

Imagining the Canadian Rocky Mountains: Discourses of Indigeneity, Tourism and Foucault's Conceptions of Power Relations

The townsite of Banff, Alberta has a celebrated history of cultural tourism. Cultural institutions have played important roles in attracting tourists to the region before the turn of the twentieth century.¹ As a tourism site originating in the 1950s, the Buffalo Nations/Luxton Museum has continued to offer historical representations of the cultural practices of local Aboriginal peoples.² In this paper, I examine the influences on the production and consumption of the museum's representations by focusing on the challenges associated with navigating regional power relations and diverse tourism markets.³ Utilizing primary evidence attained from the museum exhibits, interviews with the museum's staff members and oral histories of Aboriginal peoples,⁴ I problematize the museum's representations. I investigate the complexities of the representations and situate them within broader tourism contexts by addressing two key questions: how does the museum represent Aboriginal peoples and what are the socio-economic, political and cultural factors that influence how these representations are produced and consumed? Guided by aspects of postcolonial and poststructural social theory, I contend that scholars should avoid theoretical lenses that predetermine power relations and consider more nuanced theoretical models as alternatives. By critiquing researchers who do not account for the material and historical conditions in their analyses of cultural representations, I also suggest epistemological shifts that encourage more comprehensive approaches to conducting research in Indigenous communities.

A History of the Buffalo Nations/Luxton Museum, 1952-2008

Over the last century, Banff has become a provincial center of cultural tourism with an extensive network of cultural institutions.⁵ The museum has been part of this network since it was established in 1952 by Norman Luxton, a local entrepreneur, who was instrumental in the early promotion of Banff as a tourist destination. The museum remained in his sole possession until his death in 1962.⁶ From 1962 until 1991, the museum was operated by the Glenbow Alberta Institute, one of the most influential heritage organizations in Western Canada. In 1992, the Buffalo Nations Cultural Society, which represents several distinct Aboriginal cultural groups, including the Cree nations, members of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the Nakoda and Metis, purchased the museum from the Glenbow. The museum was transferred in a symbolic gesture for the price of one dollar.⁷

The details of this transition in ownership merit further exploration. In my interview with the museum's staff members, they discussed some of the intricacies behind the Aboriginal society's takeover. According to the museum's general manager, Estelle Guthro, since 1992 the Buffalo Nations Cultural Society technically owns the building and the property, but interestingly, the Glenbow remains in control of the museum's collections. Under the current arrangement, the exhibits cannot be altered in any manner unless the Glenbow is consulted and gives approval.⁸ Only a few small changes were made in 1992 and the majority of Luxton's exhibits were not altered. It is important therefore, to recognize that while the museum is currently controlled by the cultural society,⁹ the Glenbow has a great deal of influence over the museum's representations.

Along with having incomplete representational control of the exhibits, the cultural society faces other operational challenges. A decrease in international tourist numbers since September 11, 2001 and the recent strength of Canadian currency has made it difficult to attract visitors to the museum over the last five years.¹⁰ The overwhelming majority of the visitors to the museum are international tourists with high percentages coming from Western Europe, Japan and the United States.¹¹ The museum currently operates from revenue generated from gift shop sales.¹²

Contextualizing Aboriginal Ownership of the Museum

While it is important to highlight the details surrounding the cultural society's purchase of the museum, it is also critical to historically contextualize this purchase by underlining both regional and national events involving Aboriginal peoples that may have influenced this process.¹³ A number of issues may have motivated the Glenbow to consider a transfer of the museum to a local Aboriginal group. The late 1980s and early 1990s was a dynamic period of relations between Aboriginal peoples and the provincial and federal governments of Canada. In 1988, the Glenbow Museum's controversial cultural exhibit entitled: *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, which was produced in conjunction with the Calgary Winter Olympic Games, brought to the forefront many questions concerning representations of Aboriginal peoples. The Cree of Northern Alberta were the first to call for a boycott of the exhibit, and they soon found support from other Aboriginal communities. Although the boycott began as an effort to draw attention to outstanding land claims as Shell Oil, the exhibit's main sponsor, was then drilling on disputed lands claimed by the Cree, the debate soon shifted to questions

about representations and control over cultural assets.¹⁴ Protests occurred over misrepresentations as the producers of the exhibit were accused of depoliticizing and exoticizing Aboriginal peoples. Presumably, the negative media coverage the Glenbow experienced during the 1988 exhibit may have influenced its decision to give the museum to a local Aboriginal group.¹⁵

During this period, conflicts involving Aboriginal peoples were also at the forefront of media in other Canadian provinces. In the summer of 1990, protests in several provinces erupted in response to the seventy-eight-day standoff between the Canadian army and Mohawk residents in the town of Oka, Quebec. The decision to expand a nine-hole golf course into a burial site triggered a national event that pulled Aboriginal land rights and claims into the public spotlight.¹⁶ These events in conjunction with numerous others represent a period of protest and struggle for many Aboriginal communities nationwide.

This dynamic period of action and reaction became significant for empowering Aboriginal communities to reclaim economic and cultural resources. This period of protest and dissent encouraged some communities to grant ownership and access to disputed lands back to Aboriginal groups. The majority of these arrangements exchanged access to land for the purposes of utilizing their cultural resources to develop tourism industries.¹⁷ The events of the late 1980s and early 1990s had major consequence for Aboriginal communities. I contend that the decision of the Glenbow to approve the sale of the museum to the cultural society and even the Aboriginal group's interest in assuming ownership of the facility, cannot be isolated from the unique regional and national political contexts that surround this exchange.

The Exhibits: Cultural Representations of Aboriginal Peoples

Currently the museum consists of several distinct components but for the purposes of this paper, rather than glossing over several aspects of the museum and not giving each a detailed examination, I have chosen to provide an in-depth assessment of two exhibits which are the most relevant for an analysis of cultural representations. The first exhibit highlights historical representations of Aboriginal peoples at a cultural festival known as the Banff Indian Days and the second one depicts the Sundance, an Aboriginal spiritual ceremony.

Prior to assessing the museum's representations of the Banff Indian Days, it is critical to provide some background to the festival. The event was established in 1900 and held annually from 1907 until 1978. The Indian Days began with local tourism producers hiring Nakoda peoples from the nearby reservation, located sixty-five kilometers south of Banff townsite, to stay and perform in Banff for the purpose of entertaining tourists.¹⁸ Although the Indian Days consisted of numerous and diverse activities, a crowd favorite was the annual parade, where Nakoda were judged for the most colorful and decorative costumes. Promotional materials for tourists described the 1921 parade in the following manner:

The procession of braves, mounted on their gaily decorated ponies and wearing magnificent bonnets of eagle feathers is a sight to be remembered. Visitors are welcome at their camp where good natured squaws sit at the doors of the tepees and watch their brown babies sprawling at their feet.¹⁹

The Banff Indian Days parade was a feature event of the festival and was one of the main tourist attractions.

Sporting competitions were also important components of the Banff Indian Days. According to oral history accounts from one Nakoda elder, horse races, foot races, and rodeo-oriented events comprised the Indian Days' sporting schedule. Although initially non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal competitors participated together in many of the athletic events, as the festival became more established in the 1920s, interracial competitions were abandoned in favour of all-Aboriginal contests.²⁰ Along with entertaining spectators and displaying pre-colonial representations of Aboriginal cultures, Aboriginals were positioned and positioned themselves within the tourist gaze of the overwhelmingly white crowd during the athletic competitions.²¹

The Indian Days were very successful at attracting tourists and over the decades the event became a lucrative source of revenue for local entrepreneurs. Attendance peaked in 1922 when over 71,000 tourists arrived to participate in the festivities.²² Along with having direct economic impacts on the local community, the event serviced the tourism industry indirectly as it became a critical aspect of marketing the town as a "natural" tourist location,²³ which was considered to be a valuable asset for many international tourism destinations throughout the first half of the twentieth century.²⁴ Pre-colonial representations of local Aboriginal peoples reinforced conceptions of Banff as untouched by the influences of modernization, even though the history of park policy and practice indicates that Banff, as much as most Canadian towns, had been marked by industrialization and urbanization, including mining, logging, transportation infrastructure and hydroelectric power developments.²⁵

The Banff Indian Days emphasized the "naturalness" of the region and provided a nostalgic return to an idealized pre-industrial past for many tourists by celebrating and

commodifying pre-colonial representations of Aboriginal peoples. However, it is also crucial to consider the role local Aboriginal peoples played in these festivals and not co-opt any histories or identities that may have emerged from an important cultural space.²⁶ My research suggests that the festival offered a limited financial and cultural opportunity for Aboriginals to invent, contest, and assert their identities in a period where legitimate spaces for representation were uncommon. By controlling some aspects of their cultural representations and negotiating financial compensation at the Indian Days, Aboriginal peoples were clearly active participants whose representations were not controlled by Euro-Canadian entrepreneurs.²⁷ To comprehensively understand the effect of this festival on participants, one must consider how this festival reasserted the inequitable power relations of the period but also provided atypical cultural and financial opportunities for local Aboriginal communities.

The museum's exhibit on the Banff Indian Days has two distinct elements. The first segment pays tribute to the key contributors and organizers of the festival. Through a series of pictures and accompanying descriptions, recognition is given to the significant contributions of local entrepreneurs. Most notably, this section of the exhibit honours one entrepreneur's commitment of several decades to organizing the festival. While his contributions are outlined, no text or pictures are dedicated to recognize the contributions of individual Aboriginal leaders or performers who participated in the events.²⁸ These are significant omissions because if the exhibit highlighted the contributions of Aboriginal organizers or performers alongside the acknowledgement of Euro-Canadian tourism producers, it could demonstrate some of the complexities of cultural meanings that were produced around the event.

The second aspect of the exhibit overviews the tourist promotion of the festival. There are a series of tourism posters that were produced for the years the festival was held. The promotional images are presented in a parallel line with no explanatory text to complement the images. With the absence of text, it is impossible to know who the images depict, who the artists were, what years the images were created or distributed, and whether Aboriginal peoples were involved or gave consent for the use of these representations. Moreover, the exhibit does not mention that the promotional images were distributed to both national and international tourism markets. Although the marketing evolved over the years the event was held, it is apparent that some of the tourist promotion of the Indian Days celebrated and commodified “Indigeneity” while presenting images of pre-colonial Aboriginals.²⁹

The museum’s representations of the Banff Indian Days are perplexing mainly because they fail to engage with the complexity of the event by not recognizing the cultural meanings of the images on display. The effect, when juxtaposed with the interpretative text offered, is to simplify history and, more worryingly, replicate the colonial gaze. The overall impact is a fairly celebratory representation of the festival. While the texts describing the event appear to idealize it, the actual images in the exhibit demonstrate how the festival can easily be construed as an exploitive affair that had various negative impacts on local Aboriginal peoples. This creates an interesting paradox in the museum’s representations of the event. The main point concerning the exhibit is that the images and the accompanying text fail to reveal the complexities of meanings that were possible for the participants over the history of the event.

I now turn to draw on primary evidence in an effort to reveal how alternative readings of the representations can demonstrate the complexities and possibilities in these processes. Even though diverse groups of local Aboriginal peoples participated in the festival over many decades, the marketing images overtly homogenize participants as they are represented under the generic term “Indians” and presented as one single cultural group. As anthropologist Beatrice Medicine asserts, a lack of sensitivity and perception has been the main tragedy of understanding Aboriginal cultures throughout the twentieth century. Homogeneous labels support offensive and even racist stereotypes by glossing over the diversity of Indigenous languages and cultural groups.³⁰

While homogenous labels were applied to the Aboriginal participants at the Indian Days, it is critical to consider how these labels at times had positive and productive meanings for Aboriginal participants. In other regions of North America during the first three decades of the twentieth century, Aboriginal peoples created intertribal organizations to better position themselves politically and economically as well as to develop more extensive cultural networks.³¹ In my discussions with a Nakoda elder, she indicates that her community has strategically adapted various labels throughout the twentieth century. Specifically she refers to how this occurred in the Banff region:

we’ve been called Indians, Natives...and sometimes we thought it was good to be Blackfoot or Cree....so we did...but we’ve always been Nakoda....because that is who we are to ourselves.³²

In what can be considered a form of strategic essentialism, some Nakoda presented a unified front as a productive way of exercising power in their relations with Euro-North American groups and institutions.³³ Gayatri Spivak’s seminal essay in postcolonial studies contends that ethnic, minority and marginalized groups can form solidarity for the

purpose of social action by accepting essentialist subjectivities. While major differences exist between members of these heterogeneous groups, at key moments it can be advantageous for them to temporarily essentialize themselves and assert a unified group identity to achieve significant socio-economic, political and cultural goals.³⁴

Michel Foucault's understandings of micro power relations can reveal why forms of strategic essentialism were used during this period by Aboriginal individuals and communities. In the example of homogenous labels at the Banff Indian Days, his conceptions of power relations also demonstrate why it is critical to avoid predetermining power relations and establishing binaries between individuals and groups. Foucault's theories of how power is exercised in a capillary-like nature, suggests ways that cultural labels could have been strategically or ironically taken up in various contexts. Through their interpersonal interactions with tourism entrepreneurs, white spectators, and even with each other, Aboriginal participants could strategically essentialize themselves to exercise power in processes that could enact political and cultural change. Understanding how homogenous labels were productive for Aboriginal participants demonstrates why Foucault's conceptions of power relations are so effective. For Foucault, power is not possessed or centralized in single individuals or groups, but it is part of all human relationships as it radiates and penetrates throughout all of society.³⁵ This does not suggest that Foucault thought that power was exercised equitably in any society. While his relational perspectives of power have been interpreted as pluralism, on the contrary, his view of power relations argue that it is continually renegotiated under asymmetrical organized structures. Foucault rejected binary oppositions and he refused to see power as an oppressive tool that is only held by dominant groups. His relational and productive

perspectives of power relations investigate the enabling possibilities in constraints, not just their limitations.³⁶

Foucault's conceptualizations of power are helpful to understand relations in the context of colonial politics in Alberta throughout the twentieth century. His theorizing of power relations accounts for complexities of discursive formations by focusing on the fragmentation and the indeterminacy of the articulations between different subjectivities. Foucault's theories challenge analyses that would reduce the intricacy of colonial power to dichotomies between state apparatuses and Aboriginal peoples, or dominant and subordinate subject positions. In this context, he would recognize that Aboriginal peoples, similar to Euro-Canadians, represent diverse and heterogeneous groups, perspectives and subjectivities that, may or may not, have the same objectives, motivations, and actions. His efforts to show how individuals are constituted through discursively produced power relations within specific socio-historical contexts offer researchers a nuanced model of how power is exercised in relational, productive, and not necessarily hierarchical processes that can escape limiting binaries that, in some cases, predetermine and over determine power relations. When considering the images on display in the Banff Indian Days exhibit, it is possible to see that for Aboriginal participants, these homogenous labels had important enabling, as well as limiting, implications.

However, without any hint of these possibilities in the ways these images are presented within the display, it is easy for the homogenizing effects of this marketing campaign to be replicated today by temporalizing Aboriginal peoples as part of a bygone era – a stagnant or unchanged aspect of Alberta's past, not an active component of the

historical present. These misleading representations are problematic because uninformed consumers are left with very simplistic understandings of Aboriginal cultures, identities, and histories. Without any attempts to foreground Aboriginal peoples in contemporary realities, the promotional images of the Banff Indian Days reinforce uninformed stereotypes. The pre-colonial images presented at the museum neglect the contemporary lives of Aboriginal peoples in the Banff region. By foregrounding the images of the festival in contemporary Aboriginal accounts or lived experiences, representations can locate cultures in current spaces that challenge the images of Aboriginals in either an idealized past or an apolitical present.³⁷

With very little accompanying text to the promotional images and no attempt to fragment these representations, this exhibit leaves some consumers, particularly those with less knowledge of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, with simplified interpretations of local Aboriginal cultures. By incorporating Aboriginal perspectives concerning the cultural representations presented at the Indian Days, the exhibit could fragment these destructive images and introduce more complex and nuanced understandings of the past and present lives of local Aboriginal peoples.³⁸

I would now like to discuss the second exhibit in this analysis. This exhibit portrays an aspect of the historical relationships between Aboriginal peoples and the environment. The largest and most colourful display depicts the Sundance, a sacred prayer ceremony performed by Aboriginal peoples in the plains of North America for many centuries. The scene illustrates a circle of Aboriginal peoples observing the Sundance being performed by stoic male figures.³⁹ The Sundance, which was banned by the Canadian government in the 1880s in accordance with

assimilation policies, sometimes involved a form of prayer that has been at times inaccurately interpreted by Euro-North American researchers as a form of self-torture. The exhibit graphically shows males engaging in these practices. While the display highly exoticizes the Sundance,⁴⁰ no text is offered to contextualize this significant Aboriginal cultural ceremony. The diorama exoticizes aspects of Aboriginal cultural practices without explanations and it simplifies Aboriginal histories by reinforcing exotic Euro-Canadian stereotypes.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett categorizes displays like the Sundance as *in situ*. This variety of display consists of dioramas, period rooms, mimetic re-creations of settings and involve a creation of a virtual world for the visitor to enter based on immersive and environmental strategies.⁴¹ When involving Indigenous peoples, *in situ* displays recreate native habitats and re-enact rituals and other cultural practices. *In situ* style exhibits highlight difference and tend to be exoticizing as they reinforce the practice of placing Indigenous specimens under the colonial gaze.⁴²

In research on how specific methods and practices of museum exhibition reinforce narratives of colonial conquest over “nature” and Aboriginal peoples, one cultural studies scholar offers a critical perspective on representations of Aboriginal peoples in museums throughout North America. While only briefly acknowledged, her work does refer to the museum’s diorama as a:

Western invention that renders a spectacle of otherness permanently paused for the fascinated surveillance of the white spectator, the diorama subordinates its object matter to a fetishistic colonial gaze.⁴³

she contends that the museum’s dioramas are overwritten by colonial discourses that racialize Aboriginal bodies and relegate them to a static space of primitive nature

uninfluenced by history and the progressive temporality of Western culture.⁴⁴ Racist colonial discourses can be re-enacted in museum displays because museums and their exhibits are sites of power that are linked to chains of cultural production. The power of representation is anchored in discursive practices which correlate with forms of socio-economic, political and cultural influence. Reflexive representations through museum exhibits can be effective tools for directors to fragment colonial discourses of the exotic “other,” but to do so, one must focus on representations as power. Jan Nederveen Pieterse reminds us that constructing these types of exhibits are difficult tasks because cultural representations tend to keep out of view the power of representation. Power itself is rarely the object of display, as it is more often fetishized in exhibitions than interrogated by them.⁴⁵

While the museum’s diorama of the Sundance can be interpreted in various ways, the exoticizing elements of the display are difficult to overlook. Similar to my assessment of the exhibit on the Banff Indian Days, I maintain that including explanatory text and incorporating Aboriginal perspectives could potentially fragment this exoticizing representation of the Sundance and provide consumers with understandings that emphasize the significance of this spiritual practice for local Aboriginal communities.

In my critique of the museum’s exhibits, I do not intend to simplify the cultural representations by categorizing them as exoticized, temporalized, and homogenized. On the contrary, I argue that these exhibits are complex and can engender diverse readings. Individuals may interpret these representations in multiple ways that may, or may not, reflect their knowledge of and experience with Aboriginal peoples as well as the various competing subject positions that they simultaneously occupy. Locals, Euro-Canadians,

tourists, Aboriginal peoples, academic researchers, and a diversity of other subjectivities experience and subsequently interpret these cultural representations in unique ways.

An important example of this stems from my interviews with a Nakoda man and a museum staff member. When asked about his general impressions of the museum's exhibits discussed in this paper, he added layers of complexity to my understandings of the museum's representations. He stated that he enjoyed his work at the museum and that he was proud of how the exhibits reflected the cultural lives of the Nakoda peoples. When referring to his work at the museum, he commented that he enjoyed sharing with interested visitors.⁴⁶ I assumed by this that he meant tourists and researchers alike. While he enjoyed sharing *some* of his culture with visitors, many other aspects of his cultural practices were kept secret. He indicated that the exhibits at the museum only offered part of the story of his people and the rest of it was hidden in the mountains.⁴⁷ He continued:

the Nakoda people keep their secrets secret...Nakoda are very quiet people who don't like to share stories with outsiders. You see these mountains around us? These mountains hold all of our secrets...millions of our secrets are in these mountains and they are not meant to be shared.⁴⁸

As demonstrated in his descriptions of his impressions of the museum and why he values sharing aspects of his culture with others, his understandings of the cultural representations presented by the museum are complex. His experiences of the exhibits as an Aboriginal man represent what is shared along with the limitations of what could or should be shared. His understandings of the exhibits not only recognize absences, but also view the exhibits as partial, fragmented, and incomplete representations of his cultural practices. My objective is to complicate the museum's representations by revealing how they are diversely read. While thus far I have discussed how some aspects

of the museum's exhibits can be interpreted, in the next section I endeavor to understand the regional influences the museum operates under as a tourist venue in Banff.⁴⁹

Conclusion

In this paper I demonstrate how Foucault's conceptions of power relations can offer researchers more nuanced interpretations of how power is exercised in any community. This particular lens for interpreting interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples can be useful for scholars to avoid limiting binaries that at times predetermine and over determine power relations. I critique scholars whose deconstructions of depictions of Aboriginal peoples focus so intently on the images that the conditions underpinning the production of the images are overlooked. Researchers that interpret the past, should seriously consider the historical and material conditions that underpin production and consumption processes. Moving beyond what I refer to as decorative sociological deconstructions that leave these conditions unexplored or uncritically examined is certainly a way forward. To avoid these epistemological issues, scholars can consult with the producers of representations to interpret the conditions of production and the constraints that influence these processes. Contextualizing analyses of cultural representations is important, but it is also crucial to link these processes to the contemporary lived realities of the communities scholars collaborate with. Especially when conducting research that involves Indigenous communities, it is critical to privilege these voices by incorporating diverse Indigenous perspectives.⁵⁰

This investigation into the factors that influence how the museum represents local Aboriginal peoples has revealed that the cultural representations are far more complex

than they may appear from any peripheral assessment.⁵¹ By contextualizing Aboriginal ownership of the museum, examining current exhibits, and the power relations that the museum operates under, I make inferences about how the institution represents the cultural practices of local Aboriginal peoples and the factors that influence these representations. My findings suggest that the museum's representations engender complex and sometimes contrasting readings that need to be interpreted with deep understandings of not only the processes of production, but also the broader socio-economic, political and cultural conditions that they contribute to and exist within.

Endnotes

¹ E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginning of Canadian Tourism*. Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1983.

² Currently in Canada, “Aboriginal” has emerged as one of the most commonly used terms for referring collectively to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. For this reason, throughout this paper I have chosen the term “Aboriginal” when describing Canadian contexts. That being said, it is critical that whenever possible to invoke an Aboriginal nation’s own self-appellation. Attention to such terminological specificity prevents a homogenization of distinct Aboriginal cultures and recognizes the heterogeneity and diversity of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

³ As well as establishing the contemporary context, it is important to acknowledge that diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples lived in and migrated through the region currently labeled as the Banff-Bow Valley for over a millennium prior to European presence. According to evidence collected by oral history and archaeological methods, the Kootenai, the Tsuu T’ina, members of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Peigan, Kainai, Siksika), the Assiniboine, Nakoda, and members of the Cree Nations lived, fished, hunted, and traded in the south eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies prior to 1000 CE. Later members of the Iroquois Confederacy also lived in these regions. For more see: John Snow, *These Mountains are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Daryl W. Fedje., James M. White., Michael C. Wilson., Earle Nelson., John S. Vogel., John R. Southon. "Vermilion Lakes Site: Adaptations and Environments in the Canadian Rockies during the Latest Pleistocene and Early Holocene," *American Antiquity* 60, 1 (1995): 81–108.

⁴ To record observations on the exhibits and conduct interviews, I made a number of visits to the museum on 19 Feb. 2006; 21 Feb. 2006; 30 June 2006; and 1 Dec 2007; 3 Dec 2007. Newspaper accounts *Edmonton Journal*, *Calgary Herald*, and the *Globe and Mail* also contribute to this analysis.

⁵ Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change...." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37 1 (2002): 144-179.

⁶ *Calgary Herald*, 14 January 1963, 23.

⁷ Personal Interview, Estelle Guthro, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 30 June 2006, notes in possession of author.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Three out of four executive members of the current Buffalo Nations Cultural Society are Aboriginal peoples (Peigan, Cree, Tsuu T’ina) and six out of a total of ten directors are Aboriginal people (Cree, Siksika, Peigan, Metis, (2), Nakoda). The

remaining members of the board of directors are community members representing various local business and tourism interests. Nakoda elder (personal interview, 3 December 2007).

¹⁰ Personal Interview, Estelle Guthro, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 30 June 2006, notes in possession of author.

¹¹ Guthro estimates that over 75% of the museum's market comes from Western Europe and Asia, with specifically high percentages from Germany, Britain, and Japan. Guthro estimates that Americans also constitute a significant percentage (approx. 15-20%). The remainder of the visitors come from various places throughout Canada and a few other nations (approx. 5-10%). Personal Interview, Estelle Guthro, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 30 June 2006, notes in possession of author.

¹² Personal Interview, Nakoda elder, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 3 December 2007, notes in possession of author.

¹³ It is worth noting that beginning with the 1877 Treaty 7 agreement that instituted the reservation system and especially since the 1930 creation of BNP, Aboriginal peoples were actively excluded from the Banff-Bow Valley region for a variety of cultural and socio-economic factors. The notion of an institution that represents local Aboriginal peoples operating in a locality from which Aboriginal peoples were excluded is significant when considering the circumstances that led to the Glenbow's decision to sell the museum to an Aboriginal organization. For more on the exclusion of Aboriginal peoples from BNP see: Theodore Binnema., Melanie Niemi, "‘let the line be drawn now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada," *Environmental History* 11, (2006): 724-750.

¹⁴ Michael A. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1993), 146-147

¹⁵ A local business in Banff offered the Glenbow more than \$1.5 million for the Luxton museum prior to their arrangement with the Buffalo Nations Cultural Society. The museum is situated on prime real-estate land on the banks of the Bow River. Personal Interview, Estelle Guthro, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 30 June 2006, notes in possession of author.

¹⁶ *Globe and Mail*, 12 August, 1990, 18.

¹⁷ Kaley Mason. "Sound and Meaning in Aboriginal Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 31, 4 (2004): 843-845.

¹⁸ Laurie Meijer Drees, "'Indians' Bygone Past: The Banff Indian Days, 1902-1945," *Past Imperfect* 2 (1993): 9-13.

¹⁹ Williams, *Heart of the Rockies*, 34.

²⁰ *Edmonton Journal*, 16 July 1957, 12.

²¹ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 90-100. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett maintains, festivals that reenact or recreate activities and places in a discrete performance setting designed for spectacular commerce that clearly separate the performers from the observers, objectify human performers and directly implicate them in the process. This is inherently problematic as these spectacles, by their very nature, displace analysis and tend to suppress profound issues of conflict and marginalization.

²² *Ibid.*, 18.

²³ It is important to note that although not overtly addressed in this paper, ideas of “nature” and “natural” environments vary and at times grow quite complex. The problematic conception of these ideas often stem from a specific Eurocentric way of explaining space. To more thoroughly comprehend the relationship between nature, culture, and humans see: William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: Norton, 1996); and Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991.

²⁴ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁵ Courtney W. Mason, “The Construction of Banff as a “Natural” Environment: Sporting Festivals, Tourism, and Representations of Aboriginal Peoples.” *Journal of Sport History* 35, 2 (2009).

²⁶ For popular accounts of the Banff Indian Days see: Jon Whyte, *Indians in the Rockies* (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1985); Patricia Parker, *The Feather and the Drum: The History of Banff Indian Days, 1889-1978* (Calgary: Consolidated Communications, 1990); Hugh Dempsey, *Indians in the Rocky Mountain Parks* (Calgary: Fifth House, 1998).

²⁷ Personal Interview, Nakoda elder, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 1 November 2008, notes in possession of author.

²⁸ Buffalo Nations/Luxton Museum. Retrieved June 30 2006.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Beatrice Medicine, *Learning to Be an Anthropologist & Remaining "Native"* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 13.

³¹ Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971).

³² Personal Interview, Nakoda elder, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 14 November 2008, notes in possession of author

³³ For sources on how this occurred through the tourism industry, see: Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

³⁴ Gayatri Spivak. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," In. *The Spivak Reader*. (eds.) R. Landy and G. MacLean. (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 203-236.

³⁵ Michel Foucault, "The ethic for care of the self as a practice of freedom." In. *The Final Foucault*. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (eds). (MASS: MIT Press, 1988), 11-13.

³⁶ For more on Foucault's perceptions of power relations, see: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. A. M. Sheridan (Trans). (New York: Vintage Books, 1975/1977); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality volume I: An Introduction*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976/1978); and Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

³⁷ Kaley Mason. "Sound and Meaning in Aboriginal Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 31, 4 (2004): 837-854.

³⁸ Many museums choose to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives by providing video and audio recordings of Aboriginal oral histories. I suggest that this is the most progressive and effective method for including Aboriginal perspectives. The Canadian Museum of Civilization's *First Peoples Hall* exhibit in Gatineau, Quebec is an excellent example of this method.

³⁹ Buffalo Nations/Luxton Museum. Retrieved 21 February 2006.

⁴⁰ It is important to note that exoticism is a complicated set of ideas that can have diverse meanings. My reference is to how Western peoples view the exotic 'other,' in this case the relations between Euro-Canadians and Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Although exoticism can be associated with other forms of violence related to colonialism, including

socio-economic exclusion and dependence, marginalization, and oppression, this is more focused on the power of representation.

⁴¹ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998), 2.

⁴² Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Multiculturalism and Museums: Discourse about Others in the Age of Globalization," In. *Heritage, Museums, and Galleries*. (ed.) Gerald Corsane. (London: Routledge, 2005), 166.

⁴³ Pauline Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Multiculturalism and Museums: Discourse about Others in the Age of Globalization," In. *Heritage, Museums, and Galleries*. (ed.) Gerald Corsane. (London: Routledge, 2005), 176-178.

⁴⁶ Personal Interview, Nakoda elder, Morely, Alberta, with Courtney Mason, 3 December 2007, notes in possession of author.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ While an analysis of tourists' consumption practices is not addressed in this paper, researchers should try to understand more about how tourists interpret and/or experience the cultural representations of Aboriginal peoples at museums and other types of tourism venues throughout North America. Participant observation of tourists, interviewing tourists, investigating comment books and gift shops may be effective methods for this type of inquiry.

⁵⁰ Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith contends that to avoid reifying colonial discourses, all researchers should consult Indigenous voices, commit to privileging Indigenous knowledges and connect their past histories with the present/future conditions of their lives. Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda. "On Tricky Ground: Researching the Native in the Age of Uncertainty," In. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (eds.) Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2005), 90-91.

⁵¹ Internationally, museum curators, directors and staff face several immense challenges when attempting to produce representations of Indigenous cultures. As Indigenous peoples continue to demand possession of and control over their own cultural assets, Indigenous owned and operated cultural institutions are becoming more common. As many scholars from diverse perspectives have shown, cultural tourism can facilitate

global economic integrations that can relinquish power over land and resources from Indigenous peoples. For more see: Salah Wahab and Chris Cooper, *Tourism in the Age of Globalization*. (London: Routledge, 2001); Makere Stewart-Harawira. *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization*. (London: Zed Books, 2005); Allison M. Johnston, *Is the Sacred for Sale? Tourism and Indigenous People*. (London: Earthscan, 2006).