a two-dimensional work of art, their function, and what they symbolize. Is the black background a shroud representing death, disease, and displacement? Are the cut-outs representative of “cutting out”—extracting culture of Indian peoples? The squares and rectangles are shapes easily identifiable with windows, doorways, televisions or computer monitors—contemporary gateways of communication and cultural clashes. Do Indians then hold the power in opening or closing these “windows” to stop non-Indians from peering into their lives?

²⁰⁷ The Four Directions “cross” is an ancient symbol that pre-dates the Christian cross. “Sacred Circle” or “Wheel Cross” is another name for this symbol. The four elements are representations of the cardinal directions, North, South, East, and West, the seasons in a year, and stages of human life (childhood, youth, maturity, old age). It can symbolize wholeness, universality, and stability.

unstable architecture, misshapen qualities, dark foreboding shapes, sinister figures, murky colors, or threatening imagery. *Anthem* is a “safe” painting.

What is included in the design is just as important as the *excluded*—that is, the images *not* used. Panels from the t-shirt are extractions—details from *Anthem*, only bits and pieces of it. Abeyta created *Anthem*, but designers at the CFCH could choose what they wanted for the t-shirt. Members from the NMAI Products Subcommittee (although they did not choose Abeyta as the artist) reacted strongly to ambiguous imagery in *Anthem*, claiming it did not “look Indian” and found some images “confusing.” In order to avoid possible reactions from Festival visitors, CFCH designers chose literal images and recognizable symbols over abstract panels “considered non-Indian”. Cropping, for example, of the Pueblo Clown panel revealed only the facial features, eliminated the blurred, washed diamond shapes of the argyle pattern that Abeyta described as “beadwork motifs, abstractions of the cosmos, and water that sustains life.”²⁰⁸ Inside the sacred circle is a fifth element that also remained unused—a central feature where other images emanate from: a feathered hand-fan surrounded by golden ivy, a crescent moon and stars meant to symbolize “a direct connection to the opening museum and all the other things revolve around it.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ During the layout process, CFCH designers swapped out the coyote panel because it appeared “plain” and clichéd when placed next to the other images. The panel with the Four Directions symbol was a favorite. However, the design already incorporated this symbol through the yellow line that forms a cross and a quadrant of the shapes. In addition, the Four Directions symbol is not part of the belief system for *all* Indian cultures. Similarly, the feathered hand fan panel was not selected because hand fans are used in pow wows—gatherings practiced by Indians in the United States but not in areas outside of the U.S.

The four images, chosen to show diversity among Indian nations throughout the western hemisphere also, coincidentally, cover four main geographic areas of the United States. These symbols would have been significant to continental American Indians. However, they would not have been as familiar to groups outside of America such as the Maya or the Quechua whose sacred symbols include the jaguar, monkey, and double-headed eagle respectively.

²⁰⁹ Scott W. Berg, “National Pride: The National Museum of the American Indian Opens on the Mall,” *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2004, WE31. The eagle fan was important to many American Indian groups and was the one image of the painting that Abeyta believed had “a direct connection to the opening museum, and all the other things revolve around it.” Abeyta believed the feathered fan was an important element because of its used in blessings, rituals, and ceremonies. He chose the image because there would be many Indians “carrying these fans in the procession.” Although Abeyta believed that the feathered hand-fan was a popular

Another panel with confusing imagery featured a light-haired female face, a vignette transposed on a raven's torso. Using a single face is risky since it provokes discrepancies about the identity of the person. However, there is familiarity here: Botticelli's Venus, rising from the sea, a sheer veil fluttering in the winds held by the fingertips of the Three Graces, ready to cloak her nude body. What kind of odd connection is this to Indian culture in the Americas? Perhaps the face is a generic representation of Indian women in a form of reverence—Earth Mother, Corn Goddess, or Originator of Life. She resembles the 1590s engravings by French artist Theodor de Bry, tasked to depict the first European encounters with indigenous peoples of the New World, and portrayed Indian women as Roman matriarchs, earth goddesses, or figures of that embodied ideal characteristics (i.e., Liberty). Yet it is a fragment of cultural experience as class, history, and opportunity have shaped, as Cantwell suggests, that tends to attract an audience of people whose childhood education, home libraries, museum visits, and college degrees, among other advantages, have already aligned them with the aims of the Festival and acquainted them, however superficially, with its content.²¹⁰ Whether Abeyta included Venus to reflect his recent experiences in Italy is unknown. Nevertheless, she was a figure well ingrained in the psyche of visitors familiar with the western art canon.²¹¹

image for *many* American Indians, its scope was limited. It appealed to Indians in the United States but not to those outside of the U.S. who are not practitioners of Pow Wows.

²¹⁰ Cantwell, 87.

²¹¹ Committee members commented that Abeyta's recent studies in Italy, and the art and architecture of the Italian surroundings, had probably influenced him in when he created *Anthem*. Committee members believed that traditional clan symbols such as the turtle, bear claw, and thunderbird, would have a "universal" appeal. However, several members wondered if the light-green clown-like face on a weathered argyle pattern was an interpretation of Tlingit totems. In addition, they questioned the relationship of Indian culture to Japanese blue ware.

IS IT JUST A T-SHIRT?

What would it mean for American Indians to possess an *Anthem* t-shirt?

First, the t-shirt meant that as an American Indian, they attended the event—the largest gathering of indigenous people in the history of the United States. After all, it would not be solely Indians in America; indigenous peoples throughout the entire western hemisphere, as far south as Patagonia and north to Greenland would also be there. To be part of this group was a re-affirmation of cultural identity, not only within one's tribe or nation, but also with associated indigenous peoples on a global level. And so Abeyta designed *Anthem* for *them*—native peoples, using symbols and icons of cultural and spiritual significance for a specific event:

I did want this to be an 'Anthem,' to function as a flag of Native American sensibilities about nature, about animals and plants, the cosmos, the underworld. It has to live as a creation that was inspired by this event at this particular point in time.²¹²

Being part of this huge crowd warranted “an endurance test worthy of a commemorative t-shirt.”²¹³ Visitors wearing t-shirts of artists sanctioned by museums, particularly national museums, become products of “institutional validation” or those of “national recognition.”²¹⁴ Owning an *Anthem* t-shirt required that the visitor possessed the knowledge that made the connection between the object and its referent. Furthermore,

²¹² Berg, WE31.

²¹³ Robert Hughes, “The Show of Shows,” *Time*, May 26, 1980. The 1980 *Picasso* show, the largest exhibition of one artist's work at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, recorded the highest attendance in museum history with over 1.1 million visitors. Journalist Robert Hughes, commenting on the huge crowds, described the show as “an endurance test worthy of a commemorative t-shirt.” Hughes described visitors who found the presentation “exhausting” and “nearly indigestible”, forming this opinion as they streamed through the galleries at a rate of 8,000 people per day.

²¹⁴ Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (MIT Press, 1995), 69-71. Crimp discussed t-shirts as part of the “spectacle of response” at the 1980 *Picasso* show in Museum of Modern Art in New York City. According to Crimp, t-shirt clad museum visitors became a collective part of another type of spectacle—the spectacle of response. The embodiment of thousands of visitors wearing the Picasso signature on the t-shirt design signified a resounding “reaffirmation of artistic genius.” Crimp's argument that Marcel Duchamp had replaced Picasso as the “early twentieth-century artist most relevant to contemporary practice” was now challenged by the sea of visitors wearing the Picasso t-shirt.

to attend the event meant that one would be in the presence of U.S. senators, international presidents, tribal chiefs, and councils but other luminaries including celebrities, renowned artists and writers, and filmmakers. The t-shirt symbolized the ability to identify with hundreds of thousands of other Indians.

Another meaning of the *Anthem* t-shirt for American Indians was that it symbolized a type of status—the ability to travel. Numerous letters, emails, and telephone calls described the excitement of Indians traveling to the event. The *Anthem* t-shirt became evidence of a visitor’s attendance at the historic event where “commercial works of art have often become the mere souvenirs of fleeting visitors to far-off places”—items are all the tangible evidence the traveler needs to recall the reality of the trip.²¹⁵ For some Indians t-shirts, typically given as gifts conveyed the message of visiting a major city or indicated that the buyer had relatives or privileged access to such products.²¹⁶

The person who possessed this t-shirt maintained a unique status because of his or her ability to afford both the expense and leisure time of traveling. This position, says MacCannell, was the opposite of the person who stayed at home in the modern world and was viewed as morally inferior to the person who “gets out” often. The *Anthem* shirt embodied an “authentic experience”—something available only to those who had the means to “break the bonds of their everyday existence and begin to “live.”²¹⁷ For many

²¹⁵ Graburn, 26.

²¹⁶ Linnekin’s study on Hawaiian strength t-shirts focused on designs by native artists from Hawaii and Polynesia that contained images representing power, strength, and beauty. As gifts, Linnekin argued that these unique t-shirts became symbols of status, conveying messages including “I was in Hawaii” or “I have relatives in Hawaii,” and showed the buyer’s ability to travel to Hawaii.

²¹⁷ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 45, 150, 159. A trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the First Americans Festival would have been exciting and once-in-a-lifetime experience. Activities for visitors included marching in the grand Native Nations Procession, an Opening Ceremony with dignitaries, tribal chiefs, attending

Indians of a lower socioeconomic class, the ability to transcend their everyday existence by traveling to the Festival would have been a once in a lifetime experience. Many Indian visitors who lived on reservations, in rural communities, or in remote areas had to raise money to travel to Washington, D.C. Oftentimes, funds were needed for every family member to travel or to be able to travel with a tribal group tour. A t-shirt was proof of their attendance and experience, demonstrating that not only could one afford the trip, they would bring back experiences and knowledge related to the trip, and also had the leisure/time available for the trip.

Lastly, an *Anthem* t-shirt demonstrated a status of owning a “rare” art product. In this scenario, its “rare” quality was due to its limited availability. Once the festival opened, people snapped up every possible t-shirt in sight, not only for themselves but also for family members and friends who could not make the trip, and as gifts for tribal members and community leaders “back home.” Owning an *Anthem* t-shirt became a status symbol, especially if purchased *during* the Festival, drawing admiration and impressing Festival visitors unable to obtain a shirt. There was no limit on how many shirts one person could buy; some customers purchased up to two dozen shirts in one visit. When word spread through the Festival that the shirts were in limited quantities, it fueled more people to buy. Re-orders and arrivals became a covert operation; Festival staff, prohibited from revealing the exact time of arrival to the public, secretly coordinated with drivers en route delivering the shipments and informed Festival staff of the estimated time of arrival of the trucks into Marketplace. Additional staff, assigned to

performances, and interacting with some of the biggest names in American Indians art. Furthermore, the Festival featured special dances, dinners, balls, and social gatherings for Indian visitors.

report to the back of Marketplace, unloaded the trucks expeditiously in order to get the t-shirts into the corral as soon as possible.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO OTHERS TOO

The t-shirt also served purposes that benefited the NMAI (and the Smithsonian as a whole): Promoting the Festival meant promoting the Museum, a Smithsonian entity as a major tourist attraction in Washington, DC. The t-shirt became an object with an emphasis on culture and history—a *strategy for tourism*.²¹⁸ The increase in patronage translated into opportunities for education, learning, outreach, and public programs for the Museum. Furthermore, designing a shirt with Tony Abeyta's meant offering a higher quality of experience that would retain their current constituents and attract a higher class of visitors.

Diversity, another “selling point” for the Museum, warrants tourism and provides funding and sponsorship opportunities. In one of three inaugural exhibitions inside the Museum, *Our Peoples*, curators displayed a grid of Indian faces—male, female, young, old, light-eyed, dark-haired, olive-skinned, brown-skinned, red-haired—a race of mixed peoples. The NMAI does not represent one tribe: they boast of representing over 500 nations, not dedicated to a “pure” Indian heritage or even a multi-indigenous heritage. Prior to the 1500s Conquest Period, indigenous peoples intermarried with other tribal members, followed by mixing first with the Spanish, French and English, later by other European groups, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asians. Indian heritage then, by the

²¹⁸ Linnekin, 226.

“looks” of *Our Peoples*, is not purely Indian but one of cultural diversity with an indigenous “base”.

The heralding of all this diversity involves an exoticism that, to use Huggan’s words, “conveys the illusion of cross-cultural reciprocity.”²¹⁹ If there is unified culture, then there is no enemy, or at the very least, no culprit of the past. The heinous acts committed on Indians passively becomes unmentioned, the faces of Indians mixed with features of conquerors—tainted as mixed-bloods and the demise of tribal pedigree. The word, “a native place”, published in brochures, the web site, and Festival materials, does not describe specifications but simply identifies the NMAI as a place for native peoples regardless of the percentage of blood quantum or unknown ancestry. Indeed, according to Linnekin, this is a positive thing for an institution such as the NMAI:

A broad American ideology also holds that cultural diversity is a positive and enriching force for the nation—when expressed in approved ways.²²⁰

This diversity aspect also means that the public can share with things once considered sacred. For instance, Opening Prayer, a recitation used to bless the commencement of an event, encourages participants to stand in a sacred circle and join hands. Everyone is invited, native or not. Things once considered too sacred for non-natives opened to all—native, mixed-native and non-native. Such public demonstrations emphasize the ethnic co-existence of mixed-Indian peoples as well as a harmony among Indians in a Museum of shared space of cultural objects, narratives, histories, and therefore, multiple identities. The NMAI then, is a unique place filled with objects and where diverse identities are celebrated, a strategy for enhancing the Museum as a unique

destination or to use Jane Desmond's words, a temporal "destination image"—a place where hundreds of native cultures become a strong attraction.²²¹ The t-shirt symbolizes not only Indian heritage, but also mixed *American* heritages.

In the frenzy of it all, the NMAI and CFCH successfully developed a t-shirt design that pleased Indians, especially Indian visitors at the Festival, as well as non-Indians who recognized symbols and imagery and could appreciate the artwork of a renowned, "genuine" American Indian artist.

Perhaps the success of the *Anthem* t-shirt lies in its use of symbols that, according to Umberto Eco (1986), brings conventions of visuality when their various graphic components encompass a unified commonly understood code.²²² For instance, American Indians easily recognized images of the bear claw, turtle, thunderbird, and Pueblo Clown because they are important beings in their cultural and spiritual legacy. Abeyta's artistic techniques, interpreted figures, and methods used in rendering were also easily identifiable because of his mixed southwest and Euro-American style. Non-Indian visitors understood the symbols as images from Indian legend and lore. They may not know the "code", according to Eco, but could appreciate the composition of columns, forms in space, and contrast of colors and "could have a certain aesthetic experience, as if reading an ancient heroic poem without understanding its allegorical meaning, but nevertheless enjoying the flow of images and the rhythm of the story."²²³

²¹⁹ Graham Huggan, "The Postcolonial Exotic", *Transition* 1994, Volume 64: 27.

²²⁰ Linnekin, 227.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 300.

²²³ Ibid, 301.

However, Eco also warns against the use of images that are *too* literal arguing, “the more straightforward the communication, the greater the danger of telling the recipient something he or she already knows.”²²⁴ Would using common imagery, for instance, a buffalo, coyote, or tipi, result in “a redundant integration of words and images” and leave little to the imagination of Festival visitors?²²⁵

The selected images reflected the changing situation of Indians—the mixed heritage, encounters with the “outside” world, and the crossing of cultures, now on a global level. The t-shirt became attractive to visitors because it stood for different assemblages of ideas.²²⁶ There is a sense, as told by Meyer Shapiro in his seminal essay *Style* (1953) that it is not a single image that is important to understanding the shirt’s significance; but rather the totality of the images together. To understand art, says Shapiro, one must understand style “as an important constituent of culture.”²²⁷ This understands style as a system of forms with a quality and a meaningful expression through which the personality of the artist and the broad outlook of a group are visible.²²⁸ He argued for careful examination in forms in art, understanding that specific elements in a work of art require careful analysis in consideration of the whole work:

Basic for contemporary practice and for knowledge of past art is the theoretical view that what counts in all art are the elementary, aesthetic components, the qualities and relationships of fabricated lines, spots, colors, and surfaces. These have two characteristics: they are intrinsically expressive, and they tend to constitute a coherent whole.²²⁹

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Deborah Root, *Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 121.

²²⁷ Meyer Shapiro, “Style”, *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 287.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid, 291.

Animals, totems, clan figures, deities, ancestors, sacred creatures—these are powerful figures that explain the earliest beginnings of Indians associated with origin stories, legends, or poems that explain the existence or occurrence of things in Indian cosmology. They wrestle amongst the heavens, create mountains and oceans, sacrifice their bodies for children of the earth, bless the lands and make them bountiful, and become victorious by defeating monsters or evil creatures that threaten humankind. The symbols on the *Anthem* t-shirt then, as a whole, symbolize victory over opponents, strength and power, immortality and longevity—characteristics that all people can share in and understand.

SUMMARY

The “salvage paradigm” is a principle whereas a dominant group must “salvage” or rescue the objects of a subordinate group. In this study, an attempt was made to analyze *Anthem*, a work of art that mixed “traditional” Indian and Euro-American imagery and techniques, through the lens of the “salvage paradigm”.

Joseph Traugott argues the possibility of a reversal in the “salvage” process. However, there are elements of *Anthem* that defy its absolute categorization into the principles of the “salvage paradigm” and a “reversal” in the model. First, the idea of “rescuing” American Indian culture arose during the early twentieth century based on beliefs that Indians would soon be extinct. Since the early twentieth century, this assumption is unfounded: American Indians did not disappear nor did they fully assimilate. Second, the belief of “salvaging” cultural objects and the practices of

American Indians is a sanitized idea that ignores the actions of the dominant group in such a process. The “disappearance” of American Indians did not occur in a vacuum and involved action by members of the dominant group including encroachment, war, displacement, and the introduction of disease. Furthermore, if Traugott’s theory of reversal is applied to *Anthem*, what is being “recouped” from Euro-American culture? What is “lost” and then recovered in *Anthem*? Is it a tradition of painting, a genre, or a particular style? Are the brush strokes, textures, and earthen marks reminiscent of early Anglo civilizations?

Instead, I suggest that *Anthem* is a different version of “invented tradition” created for acknowledging a national identity for American Indians. “Traditional” elements of *Anthem* and the Festival t-shirt reveal the use of symbols and imagery that, viewed as a collective, symbolize American Indian identity for a specific event of national importance. Images in *Anthem* specify a native *American* identity and not a native-South American, Central American, or Caribbean identity. For instance, although images of celestial stars and moon and thunderbird /phoenix /quetzal can be seen as “universal” native imagery, the Four Directions circle, bear claws, and coyote are undoubtedly American. The turtle symbolizes the creation of the world according to Algonquian origin stories. The feathered hand-fan, the central image of *Anthem*, represents a cultural activity, the pow wow, a gathering of Indians that occurs specifically in the United States.

Instead of the “salvage paradigm”, I believe that *Anthem* falls under what I call a “false salvage”. “False salvage” describes the spurious, not authentic, and not genuine. In this study, it is false that American Indians are dying and require “rescuing”. The idea of

their “disappearance” was derived from a systematic process of cultural destruction by the U.S. government. Furthermore, what appears to be “real” or “authentic” depictions is a conglomeration of popular images, symbols, and methods in *Anthem* that borrow from Indian culture. However, the appeal of *Anthem* is based on elements that reflect Abeyta’s formal training in high-brow art institutions in the United States and Europe. It is no surprise that *Anthem* hangs *inside* of the NMAI with a status as “high” art. The appeal of *Anthem* and the Festival t-shirt is based on “traditional” Indian elements combined with techniques and images that are Eurocentric.

Authenticity means something different for different people. For those who took part in the selection of the artist for *Anthem*, authenticity meant that it should be a “traditional” Indian and one of known stature whose skill was exemplary in both the Indian and non-Indian art world. For Indians, authenticity meant that the artist who created their t-shirt was one of their own. For those who proudly purchased a shirt, authenticity meant that they were present at a historical and memorable event. Authenticity then, is something used to achieve a purpose, for fulfilling a mission, for justifying a trip, and for creating a memory of experience.

Summary

At the outset, the main purpose of this thesis was to attempt to develop two models for determining “authenticity”. The two models were “tradition” and “salvage paradigm”. The applications of these models in setting up a festival were examined; the deviations that occurred when a t-shirt was the most desired object at a given festival were noted; and a literature search for their “accepted” definitions and applications was also carried out. Details of the steps taken were provided herein. In short, the model of “tradition” was a model of “invented tradition”. The second model was not one of “salvage paradigm” as presumed but a different version of “invented tradition” and “false salvage”. The outcome of all of this has led to the conclusion that there are many more factors involved than originally considered. The boundaries are diffuse and not clearly delineated. The results indicated that the definition of “authenticity” in an art object depends mostly upon the history, research results, the interpreter of the information discovered, the user, and the selecting official as to what is “authentic”.

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Curriculum Vitae

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