# INDIANS PLAYING INDIAN

*Multiculturalism and Contemporary Indigenous Art in North America*

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To my parents,
Janina and Henryk Siebert
and
Barbara and Harald Paumgarten

# Contents

# Introduction

*Indigeneity and Multicultural Misrecognition*

On November 2, 2012, No Doubt, a popular contemporary band fronted by Gwen Stefani, released a new music video to its fans on Facebook. Directed by Melina Matsoukas, a Grammy-winning music and commercial video director, "Looking Hot" offered a cowboys-and-Indians-themed narrative to accompany the recent release of their single by the same title. Featuring Stefani in the lead role as an Indian woman, the video rehearsed the classic depiction of American Indians that has been solidified in settler popular culture over the past couple of centuries: Plains warriors astride horses on the background of western prairies, a beautiful captive woman pandering to the cowboy's, and the spectator's, gaze, and the assembly of props complete with feather headdresses, ceremonial staffs, tipis, arrows, wolves, smoke signals, and an array of Indian-chic clothing, all relegating the continent's indigenous peoples to a mythologized American past. The video met with immediate condemnation by scores of commentators, indigenous and non-native alike, as an inexcusable example of cultural misappropriation and a disappointing rehash of the most hackneyed Indian representational stereotypes.[1] And even though it was defended by some of No Doubt and Stefani's most loyal fans as a harmless bit of aesthetically dazzling creative play or a deliberately ironic performance poking fun at Indian stereotypes rather than perpetuating them, just a day after the video's release, the band issued a public apology and removed it from its official website; within days, "Looking Hot" disappeared from the internet altogether.

One more example in a long history of cultural appropriation of indigenous images, "Looking Hot" was not particularly remarkable in itself. Its obvious fascination with Indian nobility, mysticism, and aesthetic and erotic appeal reflected the twisted emotional economy of settler *playing Indian*, with its simultaneous admiration for the glorious Indian past and willful

disregard for contemporary indigenous realities.[2] What is remarkable about the entire incident is how quickly No Doubt issued an apology for "Looking Hot" and removed it from circulation—and how effectively their swift response put an end to the brewing controversy while, ironically, earning the band points for cultural sensitivity. One of the effects of the multiculturalist reformation that occurred in North America in the late twentieth century is that instances of cultural misappropriation and playing Indian of the kind evidenced in No Doubt's video are now readily recognized and condemned, most spectators having been successfully educated into respect for cultural diversity as the very glue that binds North American democracies. And even though such condemnations are routinely met with accusations of political correctness by those contemporary Americans who did not pay sufficient attention in their general education classes, apologies for inappropriate trespasses on others' cultural turf have become the publicly sanctioned norm and are deployed with reliable frequency.

No Doubt's apology is typical of this newly emerged genre, and it supplies clear testimony to how the multiculturalist politics of recognition has helped remake the vocabulary we use when speaking about indigeneity in North America. That it has been shaped by the rhetoric of cultural difference as a social good is evident in the apology statement's emphasis on the band's commitment to "diversity and consideration for other cultures" as well as "respect, unity and inclusiveness"; in its references to "Native American people, their culture and history" and "the Native American community"; and in its presumption that the primary harm experienced by indigenous people today amounts to a sense of insult caused by disrespect for their cultures and can thus be remedied by a respectful recognition of their cultural distinctiveness.[3] Yet, far from undoing the offenses of cultural misappropriation, such apologies bring harm of their own by further solidifying this pernicious approach to understanding indigeneity. Their reliance on the conception of indigeneity as culture obscures the unique political and legal contexts that shaped indigenous historical and contemporary realities; they imply that indigenous peoples are cultural minorities rather than sovereign nations with long political histories. Such apologies exemplify a new but already widespread phenomenon I call multicultural misrecognition, one related to but in crucial ways distinct from cultural misappropriation.

In *Indians Playing Indian: Multiculturalism and Contemporary Indigenous Art in North America*, I explore both the predicament that multicultural misrecognition poses for indigenous nations and people and the innovative ways in which indigenous artists in a range of media have responded to this predicament. As I define it, multicultural misrecognition consists in the substitution of cultural meanings for political meanings of indigeneity—that is, in the replacement of the concept of *indigenous nations* with that of *indigenous cultures* in contemporary popular, and often also scholarly, discourse. By transforming indigenous peoples into Native Americans, multicultural misrecognition equates them with other ethnic minorities to sustain the myth of America as a refuge to the world's emigrants. It enfolds the many distinct colonized nations into the American polities—Canadian and US—as one more homogenized population group accorded cultural citizenship, that is, the right to national belonging irrespective of their cultural difference rather than as a reward for cultural assimilation.[4] Multicultural misrecognition erases the multidimensional political history of indigeneity in favor of an essentialized cultural difference at a moment when, after decades of activism, indigenous peoples have successfully reinserted the concepts of sovereignty, of nations-within-a-nation, and of government-to-government relations into political and legal discourse in North America, though in different ways in the United States and in Canada. These concepts, however, remain unknown to the broader public, which—schooled on multicultural curricula—admires Native American culture and misunderstands, or altogether ignores, unique indigenous political realities, past and present.

This misunderstanding has far-reaching consequences. It renders contemporary indigenous activism on behalf of political, legal, and economic self-determination incomprehensible to much of the settler public, which often dismisses such efforts with suggestions that *Indians should just get over it already*. It determines how indigenous cultural production signifies in the public arena. If the logic of multiculturalism prohibits settler Americans from playing Indian, as the "Looking Hot" incident clearly shows, it now requires that indigenous peoples themselves play Indian to help legitimate the multicultural democracies they cannot help but inhabit. The current flowering of indigenous literature, cinema, and visual arts is typically taken as evidence that Canada and the United States have successfully broken with their colonial pasts, characterized by the expropriation and displacement of indigenous peoples, to become thriving nations of many cultures, where Native Americans enjoy full freedom to represent their cultural difference. Widely available Native American art, authenticated and protected by identity licensing laws,[5] bears witness to this representational freedom and the multicultural credentials such freedom implies.

Although certainly a welcome respite from the long history of assimilatory pressures on American minorities, multiculturalism turned out to be to a large extent a false promise to indigenous peoples. While it reinforces a long tradition of Indian representation in the national cultural imagina-

tion, now with added perspectives of Native American artists themselves, it perpetuates those cultural scripts of Indianness that thwart indigenous nations' aspirations to attain a degree of political and economic independence beyond control over cultural representation. Ironically, it becomes the task of those working in the realm of cultural production, the same realm that routinely perpetuates Indian stereotypes, to confront multicultural misrecognition and to rearticulate the political meanings of indigenous history and experience. Herein, then, lies the urgency of the central question addressed in *Indians Playing Indian*: by what means do contemporary indigenous artists capitalize on the possibilities for the creative expression of indigenous specificity offered by multiculturalism while resisting national incorporation via multicultural misrecognition?

I coined the phrase "multicultural misrecognition" to emphasize that the phenomenon it describes grows out of the ideological imperatives of multiculturalism—and the culturalization of social identities in particular—and that such a reduction to culture constitutes a fundamental misunderstanding of historical and contemporary indigeneity. The currently available concept of cultural misappropriation, useful as it is in many important ways, fails to flag the common misunderstanding of indigeneity as cultural identity; on the contrary, in its reference to cultural property rights, it solidifies the perception of indigenous peoples as Native Americans rounding out the American ethnoracial pentagon.[6] As the "Looking Hot" video incident demonstrates, redemptive attention to cultural misappropriation does not identify, let alone correct, this fundamental misperception. Indigenous peoples in North America are routinely mistaken for cultural minorities, even in the absence of inappropriate use of their images or objects of their material culture. Condemnations of cultural misappropriation may result in the removal of offensive materials and practices, but they do not change how the public thinks about indigenous peoples and their historically developed relationships to North American nation-states. By contrast, multicultural misrecognition as an analytical lens allows us to refocus the discussion of contemporary indigenous representation away from condemnations of settler playing Indian and toward the broader and more salient issues of recognition, both cultural and political.

Thus the main insight of *Indians Playing Indian* comes in two parts. While this book offers in the introduction a diagnosis of the contemporary moment and the conditions of representation with which multicultural misrecognition confronts indigenous artists, the weightier point I want to make about the ideological functions of contemporary indigenous art accrues by examples. In the book's five chapters, I explore a wide range of artistic responses to the predicament of multicultural misrecognition by focusing on sites and texts that explicitly address the dangers of multiculturalist cooptation of indigenous cultural difference on behalf of nation-building in the United States and Canada. Each chapter showcases a different medium—museum exhibition, cinema, digital fine art, sculpture and multimedia installation, and fiction—and explores a specific rhetorical strategy deployed to jam the interpretive mechanisms of multicultural misrecognition and to recover political meanings of indigeneity. While these strategies are distinct in the ways I explore below, they share a common pattern and a common aim: they evoke and engage the stereotypes solidified in settler Indian representation in a rhetorical performance we could call Indians playing Indian. They do so to expose the limitations of the culturalist conceptions of indigeneity and to clear space for the much-needed public recognition of the political historical and contemporary realities of indigenous lives.



Since the political meanings of indigeneity have been so successfully obscured by the pervasive operations of multicultural misrecognition, I turn below to a brief account of the history of recognition of indigenous peoples in North America, an account that highlights the gradual but deliberate shift from political recognition in the early colonial period to cultural recognition in the present. I begin with the contemporary moment and the ideological functions of indigenous misrecognition in the context of multiculturalism. To provide a genealogy of the present moment, I then backtrack to the early colonial period to recover the precedent of indigenous sovereignty in the diplomatic practice of the time and to the early republican period to trace the first attempts at circumscribing this sovereignty in the process of national consolidation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I describe the emergence of modern ethnology and culturalist conceptions of indigeneity and how the popular visual media, from early painting to photography and film, helped first inspire and later disseminate these conceptions. My primary focus in the narrative of these shifts in recognition is on the United States, but I note where Canadian practice diverges in significant ways.[7] I conclude this section by describing some of the many instances and forms of political and legal resistance to the erasure of indigenous nations by American Indian leaders and intellectuals from the early nineteenth century to the present. A thorough understanding of the rhetorical strategies explored in *Indians Playing Indian* depends on a good grasp of the basic facts of indigenous political history in North America. This history serves as a foundation for this art's insistent appeal for the recognition of indigeneity as a unique political phenomenon rather than as merely one more cultural identity among many others.

## Recognizing Indians: From Politics to Culture

Multicultural misrecognition as a coinage derives from the concept of the politics of recognition, the ideological and ethical heart of North American multiculturalism. The politics of recognition—that is, recognition of diverse cultural identities in the context of constitutional democracies via the concept of cultural citizenship, a group-based right—is a contemporary phenomenon. It was institutionalized in the 1982 Canadian Constitution, in a clause defining Canada as a nation of multicultural heritage. In 1992, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor theorized it as an ethical obligation and a human right in a seminal essay, which gave the concept of "The Politics of Recognition" its name.[8] Although absent from US foundational legal documents, which famously enshrined the concept of individual rights, in practice it currently pervades public discourse on social relations in the United States as well. A fighting creed during the so-called culture wars in the 1980s, by the 1990s, the politics of recognition had been appropriated by the American democratic states as a tool of nation-building, multiculturalism having replaced the earlier melting-pot ideology. By 1997 the preeminent American sociologist of race and ethnicity, Nathan Glazer, would famously, though reluctantly, claim that *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*.[9]

Contemporary American multiculturalism emerged in the late twentieth century in the wake of the new social movements advocating on behalf of equal political and cultural rights for a variety of minority groups. It promised representational liberation to all of America's historical and contemporary others and depended on a far-ranging appreciation of cultural distinctiveness, rather than cultural assimilation, as a crucial constitutive of the American past and present. Multiculturalism put a premium on difference as a resource that promised to expedite national integration, and it admitted previously marginalized groups to the national imaginaries. Thus it quickly became the dominant model for social relations in North American states that were fashioning themselves as nations of immigrants nurturing their diverse cultures while pledging allegiance to a specific political ideal of representative democracy. Suspended immediately after 9/11 in favor of mobilizing pronouncements recalling the early twentieth-century cry "Americans All!" deployed in the context of the increased immigration of people seen as racially other, multiculturalism was quickly redeployed in public discourse as a way to distinguish North American democracies, and the United States in particular, from fundamentalist Islamic states (Yúdice 340).

In the twenty-first century, multiculturalism operates in changed conditions, characterized by the war on terrorism, an increased concern with national security and the policing of borders, heated debates over immigration reform, and renewed attention to class difference and the redistribution of resources brought on by a series of severe economic downturns. Yet through all of these adjustments to changing geopolitical, economic, and social conditions, and despite the fact that it is frequently criticized for its pernicious ability to deflect questions of socioeconomic inequality (for example, by Žižek, San Juan, Fraser, and Benhabib) and political representation (for example, by Povinelli and Yúdice) in favor of the celebration of cultural difference, multiculturalism remains crucial to the self-representation of Canada and the United States as fully credentialed contemporary democracies. However, because of its dependence on culture as the main conceptual reference point, multiculturalism presents a unique set of problems for indigenous peoples, who have experienced a history of colonization rather than one of immigration. While the multiculturalist politics of recognition has offered a way to break with the more shameful aspects of the colonial past in the United States and Canada and granted previously marginalized groups access to the settler national imaginaries, it has led to a fundamental misperception of indigenous peoples and their relationship to the American nation-states and other American population groups. And while this misperception bolsters the settler states' projects of national consolidation, ironically, it undermines the explicit imperative of the politics of recognition as formulated by Taylor: the ethical obligation to properly recognize all population groups for who they are. Devoid of the acknowledgment of the unique political distinctiveness of indigenous nations, the multicultural mandate of inclusiveness continues, rather than puts an end to, colonial coercion.



## Diplomacy, Treaties, and the Political Conception of Indigeneity

Apologies for cultural misappropriation, such as that of No Doubt following the release of the "Looking Hot" video, are informed by a contemporary understanding of recognition as tied to cultural citizenship. And yet, while explicitly linked to multiculturalism's conceptual presumption about the primacy of culture to the formation of the modern self and social identities, multicultural misrecognition of indigenous peoples as Native Americans has a historical genealogy. It stems from two contradictory yet related developments: the long history of European and American depictions of the continent's indigenous peoples, which has resulted in the hypervisibility of Indians in the settler national imaginaries; and more than two centuries of federal policies that have made contemporary indigenous nations invisible

and their political history on the continent unknown to the general public. However, uniquely in North America, formal recognition of indigenous political separateness, or sovereignty, reaches back to the first decades of European arrival on the continent. It furnishes an extended precedent for the international diplomatic exchanges of recognition, one that the North American multicultural democracies prefer to leave in the past and that indigenous nations insist on resurrecting, commemorating, and acting upon. Its formal expression is a record of several hundred treaties concluded between European, and later American, governments and indigenous nations. Today, these historic treaties are often considered in contradictory terms; they are evoked to assert the recognition of indigenous sovereignty in international law, on the one hand, and pointed to as evidence of a deliberate limitation of this sovereignty in US and Canadian legal and administrative practice, on the other.

This contradictory perception begins to make sense if we keep in mind the distinction between the treaties concluded in the early colonial period—that is, prior to 1776—between indigenous nations and European states, and those negotiated with the US federal government through 1871, when the US Congress unilaterally put an end to treaty-making. In the context of international law and diplomatic practice at the time, colonial-era treaty-making between indigenous nations and European governments testified to the commonly accepted understanding that the former were politically separate entities exercising self-government and control over their territories. Early treaties regulated trade, political alliances, and land cessions; as such they functioned to recognize the prior rights of indigenous nations, even if the actual agreements involved relinquishing some of those rights. The pervasiveness of treaty-making practice, manifested in the large number of treaties, "gives clear evidence," argues historian Howard Berman, "of broad European recognition of the international personality of the indigenous peoples of that time and place" (131).[10] Importantly, Berman points out, these treaties did not constitute political recognition for North American indigenous nations, because "as political communities created by the original inhabitants, Indian societies possessed inherent, preexisting sovereign rights and conducted political relations in their own interests on the international plane" (131). By contrast, the very same treaties were the source of European rights on the continent, for they served as the formal recognition of spheres of influence in America by legitimating territorial and trade claims of European states against each other while also specifying their economic and political relationships to the indigenous nations.

This understanding of early treaty-making has persisted among North



American indigenous nations and is embodied in the Guswenta, or the Two Row Wampum Belt. The Guswenta is a record of a treaty negotiated between the Haudenosaunee, known to the Europeans as the Iroquois Confederacy, and Dutch settlers in the Hudson Valley in the early 1600s. Represented by a wampum belt featuring two purple beaded stripes, one depicting the Haudenosaunee and the other the Europeans, running parallel to each other on a white background, the Guswenta is glossed by Haudenosaunee elders as a record of an agreement to coexistence guaranteed by the mutual policy of noninterference. To this day, the Guswenta and the principles it represents are upheld by the indigenous nations of the American Northeast as the originary formulation of settler-indigenous relations on the continent. A fixture of political memory and of present practice among the Haudenosaunee, the Guswenta has been recently memorialized at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, in a bronze sculpture titled *Allies in War, Partners in Peace* and donated to the museum by the Oneida Nation of New York. Tellingly, the sculptor placed the Guswenta in George Washington's right hand.[11]

When the United States emerged as a political entity in 1776, it inherited the practice of treaty-making from the British Crown. Treaties served several important purposes for the newly proclaimed republic. They helped the recently constituted government to establish and assert its political legitimacy with regard to England, France, Spain, and other governments competing for influence in America. As Frederick Hoxie observes, "ironically, Indian treaties were originally a badge of sovereignty for the national government" (90). Successful treaties allowed the federal government to avoid costly wars on its frontiers and assert its authority over that of the individual states. Treaty negotiations offered opportunities for the new nation to demonstrate in practice its political philosophy via the concepts of the contract as a model for social relations and of free consent to enter such contracts regarding political associations (Konkle 3). While the United States was solidifying its existence as a political entity and staking claims to territorial sovereignty in North America, many of the indigenous nations continued to carry on diplomatic relations with European courts and governments through the end of the Napoleonic era (Berman 187).

However, even while engaging in treaty negotiations in order to consolidate its political existence, from its beginnings the United States deliberately limited indigenous sovereignty in order to exert sole control over land and natural resources. The process of such limitation begins in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris, when representatives of the United States managed to exclude indigenous nations from peace negotiations following the Revolu-

tionary War, both as participants and as potential claimants to American territories.[12] It continued with the US Constitution, which in the Commerce Clause differentiated Indian tribes from both the states and the foreign nations, thus circumscribing their status as sovereign nations upheld in treaties. This definitional limitation progressed further with the Marshall Court decisions in the 1830s, which asserted native title to the land but defined indigenous nations as "dependent domestic nations," effectively sealing the removal of indigenous nations from international diplomacy. It culminated in the abrogation of treaty-making in 1871 and concluded with the assertion of the US Congress's plenary power over Indian nations in the 1903 *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* decision.[13] This trajectory exemplifies a shift in US-Indian relations from recognition of both parties' political sovereignty to the subjection of indigenous nations to US colonial rule.

Treaty-making stopped in 1871, but the complex dynamic of recognition continued to structure indigenous-settler relations, though it shifted to a different plane. The abrogation of the treaty process effectively denied the indigenous nations their sovereign status, allowing for their treatment as colonized people and for consolidated efforts at integrating them into the US administrative, political, legal, social, and cultural matrix. These efforts included establishing missionary and federal agents on reservations; education in boarding schools; administrative acts such as the 1887 General Allotment Act, which aimed to put an end to collective landownership on reservations, the 1885 Major Crimes Act, which sanctioned federal incursions into tribal jurisdiction on reservations, and the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, which, for the first and only time in US history, extended (or, as its critics would charge, imposed) US citizenship on an entire population group without their consent.[14] In a historical precedent to contemporary multiculturalism, the Indian New Deal era's official cultivation of Indian cultural difference coupled with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act was part and parcel of the federal project to integrate Indian peoples into the administrative and economic fabric of the United States (Pfister). This process of administrative integration continued via the federal termination and relocation policies of the post–World War II years, which in a reversal of the Indian New Deal aimed to end tribalism by reorganizing terminated tribes as corporations and by encouraging the migration of individual Indians to American cities. During this extended period, from 1871 through the 1950s, indigenous peoples ceased to be viewed as citizens of independent nations and became members of minority groups to be assimilated into American society as individual bearers of rights and obligations (political citizenship), and eventually, by the second half of the twentieth century, as members of yet another ethnic group comprising the multicultural nation (cultural citizenship).



## Art, Anthropology, and Cultural Conceptions of Indigeneity

As the idea of the Indian nation and the indigenous nations themselves were being politically and literally undermined, settler artists began to create images of Indians that cast them in an elegiac mode, nostalgically commemorating a civilization lost to the inevitable historical progress manifest in the proper settlement of the continent and the eventual emergence of modern democracies. Partners in diplomacy from the seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries, indigenous peoples increasingly became subjects of a representational resurrection that cast them as emblems of a noble but vanishing race, as ethnological case studies—at first in civilizational development and later in cultural difference—or they were reinvented as First Americans.

The conceit of resurrection through the artist's imaginative abilities originated in the early nineteenth century with George Catlin, the painter of numerous portraits known as the Indian Gallery and the multivolume *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (1841), who routinely fashioned himself as an Indian redeemer while taking rhetorical pleasure in descriptions of Indian death.[15] Catlin's amateurish representational rescue efforts found their scientific counterpart in 1879 with the establishment of the American Bureau of Ethnology, a federally funded institution charged with the mandate of salvage ethnography.[16] With the government's funding, ethnographers fanned across the American West in an effort to describe, transcribe, translate, and record the presumably last and fast-fading remnants of authentic Indianness. Collectors followed, the most notorious and rapacious among them being Gustav Heye, the Indian enthusiast whose enormous collection eventually joined the Smithsonian Institution as the National Museum of the American Indian. In the process, the politics of indigenous recognition ceased to be strictly political and moved from the diplomatic stage to a variety of cultural stages—the World's Fairs, the private collections of curiosities, the museum, the gallery, the national statuary, and the silver screen—where the exhibits of indigenous material culture testified to the civilizational progress of so-called Man.

The mandates of salvage ethnography continued to animate the work of later artists. For example, the American photographer Edward Curtis authored numerous portraits of noble but presumably vanishing Indians in the early twentieth century; today ubiquitous in coffee-table books, in cal-

endars, on wall posters, and on T-shirts, they remain the most widely circulated images of American Indians in the world.[17] Filmmakers Robert Flaherty and H. P. Carver directed, respectively, *Nanook of the North* (1922) and *Silent Enemy* (1934), pseudo-ethnographic films that readily translated the settler society's powers of destruction into those of artistic resurrection by recreating on celluloid the vanished authentic Indian worlds.[18] In popular entertainment, the *Wild West* shows staged by Buffalo Bill Cody from 1883 until the development of cinema helped disseminate the idea of the Indian as an emblem of ancient nobility throughout North America and Europe. Theatrical re-creations of the recently fought battles of the Indian wars, often featuring actual participants—most famously Sitting Bull—reenacting their days of military glory, these shows encouraged in the general public a perception of Indians as historical anachronisms obsessively taking pride in their past and stubbornly refusing to adapt to modernity (Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 66). However, in an ironic foreshadowing of the imperatives of multicultural misrecognition, participation in these shows likely taught indigenous actors that playing Indian in ways that were recognizable to the settler publics might be the best preparation for American modernity.[19] Further, a range of what we would today call "media initiatives," under the auspices of John and Rodman Wanamaker, a father and son from a family of financiers and owners of department stores in Philadelphia and New York, melded the ideological imperatives of the Catlin-Curtis and Cody projects with an important new twist. While staging the departure of the Indian from the American political scene and preserving the images of his noble race, the Wanamakers, through the efforts of their "agent for culture and education" Joseph Kossuth Dixon, birthed the transformation of the vanishing Indians into the First Americans.[20] Dixon pressed the agenda of Americanizing the immigrants arriving in large numbers in the early twentieth century, through the displayed examples of the Indian. Additionally, the idea of First Americans served to extend the United States' historical genealogy into antiquity—combining the best of the Indian noble race and the best of Western modernity—and helped rewrite the colonial conquest into the nationalist narrative of progressive historical evolution and a political future as a universal democracy.

These representations of the Indian in popular visual media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emerged during an era of profound epistemological reshuffling, especially with regard to dominant conceptions of human difference. Major political, economic, and social changes around the turn of the century—such as an end to slavery and the Indian wars, Reconstruction, increased immigration from new regions of Europe, urbanization, and the development of mass popular culture—effectively undermined the dominant concepts and hierarchies, such as slave/master and savage/civilized, that had previously organized knowledge and social reality (Evans 4). As race was increasingly circumscribed to skin color, the anthropological concept of culture gained currency in specialist as well as popular discourses (5). Scholars usually credit Franz Boas with bringing about this shift from race to culture and from evolutionary diachronic models of civilization, which aimed to account for change, to contextual synchronic models of cultures, which offered static representations of diverse ways of life and modes of thinking (Elliott xxv). Inspired by Boas's culture concept, ethnographic conventions in genres raging from scholarly writing to amateur visual representation left no room for depictions of indigenous political agency, whether historical or contemporary. Instead, this new ethnographic approach transformed living historical peoples into objects for scientific study and aesthetic contemplation, objects that served as emblems of the modern American civilization's past.



This particular mode of Indian representation, one obscuring the political history of indigenous nations in favor of the conceptions of the vanishing noble race or of Indians as First Americans, has proven enduring; it has morphed into the full-fledged multicultural misrecognition of the present moment. The goal of the meticulous representational resurrection of indigenous worlds as yet unchanged by European colonialism or encountering that change still from the position of their own epistemological strength survives in contemporary examples such as Kevin Costner's 1990 *Dances with Wolves*, Bruce Beresford's 1992 *Black Robe*, or Terrence Malick's 2007 *The New World*, to offer just a few better-known cinematic instances. As with their precursors, these films nostalgically re-create precontact indigenous societies only to ultimately depict their destruction. The inevitability of that destruction, now blamed regretfully on European colonialism rather than on the necessity of civilizational progress, and the belief in the redeeming potential of the settler representational media remain virtually the same. As with their predecessors, these films refuse to represent any connection between historic indigenous peoples and their contemporary descendants. By the early twentieth century, Boas's anthropology had freed indigenous peoples from the earlier evolutionary narratives only to trap them in the static representations of their presumably authentic but now vanished cultures. The mainstreaming of multiculturalism and its politics of recognition in the late twentieth century solidified the hegemony of the Boasian culturalist understanding of group-based human difference. The films mentioned above and my opening example of No Doubt's apology for their "Looking

Hot" video are just some of the many available examples of the hold this culturalist conception of indigeneity has on the contemporary settler public.

By contrast, contemporary feature films by indigenous filmmakers often insist on just such a connection and continuity between indigenous pasts and presents, as in an example I discuss in chapter 2, the Inuit Isuma Productions' 2001 feature *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, which frames the story of a precontact Inuit band with outtakes depicting Inuit filmmakers, producers, and actors engaged in the performance of their usable past. No more mere objects of settler redemptive efforts, the Inuit appropriate the settler representational medium and conventions to confront multicultural misrecognition with aesthetically savvy interventions. The appeal of indigenous peoples as First Americans survives in many of the contemporary Canadian and US public narratives of multicultural democratic consolidation, such as, for example, the National Museum of the American Indian, which opened in 2004 on the National Mall in Washington, DC. However, as I discuss in chapter 1, it has to compete there with the political conceptions of indigeneity asserted in the tribal galleries curated by members of contemporary indigenous nations.

## Indigenous Political Resistance

Indigenous nations and people have always resisted this incorporation by political erasure and cultural resurrection, and they typically have done so by evoking the historic treaties, and the political sovereignty they presumed, as an emblem of their status on the continent. While the general settler discourse on Indians shifted from politics to culture, many indigenous nations have never stopped acting and speaking as independent nations. The early chapter of indigenous resistance to US federal efforts to limit indigenous sovereignty unfolded in the courts, the press, and the public lecture circuit in the early nineteenth century as the Cherokee Nation, along with the Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Nations, resisted attempts to remove them to Indian Territory. In the context of arguments about the inherent racial difference and inferiority of American Indians current at the time, indigenous intellectuals, such as William Apess and George Copway, understood that any articulation of indigenous difference functioned ultimately to justify political disenfranchisment of indigenous nations. Instead, they used the evidence of the treaties concluded with the US government to argue for their prior recognition as political sovereigns. But the histories of indigenous nations they penned included accounts of the successful appropriation of European and American institutions, such as representative



government, press, and plantation slavery, as a way to show these nations' ongoing fitness for nationhood and thus to write them into the political future on the continent (Konkle 6). Before the era of cultural difference as a social good, indigenous intellectuals used evidence of acculturation as an argument for preserving indigenous political sovereignty as recognized in the treaties.

Following the 1871 halt to treaty-making, the 1903 assumption of plenary power by the US Congress, the pacification and confinement to the reservations of Plains nations, the allotment of tribal lands, and the resulting demographic crisis in Indian Country, American Indian intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century could hardly hope to successfully argue for indigenous political independence. Nevertheless, against the then-dominant vanishing-race discourse, they insisted on inserting indigenous people into settler modernity. American Indian ethnographers, anthropologists, folklorists, and writers such as Ella Deloria, Archie Phinney, Zitkala-Sa, Arthur S. Parker, Charles Eastman, and Francis La Flesche politically supported the Americanization of Indians through educational and economic assimilation via boarding schools, allotment of tribal land, and US citizenship. In the written accounts of tribal societies, they deployed the culturalist model, thereby contributing, however unintentionally, to the settler public belief in the moribund nature of indigenous traditionalism. However, while operating firmly within the Boasian model, far from dutifully recording Indians' vanished pasts for future generations' study and nostalgic admiration, these writers questioned the model's usefulness for articulating indigenous modernity, on which they unequivocally insisted (Elliott 127). Caught between the earlier social Darwinism and the Boasian culture concept, in order to account for historical and cultural change—that is, for indigenous entry into settler modernity—these writers often had to rely on the earlier civilizational progress narrative (147). Their choice between history and culture, in other words, was political, a gambit calculated to resist the vanishing facilitated by the conceptual models of modern ethnology. While, in the spirit of the period, they took up the project of accounting for indigenous difference in terms of culture rather than unique political status, as writers and activists, they argued for the continued presence of indigenous peoples as equal citizens in a modernizing United States.[21]

Indigenous sovereignty reemerged during the 1960s and 1970s in the political rhetoric of pan-Indian organizations, such as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC), and the broader American Indian Movement (AIM). In response to the success of the federal termination policies,[22] NIYC and NCAI defined sovereignty and tribalism in their political platforms as foundational concepts

for indigenous activism in the twentieth century.[23] In a series of widely publicized actions, such as fish-ins, road blockades, and occupations of federal property and lost historic indigenous lands, AIM activists invoked the authority of the treaties to remind the federal governments and the general public about the inherent sovereignty of indigenous nations and the historic recognition of that sovereignty in North America.[24] In the context of the United States' repeated attempts to discount these treaties as anachronisms, AIM political activism attempted "to re-establish treaty documents as powerful and authoritative and as binding on the contemporary settler nation" because it saw them as legal precedents for the reassertion of indigenous rights to land and other resources (Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 19–21). This strategy paid off: insistence on the recognition of the enduring legality of the treaties bore fruit in American national politics when, in 1970, President Nixon officially ended the termination policy. It continues to pay off as every US government from the Clinton administration to the current Obama administration customarily reiterates its commitment to tribal sovereignty and to the government-to-government relationship with indigenous nations, even though they rarely act on it.[25] In the 1970s and 1980s, treaty-based activism in US legal courts resulted in the upholding of the provisions of several historic treaties,[26] the important effect of these court battles being the repeated reassertion of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights, and their solidified legal precedent.[27]

This particular history of indigenous recognition, with its twinned efforts at political erasure (and indigenous resistance to that erasure) and cultural resurrection, has led to disparate conceptions of indigeneity in the spheres of legal and diplomatic practice, which take the political nature of historical and contemporary indigeneity as a given, and in the sphere of popular culture, which remains wedded to the understanding of indigeneity as culture or ethnicity. It explains why settler entertainers issue earnest apologies for the offenses of cultural misappropriation to "the Native American community" at the same time as presidential candidates reaffirm government-to-government relations between the US federal government and indigenous tribal governments as a routine gesture in their political campaigns. More importantly, however, this history offers an archive of historical facts that are encoded in a variety of ways in contemporary indigenous art. Reading contemporary fiction by indigenous writers or appreciating contemporary indigenous visual art, whether in the museum, gallery, or movie theater, with this history in mind allows for an interpretive insight that breaks with the vastly limited understanding—misunderstanding, really—encouraged by multicultural misrecognition.



Because the multiculturalist politics of recognition encourages the exploration and celebration of cultural differences as a form of patriotic citizenship, cultural production in all of its varied forms provides a vast interface for exchanges of recognition between settler and indigenous participants, enabling interventions to be made on a much larger scale than in other realms of social engagement. Contemporary settler publics flock to museums, art galleries, and cinemas in far larger numbers than they do to Supreme Court hearings or meetings of political caucuses involving indigenous political and legal issues. Broad engagement with cultural production allows for intervention right where multicultural misrecognition takes place, at the source of the predicament, so to speak. Contemporary indigenous artists have capitalized on the current interest in their work to confront multicultural misrecognition. They do so by orchestrating fruitful interpretive impasses that play with cultural stereotypes of Indianness, and thus exploit the disjunction between culturalist and political understandings of indigeneity—and their coexistence and dissonance in contemporary public discourses. These conceptual impasses disrupt the interpretive mechanisms of multicultural misrecognition by making such misrecognition explicit and by shining light on its ideological ramifications. Because cultural production is the sphere where the culturalist conceptions of indigeneity are most commonly and forcefully perpetuated, it is here where they can be most effectively confronted. As spectators and readers, we can appreciate these confrontations—provided we are able to pry ourselves away from the interpretive mandates of multicultural misrecognition and instead consider indigenous cultural production in its proper political context. The varied forms of art explored in my book teach us how to do just that.

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To demonstrate how the disjunction between the culturalist conception of indigeneity and the political conception of indigeneity operates in public forums, I turn first to the most visible recent engagement with the question of contemporary indigenous representation: the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, DC. Chapter 1 focuses on what I call the dialectic of recognition—that is, the tension on display at the museum between the recognition of indigenous peoples as sovereign nations and their recognition as First Americans. First written into law in 1989, the NMAI was conceptualized in the 1990s in wide-ranging collaboration with indigenous communities across the Americas. Since its opening in 2004 it has been at the center of ongoing debates over the forms of contemporary indigeneity and its recognition by the state and federal governments and by the general public. The NMAI straddles the period of the

emergence of multiculturalism, its mainstreaming in the late twentieth century, and its reassertion in the early twenty-first, functioning as a kind of barometer of contemporary indigenous representation. I propose that this tension between culturalist and political conceptions of indigeneity constitutes the NMAI's most valuable and enduring contribution to contemporary debates over indigenous recognition, because it both maps in detail the workings of multicultural misrecognition as a rhetorical predicament faced by contemporary indigenous artists and highlights some of the strategies these artists and curators have developed to confront this predicament.

In chapter 2, "*Atanarjuat* and the Ideological Work of Indigenous Filmmaking," I move from the public space of the museum, constructed via multiple curatorial agencies and responding to the mandates of both settler and indigenous constituencies, to a different kind of collective effort at indigenous recognition. I turn to *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, the Igloolik Isuma Productions' debut feature, because it is the first film written, directed, acted, and produced locally by indigenous filmmakers to gain international recognition and accrue a complicated reception history as simultaneously a quintessential Inuit and Canadian film. Thus it offers an opportunity to explore indigenous negotiation of multicultural misrecognition in the context of full indigenous creative and administrative control in Canada, a country that, unlike the United States, wrote multiculturalism into its constitution but, like its neighbor to the South, displays marked reluctance to acknowledge the political ambitions of indigenous nations beyond the scope of the Canadian federation. I suggest that in *Atanarjuat*, Isuma's filmmakers deploy their own brand of the dialectic of recognition by elaborating a concept of contemporary indigenous authenticity as a deliberate performance that facilitates a variety of political projects for multiple constituencies, speaking simultaneously to the specificity and universality of Inuit history and the present.

Historically, settler Indian representation has been carried on particularly prolifically in the visual arts, from early American painting and photography to the first moving pictures and beyond, resulting in a vast encyclopedia of images and visual representational modes that helped develop the discourse of the vanishing Indian and that continue to subtend interpretive mandates of multicultural misrecognition. The examples of the NMAI and *Atanarjuat* reveal that the creative appropriation of these images of Indian past constitutes an effective strategy for disrupting multicultural misrecognition. Digital fine art is a genre that engages with the settler visual, and in particular the photographic, archive more extensively than other forms of contemporary cultural production and thus allows for a comprehensive investigation of the rhetorical uses of this archive in the context of the multiculturalist appetite for visual displays of indigenous cultural difference. Thus, in chapter 3, "Palimpsestic Images: Contemporary American Indian Digital Fine Art and the Ethnographic Photo Archive," I explore the work of Dugan Aguilar, Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, and Pamela Shields, three contemporary digital artists/photographers who deploy a similar strategy of multifaceted layering of settler archival images and photographic conventions, an approach I call palimpsestic representation. I argue that palimpsestic representation allows today's indigenous artists to capitalize on this ideologically weighty visual inheritance to evoke the truth of indigenous historical experience obscured in settler photography precisely by incorporating fragments of the settler visual archive into their works to reveal contemporary indigenous realities as saturated with officially suppressed political histories.



Even as it capitalizes on the subversive potential of the settler photographic archive, palimpsestic representation remains wedded to a settler representational system. So in chapter 4, "Of Turtles, Snakes, Bones, and Precious Stones: Jimmie Durham's Indices of Indigeneity," I turn to an artist and a body of work that explore the utopian possibilities of what I call insubordinate indigenous art—that is, art that signifies outside of settler technologies of meaning, even as it is aimed against them. Durham's is a playful yet serious utopianism that never loses sight of its vision even as it pays careful attention to the rhetorical complexities of contemporary exchanges of recognition. One of the earliest indigenous critics of multiculturalism, Durham remains largely unknown to the American public and is very rarely a subject of scholarly analysis. It is a pity, not only because of the acutely insightful commentary he has offered on the impact of multiculturalism in the art world but also because his sculptures and multimedia installations deploy a rhetorical strategy—indexical representation—that is particularly effective in exposing and subverting multicultural misrecognition. By using found objects such as animal bones, turtle shells, and precious stones as indexical rather than symbolic or iconic signs, Durham dips into a different kind of archive available for indigenous self-representation. This archive of what I call indices of indigeneity allows the artist to bypass, to some extent, the settler signifying systems and to experiment with a utopian possibility of unfettered indigenous self-representation, even as his astute critique of the American rhetorical ground defined by multicultural misrecognition undermines such utopian potential of indigenous art.

The last of the case studies turns to the genre typically seen, along with the museum, as paradigmatic of European modernity: the novel. Unlike

Durham's turtle shells and coyote skulls, which help stage strategic escapes from settler interpretive frameworks, the novel embeds indigenous writers in the representational medium perhaps most inhospitable to traditional tribal forms of creative expression, which are rooted in orality, performance, and a far more complex conception of chronology than the one that underwrites standard Western narrative fiction. In chapter 5, I examine the deployment of what I call the gruesome authentic in LeAnne Howe's 2001 novel *Shell Shaker* as a strategy of forestalling multicultural misrecognition and as part of a larger narrative experiment to enact indigenous cosmology via the western medium of literary fiction. American Indian literature has been at the foreground of what critics have described as the American Indian Renaissance, which dates back to the early 1970s and is very much in evidence today. While many contemporary American Indian writers have met with critical success and wide readership, Howe's work is known only to a few specialists in the field of American Indian literature. Part of this neglect has to do, in my view, with the radically experimental nature of her narratives and with her unwavering allegiance to the political conception of indigeneity. For the very same reason, I believe it is critical to introduce Howe to the larger scholarly and general publics.

While I elucidate the consequences of multicultural misrecognition for indigenous artistic expression, ultimately my aim is to identify and describe medium-specific formal strategies that American Indian artists have developed to remind American settler publics about their peoples' long histories on the continent and their ongoing status as sovereign nations rather than as ethnic minority groups clamoring for inclusion in American nation-states. I also seek to model a critical approach that acknowledges the opportunities multiculturalism presents as well as the dilemmas it poses for contemporary indigenous artists. While I begin my discussion with the National Museum of the American Indian and Isuma's debut feature, *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, textual sites that have achieved global circulation, I also introduce a wide range of artistic media and some lesser-known figures in hopes that other scholars will expand their teaching repertoires to include these or similar voices. Settler representation of North America's indigenous peoples has historically unfolded in a variety of media, and so have contemporary indigenous responses; we should pay attention to as many of them as we can. And as we do so, we should strive to retrain our interpretive acumen away from the pervasive imperatives of multicultural misrecognition and toward the complex and innovative ways in which contemporary indigenous art makes available the rich political histories and complex contemporary realities of indigenous experience in North America. When we refuse to pay attention to the political, we are risking misapprehension of the complicated pasts and the potential futures of both indigenous and settler nations in North America, along with the fundamental conditions and possibilities of their inextricable relations. My book is an attempt to listen to the political in contemporary indigenous art in an interpretive mode that itself resists multicultural misrecognition.

I

# Indigeneity and the Dialectic of Recognition at the National Museum of the American Indian

There is established, within the Smithsonian Institution, a living memorial to Native Americans and their traditions, which shall be known as the "National Museum of the American Indian."

Public Law 101–185, 101st US Congress, 1989

We are thus a new kid on the block—the 18th of the Smithsonian Institution's world-renowned museums. . . . We define a moment of reconciliation and recognition in American history, a time for Indian people to assume, finally, a prominent place of honor on the nation's front lawn. It is our most fervent hope that we will be the instrument of enlightenment, helping our visitors learn more about the extraordinary achievements of the indigenous people of the Western hemisphere. We also hope that Native people will look upon the museum as a truly Native place, where they are welcome and honored guests.

W. Richard West Jr. (Southern Cheyenne and member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma); Founding Director, NMAI, *The NMAI Guide*, 2004

On September 21, 2004, in the largest gathering of indigenous peoples in Washington, DC, ever, more than twenty-five thousand people from more than five hundred nations and communities throughout the Americas converged on the National Mall to celebrate the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Forming a grand procession, the participants marched by the Museum of Natural History to the NMAI's brand-new building—a symbolic, and ironic, graduation from one interpretive framework to another—to hear the NMAI's founding director Richard West welcome all indigenous peoples home and all others to a "Native Place." Taking his cue from the 1879 plea of Hinmatoowyalahtqit, or Chief Joseph, for "the white man to live in peace with the Indian" for they are "made by



the same Great Spirit . . . they are brothers," West declared the NMAI to be "a symbol of hope, centuries in the making," a place where "at long last, the culturally different histories, cultures, and peoples of the Americas can come together in new mutual understanding and respect," prompting "the true cultural reconciliation that until now has eluded American history" (qtd. in Calloway 594). West's hyperbolic optimism, along with the contagious enthusiasm of all participants,[1] offset for a moment the obvious question hovering above the crowds gathered on the National Mall that day: Given the troubled history indigenous peoples have had with the American nation-states and with that premiere institution of Western hegemony, the museum, why had so many come to celebrate yet another opportunity for the United States to promote itself as a multicultural democracy? The colonial state, the museum, multiculturalism—numerous writers have denounced all three as inimical to the political aspirations of indigenous nations in the Americas, aspirations that these nations have been increasingly successfully bringing before international fora, such as the United Nations, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[2]

By handing control over the exhibition of indigenous material culture and art to indigenous peoples themselves, the Smithsonian Institution publicized the creation of the NMAI as an opportunity to break with the long and shameful history of Western museological practices.[3] With its public commitment to work "in collaboration with the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere and Hawai'i to protect and foster indigenous cultures, reaffirm traditions and beliefs, encourage contemporary artistic expression, and provide a forum for Native voices," as the NMAI website puts it, the museum officially recognized the continued indigenous presence on the continent and contracted to foster cultural expressions of such presence. Despite these declarations the number of indigenous people on the governing board of the museum and among the museum's employees did not constitute a majority,[4] so the NMAI embarked on an extensive collaboration with indigenous nations and communities across the hemisphere in order to fulfill the founding principles for the new museum. This collaboration resulted in *The Way of the People,* completed in 1993, a set of guidelines detailing the representational imperatives facing the architects charged with designing the Washington, DC, and Suitland, Maryland, sites, guidelines that would also help direct future curators of the collections. To serve as an ongoing record of the museum's legitimacy, these consultations were extensively described in the Smithsonian Institution's *Spirit of a Native Place,* a collection of essays by people involved in the creation of the museum that was published in 2004 to coincide with the opening. Across these documents and numerous printed materials available in the various branches, press releases,

and on the museum website, the issue of Indian control over the collections and exhibitions has emerged as the most valuable aspect of the museum, a defining characteristic, and a kind of public relations mantra often reiterated in writing about the museum's popular and critical reception. When hailed by commentators, the NMAI has been praised foremost "as an institution that represents an important move away from the past—a museum about Indians controlled by Indians" (Alvin and Nagel 7).[5] When faulted, the museum has been criticized for its handling of specific organizational and thematic issues but usually only after an acknowledgment of its pioneering approach to curatorial control.[6] The Smithsonian Institution's officials publicized the transfer of administrative control over the former Gustav Heye collection and over future exhibitions to indigenous people not only to declare a shift in specifically museological practice but also as incontrovertible testimony to a larger achievement: the NMAI was a material expression of an unprecedented "moment of reconciliation and recognition in American history" (*The NMAI Guide* 7). The museum was thus to mark two beginnings: a new museological practice and a new period in US-Indian relations, the two linked in a causal relationship, with the former testifying to the latter.

The public response to the opening of the Washington branch of the NMAI has been varied. While many early mainstream press commentators complained about what they saw as radical departures from established conventions of museum exhibition, scholars of museum and American Indian studies responded by applauding the NMAI's policy on curatorial authority and by arguing that the museum successfully deployed an indigenous perspective, especially in the architecturally distinctive building and site.[7] Very soon, however, scholarly assessments became more critical, as many began to see the NMAI as an example of missed opportunities, a failure of will on the part of the curators. While these commentators fully accepted the NMAI's founding presumption about the ideological potential of "a museum about Indians controlled by Indians" and praised the design of the building and the grounds, they took issue with the content of the permanent exhibits. The main charge has been that the curators have failed to present an indictment of US colonialism and a comprehensive account of indigenous resistance.[8]

What this critical assessment misses, however, is an analysis of the limitations of the museum both as a genre and as an institution (despite Hilden and Huhndorf's early instructive example concerning the Heye Center in New York) and the acknowledgment of the structural constraints posed by establishment multiculturalism. The criticism of the NMAI indicts the curators' script as inadequate while omitting from the analysis the nature of the



stage—that is, the rhetorical conditions of engagement already in place and the interpretive constraints of multicultural misrecognition in particular.[9] As I argue in the introduction, the United States and Canada have embraced multiculturalism because it supplies a useful tool for national integration. Deploying the politics of recognition has allowed these states to translate their colonial histories into uplifting narratives of national and ideological triumph repeated in the autoethnographic accounts of each ethnic group's overcoming of past prejudice and subordination. Minority writers and artists have readily embraced and supplied these multiculturalist narratives of representational liberation because they offered visibility in the national imagination as cocitizens rather than second-class citizens. The state-sponsored performances of cultural difference by ethnic groups have testified to the vision of North American democracies as nations of multiple cultures in an ongoing project of reformation toward an equitable future. Multicultural democracies dwell on their colonial pasts, if at all, only in order to celebrate their irrevocable passing. The ultimate proof of this passing is the ascendancy of multiculturalism as a model of cultural relations, fully evidenced in the hypervisibility of minority cultural production in the public sphere. In the case of indigenous peoples, however, engagement with the politics of recognition leads to what I have called multicultural misrecognition, that is, an interpretive framework that reduces indigeneity to culture, and as a result obscures the colonial status of indigenous nations. Because the majority of criticism leveled at the NMAI took the premises of multiculturalism for granted, ignoring multiculturalism's ideological imperatives altogether, it failed to appreciate that an engagement with the politics of recognition diverts attention from historic and ongoing colonialism. As a result, this criticism remained blind to the inventive ways in which the NMAI both invites and resists multicultural misrecognition by staging a tension between the conceptions of indigeneity as culture and as nationhood. This rhetorical move, a kind of dialectic of recognition, paradoxically opens up space for critiques of colonialism within the very framework designed to conceal it. By sustaining rather than resolving this tension, the NMAI offers an instructive example of the complexity of indigenous representation in the age of multiculturalism.

## The NMAI and the Ideological Mandates of Multicultural Misrecognition

It's surprising that the critics of the NMAI overlooked the extent to which the museum accommodates multicultural misrecognition. The rhetoric accompanying the arrival of the NMAI in Washington and onto the Ameri-

can museological stage makes plain that the recognition taking place via the erection of a museum devoted to and controlled by American Indians on the National Mall is far more complex than a straightforward return, reclamation, and reconciliation; the irony of American Indians returning to Chesapeake Bay as "the new kid on the block" (*Guide* 7) is hard to miss. Richard West's commentary, during the opening ceremonies and in museum publications, manifests these complexities and allows us to appreciate the pressures of multicultural misrecognition at work. Paying attention to his language reveals precisely how the conception of indigeneity as culture works to bypass the history of colonialism in order to deliver a multicultural United States. For example, in *Spirit of a Native Place* West explains that the NMAI "represents the long overdue recognition of the contributions Native peoples and communities have made and continue to make to American civilization" and declares his belief that "the museum will be an invaluable resource for learning about cultures that were here at the very beginning of this country and are woven into its heritage"; that "for the first citizens of this hemisphere" it "will serve as a center of affirmation"; that "the museum will be here for a very long time"; and that while "what goes on in it will change over time, as it should, there will always be this place—this Native Place. As long as this country is here, it will be here" (65). West reiterated these sentiments during the opening ceremony speech, when he declared that American Indians "have lived in these lands and sacred places for thousands of years" and are thus "the original part of the cultural heritage of every person hearing these words today." And though he admitted that indigenous people "have felt the cruel and destructive edge of the colonialism that followed contact and lasted for hundreds of years," speaking in the first person plural, he declared: "We have survived, and from a cultural standpoint, triumphed against great odds. We are here now—40,000,000 indigenous peoples throughout the Americas and in hundreds of different cultural communities. And we will insist, as we must, that we remain a part of the cultural future of the Americas, just as we were a part of its past and fought so hard to be a part of its present" (qtd. in Calloway 594). West's rhetoric suggests that the NMAI supplies a happy ending to a long, traumatic history; the museum's opening marks a new era in exhibitionary practice and in indigenous-settler relations. On behalf of the United States, it offers a testimony to a new coming to terms with the nation's colonial history; as colonialism is banished to the past tense in West's speech, this history is safely transcended in the nation's multicultural present, manifested for all to see by the newest building on the National Mall. Like the final missing tile placed in an otherwise complete mosaic, erected on the last



available piece of land on the Mall, the NMAI completes the public image of the nation by helping to transform indigenous peoples into the First Americans. As an added bonus, it extends the genealogy of North American nation-states well beyond the age of discovery, conquest, and settlement. For indigenous peoples, the NMAI provides the recognition that has supposedly eluded them for so long, and with this recognition a promise of a more equitable future.

The sticking point is the nature of this recognition—that is, the question of what exactly is being recognized. As I explore in the introduction, the kind of recognition extended to America's indigenous peoples has undergone a dramatic shift from the recognition of political sovereignty in diplomatic exchanges in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the recognition of American Indian cultural difference in the twentieth century. The late twentieth century saw a consolidation of the culturalist conception of indigeneity—ironically, precisely at a time when American Indian activists succeeded in reinserting the concepts of national sovereignty and government-to-government relations into political and legal discourse and in acting with visible results in international fora such as the United Nations. Richard West's deference to culture as the defining concept for thinking about indigenous pasts and futures manifests the extent to which multicultural misrecognition structures the public exchanges of recognition between contemporary indigenous nations and the North American democracies.

The NMAI promises recognition that is cultural rather than political. The museum will foster indigenous cultures, not nations; it will reaffirm traditions and beliefs, not indigenous governance systems; it will encourage the expression of artistic, not political, aspirations. However celebratory, West's language, and the Smithsonian Institution's broader public relations discourse that this language represents, is telling in its rhetorical choices, its omissions and qualifications, and its equivocal use of terms such as *nation*, *people*, *country*, *civilization*, and *America*. West appropriates the rhetoric of the multicultural nation—*cultural* standpoint, *cultural* heritage, *cultural* communities, *cultural* future—to make claims for indigenous visibility. He deploys the language of citizenship but divorces it from indigenous nationalist aspirations. The NMAI will celebrate American Indians as "the citizens of this hemisphere" rather than as citizens of the Onondaga Nation, the Lakota Nation, or any other of the many indigenous nations of the United States or Canada, federally recognized or not, status or nonstatus. The NMAI will showcase indigenous contributions to American civilization and "this country" rather than unfold narratives of indigenous national formation.

However broadly "American civilization" might be conceived, spatially and temporally, ultimately it gets reduced to "this country," which is not America or Indian Country, but the United States, the colonial state guarantor of the recognition extended to indigenous peoples. And this particular moment—"the beginning of this country," be it 1492, 1607, or 1776—rather than centuries or millennia[10] before European colonization, remains the relevant historical marker of the hemisphere's civilization, even from West's explicitly indigenous perspective.

West's central metaphor of the NMAI as the "meeting ground on the nation's front lawn" is especially emblematic of the peculiar kind of recognition extended to indigenous people by the Smithsonian Institution and, by extension, the government that funds it. The phrase is simultaneously honorific and insulting; it promises agency only to enfold it in a larger structure of control. Historically, the term evokes early diplomatic exchanges between indigenous nations and colonial governments, such as, for example, those that took place on the front lawn of Johnson Hall in today's New York state, where the emissary of the British Crown negotiated with the Haudenosaunee in the eighteenth century. The NMAI itself is a meeting ground where indigenous people and settlers can seek reconciliation under cultural guidance from First Americans. But this meeting ground is located on the nation's front lawn, the National Mall, down the hill from the watchful perch of the Capitol. It is a Native Place—the last patch of symbolic Nativeness in a continent gone American—but one contained within national borders, those of the United States. Here, in West's words, Native people are "honored and welcome guests." The Native Place on the nation's front lawn is a home to America's indigenous peoples, but one in which they are welcome to feel like guests—and guests who are on display. Native Americans are acknowledged as partners, authorities even, engaged in cultural dialogue; they also become exhibits in the great museum of the United States as a multicultural democracy, for which the National Mall is the most visible "vitrine."[11] The recognition extended by West, speaking on behalf of the NMAI to America's indigenous peoples, is premised on the latter's reconciliation to the circumscribed nature of indigenous sovereignty within the United States or Canada—the coupling of recognition with reconciliation, one the guarantor of the other and vice versa, being the essential multiculturalist gambit.[12] The Smithsonian Institution's official rhetoric surrounding the opening of the NMAI suggests that far from acknowledging that indigenous nations have longstanding separate political identities, the museum provides a way of integrating indigenous peoples into the body politic



of the nation as separate cultures rather than as nations within it, an exemplary instance of multicultural misrecognition.

## The Legacy of the Museum as an Institution

The predicament posed by multicultural misrecognition exerting its pressure on the NMAI is further compounded by the historical legacy of the museum as an institution and its representation of the world's indigenous peoples. Much of the scholarly work in museum studies in the last two decades shares a consensus on the ideological role of the museum. Although at present ubiquitous throughout the world—from the cosmopolitan metropolis to the small town, from the state capital to the reservation cultural center—the museum is considered one of the primary founding institutions of European modernity. Having originated in cabinets of curiosities and princely collections at European aristocratic courts, the museum proliferated during the eighteenth century and emerged as a public institution in the early nineteenth. Over the next century and a half it was instrumental in the formation of the modern nation-state and the consolidation of European empires at the expense of indigenous populations across the globe.[13] Visual culture's equivalent of the novel, which in Benedict Anderson's famous formulation helped usher in imagined communities—modern nations—in place of societies structured by kinship or feudal obligations, the public museum served to transform these communities into national, and eventually imperial, audiences; it educated—or, if you prefer, disciplined—them into specific conceptions of the state, nation, empire, and the modern order of things (Preziosi 519). While making the public visible through its rituals of participation and civic engagement, the museum served a fundamentally conservative role by encouraging political passivity among its visitors (Duncan 283).

The museum's defining modes of procedure—acquisition, ordering, and exhibition of art and material culture—have reflected and reinforced the centrality of the system of objects and the culture of spectacle characteristic of the modern capitalist West.[14] Because it operates primarily by substituting the reality of the exhibited collections for that of lived social relations, the museum as a genre has tended to reify historical processes into representable essences and totalizing narratives. This process of abstraction from historical specifics operates in art museums, where aesthetic appreciation is premised on lack of familiarity with the social context, as well as in ethnographic ones, which in an effort to depict authentic cultures to

metropolitan publics end up suppressing the complex lived experiences of tribal peoples, along with their ever-changing art (Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," 643). As they construct the special nature of European modernity in sharpest relief, ethnographic museums present cultural differences produced or reproduced through curating as preexisting, inherent cultural diversity (Prakash 209). In the process, they obscure the historically unequal relations of power that enabled the traffic of bodies and things for exhibition from the colonial periphery to the imperial center in the first place. Indigenous peoples typically serve in these representations as adjuncts to narratives of civilizational development, of which the focus and the final point is the West.

This generic and institutional propensity of the museum to obfuscate global historical processes, along with the material and power inequities resulting from them, and to reinforce the centrality of the West to its representational practices has turned out to be its sturdiest characteristic, surviving even the series of reforms in exhibitionary practice undertaken in the second half of the twentieth century under the auspices of multiculturalism and its promise of equal representation. Many critics have insisted that far from transforming the museum, its late twentieth-century reinvention offered only superficial reformation, and that it ultimately, and ironically, entrenched existing perspectives and practices. For example, in his well-known critique of the 1992 National Gallery exhibit "Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration," Homi Bhabha argues that despite new exhibition techniques stressing the coevality of represented cultures and the historicity of the indigenous, "the angle of visibility" in the museum has not changed. He points out that "what was once exotic or archaic, tribal or folkloristic, inspired by strange gods, is now given a secular national present, and an international future," and he charges that "sites of cultural difference too easily become the part of the post-Modern West's thirst for its own ethnicity" (240). Furthermore, as Ania Coombes has suggested, "it is precisely under the banner of a form of multiculturalism that those exhibitions, uncritically celebrating cultural 'diversity' through the primary strategy of displaying culturally hybrid objects from once colonized nations, can claim immunity from addressing the specificity of this experience" (490) and, I would add, from addressing their own implication in the global processes of subjugation. Contemporary multiculturalist "curatorial projects end up supporting the centrality of the Western museum" (Bhabha 240). Equally importantly, I would suggest, such projects promote the magnanimity of contemporary multicultural democracies that have broken with their shameful colonial pasts, have ceded the cultural, but not the political, stage to the once oppressed, and are now,



as is demonstrated in these exhibits, equal partners in the global democratic project. The multiculturalist panacea of equal representation ends up evoking, in the service of the Western museum and the nation-states it articulates, a "misleading rhetoric of equality" (Coombes 490), which implies equivalence of difference, sliding once again into segregationist essentialism (Bhabha 240). Despite a more thorough and historicized incorporation of the ethnographic other in contemporary museological exhibitions, the West remains the center and the reference point structuring the representation of the rest of the world.

Although broadly denounced as the most successful imperialist tool, the museum has not only persisted through the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first but also flourished, its contemporary ubiquity across the world the incontrovertible testimony to its staying power. Three-quarters of the currently operating museums have been founded since World War II (Hudson 86), the majority of them in decolonized nations in Asia and Africa, on indigenous reserves and reservations in North America, and in aboriginal communities in Australia and New Zealand. Given its long legacy of exploitation in acquisition and misrepresentation in exhibitionary practice, the museum would appear too compromised as a genre and an institution to inspire such widespread interest among the world's indigenous populations. And yet, the museum is a site of potential for indigenous peoples for the same reason it has been criticized in recent museum studies—its role in mobilizing imagined communities of diverse kinds, in building and legitimizing political entities such as nations. Indigenous nations want museums as places where cultural heritage is preserved and made accessible for appreciation through staged visual narratives of historical development; in the case of tribal museums in particular, as narratives of perseverance or recovery, they function as "powerful identity-defining machines" (Duncan 286). As such, they become indispensable to indigenous nations struggling to overcome the demographic, economic, and social impact of genocide and the continuing effects of colonialism while asserting their historical status as sovereign political entities. Museums can recover and articulate suppressed national histories and legacies. They offer an arena where embattled indigenous nations can exercise control over their very constitution and definition. They make communities visible as nations to themselves and to other national and international publics. The number of newly opened tribal museums in North America readily testifies to the indigenous nations' willingness to appropriate the museum in their nation-building projects. In a refusal of standard museological practice in the West, these institutions are often renamed cultural or heritage centers, but they are intended to func-

tion as museums, albeit reformed ones, particularly in their potential for national self-definition. The example of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center is perhaps the best, and definitely the most visible, recent example of the constructive potential the museum offers to contemporary indigenous nations.[15]

As mainstream critics condemn museums for their participation in nationalist and imperial projects and their collaborative operation in globalized capital markets,[16] and as many indigenous critics condemn historical and contemporary museums and art galleries for misrepresentation, indigenous nations continue to create tribal museums in efforts to consolidate their communities and assert their national and political separateness. But they have also invested financially and intellectually in the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution, despite its federal oversight. If the rapid development of tribal museums is motivated by a desire to have full—administrative and curatorial—control over indigenous national representation, the investment in the NMAI would appear to make little sense, given that despite its public rhetoric, the museum is a federally funded institution negotiating mutually exclusive demands for indigenous recognition. This investment does become more intelligible once we consider the colonial state's national museum as a space of negotiation where indigenous nations can seek recognition of their presence and sovereignty by the colonial state—Richard West's "meeting ground" in that historically specific sense. Located on the National Mall, in the US national capital, the NMAI certainly offers the highest visibility quotient. The museum's commitment to hemispheric and pan-Indian representation, along with its inadvertent participation in the American politics of recognition, however, makes it a particularly difficult stage for staking claims to indigenous sovereignty. The museum's very name captures the rhetorical dilemma perfectly, with "National" implying, ambiguously, a variety of references, from the colonial nation-state to the numerous indigenous nations seeking their re-recognition as such. The museum becomes a meeting ground where the primary exchange of recognition is thoroughly contradictory: as the community and the NMAI curators seek to reassert indigenous sovereignty, the museum's existence within the particular geography of the National Mall cannot help but corroborate the vision of the United States as a multicultural nation and its specific understanding of the settler-indigenous relationship, which folds American Indians into the polity as yet another ethnic group.

The NMAI's curators have not been oblivious to this dilemma. For example, Jolene Rickard, a Tuscarora artist and art historian who curated several of the opening exhibits, has long recognized that a museum functions



primarily in the service of the colonial state and that inclusion of indigenous art in national museums is "simultaneously a colonizing act and a decolonizing act" (115). Given this fundamental structural predicament, she has asked: "How can we insert different worldviews or philosophical positions into a museum space? How do the interconnected artistic and political needs of First Nations function in any national museum?" (115). As long as indigenous nations continue to experience political, economic, and cultural subordination to the colonial states, she points out, inclusion of their work in these states' cultural institutions will continue to pose special difficulties (116). How can a concept of an indigenous nation be articulated on the representational stage of the colonial state? What thematic and formal choices would such articulation assume? Is a viable assertion of indigenous national sovereignty possible within the framework of multiculturalism? How can the political meanings of indigeneity be asserted in the climate of a desire for its cultural meanings? Rickard's answer to these questions is to focus relentlessly on the concept of indigenous sovereignty. She argues that "an understanding of the term 'self-determination' as 'sovereignty' is as critical a framing for Indigenous artists and art as the 'gaze' is to the gendered discourse. The fundamental issue is the exposure of an inequitable power relationship. By making sovereignty part of a national and international dialogue, museums shift the boundaries of control for the maker, the Native Nation, the gallery, and society" (118). Such exposure necessarily has to take place on the nation-state's museological stage, where it will achieve greatest visibility. It has to take place in the national rather than the tribal museums, because indigenous nations hardly need to be convinced about their sovereign political status. It is the mainstream public that must be invited to consider these questions, especially as it engages in the rituals of good citizenship made possible by the Smithsonian Institution just down the hill from the US Capitol. Museums remain of interest to American Indian nations because they facilitate the reinvention and assertion of American Indian tribes as contemporary nations. The National Museum of the American Indian, in particular, provides a highly visible national and international forum to press this agenda in the colonial state's capital. As Karen Coody Cooper put it, "the ironic symbolism [of the museum's location] is not missed. American Indians want to be visible to the nation's lawmakers, never to be forgotten again, and [they] also want to keep an eye on the US government" (166). The NMAI relies on the museum as the nation-building institution in order to interrupt the celebration of one nation with a reminder of the existence of others in its midst.

In the remainder of this chapter, I investigate how the NMAI takes up

the genre of the museum and reforms it to make it more suitable for articulating a range of issues of interest to indigenous peoples. Viewed through the lens of multicultural misrecognition, the NMAI emerges as engaged in a complicated nexus of strategies designed to make visible and to subvert the erasures demanded by multiculturalism. While the museum's public relations materials and opening ceremonies, as I described above, invite multicultural misrecognition as the primary interpretive framework, many of its individual exhibitions undertake a critique of US imperialism, expose the continued colonial nature of US-Indian relations, assert indigenous political separateness, and attempt to reeducate a public raised on stereotypes of Indianness perpetuated in popular culture. Furthermore, the NMAI engages in tribal nation-building by showcasing the work undertaken in tribal museums, reforms museological practices of representing indigeneity, and tackles the contradiction of representing the museum venture as a collaboration with the United States while chronicling the history of conflicts between indigenous nations and American federal governments. Most importantly, the NMAI allows contemporary indigenous nations to participate in the current politics of recognition by adjusting the terms of such participation away from the interpretive effects of multicultural misrecognition. It does so primarily, as I argue below, by harking back to the historical precedent of the early treaty-making period. The discourse of indigenous nationalism and of historic treaties in the museum offers an antidote to the notion of cultural rather than political citizenship asserted so emphatically in the museum's public relations materials and in the concepts of the Native Place and First Americans in particular.

## Historic Treaties and the Political Conception of Indigeneity

Upheld as testimonies to European recognition of the prior inherent political autonomy of North America's indigenous nations and decried as a colonial tool of dispossession, treaties remain complicated but apt symbols of indigenous sovereignty as circumscribed by North American democracies. Within the existing colonial framework, they furnish the only politically viable tool for asserting indigenous sovereignty, for holding on to the land base and other material resources, for demanding the return of lands lost, and for claiming gaming rights as an engine of economic development on reservations. Vine Deloria Jr.'s take on the subject is emblematic of this predicament: repeatedly in his writing, Deloria exposed treaties and government-to-government conceptions of indigenous-settler relations as



a political expedient for the colonial state, and yet he also supported evocation of historic treaties as useful to indigenous nations in securing access to resources and to some forms of self-determination.[17] Any deployment of historic treaties on behalf of indigenous sovereignty at the turn of the twenty-first century has to contend with this complicated historical context. As the understanding of indigeneity has shifted from political to cultural representation throughout the twentieth century, most dramatically in the late twentieth century with the rise of multiculturalism and the idea of *cultural citizenship*, the concept of *indigenous nations* has grown ever more obscure to a mainstream American public enamored of *Native culture*, despite occasional court rulings honoring the historic treaties and the presumption of indigenous political autonomy they embody. In a political and cultural climate in which recognition has come to mean acknowledgment and respect for cultural identity, treaties hark back to the pre-1871 period in which recognition unfolded on the diplomatic stage. Contemporary insistence on historic treaties aims to wrench indigeneity away from culture and return it to politics, to extricate the Indians from the museum and other cultural stages and to return them to the diplomatic meeting ground, so to speak.

To attempt such a shift from cultural to political recognition in a national museum of a colonial state is an enterprise wrought with paradoxes, given the museum's historical predispositions to cultural essentialism and colonial incorporation. As indigenous art and history are appropriated by the multiculturalist democracies of North America, and as Indians become celebrated as "First Americans," the NMAI functions primarily as a testimony to the state's recognition of indigenous cultural difference and therefore of indigenous peoples' cultural citizenship within the contemporary (colonial) states. And yet, the NMAI's very location on the National Mall and directly across from the Capitol opens up the possibility, however symbolic, for the recognition of the presence of indigenous nations as political actors who are once again negotiating in the colonial state's capital. By evoking the admittedly contradictory iconography of this particular location, the context of historic treaty negotiations allows us to see the NMAI as more than a venue for assertions of Western incorporative universalism. Potentially, it can function as a meeting ground where the political autonomy of indigenous nations could be asserted once again. The NMAI thus itself functions as a contemporary instance of historic treaty-making, one in which different mechanisms of recognition work simultaneously in complementary and contradictory ways. Paying attention to how historic treaties are used at the NMAI allows us to specify the complex ways in which indige-

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nous sovereignty—that is, the political idea of the Onondaga, or Cherokee, or Lakota Nations—is obscured in contemporary North American multicultural democracies and how it can be evoked and asserted.

How this complex dialectic of recognition, or the specific ways in which political and cultural conceptions of indigeneity contend with each other, plays out at the NMAI has much to do with the museum's location, its architectural design, and its multiple curatorial agency. I've described above the symbolic valences of the museum's placement on the National Mall in Washington, DC, and its potential for asserting both the diplomatic relationship between two political entities and the circumscription of indigenous sovereignty within the colonial state via the concept of cultural citizenship. This dynamic of simultaneously asserting and obscuring the political dimensions of indigeneity operates as well within the building itself. The museum's distinct common and exhibition spaces reflect the mandate to represent all indigenous peoples across the hemisphere as a demographic sharing common historical experiences and contemporary realities. At the same time, they also aim to represent the many indigenous nations as distinct from each other and as engaging in a variety of political relationships with the colonial states they inhabit.

The museum tackled this complicated mandate via a unique layout design for its exhibition spaces and an original approach to curatorial agency. The museum spaces unfold in a concentric pattern. Three large exhibition areas designed according to the same spatial principle constitute the building's core. The "Our Lives" exhibit treats contemporary indigenous issues; "Our Peoples" tackles the past; "Our Universes" presents cosmologies. Each main area is divided into two separate sections: a central cluster of displays highlighting pan-Indian issues, referred to as permanent exhibits and curated by the NMAI curators, and a surrounding area, a perimeter of sorts, divided into eight distinct spaces, referred to as community galleries, each devoted to a specific nation or tribal community and curated by a committee of the tribal members working in cooperation with the NMAI curators. These main areas are supplemented by "Windows on Exhibitions," small galleries curated by the NMAI team and dispersed throughout the building's several floors; these exhibitions highlight different kinds of objects in the museum's collections. The museum also offers space for changing exhibitions curated by invited curators. The main common gathering spaces, including the Potomac Rotunda at the museum's entry, two separate theaters, Mitsitam Café, and the museum store all continue the overall aesthetic design of the museum. Thus, curatorial agency in the museum is dispersed between museum professionals and nonprofessionals, and between architectural and curatorial teams, on the one hand, and individual curators, on the other. In the discussion that follows, I specify the curatorial agency at work in each exhibition or display I analyze by referring to community galleries' tribal designations and by naming individual curators, or curator teams, whenever possible.[18] My point, however, is not to attach either the cultural or the political conceptions of indigeneity to particular individuals or teams responsible for the design of the museum and its exhibits, but rather to elucidate the complex ways in which these two divergent forms of indigenous recognition contend with each other throughout the museum, regardless of the political and theoretical stances of the various curators.



To press the political conception of indigeneity, the NMAI deploys the discourse of the historic treaties in a variety of ways, from permanent and community exhibitions on specific treaties and their ramifications for past and contemporary indigenous realities to the general iconography evoking the concept itself that recurs throughout the common spaces of the building and in the museum's promotional materials. Some of the above strategies successfully deliver a political understanding of indigeneity; others end up subsumed by the idea of indigeneity as culture. For example, the guide to the museum, available to all entering visitors free of charge, reproduces Public Law 101–185, an act of Congress that established the NMAI as part of the Smithsonian Institution in 1989, along with several maps of the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River region, the capital, and the National Mall. Part of what the guide calls "the reclamation of a Native Place," Public Law 101–185 is formatted to mimic a founding legal document, its design following the same aesthetic conventions as the historic treaties displayed in the museum exhibits. However, in keeping with the rhetoric of the opening day speeches from Smithsonian Institution and NMAI officials, the description of Public Law 101–185 emphasizes the cultural citizenship of indigenous peoples and eschews any mention of their political status, testifying to the fact that merely invoking the treaty iconography does not necessarily subtend a political conception of indigeneity. The *Spirit of a Native Place* collection describes Public Law 101–185 as launching a museum where "Native People [can] celebrate and share their achievements and aspirations as Americans and citizens of the world" (183)—not as citizens of their nations. The language of Public Law 101–185 itself also carefully avoids the subject of indigenous nationhood. Instead it describes "cultures indigenous to the Americas," "Native American history and art," "Native American peoples," "the cultural legacy, historic grandeur, and contemporary culture of Native Americans," "Indian tribes," and "Native communities" (Public Law). When it is used, the word "nation" refers to the United States only; it never des-

ignates American Indian peoples. Rather than evoking indigenous nationalism, the iconography of the treaty appears in the guide only to point toward the idea of Native American cultural citizenship, in ways similar to Richard West's opening ceremony address.

The museum's permanent exhibitions, however, use the treaties to highlight a political conception of indigenous nations. For example, "Our Peoples" features an extended exhibit on historic treaties titled "Stated Intentions: Treaties as Instruments of Dispossession and Survival." The exhibit notes that the indigenous nations were negotiating treaties with European governments since contact, but it focuses on treaties signed with the US federal government since 1776 in order to offer an account of this government's subversion of the earlier tradition of treaty-making. The exhibit's narrative argues that treaties were expedient diplomatic tools aimed initially at forging alliances with indigenous nations to protect the fledgling US government from frontier wars and territorial challenges from other European contenders on the continent; later, with the military dominance of indigenous nations waning, they were used to extract territorial cessions. The exhibit further notes that though treaty-making was abrogated by the US Congress in 1871, the treaties constitute a historical testimony to indigenous sovereignty: "treaties are living documents that support our sovereign people and our survival," asserts Leslie Wheelock, one of the exhibit's curators.

If the central exhibit of "Our Peoples" emphasizes both the treaties' role in the federal government's dispossession of indigenous nations and their potential to support these nations' contemporary claims to resources and rights, its community galleries present the treaties as legal documents that established the historic and continuing political relationship between indigenous nations and the federal government. For example, the Yakama Nation exhibit foregrounds the 1855 treaty, which brought fourteen separate bands together and "retained 1.2 million acres of homeland." The exhibit describes how the annual celebration of "Yakama Nation Treaty Days" honors the treaty as a foundational event in Yakama national history; the Yakama see their "treaty as an empowering document" that "recognized and reaffirmed [their] rights and sovereignty." The exhibit's narrative affirms the Yakama's prior inherent sovereignty—"we were here since time immemorial . . . long before the signing of the treaty"—and insists on a specific understanding of the treaty not as a source of that sovereignty but rather as a tool to support the tribal government's decision on behalf of the nation. The accompanying account of the "closed area," a sacred place reserved for Yakama ceremonies and inaccessible to outsiders, in this context, provides a model for territorial sovereignty guaranteed by government-to-government agreements. A



framed newspaper article about the creation of the closed area—"Indians Get Mt. Adams"—supplies a useful contrast between public perceptions of tribal rights and the curators' stress on Yakama nationhood.

In a similar focus on sovereignty and its deliberate limitation, the Kiowa exhibit juxtaposes the 1867 Medicine Lodge Treaty with the 1903 Supreme Court decision *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock*, which declared that the US Congress had complete constitutional authority over Indian affairs and that it could abrogate treaties negotiated with indigenous nations. The exhibit's intent is to uphold the treaty as a primary legal document recognizing the Kiowas' sovereignty and right to self-determination, including control over their territory, and to denounce the Supreme Court decision as a breach of an established, and still binding, political and legal order. The treaties stake claims to modern political relations with the United States and show that such relations have plenty of historical precedent. Pressing the related point about the prior and inherent nature of indigenous sovereignty, the chronologies of some of the community galleries in "Our Peoples"—for example the Tohono O'odham's "Long ago through 1900s"—make a point of situating indigenous nations within a continental time not bound by the Western calendar, emphasizing their prior occupancy of the land and their long political existence independent of the current colonial state. Furthermore, the Kiowa community gallery, along with those of the Tohono O'odham and Cherokee Nations (including the Eastern Band, which remained in Georgia after the removals) and the Seminole Tribe of Florida, stands in contrast to the community galleries of the Tapirape in Brazil and the Nahua and Wixarika in Mexico. The latter, having never signed treaties with the Portuguese or Spanish colonial governments, cannot resort to the language of nationhood and sovereignty and must turn instead to the discourse of cultural continuance and ancestral genealogies to describe their contemporary experience. The presence of treaty documents in the North American community galleries, especially in light of their absence from those of indigenous communities in South America, underlines the unique political and legal status of indigenous nations in the United States and Canada and the historic practice of recognizing their nationhood.

But it is the "Our Lives" exhibition that most insistently emphasizes the links between the historic treaties and contemporary indigenous nationalism. This exhibit reaches for early treaties, such as those negotiated in the early seventeenth century between the Pamunkey and the English in Virginia, or between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in the Hudson Valley, to offer a historical genealogy for contemporary objects such as the Haudenosaunee passport displayed in the Kahnawake Mohawk community gal-

lery and the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card and Fritz Scholder's *The American Indian* painting included in the permanent exhibit. National sovereignty, for which the Haudenosaunee passport serves as a material emblem, is the focal point of the Kahnawake gallery. "When something happens, we react in a way that asserts our self-determination as a people and our sovereignty as a nation," declare the Kahnawake community curators. In this context, the well-known account of Mohawk high-rise ironworkers in New York and other American cities becomes an opportunity to assert the Mohawks' treaty-guaranteed right to unrestricted movement across the US-Canadian border rather than their adaptability to modern American industry.[19] Mohawks' labor migrations, their jaywalking across the border, function as an exercise of Mohawk sovereignty. Mohawk assertions of nationalism stand in contrast to the neighboring account of the emergence of Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic, the first Canadian province with an indigenous (Inuit) governing majority. This account makes clear the new territory's administrative subjection to the Canadian Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. The Inuit country, in other words, represents the integration of the Inuit into the Canadian federation rather than their national emancipation.[20] It offers an example of administrative incorporation on par with the economic integration of the Seminoles through the federally developed tourism and cattle industries depicted in the "Our Peoples" exhibition.

Curated by Jolene Rickard, the central exhibit of "Our Lives" accounts for such disparities by focusing on the issue of continued negotiations between indigenous nations and European nation-states in North America and by stressing the political nature of contestations over rights and resources. For example, the section on 1960s activism highlights a shift in Indian self-perception from tribalism to nationhood and chronicles the reemergence of specific national identities such as Diné, Ho-chunk, Skarure, Piscataway, Muscogee, and Unangan. Other sections treat CDIB cards, blood quantum, negotiations over Indian identity politics, gaming, control over natural resources including hunting and fishing rights, language preservation, and other cultural revitalization initiatives—all as examples of treaty-guaranteed exercises in self-determination. A side note by the curator explains the dual citizenship of American Indians, as members of both settler nations and indigenous nations, and advocates for the right to self-government for all indigenous peoples across the world. It also stresses the need for an international political forum, such as the United Nations, to serve as a stage for redressing indigenous nations' grievances against colonial states. Rickard thus harkens to the early treaty period, when Indian affairs unfolded on the



international diplomatic stage rather than as part of domestic policy in the United States and Canada.

This emphasis on the long history of diplomatic relations between indigenous and European, and later American, nations recurs in different locations in the museum beyond the "Our Lives" and "Our Peoples" exhibitions. For example, an exhibit on tomahawks, pipes, and peace medals, one of many under the heading "Windows on Exhibitions," glosses those objects as emblems of mutual recognition among political sovereigns from Europe and North America. Because they were exchanged as gifts on the occasion of diplomatic engagements, the large number of peace pipes and tomahawks—which, the accompanying narrative points out, were manufactured in England—attests to the pervasiveness of political relations between indigenous nations and European courts and governments. Presidential medals gifted to leaders of indigenous nations by the US government offer a visual chronicle of the transformation such relations underwent after 1776. Initially a testimony to the mutual recognition of "Indian nations and the US government as equal powers," the medals bear engravings of the heads of American presidents and symbols of friendship and cooperation. These gradually give way to visual assertions of the inherent value of the American way of life, such as apotheoses of agricultural labor. Ultimately, the medals decline in importance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the military and political balance in North America shifts and the United States claims complete territorial control over the mainland. Once again, the goal of the exhibit is to use the material evidence at the museum's disposal to remind visitors about the unique political status of the indigenous nations in North America and to imply that a return to the early model of political relations in North America is the only internationally legal way to resolve America's "Indian Problem."

This implication is forcefully manifested in what is effectively a presidential medal in reverse, the contemporary bronze statue titled *Allies in War, Partners in Peace* gifted to the NMAI by the Oneida Nation of New York and displayed on the museum's ground floor. The life-size statue features a group of historical figures: Polly Cooper, an Oneida woman who, the accompanying narrative informs the visitors, saved American revolutionaries from starvation by teaching them how to cook corn; her contemporary, Oskanondonha, an Oneida wampum keeper; and General George Washington. The statue commemorates a specific historic event: the Oneidas' four-hundred-mile march from Oneida Territory to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to deliver food to starving American soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Rhetorically, it asserts Oneida national sovereignty. The artist has placed in General

Washington's right hand the Guswenta, which for Oneida and other nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is a record of a treaty of mutual noninterference concluded by them with Europeans during the early colonial period. The statue implies that the Guswenta continues to define and govern relations between the contemporary Oneida Nation and the United States, or at least that it should do so. The description accompanying the sculpture further explains that the statue "honors the bonds of friendship that were forged between the Oneida Nation and the fledgling US during the Revolutionary War." A performative speech act of a kind, *Allies in War, Partners in Peace* is a gift, which gifts a particular treaty and the historical memory of diplomacy it embodies back to the United States. Extended in a highly visible national space such as the NMAI, it asserts a friendly relationship between two discrete and equal partners; moreover, it highlights the obligation of the United States to continue the friendship, especially in view of the Oneidas' siding with the Americans during the war for independence at the risk of breaking the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The statue is a reminder of the political relationship between the US government and the Haudenosaunee, of the obligations of a contracted agreement, and ultimately and most importantly, of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's prior political independence and its recognition by the European courts and early American governments.

## Ideological Functions of Museum Objects

The political, rather than cultural, understanding of indigeneity evoked by the deployment of historic treaties is reinforced by some of the NMAI's exhibition strategies, particularly in two of the three permanent exhibitions: "Our Lives," the account of contemporary indigenous experience in the Americas; and "Our Peoples," its historical equivalent. These strategies include a refusal of traditional ethnographic displays of material culture and an insistence on metacritical reflection on exhibitionary practice, an insistence that transforms the NMAI into a museum about the conjunction of museology and indigeneity. By the late twentieth century, traditional ethnography in museums had come to refer to display practices first developed and instituted by Franz Boas as a preferable alternative to the evolutionary approach of earlier periods. In an effort to move away from the hierarchical tenor of exhibitions narrating civilizational progress from primitive societies to the modern West and to consider particular cultures in their proper environmental contexts, the Boasian synchronic approach produced indigenous people as essences frozen in tradition and apparently impervious to



change, except as a result of adulteration by necessarily foreign modernity; thus Boas ironically contributed to the perception of American Indians as vanishing anachronisms. The NMAI's community-curated galleries, charged as they were with presenting a comprehensive but limited snippet of their contemporary nations, needed to consider the conventions of museological display that they inherited and the conflict between evolutionary models that narrate change and culturalist models that emphasize wholeness and authenticity at the expense of transformation. Their challenge was to represent historical change without reverting to the pre-Boasian evolutionary model of civilizational progress and without celebrating this change as a process of assimilation but instead to account for it in the context of colonialism and indigenous resistance. Accordingly, these exhibits often represent progress—in its Western understanding as industrial development, for example—as a bane to indigenous modes of life, however changed they have become during the centuries of colonialism. The exhibits are poor in objects and rich in text and visual materials such as photographs, reproductions of legal documents shaping the life of each nation, and press coverage on critical contemporary issues. When objects are displayed, particularly in the "Our Lives" exhibition, they are rarely actual historical artifacts; instead, they are reproductions of historical objects by contemporary artists or contemporary objects, such as beaded basketball sneakers, Métis Nation coffee mugs, or Indian Miss Chicago beaded headdresses, fully testifying to the culturally hybrid nature of contemporary indigenous everyday life. However, rather than representing a capitulation to Western epistemological frameworks, this stress on modernity is combined with an emphatically indigenous point of view. The community galleries insist that the indigenous present is always a negotiation between appropriating modernity and preserving traditionalism, or a conscious practice of translating traditionalism into its viable contemporary forms in a kind of "changing same," a concept first evoked by Paul Gilroy with reference to the evolving social and cultural forms of African identity in the Black Atlantic.

The attempt to move away from the generic West-centric focus of the museum while showcasing indigenous modernity as continuity is firmly at the center of Jolene Rickard's work as a curator. Rickard has been particularly concerned with the fact that the North American national museums typically represent Canadian and US American history as "the significant measurement—the bookends" of indigenous experience, thus making it impossible for the viewing public to see indigenous experience as "proceeding and ongoing." She has been interested in the possibilities of "inverting the colonial framing of Aboriginal history within a contact-narrative timeline"

and in situating "American and Canadian history, or even modern world history . . . within an Aboriginal timeline" (117). These concerns of inclusion, sovereignty, and competing but overlapping histories determine her curating decisions in the "Our Lives" exhibit. The entry to this exhibit showcases rhetorical strategies she employs to respond to this challenge. The entry is framed on both sides by a video installation featuring images of contemporary American Indians walking by, as if in a street crowd from which all non-Indians have been digitally removed, behind a slightly reflective surface. Entering the exhibition, the visitors become part of the installation, walking side by side with indigenous people, seeing themselves reflected among the projected images. The interactive aspect of the installation is hardly innovative in contemporary museums, where the visitor's active participation is the norm. What's new and radical in Rickard's conception is the specifically self-reflexive impact of the installation on the museum visitors. The exhibit turns such visitors, who usually are merely observers, even if of the participant kind, into the objects of exhibition by forcing them to contemplate their images as superimposed on those of the Indians passing by. Museum visitors join a procession that is already taking place; they arrive at, happen upon, life and history in progress rather than posturing as its originators. In Rickard's words, then, they are inserted in the ongoing indigenous historical framework. The exhibit marks the visitors', and the Europeans', late arrival on the American stage, be it museological or continental. An entry into the exhibition—in itself a civic duty in the context of the Smithsonian Institution's mission—is framed as an act of joining in or as an intrusion into an already peopled world. For what now seems merely an imaginative moment of wishful thinking, but what historically constituted a reality for much of the colonial period, the newcomers become a minority in a society constituted by others. In a telling departure from the social dynamics of contemporary multicultural societies, where the people descended from European settlers are Americans and everybody else provides ethnic color, at the entry to "Our Lives" indigenous peoples are the norm and visitors are supplementary.

The refusal of traditional ethnographic display conventions has led the NMAI curators away from the usual treatment of objects in museological practice. For example, unlike its counterpart in New York City, the Gustav Heye Center at the Custom House, the Washington NMAI has dispensed with the staple of ethnographic exhibits developed to feature objects of material culture in their environmental contexts: the diorama.[21] As I describe above, the NMAI's permanent exhibitions include relatively few objects and rely instead on textual and visual materials. If objects are exhibited, they tend



to be contemporary and to deploy hybrid aesthetics. Instead of "authentic" objects—that is, ones uncontaminated by settler materials, techniques, or ideas[22]—amassed in the museum's archives, visitors are asked to contemplate displays of a bombardier used by the Métis for ice-fishing, a Haudenosaunee passport, administrative forms for work release due to indigenous religious holidays, and so on—all documenting changes in indigenous material practices in response to American colonialism. When historical objects from the Heye collection are exhibited—as they are in the "Windows on Collections" exhibits, the central exhibit of "Our Peoples," and occasionally individually throughout the museum—their display departs significantly from traditional museum practices.

Such departures from the existing conventions of museological display have been resentfully noted by museum reviewers, who have complained that "nowhere at the NMAI" are visitors "asked to pause to consider an object, to study it, to admire it, ask questions of it," that "the curators . . . have little faith in the power of objects to convey meaning," and that "the Heye Collection isn't really here at the NMAI" (Conn 70–71). Such assessments are patently inaccurate: there are plenty of objects to contemplate at the NMAI. More importantly, however, these critics misunderstand the basic function of these innovative exhibits: that is, their critique of the usual exhibitionary practice, with its metonymic logic, its holy grail of adequate representation, and its commitment to the ethnographic imperative of producing knowledge about authentic cultures rather than about historical changes affecting all social worlds. At the center of the very idea of the museum, metonymic logic presumes that an object, or often an arbitrary collection of objects, extracted from its specific environment and arranged in a display case, can stand in for the culture within which it originally functioned.[23] It is in the process of such exhibition, and not before, that these objects—the Plains headdress, the Eastern seaboard wampum, the Northwest Coast totem pole—gain iconic status, becoming authoritative tokens fully and evidently imbued with cultural essences in order to serve as conduits for the settler understanding of the indigenous; they become culture, quite literally, reified under the museum glass. As such they are crucial to creating an illusion of the adequate representation of a particular cultural formation, which is the main prerogative, mandate, and constant worry of ethnographic museums.

The object exhibits at the NMAI deliberately teeter between the ethnographic and the aesthetic; they are presented as evidence of an indigenous presence that is not made immediately intelligible but requires further work to be meaningful, that demands reflection on interpretative strate-

gies that would make such meaning available in the first place. Object displays at the NMAI aim to be ideological rather than merely informative: they testify to indigenous presence on the American continent along with the inherent difficulty of the museological interpretation of this presence. For example, the "Windows on Collections" exhibits—featuring beadwork, pottery, dolls, arrow points, peace medals, and tomahawks, all grouped by type of object rather than historical or geographical provenience—function, most obviously, as introductions, sample glimpses into the much vaster collections stored in the NMAI's research center. But their mode of display communicates a subtler message as well. The glass cases in these exhibits are crammed with objects . . . and nothing else. There are no labels offering descriptions, nothing to distract the visitors from contemplating them primarily in their abundance and their aesthetic dimension—in other words, as material evidence of indigenous presence and as art rather than as material culture. Detailed ethnographic information on the objects displayed is available, but not at hand; it has to be retrieved through the interactive digital technology at several computer stands adjacent to the exhibit. The display, thus, is designed to postpone visitors' reliance on ethnographic gloss to understand what they are seeing. The general, brief narrative texts accompanying these exhibits also encourage such aesthetically oriented contemplation (the exhibit on tomahawks and peace medals described above is a notable exception). An introduction to the exhibit on beadwork is a good example of this strategy: it describes the beadwork as a "unique American creation" that continues "to delight us," a result of contact and trade, of mixing indigenous technique with European materials (the exhibit emphasizes objects dating from 1492). There is no attempt to explain the political contexts of the transatlantic trade or its impact on indigenous economies—no mention of indigenous art production for the tourist market, for example, or of the nationalist context of the contemporary beaded art. To further encourage a primarily aesthetic interpretive mode, the curators have arranged these objects into larger patterns, combining individual pieces into collage-like compositions: displays of arrow points arranged into large undulating waves or of South American gold pieces patterned into a gigantic sun are good examples of this approach, which draws attention to the curators' imaginative talents, to their work as artists rather than ethnographers.

As a result, these exhibits of archival collections project an interpretatively fruitful paradox with regard to exhibiting indigenous materials. Their refusal of traditional ethnography pitches the exhibits into the art museum's propensity to decontextualize the objects in an effort to bring out their aesthetic dimensions, a move particularly troubling in the case of indige-



nous artifacts. As Shari Huhndorf and Patricia Hilden point out in their critique of the Gustav Heye Center in New York City, undue attention to the aesthetic dimension of indigenous material culture turns the museum into a "boutique of valuable Indian artifacts" (169) displayed in the fashion of a high-art gallery, one designed to preempt historical reflection and, as a result, obfuscating the history of the American colonial project on the continent; a display of the Ghost Dance Shirt without any mention of the Wounded Knee Massacre is indeed an example of pernicious historical revisionism.[24] By contrast, Rickard's display design, which exhibits objects in great numbers but without the usual ethnographic gloss, brings the ethnographic and the art museum tradition into a productive conflict, prompting reflection on the desirability of existing modes of exhibition of indigenous objects in museum and art gallery contexts. Rickard's objects are not extracted from their proper ethnographic context simply to highlight their aesthetic qualities. Presented en masse, in the abundance of their historical cognates rather than as individual pieces (of art), they call forth a theoretical and methodological reflection. A different kind of commodification takes place: an arrow point no longer serves, or no longer only serves, as a singular emblem for scientific decoding; rather, it becomes a piece of a larger picture that speaks to utilitarian, historical, and aesthetic dimensions, but above all to its own ideological expediency.

This strategy prevails even in the few displays of individual historic pieces scattered in the museum hallways, such as the large-scale pottery or Plains buffalo-skin parfleche. These are placed in the more traditional museum display cases and appear singled out for their aesthetic appeal. However, as visitors contemplate these objects' beauty they also notice that the display case is a replica of a travois or a drag, a kind of sled pulled by horses to move possessions from place to place. Yes, the exhibited object is immobilized under the museum glass, but in a case that is a symbol of both mobility (transport) and indigeneity (before the European wheel technology). The pottery and the parfleche are framed—or captured, or revealed—as both portable cultural inheritance and commodified heritage that can be showcased in a museum. The display design activates all of these understandings and manages to be self-reflexive in the way it glosses the contentious debate over American Indian art and material culture and the exhibitionary order. Rickard's display strategies showcase the indigenous museum objects as cultural capital and suggest how they can be used to mobilize different understandings of indigenous experience and history; in other words, they emphasize the objects' political potential. Indigenous material culture has long been used to subtend ideological narratives: of civilizational progress,

of vanishing races, of savage nobility, of radical otherness, of multicultural reformation, of indigenous nationalism. Jolene Rickard's curating aims to bring forth forcefully the sovereignist understanding of indigeneity, but it also intentionally facilitates reflection on the politics of indigenous representation and self-representation.

One such understanding emphasizes the vitality and complexity of the indigenous world, on the one hand, and the massive scale of its disruption following the arrival of the Europeans, on the other, by using the museum collections to emphasize both the abundance of the material archive and its fragmentary nature. The exhibits such as "Windows on Collections" and "Our Peoples" amass large numbers of artifacts to harness their potential as "object-lessons of documentary import" (Preziosi 518). These objects serve as evidence of numerous societies thriving before the arrival of the conquistadors, traders, missionaries, and settlers (signaled in pre-Columbian stone and gold sculpture, shell wampum, pottery); of extensive traffic in natural resources, manufactured objects, technologies, ideas, and habits between the Europeans and the indigenous nations (seen in swords, money, gold, glass beadwork, pottery); and of the persistence of indigenous peoples despite their programmatic displacement and dispossession (evidenced in treaties and bibles with beaded covers that are translated into indigenous languages). The exhibits eschew representation of ethnographically captured cultures in order to narrate the extent and effects of political and economic interests as they played out in the Americas between the indigenous and European peoples and governments. The very abundance of objects such as early stone and gold sculpture, arrow points, pottery, and shell beadwork points to the demographic history of the continent, thereby directly undermining the myths of the virgin land and new world, however residual they might have become by now, and supporting the recent adjustments upward of the continental population before 1492.

As they testify to the vitality and complexity of the indigenous world pre- and post-contact, the great numbers of archival objects exhibited serve also, perhaps unintentionally, as evidence of the massive extent of Gustav Heye's collecting project, or, as some commentators would have it, as an indictment of his grand thievery.[25] In view of several popular and scholarly accounts of Heye's rapacious expeditions to acquire collections from impoverished communities, including an episode of grave-robbing, of his unethical dealings with indigenous leaders who pleaded for the return of sacred objects in his possession, and of the collection's gradual dissipation at the hands of unscrupulous curators, Heye's collection, the very raison d'être of the NMAI, is a tricky subject for the museum's public relations department. *The Museum Guide* and *Spirit of a Native Place* strain to represent Heye as a committed collector rather than a thief; they offer a very generous account, skimming over or dismissing as apocryphal most of the accusations of unethical collecting leveled against Heye. The resulting account is utterly, and perhaps shamelessly, redemptive: Heye is praised for his "prodigious accomplishment" and "his single minded devotion," which preserved "objects that have provided inspiration and cultural renewal for Native people from communities throughout the hemisphere" (115). When Heye's "even then buccaneer ruthlessness" is mentioned, it refers to instances when he was stealing from other collectors rather than indigenous communities. Heye's redemption is, of course, part of a larger attempt to justify the continued existence of the collection, even in its new version as the NMAI, especially in view of persistent calls for the return of all museum-held objects to their original communities. NMAI officials openly acknowledge that the matter is difficult: "The relationship between museums and Native people has always been a two-edged sword, fraught with the ambiguities of collecting, preserving and displaying," declare the authors of *Spirit of a Native Place* as they register and record "the sorrow for the loss to communities that collecting represents" (127). Yet very quickly—perhaps too quickly—the replacement of that sorrow by gratitude is offered as the proper reaction to the abundance of the collection. *Spirit of a Native Place* offers a model of such emotional adjustment in the words of Susan Billie, a Pomo artist from California who visited the research branch to select objects for the Gustav Heye Center's inaugural display in 1995: "The first day I was here I felt angry that there are so many Pomo baskets so far away from home. But by the last day I began to feel grateful that there were so many Pomo baskets here, because they were preserved and now I can see them" (115). The work of making museum collecting a legitimate project requires a quick translation from "stolen" to "preserved," one that many commentators on the Heye collection are not willing to make.[26] It requires discouraging any reflection on the connection between destroyed communities and preserved objects, and it obscures the obvious realization that if it were not for the destructive effects of American colonialism on the continent, the issue of preservation would not be of much import, as the objects would remain in their original environments among thriving indigenous communities.

As is the case with the treatment of the historic treaties, visitors have to leave behind the museum's public relations discourse and enter the collections themselves for a more acute and historically accurate assessment of the relationship between indigenous material culture and the museum. There, in the "Our Peoples" central exhibit on gold, swords, and money, they

will chance upon Paul Chaat Smith's account of how America's wealth established Spain as a superpower and transformed global economies, an account that concludes pointedly with a claim that nearly all of the original gold made by indigenous peoples before contact is now in the possession of museums and private collectors. The abundance of material-culture artifacts in the museum evidences the massive transfer of wealth from indigenous nations to European colonies and later to American colonial states.

And yet, importantly, the abundance of material culture displayed in these exhibits does not add up to a comprehensive archeological and ethnographic record of indigenous societies and economies. The display design that arranges these objects into patterns of waves, sun, and landscape ironically highlights the fragmentary nature of these object-lessons by insisting that only aesthetic rather than historical sense can be made from these shards of larger social orders. Too much has been lost to reconstruct the indigenous habitus in a comprehensive way. This fragmentation of the remaining material record and the outright absence of material evidence of many indigenous societies is an important point of the "Our Peoples" exhibition. While "We Are the Evidence," an installation framing the entry to "Our Peoples," lists hundreds of indigenous languages once spoken on the American continents, its accompanying text, in a now-recognizable dialectic of abundance and scarcity or wholeness and fragmentation, insists on the list's incompleteness. It reminds the visitors of the demographics of the colonial conquest—nine out of ten indigenous inhabitants of the Americas perished—and calls upon them to bear responsibility "for remembering everything, especially the things we never knew." In doing so, the installation foregrounds the difficulty of reconstructing indigenous history in the context of both massive historical disruption and a fragmented material record.

This problem of testifying simultaneously to preconquest vitality and colonial destruction, to abundance and to massive loss, structures the exhibits of the central area of "Our Peoples" called "The Storm: Guns, Bibles, and Governments" and beginning with Edward Poitras's "The Eye of the Storm" installation. Like many of the exhibits in "Our Lives" a floor below, "The Eye of the Storm" is scarce in objects: a circular glass display case at the center contains a beaded replica of a feathered wing; several stones with inscriptions or wrapped in pages from the Book of Revelation; a military staff and a hat purportedly resembling that worn by Wovoka, the Paiute prophet of the Ghost Dance; four direction markers; and a small bible. A large glassed exhibit placed on its outer perimeter, filled with small video screens running a series of images ranging from footage of natural disasters to archival photographs of American Indians, completes the work. The impression is of scarcity and stillness. The installation is framed by a text that represents the conquest as a natural event—it speaks rather vaguely of "foreign intrusions" and of "being caught in the storm of bibles, guns and government," of "storms coming and going" while life continues—and by doing so obscures the specific historic agency of European and American colonial states and their deliberately genocidal policies toward indigenous nations. Here, then, is an example of what the museum's critics meant when they faulted the curators for missing opportunities to offer a sharper critique of European colonialism in the Americas. And yet, the installation works in conjunction with the larger argument about the scarcity and fragmentation of the indigenous material archive; after the storm, the field is swept nearly clean—emptiness invokes devastation. What's left is quickly gathered into a display case, with a handful of objects arranged to metonymically stand in for the presumed-to-be-vanished indigenous world. In Poitras's hands the museum case itself becomes in turn an object-lesson in the massive extent of colonial destruction, on the one hand, and in the museum's collecting and exhibiting project's complicity in redemptive representational resurrection, not much different from those of Catlin and Curtis, on the other.[27]



If "The Eye of the Storm" obscures the historical specificity of the colonial projects of European governments in order to facilitate a reflection on the Western museum exhibition of American indigeneity, then the adjacent exhibit on gold and swords and on money and treaties returns some of that specificity, focusing on the impact of the Spanish Crown and British and US governments on indigenous nations in South and North America. NMAI's insistence on inserting the West into the museum's representation of the indigenous world is a significant departure from the traditional practice of ethnographic museums, which, as Gayan Prakash has explained, "have categorized, classified, and exhibited objects from nonwestern cultures according to universalist aesthetics and history, but nowhere in this display is the West itself exhibited. . . . the West cannot be described or captured as a set of beliefs: it shows up in offering an understanding of otherness, in giving it coherence and meaning" (210). In the "Our Peoples" exhibit, the West is eminently present as a powerfully destructive historical agent, a force thoroughly shattering these worlds to produce the fragmentary remnants showcased in the exhibition. The very fragmentation of the archival record implied throughout the collection is an indictment of Europe's presence in the Americas.

Rickard's and Paul Chaat Smith's curating produces both a reconstruction of indigenous experience in the indigenous timeline from an indigenous perspective and an indictment of the West as destructively present within that

framework. The scarcity/abundance dialectic is crucial to the exhibit's ideological import: the discourse of fragmentation is necessary to indict Europe's colonial project in the Americas, but the assertions of sovereignty on behalf of the indigenous nations require narratives of political, social, and cultural coherence and continuity to warrant recognition. The demand for such manifested historical and cultural continuity is often at the center of battles over recognition, and as Elizabeth Povinelli points out, it is an impossible demand given the extent of the disruption of indigenous societies through policies of extermination, displacement, forceful assimilation, and the essentialist conception of authenticity informing the recognition process.[28] And this is precisely why the treaties—as historical documents, as American Indian nationalist discourse, and as iconographic reminders—are placed throughout the museum. The treaties come to the rescue in battles for recognition by substituting historic documents laying out mutual political obligations for the relentless demand for culturally authentic indigeneity.

In addition to showcasing the vitality of the precontact indigenous world, exposing the extent of historical disruption brought on by European colonialism in the Americas, and provoking reflection on the ideological ramifications of traditional exhibitionary practices, "Our Peoples" sets out to comment on the politics of documenting and exhibiting history. The introduction to "The Americas," a display of pre-1492 stone sculpture, makes clear that the exhibit is as much about rethinking the way history is understood and inherited as it is about recovering historical details about the pre- and post-contact periods. Paul Chaat Smith's text on "Making History"—an installation that also includes an account of the spread of smallpox and other epidemics in the Americas, Theodor de Bry's engravings recording the early period of colonization, and a collection of George Catlin's American Indian portraits—draws attention to the ideological functions of historical narratives and argues that history-making was a weapon of conquest that intentionally misrepresented or altogether ignored the continent's indigenous inhabitants. Because our understanding of history is shaped more by "who is telling the stories and who the story-teller is speaking to" than by actual events, the authorship of historical accounts—or, we could say, the ownership of history—is of great consequence. If Catlin's painting and Heye's collecting are examples of Indian history-making that manifest passion for Indian culture premised on Indian disappearance, the NMAI as "the museum about Indians controlled by Indians" where indigenous peoples can tell "their own stories in their own way and voice" offers a necessary alternative. It allows the curators to appropriate the existing European historical record—in the form of paintings, engravings, and museum collections—to



offer Indian versions of Indian histories, the exhibit itself being a preeminent example of such an effort. Paul Chaat Smith's account cues visitors to the political expediency of settler representations of indigeneity, deployed at the NMAI toward different ideological ends.

## Cultural Politics of the First Americans at a Native Place

The emphasis on the politics of exhibiting indigeneity and on the museum objects as ideologically expedient cultural capital works in tandem with the NMAI's use of historic treaties by shifting the issue of indigeneity from the ground of cultural authenticity to that of politically defined nationhood. However, the museum's other discursive practices obscure anew this political conception of indigeneity showcased in permanent and community exhibitions. First deployed during the opening ceremonies, the rhetoric of indigenous people as First Americans and of the NMAI as a Native Place informs much of the museum's cultural programming as well as the very design of the building and surrounding grounds, effectively enfolding the political conception of indigeneity within a broad culturalist framework.

The concept of indigenous people as First Americans accomplishes two claims at once. First, it translates indigeneity, or rootedness in place, a definitional characteristic American Indians insist upon to distinguish themselves from settler Americans, into *firstness*, a mere sequence of arrival on the continent; it takes difference of kind and turns it into difference of degree. Second, it amplifies the similarity implied in the first rhetorical move by retroactively turning "them" into "us"—that is, Indians into Americans. Historically, these claims to prior existence and to inherent Americanness emerge as responses to the pervasive myths of America as the virgin land and of indigenous peoples' radical—racial or cultural—otherness, myths that have been deployed at different historical junctions since 1492.[29] The public relations materials and press coverage of the NMAI's development, from the legal efforts to pass Public Law 101–185 to fundraising, construction, and the inaugural ceremonies in 2004, all represent the museum's placement on the National Mall as both a long-overdue indigenous return to and reclamation of a Native Place and a final, and equally long-overdue, recognition on the part of the contemporary United States, and by implication other American nation-states, of these states' fully American heritage. The museum thus renders the proper recognition of their priority to indigenous peoples and extends the historical and cultural genealogy of America beyond 1492. Richard West's double welcome—"Welcome Home" addressed to American Indians and "Welcome to Native America" to those Ameri-

cans who are not indigenous—during the museum's opening celebrations is emblematic of this complicated claim of American belonging for indigenous people and Native belonging for settler Americans.

Lest it create anxiety in Americans whose ancestors settled in indigenous territories (many land claims continue to await resolution in US courts), the language of Native reclamation is mediated through the discourse of shared Americanness deployed throughout the museum, from the framing of specific exhibits to the museum's film and performance offerings. For example, the "Our Lives" exhibit is dedicated, as visitors are informed in the text displayed at the entry, "to everybody who [has] experienced discrimination." This effort to represent indigenous experience as portable from one minority group to another dispels potential worries about radical and oppositional otherness; it does so, however, by obscuring indigeneity's historical specificity, a point otherwise emphasized strenuously throughout many of the "Our Lives" displays. Here the curators depend on the museum-going tradition as a ritual that works to minimize the disjunctions or antagonisms among distinct social groups, and the differences among their individual members, in order to emphasize instead a shared, universal humanity, the Family-of-Man version of history (Preziosi 514). In a similar effort, Chris Eyre's *A Thousand Roads*, the NMAI's signature film intended as an introduction not so much to the museum collections as to its mandate to showcase the contemporary indigenous experience, features separate vignettes representing indigenous protagonists dealing with issues easily recognizable to other contemporary Americans: a successful stockbroker on Wall Street encounters a homeless fellow Mohawk on her way to work; an Aleut teenager returns to an Alaskan village as her US marine mother is deployed overseas; a Navajo gangster cleans up by learning traditional sheep herding under the tutelage of a Raven; and an Aymara healer fails to heal a dying boy in a Peruvian mountain village. All stories are structured in the same way, by casting indigenous specificity in the larger context of similarity: the Aleut girl's return to a traditional village, which to her is as foreign as it is to many viewers, is precipitated by her mother's deployment to the Middle East, an experience of dramatically increased currency in the United States of the 2000s. The Navajo Raven comes to the rescue of a teenager, who, like the captives of contemporary urban ghettos, too, is mired in gang activity but out in the Southwestern desert. The opening section on the stockbroker reduces her Mohawk identity to language and ornamental tokens of a different epistemology: after she addresses the street flute player in Mohawk, she returns to her desk and fingers a few stones she placed there, ultimately arranging them in a circle before returning to selling and buying bonds. The



point of this segment is that the residual indigeneity she held onto helps her function within contemporary capitalism; her office bears all the marks of a successful career. The only moment of irony arises when we realize that her office is located in one of New York's skyscrapers, very likely erected by Mohawk ironworkers. *A Thousand Roads* depicts indigeneity as a fully private, personal reservoir of resources that enables the protagonists to function successfully in contemporary America. The exception is the Aymara healer, of course, who experiences a crisis of belief as his patient dies. In this case, the film most radically departs from offering a culturally reliable picture of indigenous practices; its representation of the boy's death and the healer's response to it obscures the traditional understanding of the healer's role as a helper in a person's passage over or back to health; in that context a death is not necessarily evidence of the holy man's failure.[30]

This message of fundamental Indian normativity, as opposed to inassimilable otherness, is further reinforced in many of the performances by contemporary American Indian artists invited regularly to the museum. A good example is a Washington, DC–based women's trio, Aki, whose concerts are pervaded by the "we are just like you, except that we're Indian" rhetoric. Accompanied by strumming guitars and African and Native American drums, Aki offers a repertoire ranging from Bob Dylan songs with "Native" chants inserted as a refrain to ballads about Internet dating. The lyrics of their signature song, "Make Us One," fully render the performance's multiculturalist tenor of humanity shared across cultural differences: "Are we so different?/ I do not think so./ You can feel the way I feel./ You can hurt the way I hurt./ It makes us one./ Many different cultures, all the same inside./ We are one world, one family." The logic expressed in the phrase "many different cultures, all the same inside" shifts the burden of signifying difference from content to form, from historically specific experiences of the various indigenous nations on the continent to the abstracted aesthetic dimensions of indigeneity as manifested in art, architecture, and material culture.

At the NMAI in Washington, DC, it is the museum grounds and building in their formulations as a Native Place that have become emblematic of this kind of indigeneity, particularly in contrast to the site of the George Gustav Heye Center in Manhattan. The historic 1907 Alexander Hamilton Custom House at Bowling Green, which houses the New York branch of the NMAI, has been criticized as a particularly poor choice for the exhibition of American Indian collections.[31] The Custom House is as unequivocal and celebratory an expression of American imperialism as it gets. An example of lavish Beaux Arts architecture, it features Daniel Chester French's ethnocentric limestone sculptures depicting the continents, which flank the

building's main entrance, and generic Indian heads adorning both of the side entrances. Its massive central rotunda is decorated by Reginald Marsh's frescos celebrating the discovery and conquest of the Americas in images of transatlantic trade and portraits of Columbus, Vespucci, Hudson, Cabot, and Verrazano. Historically, it served as a location where import duties were levied. And while the resulting irony may in the end be productive, if also lost on some visitors[32]—the disjunction between the building and the exhibitions inside forcing the visitors to consider indigenous material culture in the context of European colonialism rather than as merely a collection of beautiful objects for aesthetic contemplation—this architectural mishap put considerable pressure on the architects of the building destined for the National Mall. In Washington, the architecture is meant to work differently: not to evoke contradiction, however unintentionally, but to express Nativeness, through the emphasis on form as a matter of cultural distinctiveness.

As a museum whose building itself embodies cultural specificity, the NMAI in Washington, DC, is not unique. With the rapid growth of tribal museums and research or cultural centers in the late twentieth century in North America, the idea of the museum as an opportunity to reconsolidate tribal knowledge gained wide currency as architects devised new but historically grounded architectural models to project specific tribal identities. Examples ranging from Sequoyah Birthplace Museum in Vonore, Tennessee; Camp Verde Visitor Center in Camp Verde, Arizona; Makah Cultural and Research Center in Neah Bay, Washington; Yakama Nation Cultural Heritage Center in Toppenish, Washington; to Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Ledyard, Connecticut, and the planned Omaha Interpretive Center[33] all unfold a repertoire of specific, tribally distinguishable aesthetic markers, historical and symbolic, along with the concept of architectural integration into the natural environment. These efforts testify to the usefulness of architecture itself as an embodiment of indigenous national specificities.

However, conceived as a pan-Indian hemispheric museum, the NMAI had to respond to the mandate of representing a variety of indigenous nations and communities on the continent while also articulating the predicament of indigeneity in the Americas in general. Across the permanent exhibitions in the museum, this challenge is addressed through a specific design concept, as I described above. "Our Lives," "Our Peoples," and "Our Universes" share the same organization of space: a cluster of installations centered in the exhibition space and showcasing pan-Indian issues are surrounded by eight community galleries devoted to specific nations and communities. The community galleries are organized as separate spaces, divided



by walls but arranged side by side and open to the exhibits at the center. The effect is that of a larger space—a common set of historical experiences and contemporary predicaments—shared by smaller discrete tribal universes. The exhibits strike a balance between giving their due to pan-Indian issues while insisting on the specific political identities of particular nations or the distinctiveness of hybrid American Indian communities that are not recognized as separate political entities, such as "The Indians of Chicago" or the Métis exhibitions in "Our Lives." But this kind of split attention to pan-Indian and tribally specific representation was not possible at the level of the museum's architectural design. If the national museums constructed across Indian Country could deploy architecture to evoke tribally specific aesthetics, the NMAI took the road of universalized Nativeness arrived at by the process of abstraction and homogeneization of tribally specific concepts.[34] The NMAI's Washington building does not employ any specific architectural traditions, nor does it replicate actual historical indigenous building practices. Rather, it devises its own and deploys them to convey a generalized indigenous cosmology.

In a chapter entitled "Building a Native Place," *The Museum Guide* explains the connection between the building and its surroundings: "Native people believe that the earth remembers the experiences of past generations. The National Museum of the American Indian recognizes the importance of indigenous peoples' connection to land; the grounds surrounding the building are considered as an extension of the building and a vital part of the museum as a whole. By recalling the natural environment that existed prior to European contact, the museum's landscape design embodies a theme that runs central to NMAI—that of returning to a Native place" (22). This narrative outlining the distinctive Nativeness of the museum site continues by singling out the forest, wetlands, meadow, and traditional crop areas along with the Grandfather Rocks, forty boulders that "welcome visitors to the museum grounds and serve as reminders of the longevity of the Native peoples' relationship to the environment" (23) and the Cardinal Direction Markers, four stones placed along the north-south and east-west axes and serving "as metaphors for the indigenous peoples of the Americas" (23). The building itself, according to the 1996 NMAI document, "must have a language of its own, a language that speaks for the aboriginal peoples of the Americas, a language that wraps the visitor in a different paradigm of perception" (*Guide* 24). Inspired by "the stone and masonry work of Chaco Canyon, Machu Picchu, and other Native sites" and "shaped by the wind and water," the building figures as "a distinctly Native place, one that reflects and honors the organic and emphasizes that people are part of a larger

natural world" (24). It is "aligned perfectly to the cardinal directions and the center point of the Capitol dome, and filled with details, colors and textures that reflect the Native universe. A palette of colors, materials, symbols, and forms" created by the design team "imbues the building with a Native sensibility" (27). These materials, symbols, and forms are abstracted from the museum's collections and range from the sun symbols and copper wire weaving motifs in the rotunda to moon sconces in the Main Theater, shell inlays and adze-shaped wood in the museum store, and bird motifs representing the cardinal directions on the elevators. Potomac, the museum's rotunda and central gathering space, in particular, is packed with references to indigenous cosmology and material culture: sun symbols etched on the entry doors, an oculus extending to the sky, glass prisms on the south wall, axes of solstices and equinoxes mapped on the floor, copper weave installation evoking the traditions of basketry and textiles, and at the museum's opening, an exhibition on canoe- and boat-making.[35] "Filled with visual metaphors that ground the building in the Native world" (38), the NMAI becomes an embodiment of a particular fantasy: a patch of distinct Nativeness returned to the national heart of the United States, firmly and safely a part of the country's redemptive nationalist multicultural discourse.

And yet, this specifically indigenous distinctiveness of the NMAI's building emerges in a dialectic relationship to its simultaneous references to Western architecture. For example, the museum's rotunda, the Potomac, effortlessly evokes classical European architecture, from Rome's Pantheon and Romanesque churches to American classical revival and Lincoln's Memorial. The stripped-down, modernist aesthetic of the hallway galleries surrounding the Potomac recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim. Even in its most distinctive Native abstractness the NMAI's architectural design relies on European and settler American models. Or, at least, visitors cannot help but recognize these architectural conventions as familiar even if they were not intended as such. This referencing of recognizable Western architecture along with an articulation of specifically indigenous formal signifiers constitutes the museum's appeal: visitors get a dose of difference but are also reassured by formal architectural continuities that allow them to read the space of the museum properly as temple or national sanctum and to make the comparative leaps necessary to participate in the museum's civic ritual. This aesthetic crossover is the building's brilliant rhetorical gesture: it offers interpretive signposts to visitors and prompts them to recognize an aesthetic affinity in a kind of difference that is about similarity—the NMAI is like the Pantheon, Sistine Chapel, or Guggenheim, but Indian!

But because such referencing risks being misread as colonial mimicry,



it requires a written Native gloss on the museum's website, in *The Museum Guide*, and many other printed materials. All of these glosses control for the meaning implied in architecture by unfolding a narrative of the museum's design and construction that focuses on the building as an embodiment of indigenous cosmologies and eschews any mention of its affinity with Western architectural traditions. As indigenous difference is embodied in formal aesthetic solutions, the results are vulnerable to interpretive appropriation by visitors and have to be rearticulated by curators and architects. Unless carefully and repeatedly glossed, the form cannot be trusted to provide a consistent and reliable conduit for indigenous specificity, at least not in its abstracted and homogenized version at the NMAI. The very need for the controlling gloss implies that the architecture's Nativeness is not manifestly evident beyond the most obvious references to the Southwest; it has to be interpretively constructed. The form, too, is a matter of interpretation and of politics.

The consequence of this abstraction of indigeneity to formal aesthetic markers is the sacrifice of the political discourse of national sovereignty. An abstract so-called Native Place imbued with a generalized so-called Native sensibility does not evoke the concept of contemporary indigenous nations. What it encourages instead is a general notion of Indian cultural difference rather than indigenous historical specificity in all of its differing versions across the continent. It implies cultural citizenship and invites an understanding of American Indians as a large, amalgamated ethnic group, one more to complete the image of the multicultural democracy that is the United States or Canada; in other words, it corroborates the conceptual assumptions of multicultural misrecognition. The ultimate irony in the critical reception of the museum is that the very critics who condemned the curators of the NMAI's permanent exhibitions for missing an opportunity to offer a trenchant critique of US colonialism, past and ongoing, unanimously praised the museum's architectural design—the very design, which in helping locate "Nativeness" within the larger imagined community of the nation, so effectively corroborates the vision of North American states as reformed multicultural democracies that have successfully broken with their colonial pasts.

Pushing against the critical consensus on the NMAI that elevates the grounds and building over the exhibitions, I argue that the permanent exhibitions are more successful at inserting indigenous nationalist discourse into the Western museum narrative—the stated objective of Jolene Rickard's curating efforts—and at articulating a critique of the European colonial projects and their effects in the Americas, the disappointed mandate of

the museum critics. Those aspects of the museum that contribute to elaborating the central idea of a Native Place—the grounds and building, the Potomac, the Mitsitam Café, the museum stores, and the other common spaces inside—readily meet the demands of North American multiculturalism for performances of depoliticized difference; they invite multicultural misrecognition, or recognition of abstracted Native American cultural distinctiveness and not of the political separateness and historically specific practices of individual indigenous nations. In its effort to showcase the latter, the NMAI reforms some of the exhibitionary practices traditionally used to frame collections of indigenous material culture: Rickard's walk with the Indians entry to "Our Lives" and the exhibition's insistent emphasis on the contemporary, hybrid, political, and tribally specific aspects of indigenous experience; "Windows on Collections" and individual hallway exhibits that blur distinctions between ethnographic and art gallery treatment of objects; and the insistence throughout on the exhibition objects as politically expedient cultural capital. In addition, the NMAI employs traditional museological practices and concepts, such as the function of the museum as a socializing ritual, the Western concept of nation, and the measured reliance on representational adequacy, to deploy the political discourse of indigenous nations. Thus the NMAI emerges as a meeting place where the discourses of indigenous sovereignty and of the pan-Indian Native Place exist side by side.

The irresolvable tension between the culturalist concept of the Native Place and the political concept of indigenous nations may well be the most enduring and valuable legacy of the NMAI's museological experiment. As George Yúdice explains, in contemporary multicultural states, democracy is taken to mean proper recognition of the diverse cultures of the population groups comprising the nation, recognition accomplished through state sponsorship of their expression in the arts (48–49) rather than as equal access to the political meeting ground. The curators' emphasis on indigenous nations as political units rather than as cultural entities is an effort to refuse the reducing of social identities to culture, a process encouraged by multicultural misrecognition. The sovereignist argument for respect and resources does not arise from the conception of cultural citizenship but from the legal precedent of the historic treaties laying out rights and obligations on both sides of the diplomatic divide. But as the NMAI permanent exhibitions showcase the tribally specific histories, expose European and American colonialism, and deploy historic treaties to foreground the political understanding of contemporary indigeneity, the larger context of the museum—including its location on the National Mall in the United States' capital and its generic status as the premiere institution of the modern nation-state—



obscures these efforts again, folding tribal specificity into North American multiculturalism and its particular politics of recognition. The NMAI contains the more radical revisionist or outright separatist tribal narratives of community galleries and permanent exhibitions within the larger abstract and innocuous Native Place. This very enfolding of the sovereignist messages of some of the exhibitions within the abstracted Native Place of the museum and its grounds best exemplifies the possibilities and limits of indigenous self-representation under multiculturalism. What routinely gets recognized at the NMAI, despite its curators' efforts, is not the continued colonial relationship between the North American federal governments and the indigenous nations within their borders but the fantasy of an end to such a relationship, a fantasy substantiated by the very existence of the NMAI as a Native Place, even if the museum's dutiful alignment with the dome of the Capitol cannot help but hint at the rhetorical coercion underpinning this fantasy.

between the conception of indigeneity as culture and the conception of indigeneity as nationhood opens up space for critiques of colonialism paradoxically within the very framework designed to conceal it. Or it could be a deft deployment of the gruesome authentic in literary fiction to block the multicultural translation of difference into equivalence so that contemporary indigenous traditionalism is perceived as a viable alternative to settler forms of sociality. The political implications of rootedness in the form of claims to national territory may also arrive via indexical signs that simultaneously frustrate decoding and imply residual and re-emergent indigeneity. These conceptual impasses serve as reminders of the political foundations of contemporary indigenous nations and acknowledge that while indigenous sovereignty is inherent and prior to contact, its contemporary versions are necessarily enacted in the context of the politics of recognition—that is, in adaptation and resistance to the interpretive and political imperatives of multiculturalism. The impasses of contemporary indigenous art clear paths for interpretive options beyond those conceptually tethered to culture. We must learn to read such impasses not as cognitive cul-de-sacs but as opportunities for indigenous discursive freedom beyond multicultural misrecognition.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. While the initial responses have been removed from No Doubt's Facebook page along with the video, "An Open Letter to No Doubt, Supersonic Public Relations and Interscope Records in Response to No Doubt's Video, 'Looking Hot,'" written by Angela Riley, the director of the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, made public on November 5, 2012, effectively summarizes the main charges. The letter is available on various blogs, for example, the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center at <http://www.niwrc.org/?attachment_id=1837> (accessed April 10, 2013) and Turtle Talk, the blog of Michigan State University Law School's Indigenous Law and Policy Center at http://turtletalk.wordpress.com/2012/11/05/ucla-indian-studies-director-angela-riley-open-letter-to-no-doubt/ (accessed April 10, 2013).

2. For an argument on the ideological functions of settler Indian play, see Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

3. In its entirety, No Doubt's statement of apology reads as follows:

> As a multi-racial band our foundation is built upon both diversity and consideration for other cultures. Our intention with our new video was never to offend, hurt or trivialize Native American people, their culture or their history. Although we consulted with Native American friends and Native American studies experts at the University of California, we realize now that we have offended people. This is of great concern to us and we are removing the video immediately. The music that inspired us when we started the band, and the community of friends, family, and fans that surrounds us was built upon respect, unity and inclusiveness. We sincerely apologize to the Native American community and anyone else offended by this video. Being hurtful to anyone is simply not who we are. (<http://www.nodoubt.com>, accessed November 3, 2012)

4. The anthropologist Renato Rosaldo coined the term "cultural citizenship," which he defines as "a deliberate oxymoron, a pair of words that do not fit comfortably together. Cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense. It claims that, in a democracy, social justice calls for equity among all citizens, even when such differences as race, religion, class, gender, or sexual orientation potentially could be used to make certain people less equal or inferior to others. The notion of belonging means full membership in a group and the ability to influence one's destiny by having a significant voice in basic decisions" (402).

5. The Indian Arts and Crafts Act, passed by the US Congress in 1990, requires all artists marketing their work as Indian to document their enrollment/citizenship in a federally recognized Indian tribe.

6. I borrow the concept of the ethnoracial pentagon from David Hollinger's 1995 *Postethnic America*, where he uses it to describe the five ethnoracial categories, such as "Euro-American, Asian American, African American, Hispanic, and Native American" (23), that organize the US population census, and with it, American thinking on group difference in the age of multiculturalism.

7. In chapter 2, where I discuss the Inuit Isuma Productions and its first feature film, I fill in the Canadian context in more detail.

8. In "The Politics of Recognition," Taylor argues that "our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (25).

9. Glazer was a critic of multiculturalism and saw its emergence as the price US society paid for its inability to integrate African Americans.

10. Some historians argue that the treaties were simply a convenient expedient for the European courts and later American governments and were never intended as acknowledgments of the indigenous nations' sovereignty on the continent. However, apart from the intentions of the signatories, in legal terms the historic treaties serve as evidence of a diplomatic practice that presumes indigenous nations to be political entities in control of their territories and social organization.

11. For a reading of the sculpture's rhetorical effects, see chapter 1.

12. For a detailed account of these diplomatic maneuvers, see Hoxie, *This Indian Country*.

13. For a comprehensive account of this process, see Cheyfitz. On Indian Federal Law, see Wilkins and Lomawaima's *Uneven Ground*.

14. Some American Indians opposed US citizenship as an abrogation of indigenous sovereignty, while others advocated for it, seeing it as a path to civic and political participation that would lead to ensuring tribal rights.

15. Here, for example, is Catlin writing in 1841 in volume I of his *Letters and Notes*:

> I have, for many years past, contemplated the noble races of red men who are now spread over these trackless forests and boundless prairies, melting away at the approach of civilization. Their rights invaded, their morals corrupted, their lands wrested from them, their customs changed, therefore lost to the world; and they at last sunk into the earth, and the ploughshare turning the sod over their graves, and I have flowed to their rescue—not of their lives or of their race (for they are "doomed" and must perish), but to the rescue of their looks and their modes, at which the acquisitive world may hurl their poison and every besom of destruction, and trample them down and crush them to death; yet phoenix-like, they may rise from "the stain on a painter's palette," and live again upon canvas, and stand forth for centuries to come, the living monuments of a noble race. (16)



16. John Wesley Powell, the founding director of the American Institute of Ethnology in 1878, argued thus for the creation of the office: "The field of research is speedily narrowing because of the rapid change in the Indian population now in progress; all habits, customs and opinions are fading away; even languages are disappearing; and in a few years it will be impossible to study our North American Indians in their primitive conditions, except from recorded history" (qtd. in Elliott 10). To gather support for his project "Vanishing Tribes of North America," Franz Boas argued that "future generations will owe a debt of gratitude to him who enables us to preserve this knowledge, which, without an effort on the part of our own generation, will be lost forever" (qtd. in Elliott 10).

17. Contemporary critics have argued over the ideological ramifications of Curtis's work; however, the extensive financial support he received in the initial stages of his project testifies to the wide appeal of his pitch for salvage ethnography. Alluding vaguely, in an introduction to the 1906 edition of *The North American Indian*, to the "great changes in practically every aspect of the Indian's life that have taken place, especially within recent years," and reminding the public that "the passing of every old man or woman means the passing of some tradition, some knowledge of sacred rites possessed by no other," Curtis urged that "the information that is [still] to be gathered, for the benefit of future generations, respecting the mode of life of one of the great races of mankind, must be collected at once or the opportunity will be lost for all time" (21).

18. Flaherty's supposed documentary opens with a title card informing the viewers that the film's protagonist, Nanook, has since died of starvation during an apparently unsuccessful hunt while simultaneously asserting that *Nanook*, the film, has toured the globe to enthusiastic reviews gaining a global visibility the humble Eskimo hunter could not even dream about. The film concludes with a shot that effectively melds the two Nanooks, an extreme close-up of the sleeping hunter's head. *Silent Enemy*, in turn, is framed by a prologue, in which Yellow Robe attired in Plains Indian dress extends thanks to the settler society, for through their "magic" his people, the Ojibwe, will live on into posterity. The prologue juxtaposes precontact Ojibwe life, depicted in an ethnographic and romance mode in the film, with the solitary Indian figure against a black background, here abstracted as an Indian performing on the stage. In this way, the film unwittingly depicts the evolution of the most enduring of the settler culture's Indian stereotypes, that of an Indian as a

living monument to Plains Indian culture, an abstracted image made available for the settler national mythmaking, one returning so insistently and recognizably in No Doubt's "Looking Hot" music video.

19. On how historic Indians intentionally used settler conventions of Indian representation to gain access to broader publics, see Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, and Goodyear, *Red Cloud*.

20. Over a couple of decades, Dixon orchestrated several media events—from slide lectures and theatrical productions of the *Song of Hiawatha* in the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia, to the Last Council, a staged meeting and departure of the last of old chiefs, to the groundbreaking for the Indian Memorial in New York Harbor and several expeditions for citizenship to the Western Indian nations and scheduled educational visits to American public schools, especially those educating the children of immigrants. See Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha*, for a detailed history of the Wanamaker-Dixon educational ventures.

21. During the same period, despite the predominance of culturalist conceptions of indigeneity in public discourse, some among indigenous nations insisted on the language of the treaties and on the indigenous sovereignty these treaties implied. For example, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy issued a separate declaration of War on Germany to point out that Haudenosaunee were fighting on the US side as allies rather than as US citizens.

22. Ironically, the termination policy's effect of Indian migration to cities resulted in a development of politicized pan-Indian communities, which spurred the American Indian Movement.

23. For a detailed account of the changing political priorities of the NCAI, see Hoxie's *This Indian Country*.

24. The fish-ins in the Northwest in the 1960s and in the Great Lakes in 1972–73, along with the Mohawk blockade of the international bridge between Canada and the United States in 1968, for example, publicized treaty-guaranteed rights to fishing and hunting and to free passage across the US-Canadian border. In 1972 the Trail of Broken Treaties concluded in Washington with the delivery of a twenty-point document demanding reversal of the 1871 decision and re-establishment of treaty-making with Indian nations. In a most memorable example of the time, AIM leaders, with Oglala traditional leaders' support, acted on the assumption of their tribal sovereignty by announcing the creation of the Oglala Nation, declaring its independence from the United States and establishing its historic boundaries after the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, action that resulted in the confrontation with the federal government known as the Siege of Wounded Knee in 1973.

25. Hoxie points out in *This Indian Country* that by the very divisive presidential elections of 2008 and 2012, perhaps the only issue that was not a bone of contention and an opportunity for candidates to differentiate themselves from their opponents was the official commitment to indigenous sovereignty.

26. Some of these legal victories included compensation to Penobscot and Passamaquody over land lost in contravention of the 1790 Indian Trade and Intercourse Act, the ruling asserting Indian political sovereignty in the *Santa Clara v. Martinez* case over tribal membership, and rulings in various cases over water rights in the Southwest.



27. However, as many scholars of Indian law have pointed out, as long as the paternalism of the federal government first developed in the Marshall Cherokee cases persists as precedent and the doctrine of plenary power asserted in *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock* remains in place, this sovereignty continues to be circumscribed by the ongoing colonial nature of indigenous-US relations. With the colonial framework firmly in place, the legal victories of the 1970s and 1980s, along with the series of acts pertaining to Indian education, health, religious freedom, gaming, and repatriation of human remains and cultural patrimony written into law during these decades, led indigenous nations in the direction of self-administration rather than self-governance.

## Chapter 1

1. Anecdotal reports describing the opening ceremonies are often appended to writing on the NMAI; see Lonetree, "Critical Engagements with the NMAI," for representative accounts of the day's celebratory tenor. For a view that insightfully and forthrightly accounts for the celebratory experience despite the author's serious misgivings about her participation, see Kauanui.

2. Such international lobbying resulted, for example, in the signing of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by members of the United Nations on September 24, 2007. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand declined to sign the declaration. Since 2007, however, all four countries have officially supported the Declaration: Australia in April 2009, New Zealand in April 2010, Canada in November 2010, and the United States in December 2010.

3. Public Law 101–185, the document establishing the NMAI at the Smithsonian Institution, specifies in paragraph 80q-3, section (e), regarding the initial appointments to the NMAI Board of Trustees, that "at least 7 out of 23 members appointed shall be Indians," and in section (f), regarding subsequent appointments, that "(a) 7 members, 4 of whom shall be Indians, shall be appointed for a term of one year," and "(b) 8 members, 4 of whom shall be Indians, shall be appointed for a term of 2 years" (Public Law 101–185, 111–2).

4. *The Museum Guide* states that "roughly one-fourth of the staff of the National Museum of the American Indian is Native" (12).

5. For other examples, see the special issues of *Public Historian* (28.2) and *American Indian Quarterly* (29: 3–4) and (30:3–4).

6. For a representative example, see Lonetree, "Continuing Dialogues." A notable exception is "Performing 'Indian' in the National Museum of the American Indian," a 1999 essay by Hilden and Huhndorf on the opening exhibitions of the NMAI's Gustav Heye Center in New York City. In a rare critique of the rhetoric of Indian authenticity guaranteed by Indian control deployed in the NMAI's public relations materials, Hilden and Huhndorf argue that "regardless of the ethnic origins of curators or boards of directors, most ethnographic museums remain

memorials to wealth and privilege, educating the public to accept the relations of power extant in given societies." While the new museums have potential to "clarify national histories, revealing aspects obfuscated in more celebratory narratives . . . if they painstakingly avoid . . . the simple construction of an alternative, but still equally triumphal, master narrative of the nation's past," the Heye Center obviously fails at that task, and this failure begins with the museum's building, the old Custom House, which the authors see as an architectural apotheosis of American imperialism. It culminates in what the authors find "most shocking—living exhibitions in the persons of the tour guides (called 'cultural interpreters') and of those Native people hired to sit in a 'talking Circle' . . . ready to answer tourists' questions and . . . to embody authenticity . . . for Museum visitors" (162–65). Hilden and Huhndorf readily acknowledge the good intentions of the museum curators and believe that "tribal people could assume control of the destinies of objects" (167) from Heye's collection. But they also meticulously chronicle the derailment of these intentions in actual exhibitionary practice, pointing out, among other instances, that the Native interpreters in the Heye Center end up speaking in the voice of "the objective, scholarly viewer of 'their' objects from 'their' culture" and that the exhibits exemplify "a move from the tribal world—the world that grants this voice its authority to speak here—to the Western scholarly one (whose language validates cultural judgment)" (169). The Native voices in the NMAI Heye Center model Western viewing practices. The museum thus, despite its professed Indian control, testifies to the "internalization of colonial dreams of savage others" and an "assumption that Westernness is the norm" (166). For a critique of the NMAI as a pioneer in curatorial practice, see Jacknis.

7. For a summary of press coverage of the opening and early scholarly response to it, see Lonetree, "Continuing Dialogues." For a critique of the press coverage, see Reinhardt.

8. For early scholarly writing on the NMAI in Washington, D.C., see the special issues of *Public Historian* (28.2) and *American Indian Quarterly* (29: 3–4) and (30: 3–4). On the latter criticism, see especially Lonetree, "Continued Dialogues," "Missed Opportunities," and "Critical Engagements with the NMAI," as well as Carpio, DeLugan, and Atalay in these special issues. For a critique of the inaugural exhibits, including their community-curated galleries, see Lujan.

9. I borrow the concepts of the script and the stage and the idea of their inextricable intertwining from George Yúdice, a cultural studies scholar who offers a comprehensive account of American cultural politics in the late twentieth century. In his 2003 book, *Expediency of Culture*, Yúdice argues that any revisionist stance vis-à-vis existing political, social, or cultural conditions and discourses needs to be considered as inextricably intertwined in the "performative force" of these conditions and discourses. For Yúdice, "the problem is not so much the [revisionist] script but the stage (force field) on which they are enacted. If what one is seeking is unadulterated agency, the complexity of the stage will not yield that kind of dénouement" (74). Thus the NMAI's effort at revisionist museological practices needs to be considered in the context of multicultural misrecognition, which defines the rhetorical stage of the contemporary moment.



10. The issue of the origin, age, and size of indigenous populations has been the subject of an ongoing debate. Most recent scholarly arguments have been moving the origin earlier in history and the demographic numbers upward. For a brief summary of recent research, see Mann.

11. I am borrowing the concept of the "vitrine" from Donald Preziosi. A vitrine, a display case for curiosities and goods, familiar from museums, fairs, and shops, serves for Preziosi as a symbol for what he understands to be "the most thoroughgoing and imperialist gesture imaginable": "the collection and containment of all the things and peoples of the world" and their representation from the vantage point of Europe, or the West ("The Art of Art History" 519). In that context, the National Mall becomes the showcase for the United States' newly minted credentials as a multicultural democracy by way of its collection and display of American—and the world's—cultural difference.

12. On the function of the NMAI as a forum for South America's indigenous peoples seeking recognition, see DeLugan.

13. For comprehensive histories of the rise of the museum as a public institution, see Duncan, Bennett, and Greenhill. On the impact of the museum on indigenous nations, see Phillips, "Disrupting Past Paradigms."

14. On the system of objects in the West, see Baudrillard; on the culture of spectacle, see Debord.

15. Mary Lawlor offers an account of the center's ideological functions, especially in tension with the Foxwoods Casino. The critical rift between mainstream and indigenous intellectuals over the question of the nation is visible in academia as well: while many disciplines in the late twentieth century moved away from the nation as an analytical model in favor of postcolonial, transnational, or global approaches, many thinkers within Native American studies turn to the concept of the nation to assert a sovereignist perspective. While investment in national models is sharply criticized everywhere else, it appears to be the main promise of contemporary Native American studies. For nationalist critical approaches, see Cook-Lynn, Weaver, Womack, and Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, and Justice. For a critique of the nationalist model in indigenous studies, see Huhndorf, *Mapping the Americas*.

16. Foucauldian critics, for example, note that the museum delivers the community as subject to the surveillance and discipline of the state (see Yúdice, for instance). Marxist critics in turn might point out that the communities articulated and served by the museum function in tandem with capitalism, ultimately upholding its hierarchies (see Žižek and Joseph).

17. At the same time, political scientists such as Anthony Hall and James Tully have argued for the historic treaty as a most appropriate model for federalism in North America.

18. *The Spirit of a Native Place* provides a detailed account of the complex history of architectural direction and curatorial management at the museum.

19. The Jay Treaty, otherwise known as the Treaty of London of 1794, was concluded between the United States and the British Crown to regulate political and economic relations between these two states following the Revolutionary War. Article III of the treaty guaranteed Indians living in the United States and Canada

free passage across the US-Canadian border. This right of free passage was reiterated in the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (section 289), with an addition specifying that it would pertain only to Indians with 50 percent "Indian blood."

20. The establishment of Nunavut territory included extinguishing the Inuit native title in exchange for rights to a smaller territory and monetary compensation.

21. For a critique of the Heye Center's dioramas and other exhibition practices, see Hilden and Huhndorf.

22. See Phillips, *Trading Identities*, on the category of the authentic in Native art history.

23. See Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern" on the ethnographic logic of metonymy.

24. See Hilden and Huhndorf for a discussion of the Heye Center's exhibit, including Ghost Shirts.

25. On Heye, see Clara Sue Kidwell's "Every Last Dishcloth: The Prodigious Collecting of George Gustav Heye" in Krech and Hail.

26. See Hilden and Huhndorf for Chris Eyre's comments on stolen collections and American appropriations of Native history.

27. Yet another reading is possible here, however. The blurring of colonial agency speeds up the time of the European history on the continent, pointing toward a different time frame. Its likening to natural disasters suggests that this time frame extends far into the past and also into the future, a horizon on which the colonial tenure of European states in the Americas might be only a brief interval. This concept of the indigenous "long outwaiting" is present in the classics of American Indian literature. N. Scott Momaday's *The House Made of Dawn* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* are two of the best-known examples.

28. For analyses of the processes of federal recognition, see Clifford and Povinelli.

29. These have not always been the dominant myths. On English perceptions of Northeast Indians as similar to Europeans in many respects, see Kupperman, Shoemaker, and Paula Gunn Allen.

30. I owe this detail to Joy Harjo, in conversation.

31. See, for example, Hilden and Huhndorf.

32. In their essay on the Gustav Heye Center's inaugural exhibitions, Hilden and Huhndorf quote the following comment from the visitor's book: "We have not seen the exhibits yet, but we're thrilled that the Museum brought us to see this magnificent building—like the Sistine Chapel!" (166).

33. For the Omaha Tribal Interpretive Center and Museum, for example, see the architect's project images at <http://www.jackalopearts.org> and <http://www.omaha-nsn.gov> (accessed June 11, 2014).

34. See Ostrowitz for the account of the design process.

35. In an effort to transmit as much of that information as possible, the building and the guide feed into the stereotype that everything about indigenous architecture, dress, and personal adornment bears deeper spiritual meaning. The stereotype itself has already become a subject of jokes by indigenous filmmakers. For example, in a conversation with the audience after the 2006 NYC Film Festival screening of his second film, Zacharias Kunuk responded to a question about the religious significance of facial tattoos among Inuit women by stating matter-of-factly that the tattoos were "just make-up." In his 2003 film, *The Edge of America*, Chris Eyre has Wes Studi respond to a similar question from another protagonist about a particular geological formation by saying with a laugh, "Oh no, it's just a big rock!"



## Chapter 2

1. On the emergence of contemporary American Indian cinema, see Singer. For an account of Indian filmmakers and actors in early American cinema, see Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*. See Hearne, *Smoke Signals* and *Native Recognition*, for the significance of Chris Eyre's debut feature to indigenous cinema.

2. All quotations in this paragraph are from *Reel Injun*'s soundtrack.

3. All quotations in this paragraph are from the Isuma Productions Inc. website, <http://www.isuma.tv>.

4. On the local distribution and meanings of Isuma's film, see Huhndorf, *Mapping the Americas*, chapter 2.

5. Inuktitut is the mother tongue of Canada's Eastern Arctic Inuit.

6. "Southern" is typically used by the Inuit to refer to Canadian or more broadly American peoples living south of the Canadian Eastern Arctic. But it also can be taken to refer to a specific, though broad, cultural formation we call, in other contexts, "The West" or "Europe." In this chapter, I use the term "Southern" or "the South" whenever I paraphrase Inuit commentators; in all other cases, for the sake of a coherent practice throughout the book, I use the term "settler" to refer to the same concept.

7. Jessica L. Horton's 2012 essay, "Alone on the Snow, Alone on the Beach: 'A Global Sense of Place'" in *Atanarjuat* and *Fountain*," is an interesting exception in the ongoing debate on Isuma's feature film, as it explores the many and intricate ways in which the film inscribes global contexts in its depictions of ancient Igloolik.

8. The two temporal realms of crucial consequence to my argument in this chapter are the premodern and the contemporary, the former referring to the precontact time of the tale recounted in the film's diegesis and the latter to the present historical moment, the moment of the film's production captured in the outtakes and the moment of the film's subsequent reception. In this context, specific to North America, by "modernity" I mean the time period and the prevailing social formations following the arrival of settlers on the continent. In this sense, *Atanarjuat* edits out American modernity, oscillating instead between the premodern and the contemporary.

9. Examples include Greg Sarris and Daniel Sakheim's TV series *Grand Avenue* (1996), Sherman Alexie's film *The Business of Fancydancing* (2002), Adrian Louis's novel and Chris Eyre's film *Skins* (2002), Eyre's film *Smoke Signals* (1998), Valerie Red-Horse and Jennifer Farmer's film *Naturally Native* (1997), Shelley Niro's film *Honey Moccasins* (1998), Randy Redroad's film *The Doe Boy* (2001), Blackhorse Lowe's film *The 5th World* (2004), Sterlin Harjo's film *Four Sheets to the Wind*