

REPRESENTING THE MUSEUM AND THE PEOPLE:
RHETORICAL SOVEREIGNTY AND THE REPRESENTATIONAL GENRES OF
AMERICAN INDIAN MUSEUMS

BY

C2008
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Submitted to the graduate degree program in English
and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

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This study addresses questions surrounding American Indian representations, specifically how Native nations use standard museum communicative structures to forward those communities' needs and goals, thus enacting what Scott Richard Lyons terms "rhetorical sovereignty." Using rhetoric studies' genre theory as the methodological tool, the genres of publicity/orientation literature, exhibits, and gift shops at three sites, the National Museum of the American Indian, Haskell Cultural Center and Museum, and Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, are analyzed for how Native peoples employ these genres for their own purposes for multiple audiences. The analysis suggests these genres are retailored depending upon the cultural and rhetorical context of each site, revealing that "rhetorical sovereignty" grounds itself in the context of an individual community. Furthermore, while positive changes have occurred in American Indian representations through the adaptation of museum genres by Native communities, the potential for communicative contradictions across genres and audiences still occurs.

For Bud, a song.

“Coyote Tells Why He Sings”

There was a little rill of water, near the den,
That showed a trickle, all the dry summer
When I was born. One night in late August, it rained –
The Thunder waked us. Drops came crashing down
In dust, on stiff blackjack leaves, on lichened rocks,
And the rain came in a pelting rush down over the hill,
Wind blew wet into our cave as I heard the sounds
Of leaf-drip, rustling of soggy branches in gusts of wind.

And then the rill’s tune changed – I heard a rock drop
That set new ripples gurgling, in a lower key.
Where the new ripples were, I drank, next morning,
Fresh muddy water that set my teeth on edge.
I thought how delicate that rock’s poise was and how
The storm made music, when it changed my world.

- Carter Revard, from Winning the Dust Bowl (emphasis his)

Acknowledgements

I have many thanks to give here, and I begin with my committee, who all were instrumental in making an interdisciplinary project like this work:

To Frank Farmer, for taking on the role of co-chair, and for believing both in a project that didn't stay inside the disciplinary box, and in the fledgling scholar who wrote it;

To Scott Lyons, for coming on board the committee as co-chair, nearly sight unseen, and for fully supporting the project and its vision from beginning to end;

To Bobbi Rahder, for all the invaluable help and feedback provided in multiple capacities along the way;

To Amy Devitt, for the insightful critique, supportive feedback, and for always asking good questions; and

To Lizette Peter, for the enthusiastic investment as a reader and questioner.

I would like to gratefully recognize the assistance of all the people at the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing Center who helped me with my research, gave generously of their time, and taught me so much: at the NMAI, Emil Her Many Horses, Ann McMullen and Paul Chaat Smith; at the HCCM, Jessica James, Theresa Milk, Denton Nichols, Bobbi Rahder, Lori Tapahonso (who served as my sponsor at Haskell), and Dan Wildcat; and at the Ziibiwing Center, Bonnie Ekdahl, Anita Heard (who acted as my primary contact person at Ziibiwing), William Johnson, Shannon Martin, Judy Pamp, Robin L. Spencer, and Julie Whitepidgeon. I have done my best to be faithful to what they have told me, and any mistakes are mine.

I also must recognize the extraordinary help of my husband/in-house editor/all-around cheerleader, Thorsten, without whom this project would not have been completed. I cannot express enough gratitude for his patience and his constant reminders that life really does not begin and end with a dissertation, even as he helped celebrate the milestones along the way.

Finally, I want to thank Bud Hirsch, without whom I would not have had the courage to begin traveling the road I'm on, and without whom this project would not have happened at all; truly, you have taught me to hear the change in sound, and the music in the storm.

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If Indian people found themselves disempowered in one social realm...they also found power in the same place. It is, paradoxically, the same power, and it makes a difference that it flows through different channels. One channel maintains a social hierarchy; the other maintains a contradictory ethic of multicultural egalitarianism. *The power to define and exclude, the power to appropriate and co-opt, the power to speak and resist, and the power to build new, hybrid worlds are sometimes one and the same*, and that power flows through interlocked social and cultural systems, simultaneously directed and channeled by humans and yet often beyond strict human control...

- Philip Deloria, p. 178 in Playing Indian (emphasis mine)

Although we have to make sure we do not compromise ourselves by inadvertently speaking-writing what we don't want to mean (because English [and its genres carry] a lot of Western social-cultural baggage), English language writing can work to our advantage when we write with a sense of Indigenous consciousness."

- Simon J. Ortiz, p. xiv, "Foreword: Speaking-Writing Indigenous Literary Sovereignty," from American Indian Literary Nationalism (addition mine)

Representing the Museum and the People: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Representational Genres of American Indian Museums

Introduction

As the line in Indian Country goes, “Why do Indians love museums? Because they have our stuff. And why do Indians hate museums? Because they have our stuff.”¹ Such an observation expresses the contradictions Native peoples have felt over the course of centuries of seeing the material evidence of their cultures – and sometimes even their physical remains – being collected and displayed within museums. Museums are problematic sites for Native peoples because much of what has been collected was taken under duress or dubious circumstance, has been decontextualized from Native cultures under the auspices of European-American scholarly pursuits, and makes little or no reference to the contemporary lives and cultures of Native peoples. Therefore, the discussion of how these collections and the narratives and representations produced to go with them are used is a pivotal one, especially for Native nations, and one that has gained force in the last two decades. With repatriation legislation, the opening of an increasing number of Native owned and operated museums and cultural centers, and the substantial revisions made by other museums in recent years to their approaches regarding Native peoples and cultures, the discussion of rhetoric and how Native representation can and/or should be made through museums to provide Native perspectives is crucial, ongoing, and

¹ So goes the apocryphal story; W. Richard West, the inaugural director of the National Museum of the American Indian, is quoted as saying the same – “We love them because they have our stuff, but we also hate them because they have our stuff” – in regards to how Native peoples have often felt the contradiction museums in general present to them (McConnell 2).

urgent. Given the one-sided European-American legacy provided by past (and still many present) museums that tended to treat Native cultures as dead, as objects under glass, and as historical American exotica, contemporary Native peoples as well as some scholars and museum curators have pushed for Native nations to have more say and more control over how they and their living cultures are portrayed within museum structures.

Such a push raises a number of difficult questions: Can any museum site properly or appropriately represent Native cultures? How does one define “properly” or “appropriately”? Can established institutions be revised to make the discourses surrounding the construction of Native representations more transparent and egalitarian, rather than taken for granted as “true” because an authoritative institution says so? Can Native peoples put museum structures to use for their own purposes, or do the inherent problems of those structures make self-determination in self-representation difficult, if not impossible? And if established institutions and their discourses can be revised or put to Native uses, how are those institutions and discourses made effective? Embedded among these questions are issues of how Native peoples wish to represent themselves – especially in the face of histories that declare their current presence and lives irrelevant. How those representations can be made intelligible to a mainstream audience that often still holds the “vanishing Indian” myth as true, and holds the museum structure as an authoritative purveyor of that “truth,” is now one of the primary challenges.

While this study cannot answer all of the questions above, what it does address are the attempts several museum/cultural center sites have made at revising museum discourses and putting them to use in the service of the Native peoples involved there, rather than following the past pattern of making Native peoples and cultures the objects under scrutiny, without reference to their contemporary lives. More precisely, what I show in the following study is how three distinctly different museum/cultural center sites with varying levels and kinds of Native consultation and influence employ the communicative structures they have inherited to present their respective perspectives regarding Native peoples, their histories, and their identities, and where that complex constellation of communicative actions leads each site in terms of Native representation.

To carry out such a study, I draw on three disciplines for my analysis: rhetoric studies, Native studies, and museum studies. It is in this application of an interdisciplinary approach that I hope this study will make its contribution to the ongoing discussion in several fields. From a Native studies perspective, this is a discussion about enacting Native sovereignty, identity, and image, and communicating those ideas in concrete terms in a site that has until recently written Native peoples out of history. From a museum studies perspective, this is about further understanding what potential there might be for a museum/cultural center when Native communities are more fully involved in its creation and maintenance. From a rhetoric perspective, this study is an exploration of how genre theory may be applied outside of the classroom to “texts” that range from what one would call

“literature” to the visual, textual, and spatial rhetoric of educational and commercial displays, and how genre theory may be used to help illuminate rhetorical questions – in this case, the questions surrounding rhetorical sovereignty.

More specifically, Native studies provides the occasion and exigence for this study; Native studies is in the process of challenging the mainstream cultural narratives that have and still often do not acknowledge the existence of Native peoples, irrespective of what contemporary Native nations may have to say about how they define their cultures, their identities, or their sovereignty in today’s world. Therefore, I hope to contribute to Native studies’ ongoing discussion of sovereignty, albeit a kind of sovereignty rooted in rhetoric and representation. This study begins to demonstrate how a rhetorical sovereignty is shaped and enacted in particular museum/cultural center sites, and how each vision of sovereignty and the consequent representation must differ according to the context. Perhaps, then, this work can move away from conversations that lean towards binary formulations of what can be done for narratives concerning Native peoples within museums, and highlight some of those places where the abstractions of “sovereignty” and “image” are being worked out in tangible ways.

If Native studies provides the exigence for the discussion, museum studies provides the concrete site and data for this study. As an established institution that carries authoritative cultural cachet, the European and European-American museum as such has been a prime site for the narration of Native nations’ cultures and histories, though in unbalanced power relationships with Native peoples that has

produced a pervasive narrative and attitude about Native peoples that rarely allows them to speak on their own behalf. But as a discipline that has “come of age” in the last decade (Macdonald 1), it now welcomes discussion and revision of past practices using a multi-disciplinary approach. My contribution to museum studies can be regarded as an extension of the current discussion of museums and the active participation of Native peoples in creating new ways of understanding what a museum can be and can do for Native nations, especially as a public forum for discussions of culture, identity, and sovereignty for both Native and non-Native audiences.

For the purposes of this study, rhetoric studies provides the theoretical tool for analysis: genre theory. Through genre theory, the idea of a “genre” as a set of literary texts has now been revised and expanded to include all kinds of texts, and that those texts as genres are a kind of social action that work in groups and networks of other texts to achieve a wide communicative effect on a larger scale. Genre theory can therefore begin to help articulate the kinds of communicative action that go on at a museum site and specifically those actions aimed at visitors; even more so, genre theory can help to illuminate those communicative actions as highly rhetorical and not transparent or set in stone, and therefore subject to negotiation in the process of meaning-making. What my study contributes to genre theory is its application outside of the realm of purely printed texts and specifically within the context of museum discourses. Furthermore, this study extends discussions of how genres are revised and reworked according to context, especially when the genres in question are the

negotiating points between cultural perspectives and within historically unequal power relationships.

As a result, this is an interdisciplinary study about rhetorical sovereignty in action via museum/cultural center genres. Using Scott Lyon's idea of "rhetorical sovereignty" as a guiding concept, and rhetoric studies' genre theory as the methodological tool of approach, what I have done here is trace the steps of the average visitor in each institution to find what communicative structures, or genres, she would encounter in an average visit: publicity/orientation literature, the museum exhibits, and then the museum stores. Through these genres, I endeavor to understand how each institution has chosen to portray the narratives and histories of the Native peoples involved there, and the ramifications of those portrayals in terms of Native communicative self-determination. Furthermore, for the sake of demonstrating how the above questions are tackled within a variety of settings, I have chosen three distinct museum/cultural centers to set next to one another: an internationally-known museum complex, with a Native American branch, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian; an intertribal university's cultural center/museum, Haskell Indian Nations University's Cultural Center and Museum; and a single Native nation's tribally owned and operated cultural center, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways. What a reader will find is that each site presents a complex picture of the struggle to articulate Native perspectives in a museum/cultural center context that can be at once revolutionary and contradictory, illustrating both the

potential for Native voices to speak and the strictures simultaneously set by the communicative structures that provide the frame for that speaking.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter One provides contextual history for Native image-making in museums. Beginning with a discussion of “sovereignty” and the perspectives from which several Native scholars define the term, I introduce Lyon’s idea of “rhetorical sovereignty” as a natural extension of that discussion. Then, using Roy Harvey Pearce, Robert F. Berkhofer, and Gerald Vizenor’s work to lay a foundation for how the idea and image of “Indian” has been constructed and disseminated in European and European-American culture, I trace the rhetorical construction of “Indian” into the history of museums and their portrayal of Native peoples into the present and the issues surrounding representation in contemporary museums, including NAGPRA legislation and the new museology movement.

Chapter Two outlines the background and use of genre theory for this study, including a brief discussion of visual rhetoric and its application and extension of genre theory. After covering several major theorists who have contributed to redefining genre as a social action, rather than a literary formula, I describe my methods of data collection and apply that notion of genre-as-social-action to the museum, exploring what key genres are made available to visitors and are therefore the primary communicative spaces for Native representation. The chapter closes with a description of the three museum/cultural center sites featured in the analysis and their mission statements.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I examine three genre groupings – the publicity/orientation literature, museum exhibits, and museum stores – for their commonalities across institutions. There, I describe what each individual institution offers its visitors in terms of information, and Native peoples in terms of opportunities for communication to these visitors. Chapter Three examines the publicity/orientation literature available to visitors at each of the three museum/cultural center sites as a system of genres. The texts covered in this section are the more conventional in the usual sense of what a genre might be, but are still important in that they often provide a visitor’s first look at the museum and an orientational frame for the visit. Such genres include brochures concerning general orientation, permanent exhibits and museum overviews, rotating exhibits, special museum features, and more general regional orientation literature, which are analyzed for how they depict the Native peoples involved at each institution and how that is communicated to the visitor. I conclude with a discussion of how rhetorical sovereignty emerges across the genre system in each institution, specifically addressing how the genre system is used is in large part determined by its site’s context.

Chapter Four covers the museum exhibits, describing both how they function as rhetorical and communicative spaces in a museum/cultural center and how they can be classified as a complex secondary genre. Because a museum’s permanent exhibits are often the main attraction and the public representational backbone of the museum itself, the exhibits are pivotal to an analysis of Native representation within

museums and cultural centers. Such an application of genre theory to multimedia display spaces also stretches genre theory to include more than what might be considered a standard “genre.” Concurrent with the analytical goals of the previous chapter, I describe the permanent exhibit(s) at each museum/cultural center site as complex secondary genres (rather than genre systems) and analyze them for what they appear to intend to communicate to the visitor regarding the specific Native peoples featured there, how each individual museum/cultural center approaches the job of revising the museum exhibit structure for its own communicative goals, and how rhetorical sovereignty may surface in the struggle to simultaneously meet perceived visitor expectations while fulfilling each site’s communicative purposes.

Chapter Five addresses the last genre under scrutiny here, and one that stretches the definition of “genre” the farthest: the museum gift shop. Given the documented communicative power of the typical museum gift shop for visitors, that it is typically the last (and most lasting) impression a visitor may have, and its distinctive display of material Native culture (however that may be defined in a given space), for my purposes I classify it also as a complex secondary genre, albeit one whose discourses have been made far less transparent than those for museum exhibits even as they are set in close proximity to those exhibits. In the course of the chapter, I describe the kind of commercial display each museum/cultural center provides to sell a representative piece of itself to the visitor, and discuss the ramifications for rhetorical sovereignty within this commercialized communicative setting across all three institutions.

The conclusion draws the work of the previous chapters together, providing a vertical (as opposed to the horizontal cross-institutional approach in previous chapters) summation of the representations the major genres of each institution make and how they work together as a genre repertoire to present Native peoples and perspectives to a museum/cultural center visitor at each specific site. It then discusses the ramifications for the variety of ways rhetorical sovereignty is enacted at the three institutions through these genres, and what a contextualized rhetorical sovereignty may mean for present and future Native museum/cultural center sites as they continue the work of meeting Native nations' communicative goals via museum structures, with multiple audiences as potential visitors.

Ultimately, it is my argument that even given the long history of rhetorically and materially destructive images of the "Indian" through museums and associated institutions, contemporary museums or cultural centers that employ a significant amount of Native consultation and/or are Native owned and operated have the potential (though it is not guaranteed) for using the inherited (though altered) and still sometimes-problematic museum discourses and structures to speak their living stories, histories, and identities from their own perspectives to a mainstream audience. That potential, however, is something that cannot be measured by a blanket definition of "correctness" that would create a reifying checklist of the institutionally authoritative "authenticity" that has long been the problem; rather, any discussion of Native representations must be grounded in the individual context of any given institution and how it approaches Native peoples and their cultures. There is also the

question of whether or not the inherited museums' communicative structures are capable of being used in the service of creating new or alternative Native representations that upend the historical constructions of Native peoples now embedded in the mainstream cultural rhetorical fabric. Yet again an absolute reply of "yes" or "no" still elides the complexity of any given situation; each museum or cultural center site and the Native nations involved will use an institution's communicative, generic inheritance according to its own purposes, with varying results.

As a final note here, I have chosen to use the term "Native" in reference to American Indian nations and communities, partly out of a sense of discomfort with the term "Indian" and its rhetorical connotations, and partly out of deference to and alliance with the way I hear American Indian peoples and academics referring to themselves. "American Indian" is still a much-used term, but here I prefer "Native" to refer to the pan-Indigenous sense of community or identity, and then the names of specific Native communities – for example, the "Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan," or "Anishinabek" in a more regional sense – where context allows me to be more detailed. Spellings of Native communities' names are not always standardized, and so I use the spellings used most often by each community. Furthermore, I have not drawn great attention to my position as a researcher; as someone trained in academia, speaking in the languages of theory, I assume that angle is already visible, and as someone trained in Native studies, it may also be assumed that my general knowledge of Native and American history and issues is

more extensive than the average museum visitor's, and therefore my vision is already shaped in a particular way. However, though I am of Native descent – Munsee, of the Delaware (Leni-Lenape) people, and have particular incentive to forward discussions of sovereignty – I am not a member of any Native community included here, nor have I ever been on the staff of any of the museum or cultural center included in this study, and so cannot claim any insider's knowledge or perspective from these communities or institutions. In that way, I come to these places as a visitor, too, and I hope that my position as inside the academic community and allied with the Native community, but outside these museum/cultural institutions and their sponsoring communities, provides a useful vantage point from which to do this analysis.

Chapter One

A Brief History of Constructions: “Sovereignty,” “Indian,” and “Museum”

Introduction: The Weight of Sovereignty

To say that “sovereignty” is a tricky concept to define would be a massive understatement, and to offer a definition is to provoke heated discussion anywhere in Indian Country. It is a high-stakes proposition, for in the abstraction of what “sovereignty” means lies the key to the very concrete identities and material rights of the Native peoples of North America and beyond. To define sovereignty is to define control: of who and what a nation is, what that nation can do and own, how it shall govern itself and how it shall interact with others. To define sovereignty is also to invoke an identity, a sense of who a person is or who a people can be; as Paula Gunn Allen asserts, “whoever controls your definition controls your sense of self” (99), and she accurately notes it is the media and social sciences that, over the course of five centuries, have done a great deal to define Native peoples generally without their consent or input. Sovereignty isn’t just about government; it’s also about a different kind of power: “the power to define and exclude...to appropriate and co-opt...to speak and resist...to build new, hybrid worlds” (Philip Deloria 178), to have an active and weighty part in the process, in the negotiation of meaning-making.

But to mainstream audiences, the question of sovereignty may seem like a moot one: aren’t Indians U.S. citizens? Don’t they already have too many rights? Isn’t real Indian culture dead, anyway? What’s wrong with the picture of the Indian on the romance novel cover? Why bother with sovereignty? Even a national leader such as President George W. Bush has had no useful comment on the struggle for

Native sovereignty within U.S. borders, except to declare sovereignty as something “given” by the U.S. government, not something that Native nations already had and still have (Kamb, “Bush’s Comment on Tribal Sovereignty Creates Buzz”). The task of building sovereign Native communities within this context is not an easy one, for as Deloria observes, power “flows through interlocked social and cultural systems” that extend into one another and influence one another continuously. For speaking to matter in the world, it must be heard; for images to have power, they must be seen; and to negotiate there must be more than one willing party – peoples, their stories, and the tellings of the stories are connected and demand a great deal of each other.

Much of the energy needed for the creation of new identities involves the overcoming or turning of the old ones, these old relationships, and so the purpose of this chapter is lay the groundwork for understanding how and in what terms rhetorical sovereignty has the potential to redefine both Native history and image. First, I will examine some of the major definitions of sovereignty as they appear in several prominent scholars’ works, concluding with rhetorical sovereignty as a particular conception of sovereignty that draws attention to the way language, imagery, and history are used to influence the public and drive policy; second, using mainly Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., Roy Harvey Pearce, and Gerald Vizenor, I will trace the history of “Indian” and “savage” imagery and their construction. Third, because these images became entrenched (and still very much are) in the American consciousness as the framework for defining Native peoples, I will narrow the focus of the history of image to specifically that of museum spaces and how “Indian” images were

constructed and displayed as part of the panorama of History. Finally, I will examine briefly how Native peoples are in the process of reclaiming and redefining those images, that space, and that history as a material enactment of rhetorical sovereignty.

Working with Sovereignty: Tribal, Traditional, Intellectual, and Rhetorical

Native activists and academics have provided a range of ways to define sovereignty, each with its own framework for elucidating the concept. While there is not space here to do an exhaustive summary, for my purposes I have included a brief history of the pivotal legal decisions regarding the definition of Native nations, and a range of contemporary perspectives on sovereignty that demonstrate multiple approaches to the concept. What Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Taiaiake Alfred, Robert Allen Warrior, and Scott Lyons all have in common is a desire to see Native nations as self-sustaining and thriving cultural, economic, and political entities. What makes each unique is the way each author envisions sovereignty being defined and enacted.

One of the most pivotal points regarding Native sovereignty in U.S. history was Chief Justice John Marshall's trilogy of decisions, which redefined Native nations' rights and became the precedent for international law regarding Indigenous peoples and is now often a beginning point for discussions of sovereignty.² First occurring was Johnson v. McIntosh (1823), a land dispute that involved one man with a deed for land issued to him from the Piankeshaw people, and another man with a

² Of course, the definition of sovereignty and the struggle with European and Euro-American nations goes back much further, but for practical purposes of pivotal and formal definition, I begin the timeline here. For a more extended overview of nationhood and the United States government, see The Nation Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty by Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, and Joanne Barker in "For Whom Sovereignty Matters," in Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination.

deed from the United States for the same land. Justifying his decision by proclaiming that Indigenous peoples only had “aboriginal title” to the land – the hunter-gatherer use of it, but not the ownership of it – Marshall ruled that Native nations who claimed title to land through treaty rights were not in fact full sovereigns because they were Indians, and therefore could not claim ownership of the land (Barker 6-8). Second, in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831), the question of sovereignty emerged again when the state of Georgia attempted to rewrite law in 1830 in order to dissolve the political and economic power of the Cherokee in spite of the Cherokee nations’ adoption of a constitution that proclaimed their nationhood and their peaceful existence under it. The Cherokee nation protested, citing numerous treaties with the United States to establish their sovereignty as an independent nation; Marshall replied by citing the U.S. Constitution, which notes that the U.S. may “regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes” (as qtd. in Barker 10). Marshall argued that these were three distinct categories, and then because Native nations were neither foreign nations nor U.S. states, they were something else: in his words, “domestic dependent nations” whose relationship to the U.S. government was “of a ward to a guardian” (as qtd. in Barker 10). Third, the Cherokee nation strategically argued for sovereignty again Worchester v. Georgia (1832), for Georgia’s new statute also put the missionaries operating on Cherokee lands under treaty statutes in violation of Georgia law, because the new Georgia statute nullified previous treaties that allowed for resident missionaries among the Cherokee. The case of the subsequently-arrested missionaries eventually came before the Supreme Court,

and in his formal response to the trial – which demanded a definition of the Cherokee nation’s rights and sovereignty to resolve the question of the missionaries’ rights – Marshall characterized the Cherokee nation as follows:

Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities, retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil, from time immemorial, with the single exception imposed by irresistible power, which excluded them from intercourse with any other European potentate than the first discoverer of the coast of the particular region claimed...a weak state, in order to provide for its safety, may place itself under the protection of one more powerful, without stripping itself of the right of government, and ceasing to be a state. (qtd. in Deloria and Lytle 17).

In other words, according to the United State government, a Native nation was a “weak state,” one that needed protection, but one that could still have some rights to self-government (provided that the “government” resembled that of the United States). Though Marshall did not argue for the dissolution of the Cherokee per se, his characterization of Native nations as “domestic dependent nations,” as “weak states” with limited rights to self-governance, set the precedent for the U.S. government’s definition of Native sovereignty. To the U.S. government, “sovereignty” for a “weak-state” is more or less synonymous with “self-governance,” which is regulated by the “irresistible power” (Deloria and Lytle 14, 17).

However, this limited definition of “self-governance” does not cover the multi-faceted nature of Native sovereignty, nor does it begin to address how Native nations characterize it. Deloria and Lytle argue that the primary term behind sovereignty is that of “nationhood”: this term “implies a process of decision making that is free and uninhibited within the community, a community in fact that is almost completely insulated from external factors as it considers its possible options” (13-14), as contrasted with the closely-monitored self-governance noted above. This kind of a nation is defined by “peoplehood,” a concept that has its roots in the preservation and prospering of the community and binds its members together in cultural and often religious terms. That culture and religion is in turn derived by the people from the land they inhabit; thus the people, the culture, and the land take their meaning from each other. Put another way, “[a] people is a group of human beings united together by history, language, culture, or some combination therein – a community joined in union for a common purpose: the survival and flourishing of the people itself,” (Scott Lyons 456). Just as important as community and culture is the land itself; Deloria and Lytle observe, “[it] is important to understand the primacy of land in the Indian psychological makeup, because, as land is alienated, all other forms of social cohesion also begin to erode, land having been the context in which the other forms have been created” (12). Though Lyons, Deloria, and Lytle fully acknowledge that the Native sense of “nationhood” is one that has grown to include European influences, still this sense of peoplehood and land persists.

It is precisely on the point of nationalism and land that Elizabeth Cook-Lynn takes up her argument that land and tribal affiliation should be the focal point for defining sovereignty. In her essay entitled, “The American Indian Fiction Writers: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, the Third World, and First Nation Sovereignty,” Cook-Lynn addresses her concerns regarding Native fiction writers and how, because they are regarded as representative of their respective nations (and Native peoples in general), they should be asserting that nationalism more aggressively in their writing, regardless of how well their subsequent books sell. Her fear is that the most popular Native authors are popular precisely because they conform to colonial – i.e. Euro-American – definitions of genre and audience (Cook-Lynn 79-80). Because Native authors are regarded as representative,

the failure to be clear about [a nationalistic] authorial intent suggest[s] several things about tribal sovereignty or First Nation status: that the tribes are not nations, that they are not part of the Third World perspective vis-à-vis colonialism, and that finally, they are simply ‘colonized’ enclaves in the United States, some kind of nebulous sociological phenomenon. (Cook-Lynn 82)

The solution, writes Cook-Lynn, is for these writers to make nationalism a primary literary concern, evoking the “tribal bonding with geography as the most persistent native nationalistic sentiment” (87). Otherwise, “to succumb to [a cosmopolitan] intellectual state is to cut one’s self off as a Native American writer from effective political action” (96). Sovereignty is political, it is land-based, and most of all, it is

nation-based in such a way that tribal affiliation should be the author's primary identity and primary priority.

For Taiaiake Alfred, author of Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, the emphasis is turned to prioritize and revitalize traditional forms of knowledge in creating forms of indigenous government that reflect an individual Native nation's values. He fully acknowledges that "[land], culture, and government are inseparable in traditional philosophies; each depends on the others, and this means that denial of one aspect precludes recovery for the whole" (Alfred 2). The solution he sees for this recovery, then, is the restoration of indigenous value systems, which would in turn make decolonized Native self-governance possible, which would result in a stronger national presence and strengthen land claims and relationships.

"Sovereignty" does not mean self-governance according to the standards set by colonial (read Canadian or U.S.) governments (Alfred 55-6); to Alfred, real sovereignty is a matter of reclaiming and enacting indigenous values within a modern context: "I am advocating a self-conscious traditionalism, an intellectual, social, and political movement that will reinvigorate those values, principles, and other cultural elements that are best suited to the larger contemporary political and economic reality..." (Alfred xviii). To illustrate his point, Alfred constructs his work through the metaphor of the Rotinohshonni Condolence ritual, a traditional healing ceremony that "represents a way of bringing people back to the power of reason" (xix). Though the issues he addresses – corruption of Native governments based on Euro-American models, modern Native government, and training young leaders – Alfred works to

illuminate why most current Native governments are not functioning, and how a restructuring of those governments according to traditional values would serve to decolonize First Nations and strengthen Native nations' identities.

In an interesting contrast, in Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions Robert Allen Warrior posits a conception of sovereignty he calls "intellectual sovereignty." Building on Vine Deloria Jr.'s copious body of work, and Deloria's assertion that tradition is structured to respond to the needs of the community and should not exist as a dogmatic construction (Warrior 94-5), Warrior examines both Deloria's essays and the work of John Joseph Mathews to ask what a Native intellectual tradition looks like, and to explore how sovereignty is actually not the end goal, but the beginning of a "lived praxis" influenced by tradition that addresses Native nations' everyday lived experience. To Warrior, attempting to separate Native cultures and their intellectual traditions completely from Euro-American influences does not work; in attempting such a thing, he writes, we "would fail to recognize that perhaps [Deloria's, Mathews', and others'] greatest insight was that to believe we can live free from and untainted by the rest of the world is to unwittingly play a parochializing, monolithic Anglo-versus-Indian game, the rules of which have been set up for our failure" (Warrior 115). Intellectual sovereignty, therefore, does not come with separation. Instead, "[in] the concrete materiality of experience, we see both the dysfunctions colonization has created for Indian communities and the various ways Indian people have attempted to endure those dysfunctions. The intellectual work of critics in the self-determination process...is

drawing out of this materiality what this means and has meant” (118). Intellectual sovereignty is an exercise in creating meaning of the lived experience of mixed Native and Euro-American materiality, a process that does not align itself in direct opposition to all things Euro-American, but relies on the traditional and intellectual traditions Native peoples have inherited to interrogate that materiality.

Rhetorical sovereignty, then, is yet another facet of the process of defining “sovereignty,” and it is in the realm of language and representation that Scott Lyons invokes a kind of sovereignty that brings communicative action and interaction with colonial forces into focus. As the authors above have illustrated, the concept of “sovereignty” carries different connotations for Euro-Americans than it does for Native nations. The kind of sovereignty espoused by European and American governments, derived from feudal Europe, is one that defines an individual ruler as “accountable to no one save himself or God” (Scott Lyons 450), then as an extension, an “assertion of absolute political authority at home, one that could imply designs on territories abroad” (Fowler and Bunck, as qtd. by Lyons 450). Furthermore, in periods of colonization, as countries and colonies began to vie with one another for authority, territory, and independence, to be called “sovereign” was to be understood as on par with one’s international peers, with and among other sovereigns. This notion of power was translated into legislative and political rights. Sovereignty, therefore, carried and carries Euro-American connotations of power, independence, and – perhaps most crucial – recognition by others as powerful and independent in a nation’s exercising of its rights to self-determination. “Nationhood” itself is a term

with particular implications in the United States; Lyons observes that the young United States, founded as it was on Enlightenment principles of individualism, understood itself as a “nation-state” made up of individuals that came together to form a “public” that acted as a whole to run the nation-state insofar as reason dictated and private individual rights and powers were preserved.

By contrast, as described above, Native nations defined themselves in terms of a “people,”³ a nation-people – and as such the priority for a nation-people was not private individual rights, but the survival and continuity of the community, its culture, and its land together. This is not to say that individuals were not recognized, but that individuals would prosper as the people prospered. Decisions were made by council, as a group, not by a single individual ruler. The example that Lyons cites is the Haudenosaunee, which was and is a united confederation of six different Native nation-peoples (the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga, and the Tuscarora) with the goal of mutual prosperity and peace. Their idea of sovereignty, in Lyons’ words, is “the right of a people to exist and enter into agreements with other peoples for the sole purpose of promoting, not suppressing, local cultures and traditions, even while united by a common political project...” (456). Sovereignty, characterized this way, is based both on the “power to self-govern and the affirmation of peoplehood” (456).

But the history of U.S. legislative terminology reflects a different image of Native peoples, one that illustrates the U.S. government’s exercise of rhetorical

³ In fact, most Native nations’ names for themselves typically mean, “The People.”

power. While initially treaties were made that named Native peoples as sovereign nations to be dealt with as equals, by the 1830s, as described above, U.S. policy towards Native nations was altering in its rhetoric: the terminology changed from “nation” to “tribe,” from “treaties” to “agreements,” and Native peoples were characterized as “wards” instead of “sovereigns” (Lyons 453). Such nominal changes reflect a kind of “rhetorical imperialism” in the U.S. legislation that worked to erode Native nation-peoples’ rights and power in the name of a colonial nation-state. As Lyons observes, “he who sets the terms sets the limits” of discourse and law (452). It is for these reasons, among many, that Native peoples are working to reassert what sovereignty means, and that means in language and representation just as much as legislation – for it is in the forge of language that such legislation is wrought. Lyons asserts, “Sovereignty is the guiding story in our pursuit of self-determination, the general strategy by which we aim to best recover our losses from the ravages of colonization: our lands, our cultures, our self-respect,” and therefore, specifically, “**Rhetorical sovereignty** is the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 449, italics his, bold mine).

In this way, through the language and rhetoric of representation, one can begin to see how language and image drive action and policy, and policy has material consequences for Native nations. All of the mentioned versions of sovereignty have meaning-making as part of Native decolonization, either explicitly or implicitly. Rhetorical sovereignty directly addresses that language and rhetoric concerning

Native peoples, and wishes to place the control over that language and rhetoric – and therefore control over the representation and the image derived from them, and therefore the policy and action derived from those – in Native nations’ hands. To claim rhetorical sovereignty is to claim the right to determine communicative need, and to decide as a people how Native nations should be constructed in public discourse.

The power of rhetorical sovereignty lies in its ability to challenge the very constructions of “Indian” that historically are at the heart of the history of Native representation in the United States, constructions that manifest themselves in law, in education and academia, in popular culture, and in specific material sites, such as museums. Such constructions, especially in museums, are central to this project, and so in the next two sections I will outline the history of these constructions and then their manifestation in museums.

The Historical and Rhetorical Constructions: “Savage,” “Indian,” and “Postindian”

The general image problem for Native peoples is pervasive, and has its roots well documented with the first European contact. Roy Harvey Pearce’s foundational study, Savagism and Civilization, outlines the Euro-American history of belief in the idea of the “savage” and “savagism,” the particular rhetorical constructions that came out of contact with Native peoples, and the historical acts that sprang from that belief and those constructions. His tripartite formation of Idea, Symbol, and Image, is as follows:

[by] Idea I mean a predication, explicit or implicit, which offers a solution of a major human problem. By Symbol I mean a vehicle for an Idea: a concrete, emotionally powerful sign for an abstract proposition. By Image I mean a vehicle for a Symbol: a particular mode of expounding and comprehending a Symbol and the Idea it bodies forth. In this study...the Idea is that which Noah Webster and all those for whom he spoke called the savage and his savagism; the Symbol is the Indian; and the Images are those found in the social, historical, and imaginative writing of the period. (Pearce xix)

That definition of savage, as quoted from Webster's An American Dictionary of the English Language in 1828, reads as follows: "Savage, n. A human being in his native state of rudeness, one who is untaught, uncivilized, or without cultivation of mind or manners..." (Pearce, epigraph). To be a "savage," then, is to live opposed to "civilization," and Pearce argues that the "theme" of savagism is "in effect a counter-theme to a larger one, civilization" (xix). In short, the construction of "savage" has little to do with actual Native peoples at all, and everything to do with the Euro-American construction of history. "Indians" simply became the symbol for what civilization stood against, and the images created out of that symbolic Indian "savage" were the visual and rhetorical justification for Euro-American manifest destiny.

In particular, two images drove the attitudes and policies of their times. First, in the years between 1609 and the 1770s – he is focusing exclusively on English

settlement in his study – Pearce traces the creation of the symbolic “savage” invoked by the colonists’ first contact with Native peoples, and how “[the] Indian became important for the English mind, not for what he was in and of himself, but rather for what he showed civilized men they were not and must not be” (Pearce 5). In order to establish peaceful, profitable, and civilized order, the savages had to be civilized as well, and the primary means of accomplishing the process was through Christianity: “Success in empire-building and trade was to be measured by success in civilizing and Christianizing; success in civilizing and Christianizing would assure success in empire-building and trade” (Pearce 6). Native peoples were imagined as ignorant, rude, in a natural and uneducated state, and generally incomplete but salvageable, and it was the colonists’ job, even obligation, to do the salvaging for the glory of country and God.

However, that successful subduing of savagism was not forthcoming, and in the years between the 1770s and 1851, Pearce reveals a changing line of thought among Euro-Americans. If the savages were going to resist, then civilization had no place for them. Citing the Scottish common sense writers who posited a “God-ordained, intelligent self-sufficiency of modern man to work out his own way with his common sense, his analytic reason, and his special moral sense,” Pearce observes the distinct influence they had on the rise of the American notion of Progress as a driving ideological force. If, as the common sense writers asserted, God was revealing His will to modern man, and modern man was always moving towards a higher civilization, then social, technological, and moral progress as such were proof and

justification of civilization (Pearce 82-3). The savage Indians, it was assumed, were throwbacks on an evolutionary scale of progress and civilization, and those who would not accept civilization were doomed. Pearce notes that pity often came with this – many in Euro-American society voiced it – and yet even that was filtered through a 17th, 18th, and 19th century romantic “primitivism” that begot a persistent image of its own: the “noble savage.” Pearce describes primitivist thought as “the belief that other, simpler societies were somehow happier than one’s own,” and so primitivism became a mode of Euro-American social critique that desired “to recover that portion of the primitive self which civilization had corrupted and, in the process, to lay bare the faults of civilization” (136). The noble savage was one who was civilized in his way because he was uncorrupted by society, and so again the image was a reflection of what Euro-Americans wanted to be.⁴ However, though the noble savage had some natural virtues, he had no place in the larger American civilization because he was still a savage. As Pearce puts it, Americans “needed desperately to believe...that men in becoming civilized had gained much more than they had lost; and that civilization, the act of civilizing, for all of its destruction of primitive virtues, put something higher and greater in their place” (85).

Meanwhile, partly as a means to access the savage so to convert and civilize him, and partly out of a Euro-American propensity towards collecting (which I will

⁴ Philip J. Deloria provides a complementary portrait to both Pearce and Berkhofer’s work in Playing Indian, tracking how Americans have, in the last 200 years, literally put on the images of the Indian through various costumes and societies in order to redefine themselves as something new and unique against their European roots. Indians became the focal point for this redefinition because “Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants” (P. Deloria 5).

address further on), studies of Native languages and collections of Native objects were amassing. As it became more apparent to Euro-Americans that the savage had no place in a civilized United States – that is, as the construction of the Symbol and Image, and consequently, action shifted – then “the history, life, and manners of the savage...as well as his fate and its meaning could prove savagism. The task that lay before Americans after 1815 was to fill in details of the proof” (Pearce 114). In other words, as a means of cementing into history the justification and explanation of progress, existing collections of Native objects, portraits, and stories were used to demonstrate the definition of “savagism.” Pearce observes, “The received idea of savage society, though [historians of the time] did not know it, supplied [them], just as it had supplied others before him, with categories into which to fit data,” (124) and so it was that historical societies and private collectors continued to codify history and Native peoples along the lines of antiquated savagery and progressive civilization. By 1851, where Pearce ends his analysis, “the Indian” had become a field of study unto itself, and with a more scientific approach in analysis it left behind the historical-moral construction of the savage (130). It is here Pearce sets the limits of his study.

Expanding on Pearce’s work, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.’s work, The White Man’s Indian, documents that specifically American version of the savage, the “Indian,” confirming that

[A]lthough the social and cultural attributes of Native Americans influenced the conception of them by Whites, it is ultimately to the

history of White values and ideas that we must turn for the basic conceptual categories, classificatory schema, explanatory frameworks, and moral criteria by which past and present Whites perceived, observed, evaluated, and interpreted Native Americans...(xvii)

Berkhofer's research therefore spans a timeline from first contact narratives to the mid-twentieth century, and outlines the shifting image of the Indian as one that reflects the changing history of Euro-American thought and self-image.⁵

As Pearce documents with "savagism," Berkhofer confirms the Euro-American tendency to imagine Native peoples through the lens of civilization as the antithesis of civilization, even in the name "Indian." As the story goes, Christopher Columbus mistook the Caribbean island he landed on for India (although according to European geography of the time, anything east of the Indu river was "India"), and so named the peoples he found there "Indios" (Berkhofer 5). The Spanish continued to use that designation for all the peoples of North and South America, and it is from "Indio" that the French receive the term "Indien," the German, "Indianer," and the English, "Indian" (Berkhofer 5). With the help of the printing press, travel logs and the illustrations created from their detailed descriptions spread in number and

⁵ Louis Owens offers another metaphor of "mirrors" and "masks" in his essay, "As if An Indian Were Really an Indian." He describes Euro-American ideology as a two-way mirror held up to Native Americans that "reflects the Euro-American consciousness back at itself, but the side of mirror turned toward the Native is transparent, letting the Native see not his or own reflection but the face of the Euro-American beyond the mirror" (17). The Euro-American finds only confirmation of what he believes to be there, and the Native finds himself erased. The Native is then presented a mask by Euro-America, the constructions such as those mentioned above, and it is only through this mask that the Native is "given" a voice. With this mask, the Euro-American again only finds confirmation of what he already believes, and the only way for the Native person to be heard is to speak through a mask not of his making (17).

popularity, and soon Europe had invented the “Indian,” a specifically American variety of “savage.”

Berkhofer’s next task is to demonstrate how the image of the Indian underwent a series of changes dependent on the reigning Euro-American ideological structure of a given time period.⁶ He maps out the Euro-American struggle to first classify Native Americans according to Christian cosmogony, the heart of which was to decide if the Indian were human and therefore educable and civilizable. Monogenetic human status was eventually acknowledged by orthodox Christians, but only by accounting for the obvious diversity and divergence from European culture in terms of the continuous degeneration of human beings after the expulsion from Eden. Native peoples, then, having been out of contact with civilization for too long, were obviously cases of advanced degeneration, or even the minions of Satan (Berkhofer 34-38). With the Enlightenment, the reliance on Biblical accounts decreased and if the natural world were a system of causes and effects governed by laws a scientist could discover, then the existence and state of Native peoples could be explained by environmental causes. Many Euro-American thinkers reasoned that the people indigenous to the Western Hemisphere were strong and noble, though still savage, because the land and climate made them so, or, as many European thinkers believed, these people were degenerate because the land and climate were also degenerated

⁶ For more on the reflections of these ideological reflections in popular culture, see [Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture](#), ed. by S. Elizabeth Bird. As its title suggests, the volume of essays addresses how the images outlined in Berkhofer’s work appear in American pop culture from the 1830s to the 1990s.

from the Old World (Berkhofer 38-44). This particular debate raged until the mid-nineteenth century, when the notion of Progress evolved.

Concurrent with Pearce's argument concerning the Scottish common-sense writers, Berkhofer observes the mid-nineteenth century emergence of a history of humankind based on linear progress and evolution, which in turn created the image of the Indian as behind the evolutionary curve and as living artifact. Born out of Enlightenment thought, a new notion emerged that posited a set of " 'natural' uniformities of human behavior" (Berkhofer 45) throughout all generations, and that as a result of such uniformities each generation built upon the knowledge of the past ones and so progressed. The Indian, therefore, had a specific place in the conjectural line-up based on apparent similarities with ancient Indo-European civilizations: if one could correlate the habits, culture, and actions of Indigenous peoples with the ancient Greeks and Romans who were the foundations of modern Euro-American society, then one could make the conjecture that Native Americans were people who simply hadn't progressed yet. As far as natural historians could force the images of these diverse cultures to correspond, they could use Native peoples as hypothetical exemplar for what human existence used to be (44-47). As a result, Native Americans became part of a conjectural system of linear human progress, now articulated through the theories of progress and of evolution.

As part of that burgeoning scientific endeavor to study humankind, Berkhofer shows a rising "scientifically" based racism that grounded itself in the literal bodies and the concurrently constructed image of Native inferiority, which in its timeline

corresponds with the shift in belief that the Indian had no place in civilization (see Pearce) and social evolution. Founded on the idea that one could correlate cultural features with biological features, and thus rank the relative superiority of one people against others with the resulting “evolutionary” index, “race” became a term to designate the classificatory divisions of human beings. Studies were devoted to proving physiological difference between races, and so physical anthropology and specifically craniology became the cutting-edge disciplines of the time. This study of the skull and brain⁷ became part of the pro-slavery arguments of the Civil War era, and then became a way to justify Indian policy and Manifest Destiny. Collections of Native skulls and bodies were then valuable for such research, and bounties were set for Native remains, fresh from the battlefield or taken from ancient graves. These collections of “artifacts” were housed in the major museum institutions of the time, as will be discussed further on.

Such sentiments and studies of the body to justify cultural and racial superiority lasted in the first decades of the twentieth century, but by then cultural anthropology developed as a counter to the physical anthropology described above, which in turn ushered in the new image of Indianness, the ethnographic “scientific Indian” of the 1950s (Berkhofer 56-66). This particular school of thought, pioneered by Franz Boas, began to challenge the conjectural evolution line of thought, instead preferring to work with concrete data gathered in the field among Native

⁷ “...[To these scientists] cumulative mind growth meant a better mentality as well as a difference in mentality. The lower races, therefore, not only possessed darker skins and bad manners but their organic equipment was inferior as well. The reason that white-skinned peoples ruled the world and epitomized civilization was not accidental, according to scientific racism, but an inevitable result of biological inheritance...” (Berkhofer 59).

communities. His data showed no correlation between physical characteristics, intelligence, or culture, and for that matter, Boas and his students – among them Alfred Kroeber and Ruth Underhill – challenged the idea of “culture” as a signifier for “civilized” as well, instead proposing a plural notion of “cultures” that rejected moral judgment on the subjects under study. The goal, then, of Boasian anthropology “became the study of localized cultural traits shared by social groups or the lifestyle and beliefs of a single group...[accompanied by e]thnographic description in terms of the interrelationship of the parts of one culture instead of cross-cultural comparison to establish evolutionary sequence...”(64). However, through an approach that tended to make localized objects of Native communities, many anthropologists structured their ethnographies as recording cultures under erasure, not change, and defined true “Indian” cultures as ahistorical entities that did not acknowledge the Native peoples of the present (64-5). Not until the 1970s, roughly correlating with the Red Power movement, would anthropologists begin to temper their disdain for the lifestyle changes they found in Native communities as Indigenous peoples adapted.⁸

That is not to say that Native Americans haven’t made various efforts to resist and redirect such portrayals – they have, and do – and scholar and writer Gerald Vizenor completely rejects the name “Indian” for Native peoples, favoring instead the concept of the “postindian,” who lives through survivance and trickster hermeneutics to win the rhetorical “cultural word wars” of “manifest manners.” “Indian,” he

⁸ Also worth noting is a victim myth parallel to the cultural erasure image, explored by Fergus M. Bordewich in *Killing the White Man’s Indian*; playing on Berkhofer’s title, Bordewich uses a journalistic approach to portray Native peoples of the 1990s as they are, and how the popular image of Indians-as-victims he observes is mistaken.

argues in concert with Pearce and Berkhofer, is a construction, and more specifically, “the simulation of the *indian* is the absence of real natives – the contrivance of the other...*indians* are the actual absence – the simulations of the tragic primitive (vii, his spelling and italics). The simulation of “*indian*” operates through and is fueled by the ongoing ideological framework he calls “manifest manners,” defined as “the course of dominance, the racist notions and misnomers sustained in archives and lexicons as ‘authentic’ representations of *indian* cultures. Manifest manners court the destinies of monotheism, cultural determinism, objectivism, and the structural conceits of savagism and civilization” (vii, his spelling and italics). Manifest manners are built upon “terminal creeds,” a term of Vizenor coinage that Scott Lyons summarizes as those “statements of belief that stopped at some stable endpoint – an absolute truth – and [Vizenor] thought them diametrically opposed to the more slippery and endlessly creative ‘trickster discourse’ of Native American thought” (Scott Lyons 29, forthcoming chapter manuscript).

The “postindian,” then, is one who “ousts the inventions with humor, new stories, and the simulations of survivance” (Vizenor 5). Given there is no absolute, authentic “Indian” to return to, postindians do operate through simulations, but these are “the recreation of the real, not the absence of the real in the simulations of dominance” (5). As Kimberly Blaeser puts it, the key is that these postindian “recreations of the real” must “bear the ‘simulations of survivance’ to overcome the ‘simulations of dominance’” (Blaeser 57); otherwise, these recreations may also fall into reproducing the *indian* image of manifest manners.

“Survivance,” the hallmark of the postindian, is another term Vizenor coins from “survival” and “resistance.” He defines it as the “active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy” (Manifest Manners vii). In what he calls the “cultural word wars” of language and rhetoric, Blaeser observes in the connecting line of Vizenor’s work that “[the] destiny of the American Indian rests with language. The Indian will survive or will ‘vanish’ through the merits of language: survive through tribal oral tradition, or be made to vanish through popular, scientific, literary, and political rhetoric” (Blaeser 39).

Therefore, it is the goal of the postindian to resist the language, narratives, and images of *indianness* offered by manifest manners and instead employ what Vizenor calls “trickster hermeneutics” to evade and overturn the images of “*indian*.” Tricksters, in Blaeser’s encapsulation,⁹ resist singularity, are “multiform,” and though in a given tribal narrative may be associated with one animal form or another, “physical identification is not concrete” (138). Tricksters “embody contradiction and ambiguity,” being neither good nor evil, wise nor foolish, and mediate “between supposed contradictory forces or elements by retaining aspects of both, or by revealing them to be co-existing parts of one whole, interconnected, often indistinguishable elements of the one” (Blaeser 138-9). Furthermore, in Vizenor’s

⁹ “Encapsulation” might be a contradiction in terms given tricksters tend to avoid being pinned down, but that is part of the language game, and tricksters are no strangers to contradiction.

formulation found in The Trickster of Liberty, the trickster “is a comic trope; a universal language game. The trickster narrative arises in agonistic imagination; a wild venture in communal discourse, an uncertain humor that denies aestheticism, translation, and imposed representations” (as qtd. in Blaeser, 143). Trickster discourse does not believe in terminal creeds, and instead enables the postindian warrior to avoid the concretizing closure of the images bestowed by manifest manners.

All of this is to say that the history and image of Native peoples, called “savage” and “Indian” by turn, is a construction, and one built on language. It is within these “word wars” that control over Native image has and still is being waged, and given the printed and imagistic arena, rhetorical sovereignty stands as both the goal and the means to continue overturning, inverting, and sliding around manifest manners and its accompanying discourse. What follows here is a short history of how that language and those images appear in the history of museums, as well as how a shift in the ideological underpinnings of those images is underway.

Museums: History and Indian Image

Museums were and often still are the physical repositories for the objects and research gathered by several centuries’ worth of collecting and anthropological work, and in this section I will provide a historical sketch of collecting and the images borne with it. Whatever theory science deemed the “truth” of the time, a museum would display, and so the issue of representation comes to the fore in museums and all they do.

The history of collecting and displaying things related to Native peoples – and occasionally the people themselves – begins as early as 1505, with an illustrated book based on traveler’s accounts of the Carib people. Consistent with the theory of savagism and Indians outlined above, the portrayals were of exotic peoples dressed in leaves and feathers, dining on human limbs (Maurer 16). In 1591, America, a multi-volume reference work, was published with more elaborate – though second-hand – illustrations of the peoples of the New World. By the turn of the century, “neoclassical” figures of Native peoples, whose physical types were based on Greek and Roman classicism, were becoming allegorized into the symbolic America, typically a “bare-breasted, athletic woman wearing a feather headdress and cloak, and sitting under a fruit-laden tree with her entourage of New World animals” (Maurer 16). Such allegories lasted well into the eighteenth century, although other artists who did travel to the colonies produced illustrations using more empirical observation. However, as Maurer notes, sympathetic/realistic portrayals were not popular in Europe, and so the allegorical figures retained their power (17).

Audiences in Europe quickly became interested in more than pictures, and explorers sometimes brought groups of Native peoples to Europe in order to honor their sponsors or to promote their work. Maurer cites the French organization of about fifty Tupinambá people from Brazil to build a village in Rouen, France, around 1550 in order to honor King Henri II. The transplanted village and its occupants were used as a living demonstration of Native life activities, including “fighting, hunting, trysting, and bringing bundles of dye-wood [the major export to France] to canoes

that took the loads out to the European ships” (Maurer 18). Another example is from 1577, in which Sir Martin Frobisher, a British explorer, brought a group of Baffin Island Inuit people, including men, women, and children, to England. The illustrations from the occasion, like those of the Tupinambá, show the Inuits wearing traditional clothing and demonstrating their everyday activities, though this group died in England before they could return (19).

Because Native peoples themselves did not often visit Europe, “cabinets of curiosities” were the more standard display of material items from the Americas and their peoples, and these most closely resemble what the contemporary museum-goer might recognize. Filled with “natural curiosities” – “strange and unusual things from nature,” and “artificial curiosities” – “objects made by people in far-off regions,” these collections were typically assembled by merchants or noblemen, and organized according to Linnaean-like systems. The largest collections have sometimes provided the basis for modern museums, such as the cabinet established by French King Henri IV, which has become the core of the present Musée de l’Homme (Maurer 20).

In the 19th century, huge world fairs became one of the largest platforms for displays of Native cultures, and Native objects were predominantly situated within a narrative of civilized progress. When the first world fair was organized in 1851 in London, at the height of European colonial economic and political power, Native peoples were first included in the Canadian display. The guidebook pointed the fair attendee to the objects produced by the “Canadian savages” and “noted their contrast

to products of English civilization” (Maurer 21), underscoring the evolutionary line of civilized progress. As Sir Henry Cole described the role of British museums in 1874,

A thorough education and a knowledge of science and art are vital to the nation, and to the place it holds at present in the civilized world...If you wish your schools of science to be effective, your health, the air and your food to be wholesome, your life to be long, your manufactures to improve, your trade to increase, *and your people to be civilized, you must have museums of science and art to illustrate the principles of life, health, nature, science, art, and beauty.* (qtd. in Nason 32, emphasis mine)

Thus the world fairs were a kind of gigantic museum, wherein visitors could observe the range of progress in the world and appreciate its advance. In 1893, when the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition took place, a small city was erected to house the multiple international exhibits, and visitors could see more than a dozen displays having to do with Native Americans. The single largest display was sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which built a life-sized model of a government Indian boarding school and recruited Native children¹⁰ from reservation schools to live at the fair to exhibit their daily lives. The largest grouping of Native American displays was housed in the anthropology building with “architectural models, photographs, maps, didactic information...actual Indian objects...mannequins dressed in traditional

¹⁰ Children from Haskell Institute – now Haskell Indian Nations University, whose museum/cultural center site is included in the data for this study – were a part of this living display. Children from Haskell were also part of a display at the Omaha Trans-Mississippi World’s Fair.

clothing, and statues of famous Indian leaders” (Maurer 23) for visitors to peruse. Hundreds of Native people were hired as guides in the Indian village displays, and Native artisans provided more demonstrations. Like the curiosity cabinets before them, the collections housed at these fairs were often donated to the then-burgeoning “public ethnographic museums,” and thus formed the core for the Native American collections in places like the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History (23). The important thing to note, Maurer states, is that direct connection between the European display of Native peoples and objects and the American displays of the same. Both tended to view “Native American objects as cultural artifacts without any particular aesthetic value or spiritual significance for the Native American peoples who made them and used them” (23).

Concurrent with the advent of world’s fairs and in line with the purpose of scientific advance and education, cranial study, physical anthropology, and the resulting encouraged collection of Native physical remains spurred museums to take on an enlarged role of scientific research place and storehouse. Dr. Samuel G. Morton was one of the strongest proponents of cranial research, and his research focused specifically on the Indigenous peoples of North and South America, and in order to build a collection of crania for data-gathering purposes, he solicited the help of Indian agents and physicians across the country. He was also not opposed to accepting the products of grave-robbing expeditions (as many collectors from that time were not) to help round out his “cranial library” (Bieder 24). Other researchers of the time followed suit.

After the Civil War, the study of Native bodies accelerated, and with it the role of the museum as a site of scientific and political ideological debates as well as a place of public education via those ideological structures. The debate over how to treat and what to do with Native peoples in the face of Manifest Destiny-driven expansion would determine whether or not science declared the “savage” capable of being civilized, and the conclusions derived from studies fueled museum exhibits. Some physical anthropologists believed that the primary information could be derived from crania alone, and others demanded that posture and spine be taken into account as well; such concerns derived from the argument over human evolution as measurable through the growth of the brain versus the erectness of the spine. As a result, entire Native bodies became valuable for research purposes, and the market for remains grew. In 1862, the Army Medical Museum was founded and it solicited crania from all races for its collection, even though the great bulk of its collection was from Native populations. Other museums began to compete for research authority by building their own collections of Native remains and artifacts: the Smithsonian Institute, founded in 1846; Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology, founded in 1859; the American Museum of Natural History in New York, founded in 1891; and the Chicago Field Museum, founded in 1893 as part of the world fair of the same year, all worked to build substantial collections of both Native remains and artifacts for the study of human progress (Bieder 29).

In 1906, Congress passed the Antiquities Act, which defined Native gravesites on federal lands as “archaeological resources” and “federal property” that with the

proper permits could be and should be excavated “for the permanent preservation in public museums” (as qtd. in Trope and Echo-Hawk, 127). The conclusions of such excavations and subsequent studies were controversial, as the readings of the data gathered from them often ended up positing Native peoples as inferior to Euro-Americans.¹¹ Yet regardless of whether or not the methodology or the results were sound, the biology of Native peoples’ bodies and the perceived characteristics of them came to represent who they were, and those images were displayed and publicized through museums. As Bieder puts it, such representations of Native peoples in purely biological terms allowed white Americans “to place the fault of Indian deficiency on their biology and heredity. This freed Americans from having to assume responsibility for the condition of tribal peoples and their future...[and placed] the onus of change squarely on the Indian” (32).

Furthermore, if large international or national museums functioned to demonstrate progress and illuminate the value of civilization, small local museums of regional Native objects helped to establish settler identity on a previously Native-occupied landscape. Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr., describes the desire for creating a history for the young American republic of the 1800s as a process of assigning meaning to the American landscape, and then staking a claim to that place. Hinsley underscores his point by quoting Henry Rowe Schoolcraft,¹² an ethnologist of the Iroquois of New

¹¹ As Pearce notes, often the framework of savagism vs. civilization was the ideological guide for the studies in the first place.

¹² Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864), a major figure in the history of relations with and recordings of Native Americans, acted as “Indian agent as Sault Sainte Marie and Mackinac Island, Michigan, superintendent of Indian affairs for Michigan,...ethnologist studying and reporting on the Iroquois of New York, and compiler and editor of Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History,

York, who addresses that desire for identity in his speech to a fraternal order of young white men who called themselves the New League of the Iroquois:

No people can bear a true nationality, which does not exfoliate, as it were from its bosom, something that expresses the peculiarities of its own soil and climate...[America must draw] from the broad and deep quarries of its own mountains, foundation stones, and columns and capitals, which bear the impress of an indigenous mental geognosy.

(qtd. by Hinsley, 43, addition his)

Digging for artifacts in Native gravesites, burial mounds, and settlement ruins became an encouraged national pastime for young Americans. In “discovering” the Native past, the white diggers were claiming the story and the future of that land, and in doing so constructing an identity of destiny and inheritance for themselves.

Keeping such local collections even became a matter of civic pride in some regions. Hinsley describes the work of the residents of Butler County, Ohio, who in an effort to keep greedy buyers for museums (especially European ones) out of the area, established the Butler County Geological and Archaeological Society in 1878. This organization catalogued and summarized all the private collections of artifacts in the county for inventory and safe keeping, an act which proclaimed ownership. In the words of J. P. MacLean, a local businessman and author of The Mound Builders, the purpose of the society was “to become better acquainted with the science of geology and archeology, and to form a cabinet which shall contain representative specimens

Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States for the Office of Indian Affairs”
(Henry Rowe Schoolcraft: A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress).

of all the fossils that may be found within the county, and to preserve all such aboriginal relics as may be obtained” (qtd. in Hinsley, 50). By creating a local cabinet¹³ of curiosities from the land they claimed as their own, Hinsley argues, collecting was an index of civic respectability (a mark of civilization) and a way to “appropriate” and “domesticate” the nearby Indian mounds as “uniquely regional and national” (Hinsley 50).

Modern museum exhibit models and their concomitant abstraction of the object from its context appeared first as Native objects began to be considered “art” by white observers. Not until 1910, in the Brooklyn Museum, were Native American cultural objects displayed as art, and it was the work of curator Stuart Culin that set the pace for museum displays for decades to come. Having understood the United States as divided into discrete regions, he chose one tribe to represent each region, filled display cases with objects organized according to function, and made consistent use of labels, murals, and photographs to provide some cultural background, as well as mannequins to wear the clothing and small-scale architectural models to show environment. However, Maurer notes that in spite of Culin’s intentions to look into Native life as deeply as possible, the effect of the display technique was to freeze the Native subjects in time, as there was no reference to the present. “Ironically, while educating the population at large about the depth and power of Native cultures, Culin helped deny American Indians a modern experience” (Maurer 24).

¹³ Having consulted the still-existing Lane Libraries of Hamilton and Oxford, OH, and the local Butler County Historical Society, it appears that the Butler County Geological and Archaeological Society was defunct by 1881 and said cabinets were donated to the libraries. The cabinets’ current whereabouts are unknown (Valerie Elliot, personal interview).

Parallel to the introduction of this display technique was the “discovery” of Ishi, who for practical purposes became a living one-man museum exhibit of the past. His story is worth some examination, for it illustrates the persistent tendency to display Native peoples, and also the tension behind the maintenance of that display narrative. Found starving near a slaughterhouse in Oroville, CA, in 1911, and billed as the “last surviving member of the Yahi Indian tribe” (“Ishi: The Last Yahi”), Ishi was befriended by anthropologists Alfred L. Kroeber and Theodore T. Waterman. He was brought to live at the then-new Anthropology Museum of the University of California Affiliated Colleges, where he made his home until his death in 1916 as a part-time janitor, living museum exhibit, and subject of anthropological study. As the University of California website describes it, “Graciously collaborating with the anthropologists, Ishi provided insight about his language, a dialect presumed lost until his emergence from the Mill Creek region of California. Free to return to his homelands, Ishi chose to remain at the museum as a living interpreter of his culture” (“Ishi: The Last Yahi”). How free Ishi was to return to his homeland is debatable, given the history of massacre, bounty hunting, and forced relocation to reservations in Northern California; however, he did indeed stay at the museum and from what is known, became that “interpreter” of Yahi culture (“Ishi: The Last Yahi”).

The anthropologists at the museum generally may have had one primary intention in mind – to obtain from Ishi what cultural knowledge they could on a Native people that had been assumed extinct – and they did it out of a sense of obligation, phrased here by Theodora Kroeber, Ishi’s posthumous biographer: “The

history of Ishi and his people is, inexorably, part of our own history. We have absorbed their lands into our holdings. Just so must we be the responsible custodians of their tragedy, absorbing it into our tradition and morality” (epigraph). Absorption and custodianship, taking in and preserving, are apparently the motivations for Kroeber and others. However, Ishi certainly had some control over what information he gave them, including withholding his name. He sang and told stories for them and allowed the process to be recorded, built a Yahi summer home for them on the museum grounds, and demonstrated his expertise with craftsmanship and hunting. But he also learned English, purposefully wore Euro-American clothing when in a Euro-American environment, and willingly offered a critique on how white people cooked their food (184-214, 167-168). Even more to the point, as Theodora Kroeber notes, “Ishi made choices as courageous and enlightened as the scope of his opportunities permitted,” recognizing in him his desire to support himself rather than being a ward (hence the janitor’s job he took on and the savings he accumulated) and to make a life for himself out of the difficult circumstances (240).

On the other hand, in spite of what he may have taught the anthropologists about Yahi culture and the grace with which he handled his transition into a new world, in many ways he was ultimately an object and a display. Though he might not have agreed with the classification of Ishi as a “Wild Man” – such the media branded him – Alfred Kroeber still played to the public’s romanticized vision with the appellation of “Stone Age” when describing Ishi’s abilities. As Rachel Adams notes, “Despite his commitment to treating Ishi as an equal, Kroeber used the language of

his time in a manner that could [and did] backfire by feeding directly into the popular fantasies he wished to contradict” (Adams 31, addition mine). As a case in point, Adams points out a particular headline that captures much of the public wisdom about Natives in that day: “Stone Age Indian Hauled from Forests’ Depths by Savants: Creature Found in the Wilds of Feather River a Link between Past and Present” (Adams 31). And despite public mourning for Ishi when he died of tuberculosis, his brain was kept from cremation by Dr. Saxton Pope and given to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History (who subsequently misplaced it) for study by none other than Alfred Kroeber himself. Even in recent years Ishi’s story of himself is being challenged, as a 1996 press release shows. Steven Shackley, a research anthropologist at the Hearst Museum of Anthropology, claims to prove that Ishi was not a “pure” Yahi after all: after noting that Ishi’s arrow points looked more like the arrow points of the neighboring Nomlaki and Wintu excavation sites than those from the historic Yahi sites, he has proclaimed from that evidence that Ishi must have been of mixed heritage and not really the “last purely Yahi Indian” (Kell 2). “This makes Ishi’s story even more romantic and sad...being of mixed blood, he is an example of the cultural pressure the Anglos placed on the dwindling number of Indians in the mid- to late-1800s to marry their enemies” (Kell 2). Ishi did not speak much about his family or lineage (presumed killed or dead of disease), and so anthropologists still work to fill in the gaps, and in this instance romanticize and re-represent Ishi’s story of himself. Even if Shackley is technically correct (and many fellow anthropologists

disagree with his results), Ishi told the story of himself as a Yahi, spoke Yahi, and lived in the Yahi homelands.

Ishi's brain was repatriated by the Smithsonian Institute on August 10, 2000, to the surviving Yahi-Yana people of Northern California, and with his ashes was re-interred in an undisclosed location by the tribe ("The Repatriation of Ishi...").

Though it took the backing of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and a direct petition from the Yahi-Yana people – the Smithsonian did not offer Ishi's brain back of its own accord – ultimately the return of Ishi's remains to his descendant nation marks something of an acknowledgement of Native claims to narratorship of Ishi's story. Yet the acknowledgement only goes so far, for as the description of Ishi on the current University of California library webpage demonstrates, the legend of him as the last of his kind is still prominent. California schoolchildren are told the story of Ishi – there is even a children's book about him – and encouraged to claim it as part of their identities as Californians: Ishi "left behind a legacy of invaluable information about his people, and provided a shining example of a courageous human spirit bridging the divide between two worlds" ("Ishi: The Last Yahi").

In the most general of terms, Ishi illustrates what many traditional museums did and do, to varying extents. They tell their visitors of civilizations long gone, and those visitors inherit the story as the archaeologists can put it together, anthropologists can gather it, and museums can display it. But Ishi's story is also suggestive of change, as the following sections demonstrate.

Moving Towards Rhetorical Reflexivity in Museums

In the previous sections, we have seen how sovereignty is defined in multiple ways, depending on the context and the goal in question; and we have seen that the image of “savage” and “Indian” is largely a European and now Euro-American historical construction that has its ideological roots in a desire to define what Euro-American civilization is not. We have also observed how museums have participated in these constructions, in existing both as the manifestation of these images and the educational site for the perpetuation of them. In this section, I will address the recent changes happening in the international museum community, and the how that community is striving to re-examine and interrogate the structure of museums, their goals, and their practices.

It is only within recent decades that the Renaissance humanism that drives traditional museum practice is shifting to a “new museology.” Instead of “the fundamental Humanist concept that Man could be understood through his creations and Nature through the systematic study of Her manifestations, [which] positively demand[s]...the formation of collections for study purposes” (Cannon-Brookes, as qtd. by Christina Kreps, 47), as cited in the 1984 edition of the Manual for Curatorship, many museum studies professionals have observed a global trend towards a “new museology.” Beginning in the 1970s, the “ecomuseum” – a kind of community museum concept – was pioneered in France by Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, with the goal of creating a kind of museum that “was designed around and within the community in order to combine the natural and social

environments, and extend the activities of the museum and the focus of its work beyond the actual museum building and into the community” (Simpson 71). The participation of community members in such a museum was essential. The movement spread across Europe and to North America, and met a separate but similar community-based museum movement in the United States, which was driven by the desire to make museums relevant to the populations who rarely set foot inside the average museum (Simpson 72). In addition, ethnic groups in North America had already begun to establish museums and cultural centers to balance representations made by the mainstream population and create a space for promoting cultural arts and activities (Simpson 73). Specifically regarding Native peoples, the first Native-created museum appeared as early as the mid-eighteen hundreds on the Tuscarora Indian Reserve, and the Osage Tribal Museum was established under the direction of John Joseph Mathews in 1938 (Lawlor 18). From the 1960s on, tribal museums have become more commonplace and currently over 200 exist in the U.S. and Canada (Lawlor 18), though Simpson points out that Native museums often differ in their goals and priorities – such as maintenance of oral archives for specific traditional use and not for conventional research, care for ceremonial objects beyond temperature and humidity control, and use of ceremonial objects outside museum parameters – and so cannot be easily lumped in with community museums as a group (Simpson 77).

On a world-wide scale, the “new museology” movement, emerging from discussions, conferences, and the committee work of ICOM (International Council of

Museums),¹⁴ was and is primarily concerned with “community development” and “social progress,” though not exactly in the same terms as historically used. As Kreps summarizes, “the ‘new’ museum of the new museology is a democratic, educational institution in the service of social development. [It] differs from the traditional museum not only in the recognition of the museum’s educational potential, but also in its potential for promoting social change” (9-10). In addition, the democratization in the new museology “stresses the importance of community or public participation in museums...in all aspects of museum work” (10). According to Kreps, the idea of social progress that the new museology has in mind is that “each society needs to assess the nature and precariousness of its heritage resources in its own terms and determine contemporary uses it wishes to make of them, not in a spirit of nostalgia but in the spirit of development” (UNESCO 1995:176, as qtd. in Kreps 11). In short, “the new museology movement is largely about giving people control over their cultural heritage and its preservation as part of how they maintain, reinforce, or construct their identity” (10).

As part of the re-envisioning of the museum, museums studies as a field has formed to investigate the myriad kinds of knowledges museums as institutions profess and how those knowledges are constructed, how audiences participate in meaning making, what social obligations museums may have, and the multiple roles – educator, entertainment, economic booster – that museums may play in a given

¹⁴ ICOM, the largest organization of museum professionals in the world, is “an international, non-governmental organization of professional museum workers dedicated to the improvement and advancement of the world’s museums, the museum profession, and museological interests...[and] operates under the auspices of UNESCO” (Kreps 21). UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

setting. For example, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's 1992 work, Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge, narrates a history of museums that demonstrates first that there is no monolithic structure of "the museum," but only a series of structures that have been deployed to create and shape the knowledge of its time and place, and second, that such histories "demonstrate that the use of knowledge is contingent upon other power practices," namely the social and political forces within a given context (Hooper-Greenhill, Museums and the Shaping... 191-193). Furthermore, Andrea Witcomb's work has begun to establish other histories of museums as not just educational sites, but also as places where audiences go to be entertained, which highlights the role museums have and still do play (perhaps even more so now) in the tourist industry. According to Witcomb, the bifurcation she observes between "traditional" museums that prefer to restrict their goals to research and education, and the "new" multimedia museums that play more to entertainment and consumerism is an artificial one (Witcomb 2). She calls for "[recovering] other histories – particularly those that associate museums with popular pleasures, new urban, cosmopolitan cultures and with consumerism" in addition to the history of museum-as-hegemonic-knowledge-makers (Witcomb 169).

However, the import of the educative authority of museums should not be underestimated; as research has shown, " 'Americans believe they recover "real" or "true" history at museums and historic sites'" (Rosenszweig and Thelen, as quoted in Hoelscher 210). With that educative power in mind, Hooper-Greenhill extends her discussion of the creation and dissemination of knowledge in Museums and the

Interpretations of Visual Culture, in which she examines the contrasting pedagogical models of the “modernist museum” and the “post-museum,” respectively. In her formulation, the modernist museum as an institution was a configuration of mid-nineteenth century educative values that espoused a pedagogical approach based on the “transmission model.” It “was based both on a formal didacticism and on the conviction that placing objects on view was sufficient to ensure learning. Thus museum displays were used to transmit the universal laws of object-based disciplines (with natural history as the paradigm), which were presented in formal and authoritative ways to undifferentiated mass audiences” (Hooper-Greenhill, Museums and the Interpretations...2). Hooper-Greenhill challenges those assumptions about didacticism and mass audiences with a pedagogical methodology drawn from critical pedagogy and communication theory, arguing that exhibits can be read like texts – “pedagogic functions of museums can be analysed by reviewing both *what* is said, and *how* it is said,” she asserts – and also, like texts, multiple meanings may be drawn from them depending upon the audience (Museums and the Interpretations...3-4). For her and many others,¹⁵ the audience(s) are a key component in the meaning-making process, since not only do audiences draw multiple understandings from museum exhibits, but as mentioned above they imbue what they understand to be true

¹⁵ See also “Living in a Learning Society: Museums and Free-Choice Learning” by John H. Falk et al; “Museum Education,” by George E. Hein; “Interactivity: Thinking Beyond,” by Andrea Witcomb; and “Studying Visitors” by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill for a recent grouping of articles in Macdonald’s A Companion to Museum Studies.

with a special authority because they made that meaning in a museum. Such audience awareness must be at the forefront in a “post-museum.”¹⁶

The process of social meaning making coupled with the authority traditionally ascribed to the museum as an institution has prompted questions about a given museum’s social responsibility, as noted above. If previous museum structures have purposefully excluded many communities and objectified others in for the sake of what was understood as “education” at the time, what should that “education” look like now? Many scholars and museum professionals are now working to make museum spaces more inclusive for marginalized ethnic, disabled, and GBLT communities by creating exhibits devoted especially to their histories and working harder to include them in general exhibits.¹⁷ Some museums, such as the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow, Scotland, have purposefully taken on social change – in these cases, the highlighting and eradicating of contemporary prejudices – as a mission and an educational goal for their audiences (Sandell, Museums, Prejudice, and the Reframing of Difference).

Yet complications may – and often do – arise in the process of meaning-making, especially if audiences are confronted with an exhibit or institution which they expect to reinforce the knowledge they already have, but challenge that knowledge instead. An example particularly germane to this study is the 1991

¹⁶ Hooper-Greenhill does not provide a comprehensive definition of what a “post-museum” is; because modernist museum practices still exist in the present, a fully post-museum is an institution still in the imagining and making.

¹⁷ See the collection of essays in Museums, Society, Inequality, edited by Richard Sandell.

Smithsonian art exhibit entitled “The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920,” in which paintings and sculpture depicting the American West were re-interpreted through a revisionist historicism.¹⁸ The goal of the exhibit was to challenge received and mythologized perceptions of the American West and rethink the political and religious ideologies of nineteenth-century white America that drove Manifest Destiny. In this exhibit, the portrayals of Native peoples were also challenged, and

provided a vivid illustration of the ways in which images of Native Americans changed over time, reflecting the shifting attitudes towards the indigenous population as they were viewed as the Noble Savage living in harmony with nature, ruthless savages attacking innocent settlers, heathens ripe for conversion to Christianity, a doomed and vanishing race, or passive and dependent reservation Indians.

(Simpson 29-30).

The reaction to the exhibit was swift, angry, and predominantly white; though many viewers supported the exhibit, many powerful figures did not, including Daniel J Boorstin, a former Librarian of Congress who decried the exhibit as “ ‘a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit. No credit to the Smithsonian’ ” (as qtd. by Simpson 30). Two senators also raised accusations that the Smithsonian was adopting

¹⁸ As historian B. Byron Price notes, the historical interpretations made by the exhibit were not new to historians, and though he calls the rhetoric of the exhibit “strident,” he also calls it a “watershed exhibit” in how it challenged and raised public interest (“ ‘Cutting for Sign’: Museums and Western Revisionism”).

a “political agenda” rather than remaining objective, and demanded the Smithsonian’s public funding be cut so as not to waste tax-payer dollars (Simpson 30).

To describe this kind of controversy within the museum structure, the many roles that museums may play, and the potential for what museums may become, James Clifford offers a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt: the “contact zone.” Drawing from Pratt’s work, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, he applies her sense of “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict” (Pratt as qtd by Clifford 192). As a result of applying such a lens, Clifford argues, “[museums’] organizing structure as a *collection* becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral *relationship* – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull” (Clifford 192, emphasis his). The reactions to “The West of America” exhibit, for example, could therefore be described as a meeting point between conflicting perspectives that reflect ongoing negotiation and conflict between different peoples. On the other hand, Clifford cautions his readers against assuming that all interactions that go on within a museum context can be encompassed by the notion of “contact zone,” which can be just as limiting a lens as it is illuminating. The example he cites is his meetings with Tlingit elders, whose use of the objects under discussion had at times little to do with the consultation work for which they had been sought out, and more to do with specifically Tlingit protocol among Tlingit people. As Clifford observes, “Some of

the songs, speeches, stories, and conversations were performances among the Tlingit, not directed to the museum and its cameras but interclan work – what had to be done if the objects were to be addressed at all” (193). He and other museum workers were not participants in this; in short, not all of what goes on in a museum can or should be reduced to mere “contact responses” (Clifford 193). But with a contact zone lens, much of the intercultural work that goes on can be cast in terms of reciprocity, and how that reciprocity may be carried out in any given museum setting. He writes,

[w]ithin broad limits, a museum can accommodate different systems of accumulation and circulation, secrecy and communication, aesthetic, spiritual, and economic value. How its ‘public’ or ‘community’ is defined, what individual, group, vision, or ideology it celebrates, how it interprets the phenomena it presents, how long it remains in place, how rapidly it changes – all these are negotiable,

and it is at this ambiguous and dynamic point of negotiation that reciprocity, in whichever definitions are invoked by the communities involved, should be a goal (Clifford 217-8). With this rich potential for defining community, identity, culture, and art, he observes we have yet to see what museums of the present might be able to do (219).

Moving Towards Rhetorical Sovereignty in Museums

Even with efforts to better understand how meaning is made within museums’ walls and an acknowledgement of the contributing cultures, Kreps also notes that many museums maintain a colonial “museum-mindedness” (Kreps x), and

change regarding Native peoples, especially in long-established institutions, happens slowly. For example, most anthropology museums in the U.S. maintained exhibits based on the visual-artifact-and-diorama model until the 1990s and NAGPRA, including the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History (Maurer 26). In this penultimate section, I address the establishment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and the ongoing work of Native communities to negotiate meaning on museum sites.

NAGPRA has been the strongest legislative statement of this change in the United States, though Kreps observes that "NAGPRA came about largely as a result of the perception that the American professionally museum community had not gone far enough in recognizing and respecting the rights of Native peoples" (83). As previously noted, the Antiquities Act of 1906 classified Native remains as federal property and therefore not the property of the Native peoples (or the descendants of those peoples) who made the graves. In 1979, prompted by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, a study done by the Carter administration revealed that the great majority of sacred objects and other cultural artifacts had come into museum hands through "military confrontations," "pressures exerted by federally sponsored missionaries and Indian agents," "Native people who did not have ownership or title to the sacred object," and "pothunters," but by and large "[m]ost sacred objects were stolen from their original owners" (Trope and Echo-Hawk 128-9). In the 1980s, more than thirty states passed legislation to protect Native graves, and a handful had passed laws pertaining to actual repatriation of items, but without federal legislation to back

the states, prosecution using these statutes was difficult on a large scale (Trope and Echo-Hawk 135). On November 29, 1989, Congress passed the National Museum of the American Indian Act, which eventually resulted in the creation of the National Museum of the American Indian under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institute. Such a move was important not just because it created a museum specifically dedicated to Native peoples; it also specifically targeted the Smithsonian's collection and required the Smithsonian Institute – a national leader among museums – to inventory all its Native collections in consultation with Native leaders and accordingly repatriate what human remains and funerary objects they could. Citing that precedent, and with the following year-long dialogue between museums, scientists, and Native Americans, sponsored by the Heard Museum in Arizona, a framework for large-scale national grave protection and repatriation laws was created. On November 16, 1990, NAGPRA passed into U.S. law.

However, in terms of sovereignty – rhetorical or otherwise – the phrasing of the law is worth noting. Trope and Echo-Hawk observe that the law was intended as human rights legislation designed to redress the violation of the “civil rights of America's first citizens” (139). Such a characterization is cast in terms of transcendent human rights that have been violated, but not the rights of sovereign nations. Trope and Echo-Hawk also note that Congress considered NAGPRA “a part of its trust responsibility to Indian tribes and people, specifically stating that it ‘reflects the unique relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations’” (140), reflecting a persistent reliance on a

colonialist rhetorical framework. And yet the step that was made, Trope and Echo-Hawk argue, is the U.S government formally recognized its own outright discrimination and abuse, and also that

Native American human remains and cultural items are the remnants and products of **living people**...Human remains and cultural items can no longer be thought of as merely “scientific specimens” or “collectibles”...NAGPRA is unique legislation because it is the first time that the federal government and non-Indian institutions must consider what is *sacred* from an Indian perspective. (151, italics theirs, bold mine)

It is with hope, then, that Trope and Echo-Hawk view NAGPRA, for with its passing, all other museums are supposed to follow the precedent the Smithsonian sets. The rhetorical and ideological change is taking some time, and often there is not an easy transfer of remains and sacred objects back to Native peoples, for various reasons.

The repatriation issue is a complicated one, for in it are problematic definitions, including “cultural patrimony,” “intellectual property,” and even down to what a Native nation is and what rights it has within the boundaries set by the U.S. (as discussed above). “Cultural patrimony” typically refers to the objects produced by a nation, but can also refer to a cultural group within a nation; as it reads in NAGPRA, “cultural patrimony” is “an object having ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native American group or culture itself, rather than property owned by an individual Native American, and which, therefore, cannot be alienated,

appropriated, or conveyed by an individual...” (NAGPRA, reproduced in Mihesuah, 308). But as Kwame Anthony Appiah observes, the cultural patrimony argument is often extended further to encompass “intellectual property,” which can include images, text, ceremonies, songs, symbols, beliefs, etc., and require a figurative or literal copyright (Appiah 128-9). Such thinking, argues Appiah, leads to essentialist divisions that deny past and ongoing cultural interchange, however unbalanced such exchange was, and can end in an imperial corporate attitude: “Disney Inc.,...Ashanti Inc., Navajo Inc., Maori Inc.,” and so on (130). This is not to say that repatriation cannot be fruitful, but Appiah observes that one does not need “cultural patrimony” arguments to make a case for returning stolen “site-specific” objects, or things central to a community’s cultural or spiritual life (132). David Murray also tackles the difficulty of drawing definitive lines of “representation,” simultaneously noting the danger of any representation of a thing taking the place of what it is supposed to represent if it is not carefully constructed, and the concurrent problem of trying to define boundary lines for that construction that may recreate problematic essentialisms. Calling for “authenticity” or purity is precarious, he argues, because notions of static “purity” have much of their roots in Euro-American thought and the image of the unchanging and therefore vanishing Indian, and “purity” tends to disavow change that has occurred in Native communities to support survival. At the same time, in terms of sovereignty, the question of who has the power or “the authority to represent, or to control representation, either from inside or outside” Native communities remains to be answered (Murray 95).

The negotiation of such meanings concerning representation between Native nations and museums is part of the act of rhetorical sovereignty, and varies on a case-by-case basis. Two case studies provide examples of how this negotiation and transfer of museum holdings back to the nations they belong to becomes complicated because of how the museums and the peoples define what constitutes “sensitive” items and the “appropriate” care of them. Truly, if rhetorical sovereignty is “the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse,” and no one nation-people’s self-definition or resulting goals will be the same, then the process of changing museums, what items are kept there, and how or if they are displayed is highly individualized according to each nation’s sense of what is best for the items in question. The story of the Zuni Pueblo’s decades-old pursuit of stolen *Ahayu:da*, or “War Gods,” exemplifies the need for a case-by-case approach to this change, and also begins to illustrate how powerful a Native nation’s influence can be in the process of change.

Like many Native nations, the Zuni people have suffered the loss of a number of culturally important items, among them multiple representations of the *Ahayu:da*. The *Ahayu:da* themselves are twin brother gods who are represented in wooden carvings made by the Bow Priesthood of the Zuni people. On the appropriate occasions, two new carvings are made and placed at appropriate shrines and the previously used carvings are ritually set aside to decompose and return to the elements from which they came. Keeping all of the *Ahayu:da* on the reservation so

that their life cycles can be completed is essential to the health of the Zuni religious community and the Zuni people as a whole (Ferguson, Anyon, and Ladd 240). The blatant theft of multiple *Ahayu:da* was a problem and beginning in 1978 the Zuni people began requesting repatriation of all known *Ahayu:da* from museums around the U.S. and private collectors. From the time they began their requests until the 2000 publishing date of Ferguson, Anyon, and Ladd's article, 80 *Ahayu:da* have been returned, with a minimum of litigation (246).

The authors attribute the Zuni's success in repatriation in part to the way in which the entire process was approached. For the Zuni people, the matter of repatriation of the *Ahayu:da* was not a political maneuver, but a matter of spiritual health for the Zuni nation. As a people who communally owned the *Ahayu:da*, they had been robbed of items that were essential to the rituals that defined that people (253). As such, they approached the return of the *Ahayu:da* as an "ethical and humanitarian" endeavor, and used litigation processes only as a last resort. According to the authors, "in Zuni culture a reasonable person with a grievance goes to an adversary four times to attempt a peaceable resolution of the problem. Only after this good-faith attempt should stronger action be taken" (241). Therefore, they approached the respective museums and collectors who had *Ahayu:da* as a people with a grievance who desired a peaceful solution. The Zuni people were also careful to move as a people, and each delegation that worked with a museum came back and consulted with all of the religious societies and kivas that might have a stake in the items in question. This was, as the authors noted, an exceptionally long and expensive

process, but they also stress that this is what it takes to appropriately enact NAGPRA (251, 260). Furthermore, in this particular case, the Zuni Bow Priests had every intention of returning the *Ahayu:da* to their appropriate places: in a space outdoors, open to the elements so that they would decompose. Museums dedicated to the preservation of such items balked at first, but eventually recognized that the Zuni had the right to do with those items as they saw fit.

Furthermore, concerning other artifacts, the Zuni defined “replicas” in a way contrary to the way most museums understood them; to the Zuni, all “replicas” are objects that have had sacred knowledge incorporated into their construction – even if they weren’t made for expressly religious purposes – and that as objects holding sacred knowledge, they were inappropriate for display and because when displayed they would be out of context, such replicas would be of little research use (253-4). Because the Zuni people define “real” artifacts differently, they did and still do request items for repatriation that museums often find inoffensive. The matter of the Zuni people determining what is necessary to repatriate goes further, as in the case of the Museum of New Mexico. The Museum went to great lengths to inventory their collections and identify objects they believed the Zuni would find “sensitive,” 123 in all. However, the Zuni only found 23 items that they wished to remove from the museum. In addition, through their understanding of burial ritual and the journey a person makes after he is buried, the Zuni insist on the re-interment of bodies disturbed on the reservation (although they do make provisions for brief, non-destructive archaeological study of the bodies and grave goods) – but they did not

want any museum's collection of Zuni remains returned to them, as the Zuni themselves determined that irreparable damage had occurred in the cycle of Zuni life for these particular people. There was no way for these remains to return to the Zuni homeland. The Zuni requested that the museums keep those remains, with the assumption that they would be cared for appropriately and would not be put on display (258).

Overall, what is particularly interesting here is how the Zuni people defined their approach to repatriation in terms of their needs as a people. They pursued the repatriation of the *Ahayu:da* and then other articles through means that both respected the Zuni ideals for peaceful, non-confrontational resolution, but also with the legal and ethical terms they knew their museum/collector audience would understand. Then, when it came to the actual process of repatriation after the passing of NAGPRA, the Zuni decided for themselves what should ultimately be removed. As Ferguson, Anyon, and Ladd describe it, the proceedings surrounding the repatriation of Zuni objects were a "negotiation," a term that suggests dialogue between equals rather than a confrontation on either side. The authors conclude their article with a caution: a museum's approach to repatriation must be individualized to each Native nation it works with, as there are no blanket policies that will cover how each nation defines the boundaries for what it requires back and what may stay in the institutions that house the objects and remains (262). Having the choice of definition and the opportunity to enact it is essential to rhetorical sovereignty.

The Kwakiutl people of Vancouver Island and British Columbia provide an interesting complement to the Zuni story of repatriation and underscore the need for individual nations' self-definition to guide repatriation efforts. Though many items were collected from them by anthropologists, the subject of Ira Jacknis' essay is the repatriation of potlatch regalia that was taken from the Kwakiutl people under duress in 1921. The potlatch ceremony is a common practice among the Native nations of the Northwest coast, and these large-scale feasts and distributions of property are used to mark significant occasions such as births, marriages, deaths, puberty, and other occasions. However, by 1885, the Canadian Parliament had added an emendation to their Indian Act to outlaw potlatches – mostly at the behest of missionaries, who were working to eradicate “uncivilized” practices. The law was difficult to enforce, and so in 1921 the local Indian agent, William Halladay, attempted to push prosecutions during a particularly large potlatch given by Daniel Cranmer, a Nimpkish chief. The deal that Halladay offered the people who were convicted ran thus: an exchange of jail sentence for each individual's potlatch regalia. Twenty individuals chose to go to jail, but 22 gave up their potlatch regalia. Seven hundred and fifty items were confiscated, and the government reportedly paid \$1,495 for them, though many of the Kwakiutl claim no money was ever paid (Jacknis 267-268). As Jacknis notes, three groups of the Kwakiutl were represented in this confiscation of property, including the Nimpkish people of Alert Bay, the Mamalilikulla of Village Island, and the Lekwiltok of Cape Mudge (268). Halladay then disobeyed orders and sold a portion of the potlatch collection to George G. Heye (the man whose

collections eventually became the foundation of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian), and shipped the rest to Ottawa, where the Canadian National Museum kept a portion, and then gave part to the Royal Ontario Museum with the exception of eleven items that were retained for one Duncan Campbell Scott's (then the superintendent of Indian affairs) private collection (268).

The Kwakiutl people could do little, for while the law forbidding potlatches stood, they had no legal leg to stand on to reclaim those items. But when the law was repealed in 1951, potlatching increased – it had never stopped entirely, but had instead been disguised as Christmas or wedding gift exchanges – and all Canadian Natives began to work towards a cultural revival. In the following decades, the Kwakiutl nation worked to strengthen its communities and traditions, founding new cultural societies, restoring a Native cemetery, building a library in Alert Bay, and constructing a new communal dance house. The lost items, dubbed the Potlatch Collection, had not been forgotten, and beginning in 1958 efforts were made to recover them (269). Because of the general political climate of the 1960s, Canadian museums became more amenable to working with Native nations, as those museums were working to enact a self-declared “democratization and decentralization” of their resources (270). Jacknis also points out that Northwest Indian art was gaining popularity at the time, and for that reason the Canadian government might have been interested in supporting the Native nations within its borders. Ultimately, the Canadian National Museum agreed in 1972 to return the portion of items under its

control with the proviso that the Kwakiutl had the appropriate facilities to house them.

Unfortunately, the Royal Ontario Museum was not so cooperative, as it still felt “ ‘it had some legitimate claim to the collection’ ” and wished at the least for some kind of compensation for the “curatorial care” it had provided, in the form of a joint ownership of the collection with the Kwakiutl people or replicas to replace it (272-273). Only with the backing of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs were the Kwakiutl able to persuade the Royal Museum of their unconditional rights to the collection, and in 1988 the Royal Museum returned its portion. As for the U.S. Museum of the American Indian, it too resisted the negotiation attempts begun by the Kwakiutl, but when it came under the auspices of the Smithsonian in 1989 (also concurrent, not coincidentally, with the drafting of NAGPRA) more headway was made. The problem at this institution, however, was that the part of the Potlatch Collection housed there had become mixed with the other Kwakiutl and Northwest Coast items, and only nine objects were identifiable as belonging to the collection in question.

As for the required museum facilities, the actual building of the Kwakiutl museum is an exercise in rhetorical sovereignty. The process caused a split among the Kwakiutl, and not because they did not wish a museum, but because of traditional rivalries among them – mostly among the aforementioned Nimpkish people, who have higher rank, and Lekwiltok people, who have lower rank (271). Within this cultural framework, a compromise was eventually created that would split the

Potlatch Collection, and each group would build its own museum to house it. The Nimpkish people created the U'mista Cultural Society in March of 1974 to oversee the work, and the Lekwiltok people founded the Nuyambalees Society in January of 1975. Both societies built a museum facility to house their collections. The meanings of these societies' names are significant, for they mark the purpose each group chose for its museum: "u'mista" means "the return home of a captive, through either payment of ransom or a retaliatory raid"; "nuyambalees" means "stories from the beginning of the world," or as Jacknis suggests, "narratives that outline the continuity of Kwakiutl cultural patrimony from founding clan ancestors" (272). Ransom and return, story and continuity – with the reclamation of the Potlatch Collection, the Kwakiutl peoples endeavored to have their material heritage returned and use it to continue telling their stories. Jacknis also observes how they constructed the exhibits displaying the material, for neither museum is dedicated to explaining the use of the items as a white visitor might expect. Instead, each museum has compiled oral narratives and archival documents and in the case of the U'mista museum, even created two short films that tell the story of the Potlatch Collection's confiscation, its return, and the nation's cultural survival (274-275). That is the history that they wish to tell, and want to be heard. As Jacknis states, at first glance it appears that the Canadian and U.S. museums had the advantage of dictating the terms of return for the Potlatch Collection, but the Kwakiutl peoples have framed the use and display of the items in terms of cultural survival and continuity, and certainly differently than the art exhibits the collection had been used for in the past. In addition, though the Canadian

and U.S. museums were only willing to grant the return of the collection to the Kwakiutl people as a communal whole, the Kwakiutl themselves maintain the ownership rights of the members of the families from whom the potlatch items were taken; Kwakiutl potlatch regalia is part of a larger cultural event, but the regalia itself belongs to the individual people and is displayed with the appropriate labels (277). All of this to say, while the Canadian and U.S. institutions were able to dictate some parameters for repatriation, the words one hears and the displays one sees are through the voice and the hands of the Kwakiutl people.

Conclusion: Invoking Rhetorical Sovereignty to Enact Change

In this chapter I have attempted to do several things: first, to establish the importance of sovereignty and what it means from several points of view, especially from the vantage point of rhetorical sovereignty; second, to demonstrate the history of the construction of the “savage” and “Indian”; third, to illustrate how “savage” and “Indian” images have long been a part of museum discourse; fourth, to show a gradual paradigm shift within the museum community regarding these images; and finally, to show how the enactment of rhetorical sovereignty is slowly taking place within that museum discourse.

Sovereignty, like historical images of the “Indian,” changes its definition and emphasis depending on the speaker who invokes it, the community that person belongs to, and the context in which the invocation happens. As Joanne Barker summarizes,

There is no fixed meaning for what *sovereignty* is...Sovereignty – and its related histories, perspectives, and identities – is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning. How and when it emerges and functions are determined by the “located” political agendas and cultural perspectives of those who rearticulate it into public debate or political document to do a specific work of opposition, invitation, or accommodation. (Barker 21, emphasis hers)

Sovereignty here, then, is meant to be located on the contested and uneven ground of museum sites, specifically in the emerging rhetorical sovereignty found in the history, conversation and discourse that surrounds those sites. “Rhetorical sovereignty” itself should be understood as a plural, as the above case studies demonstrate that what rhetorical sovereignty means – what control of and negotiation with representation means – will differ according to context.

What each of these studies share is an attempt to renegotiate and deconstruct the colonial narrative of savagism, which was built to be the antithesis and foil of Euro-American civilization. As Pearce, Berkhofer, and Vizenor all point out, “savage” and “Indian” are constructions, beginning as a creation meant to show what Euro-American civilization was not, moving to a narrative of God-ordained (or at least, destined) progress, shifting to an objectifying ethnographic study of the vanishing Indian, and now stands – though still deeply entrenched in popular and some historical frameworks – at a point of questioning and change. Museums, as one

of the primary custodians of and instructors in this construction, are arguably one of the most pivotal points in the formation and perpetuation of the savage/Indian discourse. As evidenced by NAGPRA and the work of individual Native nations, museums are now reconsidering their roles in that process, if not exactly in those terms, and Native nations are slowly becoming a part of that meaning-making process inherent in the construction of representations.

Having established the groundwork for discussing the import and complexity of rhetorical sovereignty, as well as the history of “Indians” and the institutions that have displayed them, the next chapter will address the means through which I will examine how rhetorical sovereignty is being defined and enacted on three distinct museum sites. Each museum site has ties to Native nations, and using genre theory as the general framework I will explore what kinds of representations are currently made, how they are created, and the ways those representations invoke rhetorical sovereignty.

Chapter Two

Genre Theory as Analytical Lens

Introduction

As covered in the previous chapter, museums are sites for rhetorical work, whether they work unconsciously as a reinforcement of ideological values in the largest sense, or function to foreground a specific set of ideas. Regardless of their scope, museums are not neutral, value-free sites. Also as noted in Chapter One, acknowledgement of rhetorical choices in museums spaces has been made by several scholars in the museum field; they are well aware of the museum-audience relationship, and that recognition has welcomed, in various ways and degrees, a rhetorical approach to understanding the function of the museum.

The methodological underpinnings of this study, then, belong to a certain extent in the same vein as that rhetorical work, although this study takes that body of work a step further in attempting to understand not only what it is museums do in a rhetorical sense, but also how they function in relationship to the goals of rhetorical sovereignty. Using genre theory as the lens for my analysis, in this study I highlight the most prominent genres within the museum whose primary purpose is to address the visitor; analyze how each of these major genres functions to both create a sense of continuity across institutions (reinforcing the museum as a structure) and also serve the individual purposes of each institution (creating change within specific contexts); and examine how each genre may contribute to the creation of a more rhetorically sovereign space within the museum's context. In addition, I address the concepts of "assimilation," "transculturation," "autoethnography," and "indigenization" as they

contribute to and complicate the possibility of rhetorical sovereignty in a museum setting.

Given the general arc of the study as described above, within this chapter I first outline the specific theories of genre and visual rhetoric I draw from to create my analytical tool box; second, I address the advantages and difficulties inherent in applying labels such as “assimilated” or “indigenized” to the data; third, I describe how I understand that theoretical discussion to apply to the general museum structure; fourth, explain how the data for the study were collected, and then finally I provide a brief history and context for the three museum/cultural center institutions that will be included as part of the analysis.

Genre Theory as the Primary Analytical Lens: Foundational Theories

Traditional connotations of “genre” associate it most often with literary formalism and categorical classification of “literary texts,” i.e. poetry, novel, play, etc; however, my study will draw upon the thread of genre theory that has developed within rhetoric studies in the last three decades, a thread that recognizes genre as culturally influenced social action that reaches far beyond “literary” writing and into everyday discourse. Invoking the foundational work of those rhetoricians, I will highlight here the major ideas (and their theorists) which will be informing my analysis.

Genres, or “speech genres” in the case of M. M. Bakhtin, exist in all utterances and all communication, and not just in what might be considered “literary” forms. Bakhtin provides a beginning point for a study of genres because he begins

with the utterance itself, something he understands as a linguistic act that is always in dialogue with another utterance, and is never something articulated in isolation or reducible to its constituent parts. In “The Problem of Speech Genres,” Bakhtin identifies the utterance as the basic unit of communication – not the sentence, which is only a grammatical construction, a “unit of language” – and defines the boundaries of an utterance as a change in speakers, not a change in punctuation (73). Such a move is significant, for it places the emphasis of understanding communication upon the speakers and the act of communication, rather than the linguistic construction itself, and therefore also implies the context within which communicative acts always occur: “Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere” (Bakhtin 91). In other words, utterances are always in dialogue with one another.

Bakhtin’s sense of “speech genres,” as he calls them, derives from utterances in that an utterance is the act of an individual, “but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances,” and these are speech genres (60, emphasis his). In addition, Bakhtin delineates two kinds of speech genres, “primary (simple)” and “secondary (complex)” genres. The first, primary genres, are “genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communication,” for instance, everyday dialogue and letters (62). Secondary genres are those genres such as “novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of

commentary...that absorb and digest primary (simple) genres” (62). A novel qualifies as a secondary genre because it uses the primary genres of dialogue and/or letters as some of its constituent parts, a research article because it draws on collections of data (various in their own right), abstracts, and other researchers’ articles to constitute itself as an utterance. What he underscores by defining speech genres in such a way is both the stability of such utterances as a category, a speech act, and also the extraordinary heterogeneity of the same.

Anne Freedman also understands genre as more than forms or formulas, but in “Anyone for Tennis?” she extends the idea of genre dialogue when she characterizes the notion of genre as a game, an activity that requires interaction, dialogue, play, and context. Lest her metaphor be made reductive, Freedman emphasizes that genre is not meant to be understood as the rules of the game – such a perception would bring genre back to the “recipe” model of pure form (Freedman 46). What she observes are two connected phenomena: the genre itself, including the play involved (not just the rules that shape it), and the “ceremony” surrounding the game, the “...games that situate other games: [ceremonies] are the rules for the setting of a game, for constituting participants as players in that game, for placing and timing it in relation with other places and times. They are the rules for playing of a game [sic], but they are not the rules of the game” (47). As texts and genres do not stand in communicative isolation, Freedman describes them as always interacting with one another – for example, a brief and report, a play and audience response, and essay question with essay and then responding feedback – and these genre/games function

within ceremonies (48). Likewise, genres make up every step of a ceremonial series of actions (47).

Furthermore, Freedman prefers to understand genres on contrastive terms, that is, not understanding genres primarily by what they have in common, but delineating them by what they don't:

The point of a not-statement is to make a distinction between two terms – kinds of texts – which in other respects are described by a like-statement...The 'like' part of the generic description establishes the domain of pertinent comparisons; the 'not' part establishes a boundary, not in the sense of a limitation...but in the sense of locating 'this kind' of text in a space, and vis-à-vis other kinds. The not-statement gives this kind of place among other places. (Freedman 51-2).

In this way, Freedman hopes to avoid an utter social determinism that would argue any genre is so specific to one context that it is found nowhere else; using not-statements, one can understand how genres might be closely related and overlap in function and/or form but are still significantly different: blueprints are like recipes, but blueprints are not recipes (Freedman 49-50). What often makes the significant difference is place – for Freedman, place constitutes genre, be it ceremonial space or literal space (60). In total, human interlocutors are the game players, who take their understanding of rhetorical action from the ceremony that places them in position in time and space, and who play the games/genres in the ceremonial appropriate ways. Freedman emphasizes an action-based orientation to understanding what genre is and

does (and what it is not and does not do), and insists on place as a powerful meaning-maker.

If genres work in dialogue and are highly contextualized kinds of utterances in human activity, then David R. Russell's work, "Rethinking Genre in School and Society," endeavors to begin articulating how genres work in dialogic systems. Drawing on Vygotskian activity theory and Charles Bazerman's initial conception of genre systems,¹⁹ and desiring to underscore the dialogic nature of genres, he emphasizes a broader scope of analysis than "text-as-discourse" and "an expanded theory of dialectic that embraces objects and motives of collectives and their participants to explain reciprocal interactions among people through texts" (Russell 505). To realize these goals, he wedds his understanding of "activity system" – "any ongoing, object-directed, historically conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated human interaction...a family, a religious organization...a political movement, a course of study, a school, a discipline, [etc.]" – to Bazerman's "genre system – "interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings" (Russell 522; Bazerman 97).

Though ultimately Russell reduces genres to "tools" that operate within a given activity system (a problem taken up by Devitt below), what his work does provide is a way to speak both to the ways genres help stabilize a system, but can also change that same system. According to Russell, the genres systems within an activity system (or arguably, make up the activity system) "stabilizes-for-now" the identity

¹⁹ See "Systems of Genres and the Enactment of Social Intentions," by Charles Bazerman, in Freedman and Medway's collection Genre and the New Rhetoric, 79-101.

and function of the activity system by both constituting and reproducing the kinds of activities and responses within that system (Russell 520). At the same time, no one individual belongs to only one activity system; for Russell, individual identity comes from the intersection of participation in multiple activity systems (519, 524), but that influence of multiple activity systems moves back outward from the individual as that person makes generic choices within those systems. Often, “people in activity systems mutually appropriate ways of writing from other activity systems,” so that a participant might apply one genre from one activity system into another, with the result that others in the group appropriate it/respond to it and the genre system changes, or put a genre from one system to a very different use within the familiar system and in doing so, create a cascade of change within the genre system and the activity system (522). However, that same participation in multiple activity systems can create contradictions and “double binds,” positions in which an individual is asked to take on the role/or genres in one system that do not function well together. It is a dynamic, dialectical operation, Russell maintains, and the power within those systems “is analyzable in terms of dialectical contradictions in activity systems, manifest in specific tools-in-use (including written genres) that people marshal when they are at cross-purposes...some people (and some tools) have greater and lesser influence than others because of their dynamic position(s) in tool-mediated systems or networks” (523-4). For Russell, the best option for change in an unbalanced power structure is for individuals to appropriate the genres of the more powerful systems and then potentially transform those genres and those systems (538).

But rather than being only tools, as in Russell's activity-system frame, genres are social actions in and of themselves. In "Genre as Social Action," Carolyn R. Miller argues for understanding genre not as a reductionist technique for categorization, but instead as rhetorical, social action that occurs in typified situations. She proposes that "a theoretically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish...[the] genre classification I am advocating is, in effect, ethnomethodological: it seeks to explicate the knowledge that practice [regarding any given genre] creates" (Miller, "Genre" 24, 27). That knowledge, as her "ethnomethodological" descriptor suggests, is socially constructed and based in a culturally and socially contingent situation, not in an objective, value-free situation ("Genre" 29). Therefore, understanding what a genre does means understanding the circumstances in which a genre is invoked – for genres are supposed to be a kind of communication that fulfills a particular exigence, or need. If those circumstances are socially constructed – that is, the perception of the circumstances and the need to communicate are constructed by a group ("Genre" 30), or part of a system as Russell argues – then genre, too, is a particular structure that was/is created to meet that communicative need. The knowledge inherent in that created exigence, and also the genre, provides roles for the actors involved, screens what kinds of information is appropriate, and gives shape and space to communication. Consequently,

[s]tudying the typical uses of rhetoric, and the forms that it takes in those uses, tells us less about...the excellence of particular texts than it

does about the character of a culture or a historical period...genre embodies an aspect of cultural rationality. For the critic, genres can serve both as an index to cultural patterns...for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community. (Miller, "Genre" 31, 39).

Therefore, genres working in systems are social actions working in systems. According to Amy J. Devitt, genres are a human construct that function within communities of variously intimate levels of connection. The people who participate in these groups (as individuals or as part of a group) take action through the genres of their communities, though the genres they use "are typically multiple and ideological [in their function] as well as situational" (Devitt 64), and therefore not reducible to tools. Interpreting what a given genre does often requires participation in that genre, and though the genres within any community "commonly [reveal their] social functions with characteristic discourse features," because of the participatory nature of genre that interpretation may never be finished. Furthermore, genres do not act in isolation, but with each other in multi-layered ways through what Devitt calls genre sets, genre repertoires, and genre systems. A "genre set" she defines as "the genres that exist within a sphere of activity" (54); a "genre system" is a "a set of genres interacting to achieve an overarching function within an activity system...a genre set identifiable by those who use it that has clearly linked genres with a common purpose" (56); and a "genre repertoire" is "the set of genres that a group owns, acting through which a group achieves all of its purposes, not just those connected with a

particular activity,” and genre systems can be part of a larger genre repertoire (57). Devitt herself states that she does not intend this list to be the cover-definition for all genres, but that it can attempt to “capture...some of the complexity of society as it is reflected in the complexity of genre” (Devitt 64).

Returning to Russell’s characterization of genres as “tools” in an activity system, Devitt voices the concern that while such a metaphorical labeling does help map genres in all their complexity in human use in systems of activity, it also emphasizes genre more as a thing than an action, and isolates genre as an object from the people who use it – with the result of sidelining action and agency from the discussion (47). Devitt observes that the analysis of genres-as-tools tends to be restricted to the level of operation, only as a means to action, not the action itself (47). “It is not a far step,” she writes, “from equating genre with the use of tools to equating a genre with form; nor is it a far step from equating genre with a ‘routine operation, usually unconscious ([Russell] 515) to equating genre with formula. To the extent that genre becomes a tool, it loses its rhetorical nature” (Devitt 48). It is her preference, then, to retain genre-as-action as a primary label, rather than “tool,” and to privilege the understanding of genres from the point of view of the users, rather than separating genre as a thing from the people who use it. In terms of her method, then, when doing focused analysis of genre in real-world situations as part of activity systems, Devitt emphasizes the knowledge and use of a genre system as articulated by the users of the genre system themselves in order to foreground how they communicate with and through genre – that is, how they understand the action they

take within and across the systems they participate in, rather than attempting to map genres as only tools-in-use by an autonomous activity system. Conversely, Devitt wishes to avoid the trap of understanding genres as agents themselves that function over or even without people. Such an approach assumes too much power on the part of a genre, that it controls people's actions or works alone (48). As others before have asserted, "...it is instead the nature of genre both to be created by people and to influence people's actions, to help people achieve their goals and to encourage people to act in certain ways, to be both-and" (Devitt 48-49).

However, if genre is a social action, then genres are not simply a matter of recurrence; they are a matter of reproduction, and as such wield power. Miller argues, "What the notion of reproduction adds is the action of participants: social actors *create* recurrence in their actions by reproducing the structural aspects of institutions, by using available structures as the medium of their action and thereby producing those structures again as virtual outcomes..." (Miller, "Rhetorical Community" 71, emphasis hers). As a result, genres can be understood as "a specific and important constituent of society, a major aspect of its communicative structure, one of the structures of power that institutions wield ("Rhetorical" 71). An individual must use – that is, reproduce – the communicative structures available in order to be acknowledged by institutions or peers, and the institution must provide the structures through which individuals communicate. Ultimately, the "mutual, cultural knowledge that enables individual actors to communicate as competent participants includes structures of interaction, of exigence, of participant roles, and of other rules and

resources. Genres...help do our rhetorical thinking for us” (“Rhetorical” 72). On a large scale, Miller concludes that genres are

conventionalized and highly intricate ways of marshalling rhetorical resources such as narration and figuration. In their *pragmatic* dimension, genres not only help real people in spatio-temporal communities do their work and carry out their purposes; they also help virtual communities, the relationships we carry around in our heads, to reproduce and reconstruct themselves, to continue their stories.

(“Rhetorical” 75)

In sum, genre is not just a social action, but also one that is constructed, mediated, reproduced, and therefore weighted with the cultural capital within particular institutions or communities.

But what happens if, as Russell argues, a genre is removed from one particular context and employed in another, especially given its particular cultural weight within the original context? Kathleen M. Jamieson asserts, “it is sometimes rhetorical genres and not rhetorical situations that are decisively formative” (Jamieson 406), resulting in a transfer of meaning/social power that may or may not make sense within a new context. In her frequently cited article, “Antecedent Genre as Rhetorical Constraint,” Jamieson examines how preceding genres often affect communication in new situations; speakers and writers draw from previously established genres to respond to an unfamiliar situation, and in the process the antecedent genres contribute to the framing of the new situation – sometimes with results that respond well to the

situation, and sometimes not. One example of several that Jamieson cites is the American “State of the Union” address, the history of which demonstrates the ample staying power and meaning-making influence of antecedent genres. Though the framers of the Constitution strove to eliminate the influence of monarchy and monarchial thinking in their construction of a new system of government, the formal genres of communication (and therefore the framing of context, role assignment, and language) between king and parliament persisted. When asked to compose regular addresses to Congress that reported on the state of the union and recommended legislation, George Washington’s response was a speech styled after the traditional English “King’s Speech,” not because he desired to invoke the monarchy, but because that was the genre he knew (411-12). As a response, Congress drafted an “echoing speech,” the traditional parliamentary response to the “King’s Speech,” a genre that called for the repetition of and unilateral approval of the king’s address (411). Invoking such genres provoked protest, for the action required Congress not only to agree with the President in totality, but also take a servile tone that was inappropriate for an equal branch of government. This monarchial genre tradition was not abandoned until 1800, but even in 1913 members of Congress still felt unease at an oral address to Congress from the president until Woodrow Wilson assured them that no reply was expected (414). Only then, Jamieson asserts, was the “King’s Speech” tradition finally adequately distanced from the “State of the Union” address in such a way that Congress – and citizens – felt no threat from the antecedent genre. To add to her previous assertions, Jamieson concludes, “[analysis] of...the early state of the

union addresses and their replies suggests...that severe constraints are imposed on rhetor and audience once a generic antecedent is permitted to anchor a response, and that the manacles of an inappropriate genre may be broken with varying degrees of difficulty” (Jamieson 414).

The middle ground that can be sought in balancing genre between a power structure and a individual (or group) agency, according to Devitt, is to name genre as a rhetorical social action, one that functions both as a constraint upon a person’s communicative options, but one that also provides a source of creativity and agency. She draws from creativity theory, and specifically Charles Hampden-Turner’s application of “vertical thinking,” which is thinking that “begins with a given paradigm and works to fit new data (or ideas) into the paradigm,” and “lateral thinking,” which “generates several new paradigms and tries them out on the data or ideas” (152). Along generic lines, in lateral thinking “the writer or reader must perceive a genre by converging many unique texts into a single pattern, a genre”; in vertical thinking, “the writer or reader creates a unique text within a genre by seeing how this text can diverge within the common pattern, the genre” (152). All of this to say, a writer or reader of a genre both learns to perceive patterns and understand texts in terms of a particular pattern, but that the same pattern may be altered to fit the needs of the writer/reader, and a different kind of action is taken within the same generic parameters. Genre is dynamic. Genre also has ideological consequence, for it has the potential to reduce complex situations to generic types that narrow understanding; furthermore, if genres have institutional backing, people are less likely

to look for details that do not fit the pattern or even question the genre's validity (Devitt 159). Genres can "[make] themselves true," in that if people perceive new information through one genre, then they will often automatically classify what they observe within the categories they already have (160). Furthermore, "a genre reflects, constructs, and reinforces the values, epistemology, and power relationships of the group from which it developed and for which it functions," though with varying degrees of force, depending on the community and the genre (63). This is not to argue for the understanding of genre as a kind of ideological slavery, however – as Devitt observes, genres are transmitted through individuals, individuals who belong at a nexus of circumstances, and who will often translate the use of a particular genre into a new context in creative (or even inadvertently imperfect) ways (161). Devitt concludes her argument with an observation few genre theorists would protest:

Without genres, writers would lack significant ways of understanding their experiences and of making meaning through language. With genres, writers are subject to the manipulation of others and to the constraints of prior expectations, assumptions, values, and beliefs. Janus-like, genres inevitably look both ways at once, encompassing convergence and divergence, similarity and difference, standardization and variation, constraint and creativity. (Devitt 162)

As the previous section demonstrates, genre theory has ramifications far beyond an understanding of poetry or the novel. Genre is dialogic and rooted in all utterances, not in form (or literary form, specifically); a genre is something that can

only be understood in all the context that surrounds it, including the other genres it interacts with. Those interactions can be classified into complex systems of genres, though care must be taken to understand genre as a human action and not merely a tool, lest the rhetorical dimensions of genre go unnoticed. This understanding of genre as social action also suggests that as social action genres have ideological and cultural power; therefore, genres can convey and reveal ideological roles and privilege. Within these systems of genres – which can complement, overlap, and contradict one another as people put them into use – participants in the genre systems may also use the genres they have inherited from other systems and translate them into new contexts, appropriate or not, with varying consequences. Because genres provide both the structure/constraint for communicative action as much as variation/creativity, as part of communicative action genres can be used to influence the actions of others and frame understanding in potentially narrow ways even as much as they can be sources of creative action.

Visual Rhetoric and Genres

The question that arises when applying genre theory to museums is how one might understand something other than a printed piece of text²⁰ to be a genre, for instance, a museum exhibit. While it may have printed textual elements to it – perhaps labels, historical documents, or image captions – museum exhibits are often multimedia affairs that employ strong visual and sometimes aural and tactile

²⁰ Spoken genres, of course, are also widely acknowledged and recognized; as noted above regarding Bakhtin, utterances, and “speech genres,” for example, the concept of genre often finds itself rooted first in spoken forms. However, for the purposes of this study and the material it undertakes, the focus will remain primarily on those genres that communicate chiefly through visual means.

elements. For that matter, the visuals are mostly what are privileged, in the form of images, objects, videos, and more; given that museum visitors only spend a limited amount of time reading labels, most museums limit how much printed text may be displayed with an exhibit for fear of boring visitors who tend to be more visually oriented and might not read labels anyway.

However, the distinction between printed text and image text is an artificial one, for both are technically “visual”; one “can never make meaning with language alone; there must always be a visual or vocal realization of linguistic signs that also carries nonlinguistic meaning (e.g., tone of voice or style of orthography)” (Lemke 72). The font, arrangement of printed text, ink colors, and placement in relationship to other texts (printed or visual) already send readers messages about how to understand what they find in the language. The printed word itself is a visual representation of language, making the distinction between words and graphics (or objects, in the case of an exhibit) impossible to maintain. They are both visuals. In addition, most communication is already a kind of “hybrid blending of visual, written, and aural forms, and the new electronic technologies are making this melding of media easier and more common...” (Hill 109). As W. J. T. Mitchell argues, “[All] media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no ‘purely’ visual or verbal arts” (qtd. by Hill, 109).

Furthermore, as both categories – however artificial they might be – are capable of guiding viewer/reader understanding, they are both distinctly rhetorical. As

Rosemary E. Hampton describes it, the author of a given text²¹ “can control ‘seeing’ so that ‘seeing’ becomes seeing through the author’s interpretation and intention in discourse” (Hampton 347). The author can control what the reader/viewer encounters, therefore guiding interpretation in one direction or another. That interpretation happens in part in the interaction between printed and image-based texts both as they are set up by an author, and yet also as they are read by a reader/viewer: “[every] time we make meaning by reading a text or interpreting a graph or picture we do so by connecting the symbols at hand to other texts and other images read, heard, seen, or imagined on other occasions (the principle of general *intertextuality*...)” (Lemke 73, emphasis in original). This intertextuality does not only happen between text and individual, but also “as part of larger systems of practices that hold a society together” (Lemke 75), suggesting that meaning-making happens in part through individual associations between what is viewed and what is evoked, and also through societal structures that function to organize meaning-making.

If the visual is rhetorical, and is already a common element in the texts one encounters both in terms of printed representation on a page and the images that are also present, one could expect visual elements to figure into what genres are, and could also expect to find some genres whose primary foundations are imagistic, even three-dimensional. In many ways, it is a matter of acknowledging the visual meaning-making that has been going on all along, but gone unrecognized due to a privileging of printed text over image text. In addition to examining the brochures and publicity

²¹ And by “text,” I intend anything linguistic, imagistic, or a combination of the two; ultimately, other sensory inputs could be included as well, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

literature that one might more immediately identify as printed “genres,” the exploration of textual meaning-making will be extended here to museum/cultural center exhibits and gift shops as complex genres that are intended to be read (visually) in a particular way by visitors, and are part of the larger systems of genres at work in the museum/cultural center at large.

Applying Genre Theory in a Museum Context

By drawing on the work above, in this study I characterize a museum or cultural center – social collective(s) of people working toward common purposes that each is – as an activity system with multiple genre systems and an overall genre repertoire with multiple textual elements (printed, imagistic, etc.) at work within them. As such, one may read the many utterances of the museum as an ongoing conversation, as replies to what has been said before. And as utterances that follow communicative patterns developed in the past, many of today’s museum/cultural center’s genre systems are drawn from inherited genres and genre systems from the historical construct of “museum” and translated into new contexts.

If museums and cultural centers may be characterized in terms of genres, genre systems, and genre repertoires, one may also make the argument that what is articulated in these institutions is rhetorical social action with consequence and ideological power. Museum/cultural center genres and genre systems have their own “ceremonial” contexts (“ceremonial” à la Freedman), and participate in larger societal “ceremonials” to forward particular goals and not others, as the discussion of the previous chapter has suggested. Within this social generic action, one may come to

understand in tangible terms the ideological privileging of one discourse over another, in this case how the discourse of savagism and civilization manifested itself and how the related museum paradigms are still in the process of change. But, as the previous discussion has also noted, the shift in museums and the changes now taking place are far from straightforward; these institutions are social systems with interlocking and sometimes contradictory genres and genre systems, especially given the colonial inheritance that comes with the museum structure. However, even as genre systems provide some constraint on their users, there is possibility for change in how the individuals involved may wield, alter, retranslate, or discard those genres and genre systems.

As the description below indicates, however general it may be, museums and cultural centers are activity systems packed with genres communicating to the visitor, sometimes in concert and sometimes across one another in apparently contradictory ways. When observed, the average encounter with a museum or cultural center is a complex set of overlapping genres throughout the museum genre repertoire. As a visitor approaches the building, its very architecture will suggest what is inside; walking into the foyer, she may need to buy a ticket, will likely see advertisements for the gift shop and banners for the major exhibits, and will be given a museum map and an abridged description of the purpose and layout of the exhibits she will want to see. The exhibits themselves will be grouped in a particular way – for instance, chronologically, thematically, or by the media of the objects in question – and there will be explanatory labeling to guide her comprehension and attractive arrangement

to catch her eye. Often there will be a video of some kind, either as an exhibit in itself or as an explanatory text for a near-by exhibit. Surrounding the visitor will be other visitors who are present for various purposes (education, research, tourism, or curiosity), docents who provide guided tours of the exhibits, custodians, curators (who may remain behind the scenes or give the tours themselves), volunteer greeters, and possibly security guards. And then, upon finishing her tour of the exhibits, she will be encouraged to visit the gift shop with its books, postcards, posters, T-shirts, and collectibles, for the purpose of selecting and taking a little piece of her visit to this museum home with her.

The focus of this study will be on the genres and genre systems that a visitor encounters in a museum/cultural center setting: first, the genre system of publicity literature, including informational pamphlets, maps, exhibit leaflets, and short histories often available to a visitor at the entrance; second, the museum exhibit as a complex secondary genre that often uses many primary, multi-media genres such as pictures, photos, artwork, artifacts, labels, video, and interactive components in its construction; and finally, the gift shop, as another kind of “exhibit” that includes a range of merchandise, which often encompasses items advertised as Native-made, product descriptions, proofs of “authenticity,” gift books about the museums, educational materials, exclusive art collectables. One could easily spend an entire study on only the publicity/orientation literature, exhibits, or gift shops, but the scope of this project will remain largely on the genre systems or secondary genres themselves rather than an extensively detailed study of each individual genre, for the

sake of maintaining a larger sense of how these genres are used to create representations of Native peoples to a museum/cultural center's visitors and ultimately function as a genre repertoire.

This project will also focus exclusively on how the staff and institutions as a whole have used these genres to speak, and not on visitor response, for the following reasons: first, visitor studies are projects unto themselves and merit in-depth studies of their own; and second, the questions of this study focus on rhetorical sovereignty as, to reiterate, Native nations' pursuit of "the inherent right...to determine their communicative needs and ...to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse" (Lyons "Rhetorical Sovereignty..." 449-50), as opposed to visitor reception. Within these genre systems, how is rhetorical sovereignty enacted? Given that the genres and genre systems selected are the material meeting points between institutions (and the people who work within them) and the visitor, they are the optimal choice for a discussion of how the Native nations involved in – who take social action with – these genres represent themselves to the visitor.

Furthermore, these genre systems are explored across three different institutional settings, for the sake of understanding how, as Joanne Barker and others observe, enacting sovereignty in any form is dependent upon the context. Three different institutions are a part of this study, providing a range of settings with varying levels and kinds of Native influence: the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Haskell Indian Nations University's Cultural Center

and Museum (HCCM), and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways (Ziibiwing). The first, the NMAI, is one of multiple branches of the United States government-sponsored Smithsonian Museums operated out of Washington, D.C.; the HCCM is a part of the Haskell Indian Nations University's campus, an institution originally organized under the Bureau of Indian Affairs but now with considerable Native leadership; and Ziibiwing, a tribally owned, community-based center located on the Isabella reservation immediately outside of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. With the data collected, it is my goal to demonstrate both the continuity of these genres as part of an identifiable museum structure/genre repertoire that the three distinct institutions have in common, while simultaneously highlighting the individual use to which these shared genres and genre systems have been put and the varying kinds of rhetorical sovereignty that have been invoked within each setting.

The data for this study were collected through two visits to each museum/cultural center and photographing the major permanent exhibits²² and gift shops; interviewing the curators who created the exhibits as well as other related personnel (in person, by phone, or via email); and collecting the literature available to visitors including publicity pamphlets, abridged histories, maps, exhibit advertisements, gift books, etc. Using these materials, I did a textual analysis through their content, language, organization (including spatial), and invoked audience, to understand intended audiences, purpose, voice, and exigence (the rhetorical situation

²² As the changing exhibits contribute to any museum, but do not form its definitive backbone, my focus remains on the permanent exhibits that define the purpose of each place.

they function in), and to delineate the textual features and uses they had in common to establish the continuity across the museum/cultural center structure as well as the definitive markers that indicated their use in their individual rhetorical settings. In addition, especially through the interviews, I sought to establish in what ways those museum/cultural centers and the genres they produce for public consumption construct the Native peoples who are the subjects of the museum/cultural center, and how sovereignty was understood to be established through representations.

The genres themselves were collected during both visits to each site, and all the publications available free-of-charge to visitors were gathered, even those that did not pertain directly to the museum but set a contextual understanding for how the museum/cultural center was represented (such as maps to other historical landmarks in the area, tribal newspapers, etc.). In addition, gift books/museum guides were purchased where available, as these publications' purposes often include a summation of the purpose of the respective institution and lengthier explanations of exhibits than the free literature. As I could not "collect" the exhibits as I did the visitor information, I photographed the permanent exhibits as a supplement to the information provided in the museum guides. The same applies to the museum gift shops, and in addition to photographs, I made a survey of the items available for sale and their attendant descriptions.

The interviews were conducted after a preliminary visit to each museum/cultural center site, and took place primarily with the curators of the respective institutions as well as other relevant personnel involved (architects,

organizers, staff members). The interviews began with a list of questions asking the interviewees basic questions concerning their backgrounds with their respective institutions and how they perceived the general genre systems to function (using the more-often used terms “publicity literature,” “exhibits,” and “gift shop and inventory”). I specifically asked them to identify what they perceived those functions to be, and who the imagined audience for these textual sites was. Then, given the context-based nature of sovereignty, interviewees were asked to define what they believe “sovereignty” to mean in general and within the context of the institution for which they worked, if they perceived it as relevant. As sovereignty is a much-discussed concept in Indian Country, a discussion of that would not seem particularly leading and rather, if anything, appear essential – as one interviewee put it about his museum, “This is where sovereignty happens!”. Following the questions concerning sovereignty, I asked for an open-ended description of what they believed to be the successes and struggles their particular institutions have encountered. The interviews lasted approximately at least one hour each, but often were two hours or more in length.

This study uses the resulting data to describe the observed genres and genre systems that appear to exist across the three museum/cultural centers; to define the goals that each genre/genre system works to realize, both at the level of practical use and at the level of rhetorically sovereign representation; to demonstrate the dialogic interplay (both in terms of support and contradiction) of the genre systems involved; and to observe what configurations of epistemologies and ideologies regarding

representation are reflected in the genre/genre systems as they exist in their respective institutions. It must also be acknowledged that external factors – funding, for example, and the expectations of the people who provide it – also play a distinct role in what these institutions are able to do with creating literature or exhibits, and therefore the data provided here are in that sense limited in scope. The final section here provides some context for those institutions involved for the sake of providing an overall sketch; but first, the issue of labeling must be addressed.

Assimilation, Transculturation, Autoethnography, and Indigenization

The questions of how, why, and to what effect Native nations' use of the European museum structure has been accomplished are not easily ignored, as they always shadow what Native-associated or Native-based museum/cultural centers do. Is using Euro-American museum structures a public display of assimilation of Euro-American discourse and representation, a selling-out on the last vestiges of “authentic” Nativeness (however that may be defined) and a final buying-in to a non-Native world view? Or is it an act of transculturation, the motion of “subordinated or marginal groups select[ing] and invent[ing] from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (Pratt 6)? Is it an autoethnographic act, one whose goal is to “represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms...in dialogue with the metropolitan representations” (Pratt 7)? Or is it the ultimate act of indigenization, one – that like the Native appropriation of the English language and Christian ritual – “speaks of the creative ability of Indian people [to]

gather in many forms...the socio-political colonizing force which beset them and to make these forms meaningful in their own terms” (Ortiz 254)?

The answer is, to a certain extent, all of the above. Even as definitions of sovereignty are contextually based, the answers to such questions will depend on the situation and the position of the observer, and like Clifford’s interpretation of “contact zone,”²³ no one term can entirely encompass describe all the interactions that go on. Yet what can be said with some certainty is that Native peoples strategically deploy varying representations to accomplish their purposes for a heterogeneous audience,²⁴ and furthermore, actions that appear contradictory may also have functions that make sense within a larger framework. For example, Mary Lawlor observes in her work on self-representation across Native museums, casinos, and powwows, there is often a seemingly paradoxical use of “essentialized” Native identity alongside historical narratives of change and contemporary life in a globalized setting. These strands are not mutually exclusive, she argues via Stuart Hall and his “pragmatics” of essentialism in decolonization; rather, in her interpretation, essentialized notions and representations of self provide “ ‘a still point in a turning world’ ” one may always refer to, even as Native peoples are constructing self-representations to be used in a “postmodern” global context (Hall, as qtd. by Lawlor, 12-13). Therefore, “essential ideas of representation can function as a

²³ See Chapter One.

²⁴ And because of the heterogeneous nature of the audience, any effort towards representation has the potential for unintended consequences; for example, regardless of the efforts of a Native nation to put forth its history and culture in a state-of-the-art cultural center or museum, it would still be entirely possible for visitors who still carry strong versions of the Euro-American “Indian” image to misinterpret what they see according to that image.

gathering place for Native peoples even as the contemporary historical narrative is simultaneously present (Lawlor 14). On the other hand, it cannot be denied that some deployments of essentialized Native identity have turned towards a language of purity and racism that relies on Euro-American formations of race, and “postmodernism” (at least in the sense of fragmentation) is not always easily indigenized or even made useful through transculturation.

Much depends upon the context. Within a specific museum/cultural center site, all of the above questions regarding assimilation, transculturation, autoethnography, and indigenization are being negotiated by Native peoples (and the individuals involved) who shape these places, who create the rhetorical representations that speak a variety of things to both Native and non-Native audiences. Therefore, I approach these sites as places of always-negotiated and polysemous meaning that nonetheless seek to be reaffirming gathering points for Native identity, representation, and sovereignty. While I cannot possibly outline every plausible meaning for every representation, what I attempt to do is describe what these genres – assimilated, or appropriated, transculturated, or indigenized, depending on context and viewer – do to create the respective representations of Native communities and fulfill the stated missions at the museums and cultural centers included in this study.

Providing the Background: Three Brief Institutional Histories

As stated above, the three institutions this study examines are the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (hereafter referred to as the

NMAI), Haskell Indian Nations University's Haskell Cultural Center and Museum (the HCCM), and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways (Ziibiwing). All have been opened since 2002, making them part of the most recent work involving Native museums, though all three are relatively diverse in their backgrounds.

I have selected three institutions for the primary purpose of avoiding binary comparisons and to provide a wider range of contexts. These particular three institutions offer a distinct range: one is operated by the federal government as part of a larger scholarly enterprise that collaborates with Native peoples but still maintains ownership; the second is still under the auspices of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs but has more autonomy within a Native university setting and can determine much of its own programming; and the third is entirely tribally owned and operated and independent of U.S. government control. These museum/cultural centers also move from a Western-hemispherical, all-encompassing attempt at representation, to that of 150 tribes who have members with a history and an education in common, to that of one tribe telling its history. Such a diversity of contexts set next to each other provides a frame through which to explore how sovereignty in representation may be enacted. For the purposes of beginning to set that frame, included below are brief historical sketches of the NMAI, the HCCM, and Ziibiwing, each institution's guiding mission statement, descriptions of the sites, and anticipated/observed audiences.

The NMAI is the museum that has received the most press, given its high-profile nature as a branch of the Smithsonian Institution. As noted in Chapter One, the NMAI was established by Congress under the National Museum of the American Indian Act in 1989. The legislation was an important precursor to the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act that passed the following year, and set a national precedent for museums that had Native American objects and remains as part of their collections. The Smithsonian itself had come into an exceptionally large collection of Native American artifacts by way of George Gustav Heye (pronounced “high”), a “great vacuum cleaner of a collector” who acquired more than 800,000 objects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from across North and South America²⁵ (Small 1; “About the National Museum of the American Indian”). Heye opened his own museum, the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, in 1916 in New York as a home for his collection. In 1990, Heye’s Museum of the American Indian became part of the Smithsonian Institution, and so it is from Heye’s collection that the present NMAI has a great deal of its foundation.

As a result of the NMAI Act and NAGPRA, and with the acquisition of the Heye Foundation’s collections, the present NMAI has three branches: the new NMAI site on the National Mall in Washington D.C., the primary location for NMAI exhibits and the centerpiece of the NMAI opened in September 2004; the NMAI Cultural Resources Center, the housing for the collections, archives, and the NMAI

²⁵The extent of Heye’s collecting may be noted in that his acquisitions included both two *Ahayu:da* from the Zuni and items from the Kwakiutl potlatch arrests of December 1921 described in the previous chapter; the *Ahayu:da* were repatriated in 1990, likely as a result of the new Smithsonian ownership and NAGPRA, as were the identifiable Kwakiutl items in 1992 (Ferguson et al, 242, and Jacknis 268, 273).

research programs, opened in 1999 in Suitland, Maryland; and the George Gustav Heye Center, the New York branch of the NMAI and a smaller-scale exhibition space, opened in 1994 in the U.S. Custom House (“NMAI in Washington D.C.”, “NMAI in Maryland”, and “NMAI in New York”).

The mission statement – a museum’s public declaration of purpose – is important in that it defines for its institution what that institution does; it is one of its defining points. As such, the NMAI had the task of defining its purpose along the new lines of NAGPRA rather than previous lines, for instance those described by the National Museum of Natural History, which held many Native artifacts and human remains for more than a century. The National Museum of Natural History’s current mission statement, for example, reads, “The [Natural History] Museum is dedicated to inspiring curiosity, discovery, and learning about the natural world through its unparalleled research, collections, exhibitions, and education outreach programs” and “serves as one of the world’s great repositories of scientific and cultural heritage as well as a source of tremendous pride for all Americans” (“About the Museum: Introduction to the National Museum of Natural History”). By contrast, the NMAI’s mission statement, as set forth in the 2007-2008 Programs and Services Guide, asserts

The National Museum of the American Indian is committed to advancing knowledge and understanding of Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere – past, present, and future – through partnership with Native people and others. The museum works to support the

continuance of culture, traditional values, and transitions in contemporary Native life. (77)

In addition, on the more accessible “Visitor Information” section of the NMAI website, the mission statement is echoed again, in terms that set it apart from other Smithsonian museums:

[The NMAI] is the first national museum dedicated to the preservation, study and exhibition of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of Native Americans...the museum works in collaboration with the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to protect and foster their cultures by reaffirming traditions and beliefs, encouraging contemporary artistic expression, and empowering the Indian voice. (“About the National Museum of the American Indian”)

Rather than a repository of scientific knowledge, the NMAI emphasizes its difference, however subtly, from past museum traditions – even within the Smithsonian system – and underscores Native collaboration and living cultures as the hallmarks of its purpose.

This mission is reflected in the NMAI Mall site itself. For the purposes of this study, the Washington, D.C. site takes precedence, as it has the highest public profile and in many ways, given its location on the National Mall, it is the most accessible and therefore the point of interest (from here on, when referring to the NMAI, I mean the D.C. site unless otherwise noted). In contrast to neo-classical marble and granite structures surrounding it, the NMAI building is a curvilinear Kasota sandstone

structure, and attempts to capture both the organic lines of a natural landscape, but also symbols in various Native peoples' cosmologies. Outside the museum, four botanical environments native to the Chesapeake Bay area have taken the place of standard landscaping, and four boulders – from Maryland, Canada, Hawai'i, and Chile – serve as markers to the cardinal directions and are seated among 40 other Grandfather Rocks. Inside, the large sky-lit atrium is a place for displays and performances, and the rest of the four-story building houses the permanent exhibits on Native belief (Our Universes), history (Our Peoples), and contemporary life (Our Lives), space for traveling exhibits, the two theaters with video presentations, a resource center, two gift shops, and a café featuring foods inspired by regional Native cuisine. The architecture and exhibits were created with extensive Native collaboration, and much of what is for sale in the gift shops is Native-made. Among the Smithsonian museums, the NMAI is singular in respect to the degree of Native involvement with the creation and maintenance of its facilities and exhibitions.

Given that the NMAI is part of the extensive Smithsonian complex on the National Mall, it comes as no surprise that the NMAI anticipates an audience that may be overwhelmed by the size of the site, and so will need specific guidance to find what they wish to see; according to the NMAI curators interviewed (Dr. Ann McMullen and Emil Her Many Horses), the NMAI's primary visitors are tourists, family groups and school groups, and likely these tourists are seeing the NMAI as part of a tour of Washington, D.C. (personal interviews). Curator Paul Chaat Smith recalls that in the process of designing the Our Peoples exhibit, he was repeatedly

admonished that the Smithsonian Institute's sense of its visitors was of an audience with a 7th grade education ("Making History at the National Museum..." 393), and that exhibits (and presumably associated productions) should be aimed at that demographic. However, Her Many Horses also pointed out that he observed Native visitors coming to the NMAI as well (personal interview), and the importance of the museum to Native communities was made manifest in the thousands who attended its opening. The NMAI therefore anticipates a non-Native tourist audience and (if more implicitly) a Native audience.

Like the Smithsonian, Haskell Indian Nations University has a beginning grounded in the 19th-century ethos of civilization and progress, but its cultural center reveals the drastic change in purpose since its founding. Though Haskell began as the Bureau of Indian Affairs-sponsored United States Indian Industrial Training School in Lawrence, KS, in 1884 – an assimilation boarding school for Native children – it is now the only multi-tribal university in the United States, with over 1,000 students from 150 federally recognized tribes ("Haskell Indian Nations University Cultural Center and Museum" 2-3). The current courses of study offered vary significantly from the original Euro-American centered curriculum of vocational work, farming, and homemaking; current students may take degrees in American Indian studies, environmental science, business administration, or elementary education, all done with "the perspective of various Native American cultures" incorporated into the curriculum ("Haskell..." 3). Its transition has been gradual, but from 1884 and the

semi-military style education in grades one through five, to the present university curriculum grounded in Native perspectives, the change has been 180 degrees.

It is within this context that the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum (HCCM) was opened in September of 2002. The vision statement, in its entirety, reads

The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is dedicated in remembrance of the first Haskell students in 1884, and to all students who have attended Haskell. The vision of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is to serve as a national center for the study of living American Indian traditions. The museum will provide present day and historical information regarding North American Indian/Alaska Native culture through exhibitions, educational programs, and research. Drawing upon the Sacred Circle as the foundation for the North American/Alaska Native philosophy, the Museum will also provide Haskell students with archives and museum classes and training that are focused on oral traditions and the spiritual dimension of objects of power needed to prepare them for careers in tribal archives and tribal museums. (“Haskell...” 3).

The HCCM’s emphasis, like the NMAI, is on living Native cultures, though the dedication to past and present Haskell students immediately sets it within a different context. For the HCCM, the road to emphasizing living Native culture does not end with the education of the general public within an extensive museum system, but rather diverges and makes its way to a place open to the general public, but created

primarily for the education of and use by the students at Haskell. That is not to say that the Smithsonian does not have its own Native curation programs – it does, primarily at the Suitland, Maryland site – but that those goals are not made primary in its mission statement; “collaboration” with Native peoples is an emphasis, but how and where is not explained, at least not in that space.

Haskell’s first displayed exhibit, titled Honoring Our Children through Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change, and Celebration, reflects the significance of that student audience, both past and present, in how it seeks to “honor the first students at Haskell as well as all of the students that attended boarding schools across the country. The exhibit celebrates the strength and resilience of the students and their contributions to what has become Haskell today” (“Haskell...” 1). In addition, the exhibit honors all Haskell students who have served in the U.S. military. Without discussing the exhibit itself much further – I will take it up again in Chapter Four – it helps to illustrate the HCCM’s purpose both as a center for study of Native cultures like the NMAI and as a place dedicated to a more precise audience.

As such an institution, the HCCM is a two-level Florida cypress-log building surrounded by the Garden of Healing, a garden landscape growing native Kansan medicinal plants and bordered by the stones from some of the first buildings on the Haskell campus. The building stones invoke the children who lived and were often abused within those walls; a “Peace Pole” from the World Peace Prayer Society and the Tree of Peace offer the counterbalance (Love and Webster 1-2). In front of the Garden of Healing is also the Native Veteran’s Memorial, which has as its center

piece the bronze “War Mother” sculpture. Inside, the floor of the display area contains a reproduction of Haskell’s Medicine Wheel, an earthwork on the south edge of the campus that students use for religious purposes. The building houses an exhibit of Haskell Indian Nations University history – the ongoing Honoring Our Children exhibition – and an exhibit dedicated to the Haskell veterans, as well as displays of Haskell student artwork. In addition, the HCCM accommodates the university’s own collection of Native objects and artwork, the Frank A. Rinehart collection of glass-plate negatives of Native portraits from the Trans-Mississippi Exposition and Indian Congress of 1898, and the university archives (“Haskell...” 2).

In terms of the audience the HCCM has in mind, as the dedication above indicates the priority is with the Haskell community, and then the larger non-Native public. As stated in the “Cultural Center and Museum” section of the HCCM brochure, “The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum provides a center for students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as the general public, to research and learn more about Haskell’s history. The center is dedicated to the remembrance of the first Haskell students in 1884, and to all Haskell students who came after” (The Haskell Cultural Center & Museum). The audience for the HCCM, though it includes the general public, is mostly intended for the people (past and present) on Haskell’s campus. As Bobbi Rahder, the first director of the HCCM observes, the HCCM in many ways functions as a welcome center on campus for incoming freshmen, who need a way to connect with Haskell and understand their roles as Native students who inherit Haskell’s history (a history of suffering, survival, change, and celebration, as

the permanent exhibit suggests). In the process, the HCCM also provides a place for remembering and healing, a place where students can come to feel safe (Rahder, personal interview). Yet as Theresa Milk, one of the museum techs involved in the creation of the permanent exhibit (and now an instructor on campus), also suggests, the HCCM is there to teach everyone about the history of boarding schools and Haskell's evolution in particular (personal interview). Both Rahder and Milk note that area grade schools and other tour groups are also visitors to the HCCM.

The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, located on the Isabella Reservation next to Mt. Pleasant, MI, is owned and run by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. Originally three separate Ojibwe bands, the Saginaw, the Black River, and the Swan Creek, the treaty signed with the U.S. government in 1855 united the three bands and set aside lands in Isabella County for their occupation, and a second major treaty signed in 1864 created the Isabella Reservation (Dubrovo 1, Van Alstine 1). Of the total 138,240 acres first reserved, today only 722 acres of allotted trust lands and 572 acres of tribal trust lands remain, due to a history of ambiguous government policy, land speculation, and timber harvesting in the late 1800s (Dubrovo 1, Van Alstine 1). The Saginaw Chippewa also felt the pressures of assimilationist policy and boarding schools, and like many Native peoples, struggled to maintain the cultural knowledge and Anishinabek language. Under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Saginaw Chippewa were allowed to form their own government, and with the ratification of their own constitution in 1937, they became a federally recognized tribe (Dubrovo 1, Van Alstine 2). Like

many Native nations, the Saginaw Chippewa have struggled to create a self-sustaining governmental and economic infrastructure, and gaming has become a means to realizing that goal. A 1993 gaming compact with the State of Michigan has grown into the Soaring Eagle Resort and Casino, which in turn has provided funding for a number of tribal programs to support its members and promote Anishinabek culture (Dubrovo 1, Van Alstine 2).

The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways is one of those sites within which the Saginaw Chippewa and specifically the Ziibiwing Cultural Society strive “to reclaim the history of our people and share it with the rest of the world” (Dubrovo 1). Opened in May of 2004, the Ziibiwing Center has become a centerpiece for the sharing and research of tribal history. Its mission statement reads, “The Ziibiwing Center is a distinctive treasure created to provide an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience. This promotes the society’s belief that the culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek must be recognized, perpetuated, communicated, and supported” (“Mission Statement”). “Ziibiwing,” an Ojibwe word meaning “by the river,” “speaks of an ancestral gathering place along the Chippewa River” (Dubrovo 1), and is invoked at the Cultural Center to “[honor] the ancestors, who against tremendous odds, protected and passed down the cultural knowledge, language, and teachings of our people” (Dubrovo 1), and also to highlight “the opportunity we have to share the history of our survival, our spirit of sovereignty, and

our message of hope for all people of the world” (Bonnie Ekdahl, March 31, 2004 press release).

The emphasis in this mission statement and supporting materials in the Ziibiwing Center gift book overlaps in some ways the previous two institutions’ sentiments, for the Ziibiwing Center voices a desire to “reclaim history” and support cultural continuity for future generations much like the NMAI and the HCCM, and also wishes to honor those who have come and sacrificed before, like the HCCM. However, this reclamation and sustaining of culture and language happens specifically within one community, the Saginaw Chippewa community, and the primary emphasis falls on a “culturally relevant educational experience” that “recognizes, perpetuates, communicates, and supports” the “culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek” (“Mission Statement”). But the educational experience is not for the Saginaw Chippewa people alone, for as the mission statement suggests, Bonnie Ekdahl points out in a pre-opening press release, and the Ziibiwing gift book echoes (Dubrovo 1), the Ziibiwing Center is also understood as a forum for sharing that story of Saginaw Chippewa survival and “[their] message of hope” with “all people.” Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Ekdahl observes the “spirit of sovereignty” as something to share as well, a point that will be taken up again in future chapters.

Given its accent on education about the Saginaw Chippewa culture (and one that is framed within larger Anishinabek culture), the Ziibiwing Center’s permanent exhibit, entitled Diba Jimooyung: Telling Our Story, is one that walks the visitor

through the Anishinabe creation story and history, as organized by the Seven Prophecies and the seasonal cycles of the year. The Seven Prophecies provide the lens through which history is told from the creation story to the present day, and ends with a section dedicated to the “Spirit of Sovereignty” and the Seven Grandfather Teachings that still frame Saginaw Chippewa knowledge today. As with the exhibits from the other institutions, the Diba Jimooyung will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Four, but even a brief description helps to illustrate the Ziibiwing’s emphasis on providing a history and worldview specific to the Saginaw Chippewa people, but intended for a wide audience.

The layout of the building follows this educational goal, in that its main foyer is built to mimic the structure of a traditional teaching lodge, and one’s path is directed immediately straight to the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, which is the primary and only permanent exhibit. To the right side is an exhibition room that houses the traveling exhibits, which have included exhibits on Saginaw Chippewa artifacts and traditional crafts such as woodcarving and basket making as well as contemporary powwow posters. To the left is the gift shop, which carries Anishinabek crafts from the Great Lakes area, craft and beadwork supplies, multiple Native American clothing lines (including the Ziibiwing Center’s own line), books about the Native peoples of the Great Lakes and music. The café is next to the gift shop, and serves deli sandwiches. The Ziibiwing Center also accommodates a research center, meeting rooms, and conference facilities, and regularly hosts workshops and lectures on Anishinabe language and culture.

As noted above, Ziibiwing's first priority is the Saginaw Chippewa community to which it belongs, but the larger non-Native public (or more specifically, non-Anishinabek public) is invited and encouraged to participate in the narrative told there. In Ziibiwing director Bonnie Ekdahl's observation, many of the visitors to Ziibiwing are Anishinabe, which is consistent with the purpose she sees in Ziibiwing: it was designed "For our own people first...knowledge is healing, and this is about knowing one's identity" (personal interview). But non-Natives are welcome too; "This is a lesson for everyone," she said (personal interview). In terms of a non-Native audience, Ekdahl noted that many professional women come to Ziibiwing, as do area educators and school tours, although it appears to be difficult to draw visitors from the near-by Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort. Robin L. Spencer, Research Specialist at Ziibiwing, also asserted that tribal delegates from other Native nations have visited to see what the Ziibiwing Center has accomplished, and Shannon Martin, Community Education Research Specialist at Ziibiwing, added that new employees at Soaring Eagle are given a tour of Ziibiwing as part of their orientation, as are new student-athletes from Central Michigan University.²⁶

Even from such brief descriptions, one can gain a sense of the ways the goals of these three institutions overlap in the way they value Native experience and culture, but the specific contexts of each place also create distinct nuances in how the value of Native culture is interpreted, and therefore how representation is constructed.

²⁶ Central Michigan University's official mascot is the Chippewas, a name used by permission of the Saginaw Chippewa people. New student athletes, according to Martin, are required to take a tour of Ziibiwing in order to better understand who it is they represent with the mascot name. Students from CMU's School of Education are also frequent visitors (personal interview).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have endeavored to delineate the methodological underpinnings of my analysis via genre theory and its understanding of genre-as-social-action. It is a dialogic utterance always replying, part of an ongoing conversation still shaped by what was said before. Genre is contextually driven – “ritual” and place are powerful meaning-making influences – and genre also creates that context for meaning-making. Genres create and are made by systems of action and communication. Genres are ideologically weighted; some have more recognized value than others, and carry more authority than others. Genres provide both constraint and a necessary structure within which creativity may be sparked and change can be enacted. Furthermore, genres encompass both printed and imagistic elements of “text” – both are visual, and both are rhetorical – and can even be argued to include other kinds of sensory input as well in order to communicate to an audience.

Within the museum/cultural center, repertoires of genres made up of genres and genre systems function to enact the goals of their respective institutions and also constitute those same institutions. Historically, those museum/cultural center genres carry cultural authority and so have been sites for influencing what the public considers “knowledge.” But as the contexts for and participants in these places are shifting, so too is the knowledge offered to the public – those Native representations – via newer sites, the Native people(s) involved with them, and the museum/cultural center’s attendant genres.

In the next chapters, I analyze the genres/genre systems available to a visitor at the NMAI, the HCCM, and Ziibiwing, both for what they have in common and for how each institution's use of these genres is unique to its context and goals, to ultimately understand how Native representations – how rhetorical sovereignty itself – manifest themselves for public consumption. The following three chapters are organized according to genre system, or in the case of the exhibits and stores, a complex secondary genre. Each chapter provides a description of the genre or genre system in general and its functions; a description of what I found at each site; a site-by-site analysis of the structure of representation as it is present through these genres and how that representation functions within its context; and then a concluding discussion of how rhetorical sovereignty functions across the institutions and within their specific situations.

Chapter Three
Making the First Impression:
Representation in the Genre System of Publicity/Orientation Literatures

Introduction: On Maps, Advertisements, and General Information

Though little scholarly work has been done on the rhetorical features and implications of maps, exhibit advertisements, and other general information literature, the importance of their existence does register with some scholars in their work on the museum as an experience rather than only a place. John H. Falk and Lynn D.

Dierking make the general observation that visitors often experience a sense of disorientation upon first entering a museum/cultural center, and usually the first few minutes of a visit are spent trying to figure out the cost of entrance, the location of the restrooms, the best starting point for the exhibits, and the closing time of the museum (88). Documents containing this information would appear to be essential, but Falk and Dierking also note that depending on the design of the map (or other literature), a visitor may not find the literature useful and plunge into a museum/cultural center without the desired information, resulting in an “insecurity [which] will diminish the visit and he will not be caught up by the experience because he is worried that he’s missing something important or that he’s going to get lost” (88, addition mine).

Drawing on these observations, one may assume the existence of general information brochures is not the only “must” – brochures should also be accessible, and provide the kind of information that will allow a visitor to feel secure in navigating a visit, especially if the subject matter is something with which a visitor is not familiar.

Furthermore, food and shopping are often equal in attractiveness to the exhibits

themselves, and particularly with family-oriented museums/cultural centers, knowing where to find the café or the gift shop (or the restroom) is paramount to finding the exhibit (Falk and Dierking 90-91).

Creating a single document that can physically orient a visitor and provide her with the appropriate context is a challenge, and that challenge only increases with the size of the museum/cultural center and the relative complexity or unfamiliarity of the materials on display. A general perusal of most information desks – because most likely, there is an information desk – will reveal a system of genres at work to orient the visitor and provide a well-informed visit. Given that this is often the first detailed literature²⁷ about a museum/cultural center that the visitor has encountered, this system of genres is also a prime opportunity for presenting the institution to the public. While exhibits typically take center stage, both for visitors and for scholars, the general information brochures, pamphlets, and advertisements can have a tremendous influence on expectation and perception of those exhibits by directing visitors' attention towards one place and not another, highlighting special features, or providing essential context for the exhibits and museum site. They therefore have an undeniable hand in framing the kind of representation these institutions would like to promote.

²⁷ Falk and Dierking argue that the “museum experience” often begins before one sets foot in the door, with the expectations one has regarding a specific museum/cultural center or museums in general (25); with the accessibility of the Internet, I would also argue that those expectations are also influenced by the increasing number of museum websites that a potential visitor can now consult. The study above focuses exclusively on the genres that physically exist on-site for visitor consumption, but a future study of how websites are designed as advertisement and virtual orientation for visitors would be worthwhile.

Within the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing, there is a genre system in common, ready for the visitors at the respective information desks. Each museum/cultural center has a primary brochure that describes the institution: the full title of the institution, the opening and closing hours, the location and contact information for the institution, general site features, the highlights of the major permanent exhibit, and some kind of contextual information for understanding the purpose of the place and its history. Often there are photo highlights of the site to underscore the basic information provided. These brochures are typically the most brightly colored and of better paper and printing than others, and they are often most centrally placed for visitor accessibility. Frequently there are additional pamphlets which fall into two groupings: special advertisements/explanations for traveling exhibits, and pamphlets that highlight specific parts of the museum/cultural center site. Finally, there is a loose grouping of connected genres that share a common purpose in general orientation to the city or region within which the visitor finds the museum, such as city maps and local newspapers. One might imagine these groupings in concentric circles, with the general information brochures at the center, the rotating exhibit advertisements and special feature pamphlets together in the next circle out, and then the looser grouping of general regional orientation genres as yet another ring surrounding the rest. This helps to illustrate not only the relative centrality of some genres to the function of the museum/cultural center, as I will demonstrate, but also where the strength of commonality between the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing falls; the further from the center brochure one goes, the more diverse the kinds of genres

become, both as a result of actively serving particular audiences or purposes these institutions do not have in common, and as a reflection of the respective communities within which each institution is located. The following sections will be organized according to these rings of information, beginning with the center.

Having briefly established the genre system that exists in common across these three sites, in the sections that follow I examine details of each genre as it exists within its distinct context at the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing as they fall in the concentric circles. Such particularization regarding context inevitably leads to revealing differences as well as commonalities, and so I address the contrasts in genres between sites and their rhetorical significance for representation within each context as well. The general structure I follow for this chapter is one of accumulated analysis and comparison, as in each section I describe the NMAI's genres, analyze them in terms of language and visuals, move to a description of the HCCM's genres, analyze those and then compare them to the first, and finally describe Ziibiwing's genres, analyze them, and compare them to previous two sites. The chapter concludes by reviewing the overall representation each site presents via its publicity/orientation literature, discussing to what extent and in what ways the generic action in question works towards a sense of rhetorical sovereignty, while keeping in mind how each space establishes individual communicative goals based on the needs of the Native communities involved in each institution.

Starting in the Center: The General Information/Permanent Exhibit Brochure

As just noted above, each museum/cultural center has a primary brochure with general information about the institution and the permanent exhibit features, though what each institution chooses to highlight already begins to indicate the kinds of self-representation each site promotes. Beginning with the NMAI, I examine here each brochure for its major features, the kinds of information it provides (and therefore what it anticipates its audience needing), and how it accomplishes the goal of orientation. (See Appendix A, Figure 1 for brochure covers.)

The NMAI brochure, entitled General Information with Floor Plan, is the most elaborate of the three, if only because it has the largest amount of material to cover given the size of the institution. The cover of the brochure is in red and black with a curvilinear divide between colors reminiscent of the architecture of the building; the NMAI name is in the top left-hand corner, and the Smithsonian logo is at the bottom in a smaller font. The center of the cover is divided into quadrants by four photos: the upper left photo is a partial shot of an fourteenth-century Peruvian gold and turquoise mask, the upper right photo is of Josh Hill (Ojibwe/Lakota), a Fancy Dancer performing in the museum, the lower right photo is of Kiowa Aw-Day beaded Converse-style sneakers, and the lower left photo is Santee Smith (Mohawk), a performer in the museum's Rasmuson Theater (Credits, back cover, General information NMAI). The back of the brochure provides information under four headings: "Hours and Locations," "Nearest Metro Station," "Other NMAI sites," and "Please Note," which covers the rules for conduct regarding food, drink, smoking, security protocol and checkrooms, photography and video recording, and a quick

declaration that the facilities are fully handicapped accessible. The only photos included here are a shot of the Suitland, Maryland, site and the George Gustav Heye Center in New York.

The General information brochure folds out into four panels, with specific information under the headings “Getting Started,” “The Potomac,” “Resource Center,” “Exhibitions,” “Programs, Theater, and Films,” “Stores and Café,” “The Building,” “The Landscape,” and “History.” In concert with Falk and Dierking’s observations regarding the average museum visitor’s needs and expectations, the orientation information pointing out the existence and location of the Welcome Desk and the highlights tours comes first, then a description of the center space at the entry point (the Potomac), followed by major points of interest (Resource Center, the exhibitions, live entertainment, and the stores and café), and background information regarding the building itself, the landscaping around it (with a more detailed illustration on the back of the four panels), and the history of the NMAI. Four photo insets are included within the outline: the Bear Creek drum group performing, a 2003 sculpture called “Raven Steals the Sun” (by Preston Singletary, Tlingit), a Native Hawaiian performer from the Hālau O ‘Aulani, and a shot of actress Jehnean Washington (Cherokee/Yuchi/Seminole/ Northern Plains Shoshone) and actor Will Hill (Muscogee) in the Rasmuson Theater. Here the visual emphasis is again on contemporary Native performance and art. Finally, the brochure folds out again vertically, providing a large map of the NMAI’s four floors and their features, including major exhibitions, the theaters, and the practical visitor amenities marked

by signs for stairs, elevators, restrooms, telephones, food, and an ATM. The photos here – because they are exhibit oriented – do include far more pictures of objects, but several pictures of visitors interacting with the exhibits are also included.

From the features above, it appears that the NMAI's general information brochure's primary priority is one of orientation for non-Native and Native audiences alike, rather than a full explanation of its historical context or exhibits. Context knowledge is either assumed, or deemed unnecessary for a visitor's initial entrance into the museum. Instead, given that most museum-goers tend to spend only an hour or two in any museum, all the features of the NMAI are set out in an accessible way in the brochure, perhaps making it transparent enough that a visitor (Native or non-Native) could choose what features are important for them to see. However, in its photographic emphasis on the performative aspects of the museum, it seems to point its readers toward the interactive/entertainment oriented portions of the museum rather than the more object-oriented exhibits (or it assumes visitors will go to the exhibits anyway, and might bypass the performances in favor of the familiar). With the series of four photographs on the cover, for example, the NMAI is already making a statement about what a visitor will find inside, and it is telling that only two of the photos are of objects, and only one of those objects falls into the conventional category of "artifact." With two contemporary Native performers and a piece of contemporary Native artwork, the museum seems to emphasize its mission of celebrating the "lifeways, history, and art of Native Americans throughout the Western Hemisphere." Furthermore, the mixture of conventional, almost stereotypical

images (the mask, the Fancy Dancer) with images that invert those stereotypes (a Native actress, beaded sneakers instead of moccasins) appears both to play to the expectations of non-Native visitors who only know the conventional images and affirm the existence and possibility of other ways of contemporary Native existence. The photographic emphasis on Native performers can also be read as a sign of inclusion, indicative of efforts to make the NMAI a place where Native peoples are visible and welcome.

The HCCM brochure, titled The Haskell Cultural Center & Museum, is the smallest of the three brochures, in part²⁸ reflecting the size of the site relative to an institution like the NMAI. The brochure is white, with images and text set into text boxes on the cover. The title of the HCCM is set in white font within a solid blue text box at the top of the cover, followed by a smaller bright yellow text box, outlined in purple, with the statement, “Building our future...preserving our tradition...through academic excellence.” Taken from past Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell) vision statements, the quotation directly invokes the HCCM’s context as part of the Haskell campus, as do the text box’s colors (yellow and purple), which are Haskell’s colors. The Haskell vision statement is followed (vertically) by a photo of the HCCM’s front exterior. At the bottom of the page is a second blue text box, which contains the telephone number for the HCCM, and its visiting hours and research hours. The back page of the brochure has no photos, and from top to bottom presents

²⁸ It should also be noted that in terms of steady funding, the Smithsonian Institute receives the great majority of its funding from federal appropriations and private trust funds, while the Ziibiwing Center functions primarily through general entrance fees, membership and gift shop revenues, and volunteer help, and the HCCM is operated on private donations and grants. Therefore, in terms of what kind of literature can be produced, funding and support has a significant influence as well.

a statement on the HCCM's sources of funding ("private donations and grants"), a note on the tax-deductible nature of such donations, a statement of gratitude for the reader's support, and then detailed contact information. At the bottom of the page is a plain grid map of the two major intersections near the HCCM and an "X" to mark its location.

The HCCM brochure is arranged in a tri-fold layout, folded barrel style, and the information it contains is much like the information within the NMAI brochure: it describes what a visitor will find in the HCCM, highlights of the permanent features of the site, and historical context. The left leaf of the inner tri-fold is titled "The Cultural Center and Museum," and under it is a color photo of the center of the main interior room of the HCCM with the semi-transparent black and white photo panels of Haskell students suspended over the medicine wheel in-laid in the floor. Underneath the photo, in the remaining two-thirds of the page, is a history of the HCCM, a statement of its purpose, a dedication to the first boarding-school students at Haskell, and a list of archival resources and "ethnographic artifacts" that the HCCM houses. At the bottom of the page is a brief description of the semi-permanent exhibit, Honoring Our Children through Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change, and Celebration. The center panel is titled "History of Haskell" and is primarily devoted to a brief history of Haskell accompanied by two black-and-white photographs, one of the first students, and one of the Haskell site in 1903. The bottom paragraph makes the shift to the state-of-the-art physical features of the HCCM (with the presence of the HCCM as the link between Haskell past and present as the segue), and the bottom

of the page contains a photo of the Medicinal Garden in bloom outside the HCCM building. The third page of the interior is titled “Medicinal Garden and War Memorial,” and as the title suggests, it highlights the medicinal landscaping around the HCCM and the Veteran’s Memorial to the east and north of the HCCM building and includes one photo of each. The remaining page (which would technically be the second of two as the first page of the tri-fold is opened, next to the “Cultural Center and Museum” page) concentrates exclusively on the Frank A. Rinehart photograph collection, one of the HCCM’s most important holdings²⁹ and one that also functions as a small exhibit in one corner of the HCCM. Two portrait samples from the collection provide illustrations for this page.

Though the arrangement and amount of the information on each general category suggests similarities of purpose between the NMAI brochure and the HCCM brochure, the HCCM version’s choice of information and arrangement suggests an emphasis on acts of honoring and remembrance rather than celebration and performance, in large part because the HCCM’s purpose and audience is significantly different.³⁰ Such a difference in emphasis reveals itself not only in the explicit statement of purpose, but also in how information, both textual and visual, is prioritized. For example, while the NMAI brochure features multiple pictures on contemporary Native performers and visitors, the only people in the photos within the Haskell brochure are portrayed in the portrait of Haskell’s first students, the

²⁹ Only the HCCM and the National Smithsonian Anthropological Archives have the negatives for this unique collection.

³⁰ See Chapter Two for the HCCM’s full mission statement and a discussion of audience.

silhouettes of the contemporary Haskell students in the hanging panels, and the men's portraits from the Rinehart collection. The NMAI is working to promote itself against the backdrop of many museums' tendency to keep Native peoples exclusively in savage/victim narratives of the past, and so it appears to work harder to show the contemporary celebration of Native communities' survival. By contrast, the HCCM works to preserve Haskell's history and bring that living history into the present day with current Haskell students and area residents, and so the historical photos and information are prioritized in the brochure.

Another significant difference is the language of each brochure: while they have words like "research," "learn," "history," "celebrate," and "honor" in common, what these word clusters mean changes depending on the context. The NMAI brochure also has words such as "vitality," "diversity," "performance," and "contemporary" to describe what goes on within the institution's walls, and coupled with the photos of Native performers, it projects a sense of place that showcases Native cultural performance, and that visitors will learn about Native history in an atmosphere of celebration (in fact, the only place "research" is used is under the "Resource Center" heading, where visitors are encouraged to "research genealogy" – the possibilities for research at the Suitland site are not mentioned). The Haskell brochure, on the other hand, though also celebratory, extends the meanings of "research," "learn," "history," "celebrate," and "honor" within the context of other words such as "remembrance," "archives," and "memorial." Paired with the historical photos from Haskell's past, the Rinehart samples, and pictures of the HCCM today,

the words and text depict the HCCM as a place for Native students and all visitors to remember – to remember those who came before them at Haskell, to remember the sacrifices made and successes achieved by Native students and Native veterans, and to remember their place in the ongoing narrative of that history.

The Ziibiwing brochure,³¹ in terms of initial appearance and size, falls between the NMAI and Haskell brochures, although its contents and organization mark it as something different from either. The title of the institution is at the bottom of the cover, black font on a dark yellow ground, next to a turtle seal with a swimming swan within the circle of its shell (to acknowledge the Saginaw, Swan Creek, and Black River Bands). The primary title space at the top of the page is instead given to the title of the permanent exhibit. It reads in Anishinabemowin, “Diba Jimooyung” in a large black font, and then the English translation “Telling Our Story”³² in smaller letters beneath, with the subtitle “A guide to the Diba Jimooyung permanent exhibit” below the other two in the smallest font. The first two titles appear in a horizontal panel of neutral grey-green, and that panel is bordered by other narrow panels of in dark yellow, red, and green. The lower half of the cover contains a panel-collage of photos depicting different parts of the permanent exhibit, including

³¹ Technically there is a brochure about the general Ziibiwing facilities, but I only encountered it online; so far as I could tell on the visits I made, that brochure was not immediately available to visitors.

³² “Telling Our Story” is an approximate translation of the Anishinabemowin, for depending on the dialect, there are words for “story” that refer directly to sacred stories, and words that designate other kinds of history or news (Lyons “Re: draft of chapter three”). For the Saginaw Chippewa, “Diba Jimooyung” is translated as “our story as told by the people – past, present, and future,” which includes *discussion* of both sacred and secular aspects of Saginaw culture and establishing those aspects’ presence without infringing on ceremony (as qtd. by Anita Heard, with Shannon Martin, “Good Questions!”). As Heard puts it, “We are merely presenting the language as it was explained to us, Diba Jimooyung encompasses all aspects of our people – spiritual, secular, sacred, etc.”

beadwork, archival photos, the Woodland-style Richard Bedwash³³ depictions of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and a section of the diorama depicting maple sap and wild rice harvesting. The back of the brochure provides the full name of the institution and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, Ziibiwing's address, open days (but not hours), a list of the major facility features (permanent exhibit, changing exhibit, research center, café, gift shop, and meeting rooms), and a map of lower Michigan that marks the city of Mt. Pleasant, the city closest to Ziibiwing, and contact information via phone and website.

The Ziibiwing brochure is a quad-fold brochure that opens first to two pages, and then opens fully to a four-page spread. The initial two inner pages are prominently titled “The 7 Prophecies” on the left, and “Ziibiwing Center Rules & Regulations” on the right. The “7 Prophecies” page narrates the Seven Prophecies/Seven Fires, which is simultaneously the migration story of the Anishinabek people from the eastern coast of North America to the Michigan area, and a cultural and spiritual history of the Anishinabek people. The “7 Prophecies” provide basic contextual information, supplying the organizational backbone for the Diba Jimooyung exhibit and also a framework that is couched in the language of the Anishinabek oral tradition. The “Seventh Prophecy/Seventh Fire” is particularly noteworthy, and reads, “New People will rise up and the Anishinabek nation will be

³³ Richard Bedwash (Ojibway) is from the Long Lac Reserve near Thunder Bay, Ontario, and began his career as an artist under the tutelage of famed Ojibway artist and Grand Shaman Norval Morrisseau. His images strongly reflect Morrisseau's “Woodland Spirit Art” style, in which one is “not always looking at a true physical representation, but at the spiritual essence of the being. It can be a person, an animal, a rock or anything else, but what remains common to all is the representation of the inner spiritual being of the painting” (“Indigenous [sic] artist illustrates Anishnabe [sic] ethnicity featured at new Ziibiwing Center”).

reborn. The New People will seek knowledge from the elders and rekindle the old ways. In the Seventh Fire, ALL people must choose between two paths – desecration or compassion. **Which path will you choose?**” (bold in original). The question is put to all visitors, Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek. The “7 Prophecies” page is then faced by the “Rules and Regulations,” which in addition to the standard rules regarding food, drink, and photos, emphasize respectful behavior while viewing the exhibit (including a cell phone prohibition, keeping voices down, and a specific injunction against “running and horseplay”).

The two pages described above fold out into a four-page map of the Diba Jimooyung exhibit that is both numbered, color-coded, and labeled. Each section of the exhibit is color-coded on the map and given a number. The number/color combinations have corresponding labels that provide brief explanations of the exhibit contents, and also notes which sections specifically address a section of the “7 Prophecies.” The labels are language based (they include no photos), and the language in the labels is neither specifically scientific nor evocative of the oral tradition, but reads as a personal “we” (the Saginaw Chippewa people) speaking to “you,” the visitors. For example, in “Area 7: Effects of Colonization,” colonization is made personal: “The effects of colonization were devastating diseases, harmful government policies, destruction of our traditional subsistence economies, and religious persecution. Learn about our loss of land, language, and life.” Though the list of atrocities provided so matter-of-factly almost makes the description sound detached, and does employ academic/scientific language, the “our” keeps the

description grounded in the present Saginaw Chippewa peoples who speak through the exhibit. Furthermore, sovereignty is explicitly addressed in the descriptions of the exhibit sections that speak to the effects of colonization and present struggles for sovereignty.

When compared to the NMAI and HCCM brochures, the language of the Ziibiwing brochure appears distinctly different. As already discussed, the language of the brochure is not framed as much in terms of “research,” “learn,” “history,” “celebrate,” and “honor,” though Ziibiwing does have a research center, and learning, celebrating, and honoring are all part of the activities that take place there. Instead, the language is that of “our story,” “prophecy,” “respect,” “devastation,” “Anishinabe,” and “sovereignty” set in the metaphor of a journey that begins with the “7 Prophecies” and ends with the final section of the Diba Jimooyung exhibit. In addition, the photo visuals are limited to the cover of the Ziibiwing brochure, a distinct difference from the NMAI and HCCM’s approach; such placement of visuals seems to “show” a potential visitor what he might see, should he enter the exhibit, but the emphasis within the brochure is on the telling of the context and outline of the story itself, down to a highly detailed description of the exhibit based in words and a minimalist map rather than photo highlights of facility features, as both the NMAI and HCCM employ. The emphasis on “Telling Our Story” is also subtly made in the positioning of the permanent exhibit as the center of the general information brochure itself, for minimum information is given regarding Ziibiwing’s facilities, at least compared to the detail of the NMAI and HCCM’s brochures.

While all of these brochures follow the generic pattern of providing basic orientation information for each facility, the direction that the orientation takes depends upon the goals of each individual institution. If through these brochures the NMAI seems to take an approach that highlights performance and celebration of Native cultures, and the HCCM a chronicling and remembrance of Haskell as a government boarding school now turned to a Native-based contemporary education, then Ziibiwing asserts a distinctly Anishinabe perspective regarding Saginaw Chippewa history, sovereignty, and lifeways. Such an orientation at each site already begins to point to how each institution employs these genres to define itself and its communicative goals.

First Ring from the Center, Part I: Rotating Exhibit Advertisements

At the same information desk or kiosk that offers the general information brochure, one will often find supplementary materials describing the rotating exhibits that are not a permanent fixture in the museum/cultural center, as well as special features of the museum/cultural center that did not receive detailed treatment in the central brochure. The next two generic groupings are examined with the grouping that has the most commonality first (the rotating exhibit advertisements), followed by the special features brochures.

Because most museum/cultural centers have rotating exhibits that change over time, and because general information brochures have a longer shelf life than the span of the few months a rotating exhibit is likely to be installed, a different medium for attracting visitors to an exhibit literally off the map is essential. All three of the

museum/cultural centers included in this study produce additional brochures to draw attention to exhibits that are not included in the general information brochure, although what might constitute an “exhibit” depends upon the institution’s context. Typically such a brochure is smaller in size or total text than the general information brochure, and focuses exclusively on the changing exhibit. The title of the exhibit is a common element, as are images of exhibit features, and explanatory narratives for exhibit features. Often the name of the museum/cultural center appears again with contact information for the facility. (See Appendix A, Figure 2, for cover images of the rotating exhibit brochures.)

For example, in May of 2007, the “Changing Exhibitions” space of the NMAI was occupied by an exhibit of Native women’s dresses entitled Identity by Design: Tradition, Change, and Celebration in Native Women’s Dresses. Located at the Welcome Desk and in all the same places the General Information brochures were distributed throughout the NMAI, the Identity by Design brochure is double the width of the General information brochure, allowing it more surface area for visuals and larger text. The primary title of the exhibit, Identity by Design, is prominently set in the center, slightly to the left, in gold letters on a black field. The Smithsonian/NMAI name is smaller letters in white across the top, with the Smithsonian emblem. The right half of the brochure’s cover prominently depicts a red and green dress covered with what appear to be elk teeth and belted with blue, red, and brass beadwork. The back of the brochure is also black, with two columns of small text that note the dates of display for the exhibit, the location of public programs, and a repetition of the

NMAI's general information. In addition, there is at the bottom a small advertisement for the Identity by Design exhibit book and a photo of its cover.

The Identity by Design brochure is a tri-fold, and so upon opening it, the visitor encounters first a pale olive-green page with the title of the exhibit again in red at the top left, followed by a quotation by Jackie Parsons (Blackfeet), who is one of the Native women involved in the collaboration with the curators for the exhibit, and then a photo of the six contemporary Native dress designers/collaborators and a quick overview of where the collection of dresses comes from, the time periods they span, and the artistic and cultural significance of the dresses. Under the photo of the dress designers is a caption with their names and tribal affiliations, and then towards the bottom of the page the final paragraph of the explanation notes the participating curators and the importance of dressmaking and wearing in cultural continuity. On the far right is a black and white photo of a Blackfeet woman, ca. 1900, wearing an ornate dress.

When the green introductory page is folded out, the three-page, parchment-colored spread within provides three explanatory sections for the exhibit. First, under the page labeled "Tradition," a photo of a Sioux hide dress is set next to two columns of text titled "19th-Century Style" and "Full Circle of Life" that briefly explain "what influenced Native women's sense of style in the 19th century" and also the symbolic significance of the dresses in women's rites of passage. Framing this explanation, at the top and bottom, are observations about Native dressmaking from the designers/collaborators cited on the green page. A small black and white photo of a

Cheyenne girl in a heavily beaded dress completes the page in the bottom right-hand corner. The following pages, “Change” and “Celebration,” operate in similar fashion, presenting a dress to represent the idea (“Change” shows a Native dress made entirely of European trade materials, and “Celebration” shows an early 20th-century Fourth-of-July dress), and then two columns of explanatory text, a frame made of quotations from contemporary dress designers, and another illustrating photograph.

Both the language and the images presented are in keeping with the larger mission of the NMAI, that of celebrating living Native cultures, and both the language and the images move from what one might read as archival/historical to contemporary. Significantly, the explanations are outlined in terms of “style” and a “sense of style”; instead of casting the explanatory text in terms of anthropology, the curators of the exhibit seem to wish the visitors to understand the dresses on display in terms of fashion and the history of fashion in addition to the cultural significance of the dresses. Such a word choice challenges the perception of the dresses as mere artifacts and suggests a way for museum visitors (most likely unfamiliar with Native dressmaking) to identify with them and their makers in the present. The contemporary emphasis is especially made clear in the inclusion of the Native designers’ voices through their quoted thoughts on the history, process, and personal meaning of dressmaking.

The visuals suggest a similar purpose in demonstrating the importance of dressmaking in Native fashion and cultural identity from the past and into the present. The first dress shown is what many visitors might think of as the stereotypical Native

dress (literally beads and buckskin), the second dress shown seems to up-end that image entirely by showing a dress made of red trade cloth and beads, and the final dress seems to present what a visitor might find confusing, a hide dress decorated in red, white, blue, and yellow with beaded American flags and a Christian cross (though the text does provide some explanation). The photos of women wearing dresses move from black-and-white archival images on the right to a full-color photo of one of the dress designers/collaborators performing with her daughter at a powwow in full regalia on the far left. Overall, the brochure advertises its specific exhibit and provides a conceptual outline (rather than a physical map) for how visitors should approach it.

The HCCM's array of secondary brochures are not as clear cut in their roles, as the entire one-room space of the HCCM was intended to house changing exhibits as well as some permanent features; the past and present staff of the HCCM indicated that Honoring Our Children Through Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change, and Celebration was not intended to be a permanent installation. Instead, it was designed to be the inaugural exhibit for the HCCM, and to then be a traveling exhibit to other sites. For the moment it has returned home and been reassembled in a different order than it was first exhibited, now as a semi-permanent installation. For this reason, the HCCM's general information brochure includes the language "currently exhibiting" to describe the exhibit's status, and concurrent with its status as a non-permanent fixture, an additional brochure is available in the same way as the NMAI's Identity by Design exhibit.

The Honoring Our Children exhibit brochure is a black and white photocopied quad-fold brochure that folds itself in half, and then half again (as opposed to a double-door-like fold). The orientation of the brochure is turned counterclockwise, so that the title runs the vertical left edge of the brochure's cover. "Honoring Our Children" appears in a large script font across the (adjusted) top of the text box; a reproduction of the Haskell Medicine Wheel is centered below it; and finally, the rest of the exhibit title – "Through Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change, and Celebration" – follows. The back panel of the brochure (as it is folded) is halved by two text boxes. The left text box provides a map of the original layout of the exhibit including directional arrows that suggest a path for the visitor to follow.³⁴ The right text box offers a notice that establishes the Honoring Our Children exhibit as the inaugural exhibit for the HCCM, a "thank-you" to the visitor and those who participated in the creation of the exhibit, and then the contact information for the HCCM.

When folded out entirely (and consistent with the spatial orientation of the cover), the left panel of the quad-fold interior is actually the top panel, and the title of the exhibit appears again, with a brief general statement of the purpose of the exhibit: "...to honor the first students at Haskell" as well as all boarding school students, to celebrate "the strength and resilience" of current Haskell students, and to honor "all of the Haskell men and women who have served in the U.S. Military..." The

³⁴ The current position of the materials (as of the fall of 2007) does not match the map provided; together with the photocopied nature of the brochures and the description of the HCCM as "new," the discrepancies suggest that the photocopies are reproductions of an original brochure that was distributed at the opening of the HCCM.

following panels descend in the order of the exhibit title, with “Sacrifice,” “Survival,” and “Change” completing the interior, and “Celebration” and “Military” continuing on the opposite side. In addition to the text describing the general contents of each section, each of the five parts (“Survival,” etc.) contains a small photo insert, with the “Sacrifice” section including two photos. The photos appear to be Native students (except for one of school-complex gate); uncaptioned, they appear to be intended as support for the text.

The language of the brochure finds emphasis in repetition; the title suggests a structure – “Sacrifice,” “Survival,” “Change,” and “Celebration” – that is followed out accordingly. Those particular word choices also suggest a chronology, one that moves deliberately through the loss endured by the first students of the boarding schools to their resolve to bring about change on Haskell’s campus; from the enormous change of assimilation-based policy in Haskell’s curriculum to its current emphasis on “self-determination” (“Celebration”). This narrative structure also emphasizes a movement that does not stay with “sacrifice,” but ends with “celebration.” In addition, the “Military” section adds another layer of meaning to “honor,” for though this is the briefest section of the brochure, the existence of a section devoted to “honoring” Native veterans outside of the larger narrative implies its significance, and its explicit invocation of the word “warrior” as well as the statement that “We Honor all who have served, survived, and died for the Honor of their Country” in terms that do not mention “America” or the “U.S.A.” connote a general Native perspective through which to understand military service. The

visuals of the brochure mostly go unlabeled; with the exception of the map, no explanation is given, and their meaning must be derived from their contexts.

Familiarity with Haskell will help a visitor recognize the Haskell Medicine Wheel symbol, which exists as an earthwork on a portion of the campus reserved for religious and ceremonial use. A Haskell student would likely recognize the Medicine Wheel and need little explanation, but a first-time student or visitor would not understand its significance.³⁵ As for the photographs, without captions and due to the quality of the photocopying, their details are difficult to discern. However, even as outlines the documentary nature of the photographs becomes apparent – they are mostly posed stills from the late 19th and early 20th century – and so they suggest the archival testament that exists to support the brochure’s narrative.

When compared, the similarities between the NMAI’s Identity by Design brochure and the HCCM’s Honoring Our Children brochure exist for the most part in their major purpose: to provide an explanation for an exhibit that is not necessarily a permanent fixture in the museum/cultural center. They both provide a sectioned narrative that mimics the structure of the exhibit itself in order to provide general contextual information to the visitor and orient him within the narrative of the exhibit. Both also provide visuals to make their points, and both make specific use of archival photos as historical support for their narratives. However, as with the general information brochures, the language of each narrative reveals distinct emphases. While both brochures describe exhibits that cover roughly the same time period – the

³⁵ Hence the explanatory flyer for the Medicine Wheel set out for HCCM visitor reading, as detailed in the next section.

late 19th century into the present – and both have sections labeled “Change” and “Celebration,” the tones are decidedly distinct. On one hand, the Identity by Design brochure casts the entire exhibition of women’s dresses in terms of “style” and a history of cultural fashion, and though the “traumatic changes to their traditional lifestyle and loss of land and resources” is mentioned in passing when explaining the seeming contradiction of Native dresses decorated with Christian and American patriotic symbols (third inner panel), the “art form” (second inner panel) of the Native dress takes precedence over the historical narrative. Therefore, the NMAI’s “Change” section defines change through the lens of fashion design, the introduction of new materials for dressmaking, and the cultural identity in dressmaking. Likewise, “Celebration” describes occasions for special dressmaking, be they traditional or Christian, historical or contemporary, and a tribute to those who continue the tradition. On the other hand, the HCCM’s use of “Change” and “Celebration” comes as part of a historical narrative describing the cultural devastation wreaked by the boarding school system (which stripped students of the traditional knowledge and dress styles that are a part of Identity by Design), and so “Change” in the HCCM context means a move from assimilationist policy to “the emergence of an Indigenous voice” (fourth inner panel) and “Celebration” means “Haskell captur[ing] the essence of [the policy of self-determination] by conjoining the elements of academia and Native perspectives” (“Celebration” panel, back of brochure).

The visuals are also distinctly different, for while both brochures use images to illustrate and expand on the information provided via language, the fact that the

NMAI is able to use larger, more detailed, and colored graphics creates a stark contrast with the smaller black-and-white images in HCCM brochure. Within the Identity by Design brochure, the images of dresses and their wearers past and present not only illustrate the “Tradition-Change-Celebration” narrative, but could also almost stand alone as a visual narrative themselves. The images provide enough detail that, with only the panel titles as a guide, a viewer could construct a general understanding of the exhibit’s contents – and with the captions to the images, all the more so. Their integration into the printed narrative in if not equal parts, in at least prominent parts, also suggests the visuals’ importance. By contrast, the images of the HCCM brochure are literally at the edges of the narrative, and because of their size and the difficulty in photocopier translation, the images are indistinct enough that they cannot stand alone to tell a parallel visual tale to the printed text. With no captions to indicate what the visitor is looking at, the images appear to serve primarily as reinforcement for the printed narrative.

Returning to Ziibiwing, like the NMAI, it has a “Changing Exhibit” gallery, and because the general information brochure available to visitors works exclusively with the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, providing information for visitors about the “Changing Exhibit” space is indispensable. One such document was produced for the Woven by Tradition: Black Ash Baskets of the Great Lakes Anishinabek exhibit. More of a handbill than a brochure, the one-page brochure is printed on stiffer cardstock, and is approximately the same size as the cover of the Diba Jimooyung brochure. At the top of the brochure, “Woven by Tradition” is printed prominently on

a pale brown ground; the other two thirds of the space displays a partial close-up photo of a red black-ash basket. A dark red banner runs across the bottom of the brochure (and the bottom of the basket photo) on a slight diagonal, advertising the dates the exhibit will be displayed. On the opposite side of brochure, a slightly smaller version of the red basket inserted from the left covers almost half the horizontal space, and the explanatory narrative is justified to the right side and follows the basket's profile on the left. Beginning with an introductory sentence printed in bold black font and italics – “Black Ash basket-making dates back centuries in Great Lakes American Indian culture” – the narrative is divided into three paragraphs. The first paragraph notes the utilitarian and sacred aspects of the baskets to Anishinabek ancestors; the second briefly describes the ornate developments of basket design into the present, warning that it may be soon a lost art form; the third is an invitation to the reader to come “experience” the baskets and “learn how this artform [sic] is being preserved for future generations.” After a decorative dividing line, Ziibiwing's full institutional title appears again along with opening hours and contact information at the very bottom.

The language of the Woven by Tradition exhibit brochure creates a narrative of time and change, but does so through the evocation of the “ancestors” who first made the baskets, the “generations” and “family members” through which basket-making as an art form has developed, and the “few families” in the “communities” who are keeping basket-making alive and keeping it for “future generations.” Rather than phrased in terms of chronology by year or event, basket-making here is first

established with the sentence in bold and italics as a long-standing activity among the Great Lakes Anishinabek, and is then cast in terms of continuity and connection from one generation of families to the next – hence the use of “Tradition” in the title.

Moreover, and in keeping with the Diba Jimooyung brochure, the narrative also uses first-person pronouns: “our ancestors,” “our people,” and “our communities.”

However, plurals and the avoidance of only referring to the Saginaw Chippewa are noteworthy as well, for as the title suggests, this is supposed to be an exhibit covering the basket-making in the various Anishinabek communities of the Great Lakes region.

The primary image – the detailed close-up of a sample basket – serves to show an example of black-ash basket weaving, although it is not an ordinary-looking basket. Both its color (red) and the variety of textures in the weaving suggest the intricacy of basket-making technique, and because it looks unusual it also suggests that the exhibit can show the viewer something about baskets that perhaps she has not seen before. It also complicates the title, Woven by Tradition, because such a basket simultaneously illustrates continuity and innovation. Though the close-up nature of the photograph changes the perspective enough to make the basket’s overall shape difficult to discern (the actual basket, from the exhibit, is built in the shape of a strawberry), it does provide both enticement for the potential visitor and a reinforcement of the narrative’s claim regarding “colorful” and “intricately woven” baskets.

Compared to the NMAI and HCCM brochures, the Ziibiwing changing exhibit brochure is the most compact. Like the other two, it provides a title to explain

what the visitor will encounter, an explanation of the exhibit (and the place and time it runs). Unlike the other two, it does not provide extensive description of the exhibit, a detailed chronological narrative, or a suggested sequence for viewing the exhibit. Similar to the NMAI exhibit on Native dresses, it frames the Anishinabek basket-weaving as an art form, and works to make the visitor witness to the personal and cultural significance of these objects. Yet unlike the NMAI exhibit brochure, when describing basket-weaving as an art form the language of the Ziibiwing brochure does not invoke “style” or “fashion,” but rather a narrative of continuity based on maintained “tradition,” and can speak to that because of the personal (“our”) and cultural link between the community sponsoring the exhibit and the exhibit contents. Perhaps because it must cover so much material over multiple Native cultures and communities, the NMAI exhibit maintains a chronological timeline that stands outside of Native narratives, although some of the exhibit material is made more personal through the commentary of the Native collaborators in the exhibit. The HCCM must also cover multiple Native communities who were drawn together at the Haskell site, and so relies on the same kind of timeline and maintains third person distance³⁶ to create a history-in-common for Haskell students, past and present. Also, the HCCM is different because the other two provide object-oriented discussions, while Haskell’s is more narrative-oriented.

³⁶ The third person stance is maintained with the exception of the final sentence of the “Military” section, which reads, “We Honor all who have served...,” and also the thank-you section on the back of the HCCM brochure, which reads, “We would like to thank...” Perhaps because these are statements of a more personal nature, rather than historical/chronological, the “we” appears in the language in these places.

As already noted, there is only one major image on the Ziibiwing's Woven by Tradition brochure, and like the NMAI's and HCCM's brochures, the image functions to suggest the exhibit contents. Using only the image of the red basket, the visitor could assume that the exhibit is about baskets, maybe some of them out-of-the-ordinary (or at least what she assumes to be ordinary). In that sense, the red basket hints to the reader – as the variety of dress images suggest to an NMAI visitor – that there is more to know, and a basket is not necessarily just a basket (or a dress just a dress).

In sum, the changing exhibit brochures exist to advertise exhibits not included in the general information brochure, and to provide orientation to those exhibits. Because the focus is on one exhibit, proportionately more space can be allotted to the details and narrative of those exhibits; this is true for both the NMAI and HCCM, and the narratives of their changing exhibit brochures appear to be designed to enhance each institution's mission. By contrast, Ziibiwing's version is smaller than its general information brochure, and while its narrative does support its institution's mission, the comparative emphasis on detail remains with the permanent exhibit.

First Ring from the Center, Part II: Museum/Cultural Center Special Features

In addition to the rotating exhibit brochures, a visitor will generally find brochures introducing visitors to special features of the museum, be they important collections, a part of the architecture, extra context information, or the café and gift shop. The NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing all have a variety of special feature brochures, although the site and the context of each institution determines what

qualifies as a “special feature.” (See Appendix A, Figures 3-5 for cover images of the special features brochures.)

At the NMAI, there are two brochures detailing special features of the site, one devoted to physical aspects, the other to participation and performance. The first special-features brochure is the more ubiquitous of the two, and provides a quick explanation of both the Mitsitam Café and the Roanoke and Chesapeake Museum Stores. Designed as a tri-fold brochure with accordion folding, the front and back panels actually both serve as covers. To be more specific, one “cover” is for the café, and mimics the design of the NMAI General Information brochure in that it also has the NMAI title on the upper left corner, a two-color background divided by a curvilinear line, four photos set into the center, and the title Mitsitam: Native Foods Café Guide set beneath the photos. However, the primary background color is a golden yellow, complemented by brown, and the photos set into the center are images of food and drink, attractively arranged and garnished, and portrayed in vivid greens, reds, yellows, and browns. A visitor would open this panel to reveal two pages describing the “variety of foods from America’s Native Peoples,” which is covered in five major regions and accompanied by more photos of food. Each section detailing each region provides a four or five line description of the general ingredients the peoples there used, and then provides a list of “Menu Highlights” a visitor could sample. The opposite “cover” of the brochure (the “back” of the Mitsitam brochure, and vice-versa) has a contrasting background of turquoise-blue and brown, and utilizes the same format as the other two covers, with the exception of the color, the

photos – which are of baskets, textiles, carved gourds, and pottery – and the title, which reads Roanoke & Chesapeake: Museum Stores. Inside this portion of the brochure, a visitor can find a statement on the NMAI as “an institution of living cultures”; as such, “The Chesapeake and Roanoke Museum Stores bring you authentic works of art and memorabilia inspired by the remarkable collections of the museum.” This statement is followed by a description of each store and more photos of pottery, a lacrosse set, and the bow of a canoe. According to the brochure, the Chesapeake Museum Store offers crafts and collectibles “created by world-renowned contemporary artists,” and the Roanoke Museum Store offers “souvenir items.”³⁷

Also available to a visitor at the NMAI Welcome Desk is a calendar of museum programs for a three-month span.³⁸ Printed in an 8.5”X11” format, the eight-page brochure can be folded twice to create a standard business-sized letter for mailing, and the black-and-white photos and text detail the activities taking place at the NMAI, including theater, author’s readings, children’s activities, discussion panels, traditional dance demonstrations, film, and cooking demonstrations. The brochure lists the major events in chronological order, with a description of each event, and frequently a photo of a featured author or performer. The title of the brochure, Spring Calendar: March, April, and May 2007 Museum Programs, reads in bold across the top of the front page, and provides contact information next to the title line. The rest of the front, inner, and back pages provide event descriptions and

³⁷ The museum stores will be covered in more depth regarding representations via this genre and others in Chapter Five.

³⁸ The sample used for this study is the Spring Calendar for March, April, and May of 2007.

photos. However, the bottom third of the back page looks like an envelope front, complete with the Smithsonian NMAI logo, mailing and web address in the left corner created by folding, and then two lines for the months the calendar covers and the title of the brochure. The center space is reserved for address labels.

The language and visuals of these “special features” brochures are similar to those of the rotating exhibit features in that these brochures are designed to explain places and events in greater detail than is allowed in a general information brochure. However, each “special features” brochure is also vying for attention among the museum exhibits; while Falk and Dierking make clear that audience expectations of a museum visit include food and shopping, in such a large space the Mitsitam Café and the Roanoke and Chesapeake Museum Stores still must advertise their presence and make their offerings clear to the visitor; especially because the café provides a cuisine ranging from familiar to completely alien to the average tourist visitor, it must make its wares attractive with appetizing photos and descriptions that include foods a visitor would recognize among the dishes he might not.³⁹ The museum stores, on the other hand, seek primarily to establish the authenticity of their products, anticipating both an audience of professional collectors (Chesapeake) and tourists (Roanoke). Advertising is all the more necessary for the events calendar, as the image of the typical museum of the last century might only include the occasional craft demonstration by a Native person, or none at all. Visitors likely would not expect the

³⁹ Such an approach also subtly highlights how much Native cuisine, past and present, has influenced Euro-American cuisine and much a visitor might consider familiar comes from traditional Native food sources; however, this idea is not overtly spoken and is left only to the inference of the reader.

kind of variety of activities available, and so the calendar must make clear that first, there are a multitude of activities that appeal to a range of interests; and second, these are exciting or unique opportunities that a visitor would not want to ignore. The mail-oriented design also suggests distribution outside of the NMAI building proper, indicating perhaps an audience of regular attendees to the NMAI for events or other mailing lists to which the brochure is distributed.

The HCCM also has multiple special feature brochures, and the two that pertain most directly to the HCCM as a museum/cultural center are the Garden of Healing and the Beyond the Reach of Time and Change brochures. The Garden of Healing brochure (Love and Webster) is slightly wider than the other brochures (5.5''X8.5''), and arranged as a color photocopied, eight-page booklet that describes the significance of the landscaping features around the HCCM. While the garden is mentioned in the general information brochure, here a visitor can read in more detail about the symbolism of the features – for example, the stones from Haskell's first buildings that commemorate the abused and missing children on Haskell's first rosters, and the Peace Pole from the World Peace Prayer society – as well as the variety of medicinal plants grown in the garden itself. The cover of the brochure features the title "Garden of Healing" across the top, with the image of Haskell's mascot as background. The university's title appears next, and then "Cultural Center and Museum." Like the general information brochure, the cover includes a photo of the HCCM. Below the photo it reads, "Preserving Our Past to Ensure the Future." Within, alongside the explanatory verbal text, are illustrative photos of the first

children at Haskell, the Peace Pole, and then photos of the featured plants and their uses. The back of the brochure provides the HCCM contact information and hours of operation, an image of a medicine wheel with Haskell's mascot at the center, and a disclaimer about self-diagnosis and treatment regarding medicinal plants.

The Beyond the Reach of Time and Change brochure provides more information regarding the HCCM's collection of Frank Rinehart/ Adolph Muhr portrait negatives. It is a tri-fold, black and white photocopied brochure, with the title of the collection's book, Beyond the Reach of Time and Change, as the brochure title, followed by a sample portrait from the collection, and followed by the subtitle, "The Photographs of Frank Rinehart and Adolph Muhr: American Indian Portraits 1898-1900." The back of the brochure appears to be constructed for mass-mailing purposes. When the cover is folded out, there is a panel with a column of information on Haskell's history; when all the panels are folded out, the three-panel spread within provides a spatial division for the three topics covered: the history of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition and Indian Congress, where the portraits were taken; a short discussion on the significance of how Native peoples are represented in photos at the turn of the 19th century and the HCCM's intentions in using these photographs; and finally, a short impressionistic essay about the collection by fiction writer Debra Earling (Salish).

In addition, there is a double-sided, 8.5X11 handout explaining the Haskell Medicine Wheel, the design of which is embedded in the HCCM's gallery floor. The black and white photocopied pages have the design of the Medicine Wheel at the top

of the page, and the description is entitled in bold, **A Design of Sacred Means**. Following the title are the specific credits to the designers, explanations of the Haskell Medicine Wheel's features, and on the back, an explanation of the significance of the circle shape and importance of the earthwork's installation at the quincentennial of Columbus' arrival.⁴⁰

The language and visuals of the HCCM's special features brochures differ slightly from one another, given their differing purposes, but they all share the goal of enhancing a visitor's understanding of the HCCM and its importance to Haskell. While the general information brochure focuses primarily on the history of Haskell that the HCCM documents and displays, the Garden of Healing and Medicine Wheel brochures provide some context for the HCCM's spiritual and healing significance on campus. The garden itself invokes the "Indigenous people [who] have used the sacred power of Mother Earth for the mind, body, and spirit," the dead and missing children from those first years of Haskell's boarding school history, and "Peace offerings" (Love and Webster 1-2), and the photos included – of the "Haskell Babies," the Peace pole with stones, and the living plants – reinforce that invocation. The Medicine Wheel Earthwork is described, at the time of the quincentennial, as "a Native gift to all peoples of this planet and a powerful symbol of what we peoples of the world must now learn," which is to avoid a repetition of the colonization experience and to stop the persistent, "continued devaluation and outright denial of the existence of

⁴⁰ The reference to "Haskell Indian Junior College" marks the date of the brochure (Haskell now has university status), and so its original intention was likely as an explanation of the original earthwork – but it also works to explain the reproduction of the Medicine Wheel on the HCCM's floor.

indigenous American spiritual and intellectual traditions.” Together the garden and the Medicine Wheel brochures affirm another, and no less important aspect to the HCCM, that of Indigenous spiritual affirmation and healing. In another arena, the Beyond the Reach... brochure overtly tackles the issue of Native representation through the images of the Rinehart collection; the only image provided is the cover image, of an unnamed Native leader in full regalia, posing in what looks something like “The Thinker”’s pose. Both rather exotic – his head is adorned with a bird – and thought-provoking in his stance, the image both plays to and challenges the visitor’s expectations. The language within is more explicit: “The photographs displayed...are not stereotypical. These photos are portraits which reflect individual personalities with dignity, pride, and honor” (Center panel, Beyond the Reach...). While acknowledging the abuse non-Native people have committed with these kinds of photographs, interpreting them according to non-Native perception as Pearce and Berkhofer have described,⁴¹ the language of the brochure insists on both recognizing the potential for stereotyping and the need to acknowledge these images in a present light: “This exhibit [with the collection] is intended to be a dialog between the American Indians photographed in the past and people living today, both Native and non-Native” (Center panel, Beyond the Reach...). Together, these special features brochures underscore a desire for healing and the beginnings of a dialogue between Native and non-Native peoples as part of that healing.

⁴¹ See Chapter One for more details on the construction of the “white man’s Indian.”

In terms of comparison, the distinctiveness of the NMAI and HCCM's special features brochures points back to the anticipated audience at each site and the mission that each institution has committed itself to, perhaps more so than the abridged descriptions of general information brochures can provide. As one part of a large, mainstream system of museums, the NMAI anticipates a mainstream tourist audience and a Native audience. As such, the language and visuals play to the general expectation of the museum experience that includes refreshments and shopping, even as the NMAI wishes to promote itself as a vendor of "authentic" or Native-inspired items – a place that does not sell kitsch, but provides both a traditional and a contemporary experience for its visitors. The list of events in the Spring Calendar accentuates this idea via performance and discussion, inviting museum visitors to witness/participate in traditional and contemporary performances by Native artists and emphasizing that invitation with visuals of artists and performances. By contrast, because the HCCM's primary audience is Haskell students and alumni, and then the general community, the HCCM becomes the site for a unique kind of experience tailored to Haskell's history and the physical and spiritual reverberations of that past in the present. Though the special features highlighted with their own brochures are mentioned in the HCCM general information brochure, they are framed within the context of Haskell's history. Given their own space, the spiritual and dialogic dimensions of the HCCM are brought forth in the Garden, A Design of Sacred Means, and Beyond the Reach... brochures in language that specifically addresses points of pain and conflict (the Columbus quincentennial, the abuse and death of

Haskell students), and in visuals that instruct (the images of the plants, the Medicine Wheel, and the portrait).

At Ziibiwing, the special feature brochures in part fit the pattern established above as brochures that provide additional space for explanations, but they diverge in what they consider essential for their visitors to know about Ziibiwing. Specifically, the five Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books), which are the primary additional brochures, highlight specific portions of Anishinabek cultural knowledge as the “features” in need of explanation for visitors. Made prominently available at a kiosk at Ziibiwing’s entrance, this series of five brochures covers Niizhwaaswi Mishomis Kinoomaagewinawaan (Seven Grandfather Teachings), Gdodemonaanik Do Kinoomaagewinawaan (Clan System Teachings), Ziisibaakodokaaning (The Sugarbush), Manoominikekamigak (Wild Ricing), and Wiigwaas (Birchbark), in that order. Printed as tri-fold brochures in black ink on different shades of pale brown and gray paper, each brochure features a broad border with a different traditional Anishinabek design that runs across the top and back onto the first inner page. The cover includes the title of the brochure, an image (picture or photograph), and then its number (Part 1, etc.) in the series of five Little Teaching Books. Both the Anishinabek and English languages are used for the titles, and the Anishinabemowin takes precedence with a larger font and bold print. The back panel of each brochure features the name of the Ziibiwing Center and provides the same map and information available on the back of the Diba Jimooyung brochure. Upon opening each brochure, the panel still folded in (the third concurrent with the front and back

when opened fully) presents a kind of disclaimer statement, affirming the diversity of Native American cultures, and as a result, that “stories and teachings may vary from region to region” (Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas...). The Ziibiwing seal follows. The inner three panels then concentrate on explaining the concept set forth in the title with both word- and image-based text. For example, the Niizhwaaswi Mishomis Kinoomaagewinawaan (Seven Grandfather Teachings) brochure outlines the principle teachings given to the Anishinabek people, providing their names in Anishinabemowin, then in English. Each teaching is explained in English, and accompanied by black and white reproductions of the Richard Bedwash paintings of the Seven Grandfather Teachings from the Diba Jimooyung exhibit.

In addition to the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books), there is also a twenty-page booklet advertising the 5th Annual Indigenous Peoples Art Market⁴² and showcasing the individual artists and their wares from around the country. The white cover includes the title 5th Annual Indigenous Peoples Art Market and the dates of the market in turquoise blue, and beneath it a reproduction of the “best in show” artwork from the previous year. Finally, in yellow, is the Ziibiwing Center title and contact information. Within, the first page includes a greeting (“Boozhoo”) from Bonnie Ekdahl, Ziibiwing Director, and a table of contents for the individual artists. The next two pages provide details about the show’s sponsors – Ziibiwing and the Naanooshke Gallery in the nearby Soaring Eagle Casino &

⁴² The 5th Annual Indigenous Peoples Art Market took place in October of 2005, but the brochure was collected in March of 2007; no current catalogues were available, as the event is now biennial.

Resort⁴³– and the next page provides biographies of the two judges and an invitation to artists to participate in the Diabetes Awareness Community Mural Project. The remaining pages provide artist biographies and photographs of their work, and inside the back cover is a short Ziibiwing “Calendar of Events” for October-December, with no descriptions. The back of the booklet is blank, except for a small oval photo of Ziibiwing, its title, and the contact information again.

Though the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) do not address physical features of Ziibiwing per se, the “special features” that visitors are encouraged to examine are important parts of foundational Anishinabe cultural knowledge, be it spiritual, ethical, relational, or historical. The anticipated audience appears to be both Native and non-Native, though the language of some of the brochures seems at times to invoke one audience more than another. For instance, the Niizhwaaswi Mishomis Kinoomaagewinawaan (Seven Grandfather Teachings) booklet invokes a “we” who should be working to “take care of Mother Earth and the community of life... We should all try to live by the Seven Grandfather Teachings” (Inner panels, one and three), which suggests a general audience like that of the Diba Jimooyung brochure. On the other hand, the Gdodemonaanik Do Kinoomaagewinawaan (Clan System Teachings) brochure seems to be aimed more at an Anishinabek audience, given that the second section, called “Learning Your Clan,” is addressed specifically to those “Anishinabek who do not know their clan” (Second inner panel). Furthermore, the more history-oriented brochures that describe

⁴³ Both Ziibiwing and the gallery are overseen by the Ziibiwing Cultural Society of the Saginaw Chippewa.

collecting maple sap, wild ricing, and the use of birch bark seem more oriented toward a non-Anishinabek audience who would need to know both the story-origin of the traditions and then the more technical descriptions of how these traditions were and are still carried out. The language is still that of “we,” but the “we” speaking is that of the Anishinabek people to their visitors, or the “we” of the Anishinabek people to teaching those Anishinabek who do not know, and is inclusive. The visuals of the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) also vary in approach, for they also appeal to various audiences, at times some more than others. To be more specific, the Norval Morrisseau-like paintings that illustrate the Seven Grandfather Teachings brochure may be somewhat inaccessible to a visitor unfamiliar with Woodland-style art; if one does not know that the images represent spiritual connections, essences, and balance, the stylized figures of animals and humans connected by wavy lines and bisected circles might not make sense. By contrast, the archival photos (most from the Minnesota Historical Society) depicting maple sugar, wild rice, and birch bark harvesting and use seem almost self-explanatory, in that they show people doing the things described in the printed text via a more common kind of visual documentation.

However, the language of the 5th Annual Indigenous Peoples Art Market booklet remains largely in third person, and reads as a catalogue designed for a potential buyer of Native art. The great majority of the text and visuals are devoted to the artist biographies and product images, and given that each artist is also identified by tribal affiliation, there is an understated assertion of authenticity – the word

“authentic” does not appear anywhere, but if every artist included is listed also by affiliation, then an affirmation of the Nativeness of the artists and their products is made nonetheless to potential buyers seeking “real” Native art. The visuals, however, display a number of products using contemporary techniques in painting, pottery, and sculpture – and so Nativeness is not defined so much by technique (traditional or non-traditional) as it is by the final image produced (for instance, a medicine wheel done in stained glass). In addition, the pages that highlight the Ziibiwing Center and the Naanooshke Gallery suggest that the booklet is meant for people not already familiar with these places.

As with the NMAI and HCCM’s “special features” brochures, which confirm and expand on the mission and anticipated audience for the respective institutions, the “special features” brochures create space for Ziibiwing to provide more contextual knowledge, while also confirming and expanding on the Ziibiwing mission statement. In outlining major parts of Anishinabek culture (and they are framed in the larger sense of “Anishinabek,” rather than only “Saginaw Chippewa”), the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) provide a way to “recognize, perpetuate, communicate, and support” the “culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek” (“Mission Statement”). This education is for both Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek, and this distinction sets it apart from either the NMAI or the HCCM: while the NMAI and HCCM are working with multiple Native nations, and the audience distinction is therefore Native and non-Native, Ziibiwing works specifically by and for the Saginaw

Chippewa, within the larger context of Anishinabek culture. As such, and like the Diba Jimooyung information brochure, the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) function to confirm Anishinabek cultural knowledge and to educate all other audiences outside that circle. At times they use language and visuals that are accessible to all audiences, and at other times employ culturally-specific language and visuals that create a more select audience, though most readers will still have some access. The Indigenous Peoples Art Market booklet, however, appears to concern itself with similar issues of “authenticity” as the NMAI’s café and museum stores do, though Ziibiwing approaches the establishment of authenticity by naming artists and providing their biographies and tribal affiliations, rather than invoking it by association with the “remarkable collections of the museum,” a museum that carries the authoritative Smithsonian name (Roanoke& Chesapeake Museum Stores).

Like the changing exhibit brochures, the special features brochures provide extra space to introduce visitors to important features that receive only nominal attention in the general information brochures. However, these special features are permanent, defining aspects of these institutions, and via the brochures they contribute to each site’s overall representation. The NMAI’s special features brochures help to define it both as a conventional museum with food and shopping as well as a place that promotes living cultural performance; the HCCM’s special features brochures draw attention to its role in being a site for dialogue and spiritual and physical healing; and Ziibiwing’s special features brochures reinforce the importance of Anishinabek cultural knowledge.

Second Ring From the Center: General Regional Orientation Literature

As the final circle in the genre-system formulation above, the genres included in what I loosely term the “general regional orientation literature” vary the most in their size and content, though the anticipated audience for each institutional grouping is consistent with the other genres found at each institution. As I discuss below, what constitutes “general regional orientation” does differ from institution to institution, but can include newspapers, events calendars not specific to the museum/cultural center site, maps, regional magazines, bus schedules, etc. These are materials that mark the larger context in which each museum/cultural center exists, providing further information about anticipated audiences and indicating to a certain extent what the museum/cultural center’s perceived role in the larger community might be. (See Appendix A, Figures 6-8 for cover images of the regional orientation literature.)

At the NMAI, there is little extra literature available to museum visitors outside of what directly pertains to the NMAI itself. The only other brochure that I found at the Welcome Desk⁴⁴ was the goSmithsonian>>: Free Visitor Guide to the Smithsonian Museums. A roughly 5X8”, 56-page booklet, the goSmithsonian>> guide provides maps and general information for the 14 Smithsonian museums and art galleries in the Washington D.C. area, as well as basic visitor information and a dining guide. The cover of the February to July 2007 issue is mostly devoted to the large photo of giant panda Mei Xiang and her cub, Tai Shan, advertising the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. “Free Visitors Guide to the Smithsonian

⁴⁴ Apparently there is a Family Activities Guide available at the Welcome Desk, though I discovered that one must request it – at least at the time of both of my visits, it was not visibly available.

Museums” appears in a green banner across the top of the cover, followed by “goSmithsonian>>” printed prominently in a white field, with “go” and “>>” in blue letters, and “Smithsonian” in black. The season and web address for the publication are listed in fine print below that, followed by the panda photo. At the bottom, the Smithsonian Institution logo and name appears, followed by another declaration of “Free! Maps and Tips to All Museums Inside.”

The inside cover and facing page display a map of the National Mall, with notes on parking, sidewalks, and ATM locations as well as markings for bus stops and metro stations. On the next page is a short table of contents, and a welcome statement from the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The next two pages (that are not advertisements for other area attractions) include basic visitor information regarding safety, cameras, pets, etc., and then a suggestion of where visitors might start in the Smithsonian complex. The “Dining Guide” comes next, and then (again, interspersed with advertisements) the descriptions of the individual museums begin. The back cover of the booklet is a full-page advertisement for programming on the History Channel, and inside the back cover, one finds suggestions for visiting the “goSmithsonian” website for more tourist and visitor information.

Of the 56 pages (58 in all, with the insides of the covers included), the National Museum of the American Indian has four pages of space, divided in half between a description of features and a two-page map of the facilities. The description includes a paragraph describing the purpose of the museum, followed by tips for where to start in the museum, and then one- or two-sentence descriptions of

the permanent exhibits. The rotating exhibit, Identity by Design receives a paragraph of description, as does the description of Windows on Collections artifact displays and the Mitsitam Café. The museum stores are mentioned in brief, and a note on free film presentations and the dates for the National Powwow conclude the text. Inserted on the edges of the text are basic location and opening hours information and images, but unlike the General Information brochure's emphasis on photos of people and performance, there are only images of objects: a dress, a drum, a beaded bag, and textile work.

The goSmithsonian>> guide places the NMAI firmly within the context of the Smithsonian complex: it is one museum among many museums, and the goal of its description in the museum guide are not so much to highlight how this museum is unique among the Smithsonian installations, but simply to make it as accessible and as attractive as possible to visitors. One may assume, then, given the degree of detailed information regarding locations of museums, parking, food, ATMs, and tour suggestions, that the anticipated audience is likely tourists, or at the very least people who are unfamiliar with the area or the Smithsonian Institution. In terms of images, the photos of objects (to the exclusion of all people, visitors or performers) seem to fall back on the museum default-setting, in that images of objects suggest a place full of Indian things on display, and though the description notes the "collaboration with tribes and communities from across the hemisphere," ultimately the NMAI is framed as "the largest and most diverse collections of American Indian Art and cultural objects" (goSmithsonian>> 36). Thus, characterized as part of the Smithsonian

system, the NMAI is made to appear more like its surrounding peer museums and less like a place that “empower[s] the Indian voice” (“About the National Museum of the American Indian”) or that emphasizes the “continuance of culture, traditional values, and transitions in contemporary Native life” (“Appendix A” 77).

The HCCM has the widest variety of free regional literature available among the three sites, which function to connect it to the Haskell community as well as the University of Kansas, the city of Lawrence, Douglas County, the greater Kansas City area, and the state of Kansas. The six maps, magazines, and brochures available at the reception desk at the HCCM set Haskell and the HCCM within the local and regional educational and tourist context, beginning with the A Walking Tour of Haskell brochure. This brochure is a black and white photocopied tri-fold that provides a curious visitor with a historical/architectural tour of the Haskell campus, and includes images of the various buildings as they are listed. Next is the K-10 Connector, a black and white, photocopied tri-fold brochure with bus maps and schedule information for the pilot project in the Johnson County transit system that provides transport along the K-10 highway between KU’s Lawrence and Edwards campuses, Haskell’s campus, and Johnson County Community College. Across the street from the bus stop, the HCCM becomes a logical place to advertise this inter-campus bus system, and also places Haskell within the context of other area colleges and universities. Meanwhile, KU’s Lied Center – the largest performing venue in Lawrence, and host to musicals, chamber music, and dance productions among others – also has its brochure and season schedule available. No immediate connection is apparent, and

one may assume that the HCCM simple serves as another advertising venue, perhaps for Haskell students interested in the arts;⁴⁵ however, the second event on the schedule, Irene Bedard & Deni, is billed specifically as “Techno meets Native rock.” Irene Bedard, who is the voice and likeness for Disney’s animated feature Pocahontas and the female lead in Smoke Signals, is a well-known Native singer-actress, and perhaps in part for this reason the Lied Center has added incentive to advertise at the HCCM.

The other three items are more oriented to newcomers in the area, whether they are visiting or settling. The Heritage League of Greater Kansas City, whose “primary purpose is to promote a broader awareness of and appreciation for the history of the Greater Kansas City area” (back panel) provides a 14-panel annotated folding map entitled History Map: Directory of Historical Sites and Organizations. The HCCM is listed as a site (with contact information) on the map, and the description reads, “Exhibits feature Haskell’s unique archival and artifact collections preserving the vast history of Haskell’s evolution from boarding school to university, including traditional art forms, contemporary work, and oral history projects.” Within the DouglasCounty Newcomers**guide** (the bold is part of the formatting), a magazine designed for those who have recently relocated to the Douglas County area (primarily the city of Lawrence), one finds the HCCM listed under multiple headings. As a guide that provides basic community information (utilities, emergency numbers, etc.),

⁴⁵ “Cultural arts” in the context of the Lied Center lean more toward classical senses of “high culture” (European or Euro-American music, theater, dance), contemporary performances that have their roots in the same, as well as “multicultural” (music, theater, and dance from other countries or non European/Euro-American cultures). Because of this classification system and the way it marks identity, Irene Bedard & Deni are classified under “World.”

information regarding transportation, health care, education, and historical attractions, the 64-page guide (with a smiling mother pushing a child on a park swing on its cover) provides a short profile of Haskell under its section on education (29), marks both Haskell and the HCCM specifically on its area map (32-33), and provides a short profile of the HCCM under the “Arts” section of the “Our Town” local attractions portion of the guide (42). One may also pick up the Official Kansas Visitors Guide 2006, a 172-page tourist guide for the state. Behind a cover depicting a string quartet performing in an open Flint Hills pasture, the first page includes a governor’s welcome, and the cover itself folds out into a map of Kansas. Roughly half of the magazine is devoted to feature articles on sites around Kansas, and the other half lists a state-wide events calendar, and then sites of interest organized by city. Haskell itself is listed under the “Kansas Calendar” for its Native American Art Market in September and its powwow in May, and both the university and the HCCM receive listing under “Lawrence” in the “Community Listings” (133).

Within this grouping of genres, the HCCM is sometimes cast as an introduction to the Haskell campus, as the liaison point between the community and Haskell, and at other times as a feature of the larger community among other features. As a place for the walking tour to begin, the HCCM is ideal in its location on the edge of campus, as well as in its designated function as a campus welcome center. As a place for bus schedule distribution, it is one of the most convenient points on Haskell’s campus (given its location on a major street that intersects with K-10, near that intersection) and besides the literal intersection of place, there is the intersection

of students in the area who all benefit from the bus service. As a place to advertise the Lied Center's events, the HCCM also functions as a liaison point between Haskell students and faculty and the University of Kansas, especially when the Lied Center hosts performers that may have particular appeal for faculty and students at Haskell. Through the "History Map" of the Kansas City area, the HCCM becomes part of a grouping of historical places understood as the "heritage" of the area, a place that contributes to the archiving and preservation of history: Haskell's in particular, but as Haskell is part of the Greater Kansas City area, on this map Haskell's heritage belongs to all people in the area. In the DouglasCounty Newcomersguide, the HCCM is located in the "Arts" section, among art galleries, orchestra, and theaters, and cast as "a testament to studying living American Indian traditions, research, provide education and cultural programs while celebrating Native cultures and promoting cross-cultural understanding" (42). Framed in this way, the HCCM becomes understood as a liaison point again between the Lawrence community and Native cultures. Yet in the Kansas visitor's guide, the HCCM – as a "museum and archives reflecting the history of Native American education and art" (133) – is one tourist attraction among many, and because it does not advertise activities (at least in this issue) it is listed only under "Lawrence" in the "Community Listings," and reads as a feature of Lawrence.

Of note is the lack of HCCM visuals; none of the publications provided a photo of the HCCM, and so the HCCM exists at most as a dot on the maps in the History Map and the DouglasCounty Newcomersguide. In lieu of an actual image of

the HCCM, the reader is generally left to imagine what the HCCM might be like, depending on the visuals that are provided; for example, given that the History Map illustrates its cover with sepia-colored archival photographs, mostly of monuments and historical landmarks, one might expect the HCCM to be housed in such a place (which it is not), or at the very least house those kinds of archival photos (which it does). Conversely, with the DouglasCounty Newcomersguide, the HCCM is listed among art galleries, and the visuals provided on neighboring pages are of spacious white walls and art; one might then expect the HCCM to look something like that, and though it does have a section for Haskell student and alumni artists' artwork, the display is less like the depicted art gallery and more integrated into the larger HCCM goal of telling Haskell's story.

Because the anticipated audience for the HCCM is often first-time students and their families, as well as tourists, such an array of literature seems aimed to accommodate a variety of familiarity levels regarding Haskell. For those already familiar with Haskell, the bus schedule, DouglasCounty Newcomersguide or the Kansas visitors guide might be more important; for those who are tourists or first-time visitors to the HCCM, the AWalking Tour of Haskell might be more useful, and depending on their familiarity with the area, also the History Map and perhaps the general Kansas guide.

Like the goSmithsonian>> brochure, the literature available at the HCCM places it in a larger context, although the variety found at the HCCM creates a multidimensional understanding of the HCCM as simultaneously an extension of

Haskell, a meeting point between the Haskell community and the local community, and also as a place subsumed into the larger regional historical narratives and tourist pitches. While the [goSmithsonian](#)>> brochure's primary concern is orienting visitors to the Washington, D.C., Smithsonian museums – not the National Mall in general, but only the Smithsonian-owned museums and galleries – the array of literature available at the HCCM illustrates the multiple audiences it serves. That is not to say that the Smithsonian Institution does not draw multiple audiences, but it is to say that those multiple audiences generally have a common purpose as sightseers while those at the HCCM may not. The language of the brochures from both sites, however, does show that in both cases, as part of a larger context the descriptions of the NMAI and HCCM are tweaked to reflect the purposes served within that larger context. The NMAI's preliminary description in the [goSmithsonian](#)>> brochure focuses more on collections than the mission to support living Native cultures, making it more congruent with the other traditional Smithsonian museums, and the HCCM's description shifts according to the literature that includes it, from art galleries interested in “promoting cross-cultural understanding” ([DouglasCounty Newcomersguide](#) 42) to historical societies interested in “Haskell's unique archival and artifact collections” ([History Map](#)).

At Ziibiwing, a visitor will find only one other piece of literature in addition to the brochures relating directly to cultural center: the [Tribal Observer](#). This once-monthly community newspaper is owned and operated by the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation, and is free to enrolled Tribal members and employees of the Tribe

(Tribal Observer 4). Typically 32 pages, each issue of the Tribal Observer has its title at the top, with the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation seal above it, and the in the upper left corner is the date, volume and issue number, and the Anishinabemowin words and English words for the current moon cycle/month (in this particular issue, it was “Onaabadi-Giizis,” or “Snow-Crusted Moon”). Under the title it reads, “The Saginaw Chippewa Nation... *‘Working Together for our Future’*” (italics in original), followed by a front page divided into articles with smaller titles and photographs. The center top of the front page includes the physical and web addresses for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation, and the right corner has a “postage paid” stamp, so that the paper could be folded and mailed. At the bottom of the front page is a table of contents, by topic, for the rest of the paper. Subjects covered are Saginaw Chippewa community news, including obituaries, articles on local government and community events, letters to the editor, and entertainment, health and sports sections. There are also sections that cover specific cultural events in the community, news “Across Indian Country,” and happenings at the Sowmick Senior Center. Interspersed with the articles are community members’ contributions as essays, stories, poems, thanks-yous, and children’s artwork, and area business’ advertisements.

As part of the community infrastructure and a site to hold events, Ziibiwing is mentioned or advertised six different times in the Tribal Observer. Its first mentioning comes with a quarter-page advertisement for the Woven by Tradition exhibit, complete with the cover of that brochure reproduced there (with some adjustment to fit the space) (17). Across the bottom of the advertisement is the Ziibiwing Center

name, logo, and contact information. The second, third, and fourth advertisements are found on the following page (18), with an eighth-page block advertising the “Spring Equinox: Anishinabemowin Immersion Cultural Teaching & Feast” to be held at Ziibiwing, and below it another eighth-page block advertising for readers to become Ziibiwing Cultural Center members. Next to these two is another quarter-page advertisement with a photo of Ziibiwing at the top, followed by the title, “The Midwest’s Premier American Indian Museum!”, which is still an advertisement for the cultural center itself (18).⁴⁶ Beneath the title are bulleted points that describe Ziibiwing’s major features, beginning with “One-of-a-kind exhibit featuring over 500 rare artifacts, interactive displays, and two theaters,” “On-site café and gift shop with Michigan’s largest selection of North American Indian books, music, and videos,” “Research Center with a large collection of archives, books, documents, and treaties,” “Group tours and senior discounts,” and “Located just south of the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort” (18). Like the Woven by Tradition advertisement, each of these also has the Ziibiwing name, logo, and contact information at the bottom. The next mention of Ziibiwing comes on the facing page, with an eighth-page advertisement for the Anishinabemowin immersion club that meets at Ziibiwing (19). The final mention of Ziibiwing comes on page 31, with the meeting for the Anishinabemowin club marked on the “Tribal Community Calendar.”

⁴⁶ More recently, the “Midwest’s Premier American Indian Museum!” is becoming a secondary title to Ziibiwing’s established name, and is beginning to appear on more of Ziibiwing’s literature, though within this grouping (and past publications) the “museum” designation is unusual.

Within the context of the Tribal Observer, Ziibiwing appears to take on two roles: that of a community gathering place, most often for the Anishinabemowin club's language activities, and that of a cultural center/museum advertising its holdings to the public. Half of the notations are specifically for community activities, and the other half are Ziibiwing advertisements (although in terms of page space, most is given to the advertisements). The community activity advertisements appear to be geared toward tribal members who wish to learn or continue speaking their native language – the attraction in both the “Spring Equinox” advertisement and the Anishinabemowin club's advertisement is the chance to learn both language and cultural teachings from fluent Anishinabemowin speakers. The advertisement asking for readers to join Ziibiwing as a sponsor/member could be for Saginaw Chippewa and non-Saginaw Chippewa audiences alike; its wording, “Like other non-profit American Indian Museums, we depend on donations and memberships to sustain our endeavors” (18), places Ziibiwing with other “American Indian” museums rather than a specifically Saginaw Chippewa museum, and so while the incentive to protect Ziibiwing might be stronger with those whose material culture it houses, the wording seems meant to appeal a larger audience that would find the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways more attractive as an “American Indian Museum.” The appeal to a non-Saginaw Chippewa audience becomes most obvious in the “Midwest's Premier American Indian Museum!” advertisement, for here Anishinabek culture is not mentioned at all (except for in Ziibiwing's full title at the bottom), and the description is instead tuned to “rare artifacts,” the café and gift shop, the archives,

the possibility for group tours, and perhaps most telling, its location in reference to the nearby Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort.

The description here resembles that of the NMAI's description in general and especially in the [goSmithsonian>>](#), in that it invokes an image of a prototypical Euro-American museum that concerns itself with artifact displays, archives, food, and shopping. The last section about its location near the casino sets Ziibiwing firmly within a tourist-recreation context, and it appears to be aimed at non-Saginaw Chippewa vacationers at Soaring Eagle. Yet the advertisement's location in the [Tribal Observer](#) is puzzling – how can the newspaper for the Saginaw Chippewa attract outside visitors?– until one discovers that the [Tribal Observer](#) is also distributed in each Soaring Eagle hotel room. Thus, though the primary audience is the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation, through the resort the paper receives wider distribution. Its location at Ziibiwing, then, seems to provide a kind of mutual reinforcement: the [Tribal Observer](#) is a platform for publicity for both tribal activities at Ziibiwing and the cultural center as a tourist attraction, while keeping issues of the [Tribal Observer](#) for distribution in Ziibiwing reinforces the [Tribal Observer](#) as part of the tribal infrastructure, even as it plays a different role in the Soaring Eagle hotel rooms. As a result, like the multiple materials at the HCCM, the [Tribal Observer](#) serves multiple audience needs for Ziibiwing.

The general regional orientational genres are a marked contrast from the other groupings, for because of constraints regarding space, audience, and goals, the representation of each site changes according to the outside communities who

produce these genres. One finds the NMAI's image of a museum that supports living Native cultures shifted more to a conventional, artifact-oriented museum in the Smithsonian guide, likely for the sake of establishing it as a museum-in-kind with other Smithsonian sites. One finds the HCCM's image of a site for historical memory and healing overshadowed and adjusted to the goals of the communities that include it as part of themselves, highlighting only those features that the HCCM has in common with them. And one finds Ziibiwing splitting its appeals within the same forum (the Tribal Observer) in order to appeal to an Anishinabek audience that wishes to reinforce Anishinabek culture and a non-Anishinabek audience less interested in a "cultural center" and more interested in a conventional "museum."

Summation and Conclusion: Publicity/Orientation Literature and Rhetorical Sovereignty

The collected samples of publicity/orientation literature described above provide a wide array of opportunities for representation, and many of these opportunities are interlocking even as the genres in these systems connect. Sometimes the representations made in these genres build on one another, and sometimes they appear to contradict one another, but in sum they provide a multi-faceted glimpse into these three institutions' efforts to present themselves to diverse audiences. What follows is a brief summation of each institution's publicity/orientation genres and their representations.

The NMAI's General Information brochure demonstrates a simultaneous desire to orient the anticipated tourist audiences in the most conventional sense of a

museum – providing maps, highlighting exhibits, food, and shopping – and to begin encouraging those same audiences to think of Native cultures in terms of the contemporary and the performative rather than the catalogued and preserved, especially through the visuals in the brochure. The sample rotating exhibit brochure, Identity by Design, reinforces this sense of the present-day, both in its inclusion of the words and photos of contemporary Native dressmakers and its theme of Native “style” and “celebration” while at the same time appealing still to visitors who want to see collected dresses and archival photographs. The special features brochure for the Mitsitam Café and the museum stores attempts to attract shoppers who expect a conventional museum with “authentic” foods and goods for sale, while at the same time the events calendar emphasizes the interactive and performative events that museum-goers might not expect to find. Finally, the goSmithsonian>> brochure recasts the NMAI somewhat back into the conventional museum mold, resulting in the NMAI looking less performance-oriented and far more artifact-oriented.

The HCCM’s general information brochure is far more oriented towards preserving and interpreting Haskell’s history, and though it focuses on highlighting the major features of the HCCM in general (archives, artifacts, collections, landscaping), that work is done with the goal of teaching visitors through the lens of Haskell’s history. The exhibit brochure, Honoring Our Children, strives to orient visitors (students, faculty, staff, larger community) to the experience of past Haskell students and Haskell’s evolution into an intertribal university, and the special features brochures (Garden of Healing, A Design of Sacred Means, and Beyond the Reach of

Time and Change) enlarge on the spiritual and healing features of the HCCM that go hand in hand with coming to terms with that history, and how a dialogue on representation can be begun. The general regional orientation materials seem to reinforce the sense of the HCCM being a site for communication between Haskell and the larger community, although the unique features of the HCCM often become subsumed (and consequently, descriptions altered or abridged) according to the agenda and audience of the publication.

Ziibiwing's general information brochure, Diba Jimooyung: Telling Our Story, is less designed for a visitor's spatial orientation, and more designed for world-view orientation – that is, the brochure is designed to introduce Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek visitors alike to Anishinabek prophecy, history, and teachings as they appear in Ziibiwing's permanent exhibit. The sample rotating exhibit brochure, Woven by Tradition, echoes the language of history, adding to it the sense of traditional practices made contemporary through the continuity of Anishinabek basket-weaving practices. As “special features” brochures, the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) are also focused on Anishinabek cultural knowledge rather than physical features of the building (though Ziibiwing has both a café and a gift shop), although the Indian Peoples Art Market booklet does remind visitors that Ziibiwing is also host to Native artists who have wares to sell (but “authenticity” is certified by tribal affiliation here, both in the cultural center and in the artwork). The general regional literature found at Ziibiwing, the Tribal Observer, reflects the Saginaw Chippewa community and Ziibiwing's place in the community,

while at the same time (via Soaring Eagle) provides a wider audience to which Ziibiwing appeals by casting itself in advertisements as an artifact-centered “museum” rather than a “cultural center” in hopes of attracting a tourist audience.

To review the concept of “rhetorical sovereignty” discussed in Chapter One, it is “the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 449, italics his). Because of the various locations, audiences, and motivations for speaking, it is not possible (or practical, or productive) to attempt a ranking of institutions, of who is more rhetorically sovereign than another. To reiterate Joanne Barker’s point about the specific, located nature of sovereignty, it “is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning. How and when it emerges and functions are determined by the ‘located’ political agendas and cultural perspectives of those who rearticulate it into public debate or political document to do a specific work of opposition, invitation, or accommodation” (Barker 21). Therefore, any discussion of sovereignty must be grounded in the physical and social context of the institution in question. If a ranking is not possible or desirable, what can be done here is a discussion of how rhetorical sovereignty becomes defined – of what is accomplished – within the context of the genres from each institution that are discussed in this chapter.

For the NMAI, the struggle is that of a museum set within one of the most authoritative museum complexes in the world, one which not only maintains many of the forms of the conventional museum but also – because of its authority – sets the

standard for other museums around the world. That the NMAI has to an extent bucked that conventionality in its stated mission and its orientation towards presenting its collections in terms of living Native cultures sets a tremendous precedent within the Smithsonian complex. In terms of the representations of Native peoples that it presents, the general publicity literature it provides often emphasizes contemporary artists and performers as much or more than its extensive artifact collections, sending the message to its visitors that what they will see is not the remnants of dead Native cultures, but instead evidence of living Native cultures. At the same time, as part of the Smithsonian system, the NMAI must conform in many ways to the conventional museum framework; such tendencies are evidenced in the exhibit-food-shopping organization of its general and special information brochures, and in the [goSmithsonian](#) description that does much to reduce the NMAI's emphasis on living cultures back to a collections-driven focus. As far as Native peoples actually finding voice through the NMAI's orientation literature, only in the Identity by Design exhibit brochure did any Native people literally speak; perhaps this is a result of general publicity literature needing to remain general in how it orients visitors – as demonstrated above, the special features brochures allowed for more discussion and detail – and also a result of the Smithsonian's control. Native peoples were invited to collaborate on exhibits, but the other genres generated by the NMAI were not (with the exception of the Identity by Design brochure) part of that collaboration. In the actual production of these genres, Native peoples have little

power, and the constraints of the NMAI site as a Smithsonian museum (and its attendant genres) limit how that power may be exerted.

At the HCCM, as an extension of Haskell Indian Nations University, which is itself partially under the control of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, one might expect the HCCM also to reflect a more conventional sense of “museum” given those ties to government and university education paradigms. However, while its general publicity literature’s emphasis on archives, preservation, and Haskell history at first appears to fulfill that sense of a conventional museum, the way that history is shaped (and ostensibly, those archives and preservation work put to use in the exhibits) indicates a distinct emphasis on Haskell (and its student body, representing 150 tribal nations) telling its own story. Especially within the space provided by the special features brochures, the HCCM expands its goals from standing as a prototypical museum space to a spiritual and healing space; in this way, the goal of the HCCM is not only to record and recite Haskell’s history, but also to help visitors (especially students) make sense of it, and meaning out of it. The great majority of the work involved in producing the brochures was done by Haskell faculty, staff, and students, suggesting a vested interest on the part of the writers, who would be telling their institution’s story. On the other hand, within the circle of general regional orientation brochures, the HCCM struggles with similar issues as does the NMAI; in the descriptions of the HCCM in the History Map and various area guides, the features that best fit the overall context of the area guides are the ones that receive attention, and those features are most consistently the archives and the history. The HCCM thus

becomes reduced to its archives and history on a list of many historical places with archives; in the case of the History Map, because the Heritage League of Greater Kansas City claims the HCCM as simply part of the history of the region, and that idea's translation into genre restricts the HCCM's representation, the HCCM loses the sense of Native self-told story.

At Ziibiwing, because the cultural center is located within a Native nation in the process of establishing itself as sovereign, Ziibiwing itself becomes a kind of statement of sovereignty. In the general publicity/orientation literature it provides, its emphasis is on telling the Saginaw Chippewa (within the larger context of Anishinabe peoples) story from the Saginaw Chippewa point of view. Visitors received less literature aimed at physical orientation, and more that is aimed at epistemological orientation. While conventional forms of museological genres such as brochures and maps are employed, they are put to a unique use within Ziibiwing's context, especially in the form of the Kinoomaagewin Mzinigas (Little Teaching Books) as the "special features" that visitors are encouraged to examine. Both Anishinabemowin and English are put to use, and while the language of explanation is English (so as to appeal to the widest audience) the framing language of titles consistently puts Anishinabemowin first. In addition, as the only institution in this study that calls itself exclusively a "cultural center," Ziibiwing seems to attempt to distance itself as much as possible from the label "museum." This rhetorical choice makes the Tribal Observer advertisement for Ziibiwing as the "Midwest's Premier American Indian Museum!" all the stronger in contrast, and marks a distinct shift in Ziibiwing's

rhetorical approach when it seeks tourists as visitors. Like the NMAI and HCCM, when appealing to the general population, the approach Ziibiwing takes to market itself is to use a more conventional generic approach, casting itself as a conventional “museum” with collections of artifacts, a café and a gift shop, and convenient location.

For all three institutions, it appears as though rhetorical sovereignty – that control over the means and representations made in communication – becomes more difficult the further afield each site goes in its communicative efforts. Perhaps because the further out one goes, the more other audiences and agendas one meets and it becomes more difficult to appeal to all. Often the unique aspects of these institutions that assert Native voices with the most strength often are not included in descriptions in the outer circles because of a desire for mass-appeal, or those unique aspects are described in ways a mass-audience (primarily Euro-American) finds familiar in their museum-going experience. And again, in the center (with general orientation literature), one still has to work hard to provide the information a typical audience will need and provide the context they will need to understand what they will see and hear. Within these three sites, it seems as though the special features brochures provide the greatest amount of latitude for expanding of site- or culturally-specific features; only in that place does the NMAI get a chance to provide details on the performance events that set it apart; only in that place does the HCCM discuss the spiritual and healing aspects of that place that are so treasured by the interviewees; also there, Ziibiwing gets a chance to enlarge on the Anishinabek world view.

Overall, the general publicity/orientation system of genres demonstrates the complexity of the interaction between site, audience, and the conventional genres that have long been a part of the museum system. At each site, the representation of the museum/cultural center finds voice (and tension) via a variety of genres that always seek to be familiar enough to visitor expectations to be useful, but also at times and to varying extents to challenge the visitor – this appears to be true at least of the genres these museum/cultural centers produce for use within the site’s boundaries. Yet outside of these sites, each institution’s voice comes under heavier influence from outside communities/audiences who are attracted to what they find most useful or familiar, and so the communicative control – the rhetorical sovereignty – each site enjoys within its bounds is often compromised in appeals to mass (non-Native) audiences.

Chapter Four
The Rhetorical Core of the Museum:
Representation in the Genre of Museum and Cultural Center Displays

Introduction: The Rhetoric of Displays and Visual Pedagogy

Though museums and cultural centers have historically been sites for collections, storage, and academic research, they are best known to the average visitor for their displays.⁴⁷ The great majority of scholarship in museum studies is devoted to exploring the design, purpose, and effect of museum displays, and so for both the museum professional and the visitor, the museum or cultural center exhibit takes center stage. Particularly important are those displays that are a permanent part of the museum or cultural center structure, for they become in many ways the defining elements of that site.

In Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argues that because the experience of an exhibit is visual, rather than strictly verbal, articulating how such an experience occurs is not easy – but the exhibit is still the primary form of “pedagogy” that museums employ. She writes, “It is the experience of the displays that for most visitors defines the museum, and it is through displays that museums produce and communicate knowledge” (4). However, as museum curators and design teams have discovered, meaning-making is something that can be influenced, but not completely determined. Visitors bring their own experiences to

⁴⁷ The terms “display” and “exhibit” are often used interchangeably in museological discourse, though sometimes the distinction is made between an “exhibition” or “exhibit” which is featured within a gallery, and the “displays” that constitute that “display.” In this chapter, I use them interchangeably.

the museum or cultural center, and therefore have interpretive lenses of their own through which to understand what they encounter. As Hooper-Greenhill asserts,

Exhibitions are produced to communicate meaningful visual and textual statements, but there is no guarantee that the intended meaning will be achieved. [Visitors] may or may not perceive the intended meanings, and perceiving them, they may or may not agree with them, find them interesting, or pay attention to them...Displays must of course have some kind of inner coherence which should be made clear to the viewer; this is a part of the professional responsibility of the curator or exhibition team. However, visitors will construct their own coherence none the less, which may or may not comply with that of the curator. (4)

This is not to argue that guiding visitor perception in regards to interpreting displays is a futile effort; if anything, such an effort underscores the importance of how the histories and narratives told by exhibitions are constructed, and thus in the end are highly rhetorical. Though she does not use the word “rhetorical,” Hooper-Greenhill relies on an understanding of what she calls “pedagogic style” to discuss the ways in which “something is said, or teaching method; in museums this refers to the style of communication in displays, which includes the way the objects are used or placed, the way the text is written, the provision within the exhibition for various forms of sensory engagement (including visual, tactile, auditory senses), the use of light and colour [sic], the use of space, and so on” (5). All of these features contribute

to the process of meaning making, creating cues for visitors to follow in the interpretive process. Referring to those cues as a “hidden curriculum”⁴⁸ in museum pedagogy (5), Hooper-Greenhill recognizes that the values and attitudes embedded in such a “curriculum” also carry political consequence, specifically citing museums with ethnographic collections as particularly contentious places with regard to the construction of historical narratives. She states, “It is in the context of what counts as history that the constructed character of meaning is demonstrated most clearly within the museum field...Displayed objects of all types are made meaningful according to the interpretive frameworks within which they are placed, and the historical or cultural position from which they are seen” (8). Many museums are now leaning towards exhibit styles that purposefully allow for a multiplicity of interpretations as a way to counterbalance the historical tendency of exhibits to become monolithic in their pedagogies.

Even the spatial organization of exhibits carries a rhetorical statement of intention with it; according to Bill Hillier and Kali Tzortzi’s summation of scholarship done regarding display organization, spatial design itself can be more overtly pedagogical (providing more guidance, restricting visitor movement, or creating a flow in only one direction), or more open-ended in meaning-making (encouraging self-guided exploration of an exhibit) (Hillier and Tzortzi 288). In the case of “heavily sequenced spaces,” the stricter organization “gives tacit articulation

⁴⁸ Elliot W. Eisner and Stephen M. Dobbs refer to the same concept as “silent pedagogy” in their work on exhibitions in art museums, arguing that sometimes those cues are not made obvious enough to assist visitor interpretation of art. See “Silent Pedagogy: How Museums Help Visitors Experience Exhibitions.”

to an intellectual experience, and so becomes positive for a visitor...”; such organization can be “very powerful where there is a legitimate and illuminating narrative,” though if a narrative is lacking, “an overly sequenced narrative may appear as unnecessarily constrained” by a visitor (Hillier and Tzortzi 299). On the other hand, “The alternative is to design space in such a way that sequences are more localized and interconnected so as to allow visitors to choose different paths and construct their own pattern of experience” (Hillier and Tzortzi 299). In addition, placing objects or displays within particular proximity of each other also creates meaningful relationships; “the design of space can add relationships between objects which are otherwise equivalent in terms of accessibility or visibility, and affect the ways in which displays are perceived and cognitively mapped” (Peponis et al., as cited by Hillier and Tzortzi 294). From their scholarly survey, Hillier and Tzortzi tentatively assert that most museum exhibits exist in a continuum between the two kinds of “generic” spatial exhibit types – completely sequenced, or as open as possible – with their designs being influenced by what the curators or design teams wish to communicate to the visitor (296-299).

For the purposes of this chapter, the museum/cultural center permanent exhibits will be considered genres, though in a sense larger than spatial organization. Just as museum/cultural center publicity and orientation literature can be considered genres based on their content, features, context, audience, and rhetorical intention (or their “pedagogical intentions”), so can museums’ exhibits. As a result of this generic, interpretive frame, one can see in sharper relief how museum exhibits are rhetorical

communicative forces as well. In what follows, I first establish the generic framework of the museum/cultural center permanent exhibit as I found them in the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing; secondly, I examine and analyze the permanent exhibits of each site for how they emerge in their distinctive contexts, beginning with the NMAI, moving to the HCCM and providing a comparison between the two, and then moving to Ziibiwing and providing a comparative analysis to the previous two; finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of rhetorical sovereignty and its implications in the meaning-making process of these exhibits and their individual communicative goals.

Museum/Cultural Center Exhibit as Genre

The museum exhibit is a highly embedded secondary speech genre, which is to say – in the Bakhtinian sense – it is a genre like “novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary...that absorb and digest primary (simple) genres” that come more directly from everyday speech acts (Bakhtin 62). For Bakhtin, “speech” was not merely a matter of speaking, but encompassed all kinds of spoken and written utterances one might encounter. Furthermore, for Bakhtin, “speech” and “utterances” that composed it were not units of language – the classification theorists of his day tended to make – but instead units of purposeful communication. While Bakhtin was not much interested in the rhetorical implications of genre, primary or secondary – audience, context, and rhetoric in general do not receive a great deal of his attention – he was very much interested in the historical nature of utterances as always in response to what was previously said, and the

prompting for the next utterance to be spoken (Bakhtin 69). Within the context of this chapter, I will expand Bakhtin's notion of "utterance" to include visual constructions, as well as printed ones, and also the idea of "secondary speech genres" to take more rhetorical concerns into consideration. Therefore, the present formulation of a museum exhibit as a secondary genre will necessarily take into account multiple kinds of "utterances" as well as rhetorical concerns of situation and audience. Not to be confused with a "genre system," which would refer to all the genres that go into the making and promoting of the museum exhibit, including staff memos, meeting notes, schematics, internal reports, and then the system of publicity literatures described in Chapter Three (just to name a few), I treat the exhibits themselves as a secondary speech genre constituted by primary genres in predictable patterns, and often in ways that are designed to answer previous exhibit formations as well as prompt a response from present viewers.

In terms of predictable patterns, generally speaking, a museum exhibit in an ethnographic museum (or museum/cultural center with that kind of collection as its foundation) will be a series of multimedia display that simultaneously makes use of words, images, and objects to convey its ideas. The exhibitions are organized around a theme or idea, and are frequently arranged in space with an intended order of encounter for visitors (although that order may vary in its firmness given the curators' goals for a more specific or more open interpretation of the exhibit). Within that general organization and its guiding ideas, there may be subsections where individual points receive more attention or elaboration.

The ideas or themes within an exhibit can be conveyed by privileging language, image, or objects; as Maurer described the prototypical ethnographic museum exhibit, often objects were given primacy, with historical or anthropological narratives built around arrays of Native goods (Maurer 23). Within the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing, however, frequently printed and imagistic narratives drive the larger narration of an exhibit, with objects standing in as support for the ideas conveyed with words and images. Printed texts are frequently used to introduce an exhibit in an introductory panel, and the major organizational ideas are often marked by printed texts in other panels in order to guide the visitor. Smaller labels are employed to provide explanatory captions for images, photographs, and objects. Occasionally, if there is an aural narrative provided, there will sometimes be a visual representation of that same narrative for the visitor to read. Language in the text may vary from the scientific third-person to the narrative first-person, or some combination of the both. Following recent trends in museum studies, curators are now sometimes signing the text that they contribute to the display, marking it as distinct from other sources of information and undermining the traditional sense of museum and curator as monolithic knowledge-makers.

Image-based narratives may also be employed to convey ideas or create an effect with a minimum of printed explanation, as can arrangements of objects, though most often there is some kind of verbal text accompanying image or object displays. The images used are often archival photographs, relying on the authority of history to support their documentation of people and events; there may also be artistic images

meant to provide interpretations of an event or idea. Other images may function in a support role as part of a printed text panel, enhancing with illustrations or examples the ideas the printed text supplies in much the same way a verbal caption can support an image. In addition, video and film presentations are becoming a more common feature of exhibits, whether they are included as video monitors embedded in the exhibit itself, or presented in a theater that is a part of or works in conjunction with the exhibit. These presentations can be documentary-like in style, relying on the camera to depict reality for the audience and provide real-time “evidence” for the ideas expressed, or they may be more purposefully and overtly artistic renderings of story or narrative to support visitor understanding.

Within these three institutions, the typical object-driven display design has for the most part been discarded in the permanent exhibits,⁴⁹ although objects still play a significant part in the displays. In past museum display techniques, objects and artifacts were regarded as kinds of texts with histories to tell, and presently they are still regarded that way. On the other hand, many curators now recognize that those artifacts do not speak by themselves, nor is their meaning transparent and easily transmittable via mass groupings and technical text labels. Currently many curators understand objects in collections to be items with complex histories that vary according to who tells the story, and accordingly exhibit designs are beginning to reflect efforts to contextualize collections and their multiple narratives as objects

⁴⁹ With the exception of the Windows on Collections displays at the NMAI, which are purely object driven, and include only the minimal labeling system of traditional museums; this vestige of the conventional museum format stands in stark contrast to the permanent exhibits, as they are described below.

within narratives, as opposed to objects in isolation. By and large, the objects on display in the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing permanent⁵⁰ exhibits are not meant to be the centerpieces of the exhibition. Rather, they have been chosen and integrated into the exhibits in such a way as to enhance or support the ideas and narratives conveyed. They remain, though, in glass cases for their protection and preservation, and so remain purely visual (though three dimensional) components of the exhibit rather than sites for multi-sensory input.

In addition to the visual components – printed text, images, and objects – other sensory input are employed to enhance visitor comprehension. Aural narratives, as mentioned above, are sometimes provided to guide visitors as they view the exhibit, via motion detectors that are activated by visitors who come into range, or by hand-held devices that visitors can choose to listen to (or ignore). Music or other sound effects are also common, and are more frequent with video presentations. Occasionally other senses may be invoked, such as the scenting a life-size model of a teaching lodge with sage or cedar, or interactive exhibit sections that require hands-on participation from visitors.

Because of the wide variety of choices and sensory input one may have in creating the experience of a museum/cultural center exhibit, in many ways it is a more complex genre than, for example, that of a brochure. On the other hand, like a

⁵⁰ That is not to say that the object-driven display technique has been utterly discarded, for often in the rotating or changing exhibit areas, the exhibit designs do center on collections of objects; however, there is more often than not also an accompanying narrative of some kind to go with that collection (for example, the evolution of style in Native women's dresses), rather than keeping to the minimalist labels and minimum contextualization of museum tradition (with the exception, as noted above, at the NMAI).

brochure, visitors recognize a museum exhibit when they see one, suggesting that there is a generic structure that audiences have come to expect and curators know how to build. In the sections that follow, using the Bakhtinian-derived sense of “secondary speech genre” as my lens, I describe and analyze the permanent exhibits as they appear at the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing, relying on the above-described cumulative analysis and comparison to establish both what these exhibits have in common, and where they diverge in their efforts to meet their individual communicative goals. Additionally, because the exhibits demand consideration of their spatial organization as well as printed text and images in the process of meaning-making in this genre, the individual spatial organization of materials will figure more prominently in the description and analysis of this chapter.

Our Peoples, Our Universes, and Our Lives: The NMAI Permanent Exhibits

The three centerpiece exhibit galleries⁵¹ at the NMAI are the sites in which the most overt discussions of what the NMAI is about take place. Located on the third (Our Lives) and fourth floors (Our Universes and Our Peoples), the exhibit galleries are not as centrally located as the museum stores and the Mitsitam Café (on the first and second floors, directly off the central space called the “Potomac”), but are still relatively easily accessible via stairs or elevators. Each exhibit gallery is designed with its own thematic structure and internal organization, but what each has in common is a group of eight Native communities (for 24 total communities)

⁵¹ Technically, there is a fourth permanent installation, called Return to a Native Place in a small series of kiosks on the second floor, next to the elevator. It exists to document the history of the NMAI site as a Native space with a Native history; however, because of its comparatively small size, and the lack of emphasis on maps and publicity literature, the focus of this chapter remains on the three major permanent NMAI exhibits.

contributing their stories and view points under the thematic umbrella provided by the NMAI curators, as well as recognizable genre features such as labels, images, and objects.

Our Peoples: Giving Voice to Our Histories in many ways provides the historical framework for the rest of the museum, as it works to establish an overall contact narrative from a Native point of view that culminates in the histories and stories of survival from eight Native communities, the Seminole Tribe of Florida (USA), Tapirapé (from Mato Grosso, Brazil), Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma (USA), Tohono O’odham Nation (Arizona, USA), Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation (North Carolina, USA), Nahua (Guerrero, Mexico), Ka’apor (Maranhão, Brazil) and Wixaritari (also known as Huichol, from Durango, Mexico).⁵² The spatial arrangement is one designed to be a “gently destabilizing” experience (Smith, Monthly Curator Series Lecture, 5), full of curving walls and alcoves that a visitor must explore (as opposed to a highly sequenced arrangement). The backbone narrative, called “Evidence” by its curators Dr. Ann McMullen, Dr. Jolene Rickard, and Paul Chaat Smith, curves in sections through the center of the gallery space from entrance to exit, and surrounding it are eight semi-circle, room-sized alcoves devoted to each Native community. An additional alcove, called “Making History,” sits to one side.

⁵² This is the original grouping of Native communities at the NMAI site; since my May 2007 visit, two new communities, the Blackfeet Nation (Browning, Montana, USA), and the Chiricahua Apache (Mescalero, New Mexico, USA) have been rotated into the exhibit space (“Exhibitions: Current Exhibitions in Washington, D.C.”).

As the visitor enters the exhibit space, he will encounter the “Evidence” narrative as it is displayed through a technique that the curators call “repetition with difference” (Smith, “Monthly Curator Series” Lecture, 7) – presenting many similar objects together that are at the same time distinct – and providing conceptual labels to guide the narrative rather than individual labels for individual objects. At the intended entrance, the visitor is greeted with a glowing blue wall with various objects embedded in it, with the word “EVIDENCE” set in the center. To the right, the exhibit curves into a display wall of hundreds of unlabeled figurines, entitled “1491,” with an explanatory label concerning the diversity of peoples in the pre-contact Americas. This display curves into another, called “Gold,” also a collection of unmarked gold ornaments and ears of corn (Appendix B, Figure 1), and which bears a conceptual label explaining the wealth of the Americas and preparing the visitor for the neighboring “Contact” and “Invasion” sections by framing Native history as a story of “wealth and dispossession” (Smith, “Monthly Curator Series” Lecture, 7). The “Contact” display is one of swords and gold artifacts, connected to the “Gold” wall and explaining the transfer of American wealth to Spain; to the left is a free-standing display setting forth the exhibit’s thesis, and across from that is the display wall called “Invasion,” detailing both the pandemics of disease brought by Europeans to Native peoples, and the incursion of European conquerors and settlers into Native homelands.

Towards the center of the exhibit space, three walls curve to form a broken circle, called “The Storm,” and on these walls visitors can read about three major

forces that shaped Native histories with the coming of Europeans – guns, Bibles, and governments – with accompanying labels explaining the curators’ choice of emphasis. In the “Coiled Dragons” section, one may follow a curved wall of guns, from several centuries old to the present, and read about the impact on and adaptation of European weapons in Native hunting, trade, and warfare. Following the circle around, the “God’s Work: Churches as Instruments of Dispossession and Resilience” section displays statuary, crucifixes, Christian scriptures and hymnals in European languages and translations in Native tongues, and labels explaining the conceptual and historical impact of Christianity on Native societies. Finally, in the “Stated Intentions” section, visitors may view samples of the hundreds of treaties signed by Native leaders, colonial powers, and the U.S. government that document Native relationships to government and sovereignty (and labels that explain this relationship). Within the center of this circle is a work of conceptual art by artist Edward Poitras, called “Eye of the Storm,” which symbolizes the regeneration of Native peoples and “evidence of Native survivance”⁵³ (Smith, “The Storm: Guns, Bibles, and Governments” label).

As mentioned before, surrounding the contact and storm narrative displays are the individual Native community displays, in which each community voices its own history in a narrative they co-wrote with the NMAI curators and with objects they chose from the NMAI collections. Each community space is prominently titled with

⁵³ The term “survivance,” as noted in Chapter One, is key to Gerald Vizenor’s understanding of how “*indian*” simulations are overturned; however, the term is not defined or attributed to him within the exhibit.

the community's name and a subtitle for the display (for example, "Kiowa: Our Songs and Our Ceremonies Enable Us to Carry On," Appendix B, Figure 2), a panel where the community, its geographic location, and its contributing "community curators" are introduced via text and photographs. These displays are heavily language-text based, but also integrate artwork, photos, video monitors, and artifacts into the experience. Within these displays, each community tells its history as its contributing community curators have agreed to tell it, sometimes including creation stories, major historical events, and perspectives on contemporary life.

Perhaps the most important section, although not centrally located or attractive by size, is the "Making History" alcove, in which a visitor encounters a curved wall full of George Catlin portraits of Native leaders – a literal assembly of colonial-made images of Native peoples – facing a wall with a single portrait on it: that of George Gustav Heye, the collector whose massive collection of Native objects forms the foundation of the NMAI. Next to Heye's portrait is a section of the wall bearing the title of the section, and an explanatory narrative describing who Heye and Catlin were as collectors, as well as suggesting that history itself "is always about who is telling the stories, who the storyteller is speaking to, and how both understand their present circumstances" (Smith and McMullen, "Making History" panel). Simultaneously, a video monitor embedded among the Catlin portraits plays a video depicting Floyd Favel, a Plains Cree playwright, directly confronting the past depictions of Native peoples, especially in museums, and offering the

self-told histories of selected Native communities. Other communities, other perspectives, would have produced different results. We present evidence to support our belief that our survival, the original people of this hemisphere, is one of the most extraordinary stories in human history...Explore this gallery. Encounter it. Reflect on it. Argue with it. (“Narration”)

This narration appears also as a text panel for visitors to read.

The rhetorical goals, then, of such an exhibit seek to undermine the structure of the traditional museum exhibit and provide visitors both an illustration of knowledge- and history-making and the opportunity for their participation in it. Rather than producing an exhibit gallery full of artifacts labeled in archeological or anthropological language by material, time period, and cultural category, the Our Peoples gallery seeks to make a space in which “the anthropological gaze, previously one that showed Indians on display, trapped in an ideological prison, would be returned by Indian people” (Smith, “Monthly Curator Series Lecture” 3). More specifically, the Our Peoples gallery strives to overturn the notion of monolithic museum history itself, especially in its “Making History” alcove – museums visitors are literally challenged to interact with what they see, instead of passively absorbing it. The spatial organization is one that, while it provides a loose narrative, can be encountered from a number of directions (literally, there are two places a visitor may enter the gallery, so the “beginning” may not necessarily be where a visitor starts) and encourages visitors to piece together what they see in their own fashion.

Complementing the larger narrative of contact, the eight Native community spaces underscore the living Native cultures that still thrive, in spite of everything depicted in the “Evidence” narrative, and the multiple ways they characterize their histories coming out of the contact narrative. The labels in the “Evidence” sections provide a historical, conceptual orientation rather than specific archeological or anthropological orientation, and the narratives of the Native communities display printed and imagistic snapshots of living communities as they have been co-constructed with NMAI curators and designers.

However, given that this exhibit, as a genre, strives to overturn what “traditional” museum exhibits have done in the past – arranging Native objects by regional grouping or evolutionary groupings, or narrating with dioramas, without or with little consultation from the Native communities who are the subject – it may also thwart its “readers” expectations in counterproductive ways. The use of “survivance” as a key word that appears in label text is significant, in that the use of Gerald Vizenor’s neologism for “survival” and “resistance” asserts a desire in this context to both resist the way Native histories have been told and allow the histories Native peoples have constructed to be heard. Yet the concept is not explained within the exhibit and therefore could cause confusion among those who do not already recognize it. Smith acknowledges that the curatorial team understood that in general the exhibit they were constructing would likely produce “cognitive dissonance”⁵⁴ in

⁵⁴ By Smith’s definition, “cognitive dissonance” is “defined as a psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously. That’s what happens when you tell visitors of [American] wealth Europeans had never imagined” (“Monthly Curator Series” 5). Though Smith does

how it would tell stories and histories that visitors had never encountered before (Smith, “Monthly Curator Series” Lecture 5); in addition to that, I would argue that the exhibit structure itself, in its efforts to undermine museological knowledge-making authority, has the potential to create cognitive dissonance in terms of how visitors expect to approach an exhibit in the first place. Either of these results has the potential for epiphany or backlash (or a combination of the two): on one hand, a visitor may be able to work with the challenging narrative, or on the other, she may reject it out of hand because it does not fit what she expected. Dr. McMullen, the senior curator for the NMAI, acknowledges that most visitors are imagined as impatient tourists, as viewers who will not spend more than two minutes looking at any given object or label, and arrive at the Smithsonian fully expecting to be told what to believe (personal interview). The intentions of the Our Peoples exhibit are fairly clear, but whether or not visitors are willing to participate in the history-making process is not, especially if they greet the purposeful undermining of their expectations as unwelcome and prefer to fall back on more traditional – and often passive – ways to approaching a museum exhibit.

By contrast, the Our Universes exhibit leans back more towards a generic orientation that visitors might recognize, as it is presented in a more structured way and in some respects, less interactive. Located across the hallway from Our Peoples, the Our Universes: Traditional Knowledge Shapes Our World presents another eight Native communities, in this case with the goal of explaining how each community

not provide a citation for “cognitive dissonance, one may assume this is derived from Leon Festinger’s original concept.

spiritually and epistemologically frames the world. According to the primary curator for Our Universes, Emil Her Many Horses, those communities who were selected to participate were those who had a communal ceremony and established structure from which their traditional community philosophy could be pulled (personal interview). Those communities who participated in the exhibit are the Pueblo of Santa Clara (Española, New Mexico, USA), Anishinaabe (Hollow Water and Sagkeeng Bands, Manitoba, Canada), Lakota (Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, USA), Quechua (Comunidad de Phaqchanta, Cusco, Peru), Hupa (Hoopa Valley, California, USA), Q'eq'chi' Maya (Cobán, Guatemala), Mapuche (Temuco, Chile), and Yup'ik (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Alaska, USA). The exhibit also covers three pan-indigenous events, the Denver March Powwow, the North American Indigenous Games, and the Day of the Dead.

The exhibit space is organized as the “passage of a solar year,” with star constellations marked overhead in the ceiling, and the end of the exhibit comes with the phases of the moon. Upon entering the exhibit – and Our Universes has a distinct beginning and ending – the visitor encounters a yellow wall with the title of the exhibit, with an introductory label by Her Many Horses:

In this gallery, you'll discover how Native people understand their place in the universe and order their daily lives. Our philosophies of life come from our ancestors. They taught us to live in harmony with the animals, plants, spirit world, and the people around us. In *Our Universes*, you'll encounter Native people from the Western

Hemisphere who continue to express this wisdom in ceremonies, celebrations, languages, arts, religions, and daily life. It is our duty to pass these teachings on to succeeding generations. For that is the way to keep our traditions alive. (See Appendix B, Figure 3.)

Accompanying the label is a contemporary glass sculpture of a raven's head, its beak grasping a glowing red ball, entitled "Raven Steals the Sun."⁵⁵

The exhibit alcoves for each community are arranged in a roughly circular pattern according to the passage of the solar year, though each community's space is shaped by the site or ceremony they wished to be portrayed. For example, the Pueblo of Santa Clara had their space designed roughly in the shape of a kiva, with the four cardinal directions also representing the four colors of corn and the four stages of life; the Hupa space invokes the shape and feeling of their traditional cedar plank houses, where much of their ceremonial life takes place. Photographs of people participating in ceremonial life are frequently included, as are symbolic images, artwork, and artifacts and occasionally video clips chosen by the community curators. The entrance to each community's space is marked by a tall blue panel, with the name of the community appearing vertically down the left side, and the top of the panel depicting a symbolic representation of that community's guiding philosophy – for example, the Lakota panel includes a medicine wheel marked with the four cardinal directions and their names in Lakota. Beneath the symbol is a brief introduction to the community's philosophy and a short explanation of what the symbol above means to the

⁵⁵ By Preston Singletary (Tlingit), 2003.

community, and this explanation comes from and is signed by the community curator(s) (Appendix B, Figure 4). At the end of each community section, a long panel introduces the visitor to the community curators who were the primary consultants for each section, providing the names and photographs of the community curators, and sometimes a description of their roles in their respective communities. This panel also includes a map to show the geographic location of each Native community. The end of the exhibit itself ends with a glass “Raven Steals the Moon”⁵⁶ sculpture as a complement to the “Raven Steals the Sun” sculpture at the beginning, and there is also an alcove with carpeted benches designed for visitors to sit, listen to, and watch a video animated presentation of one of the Pacific Northwest Raven stories, emphasizing the teaching of stories and cultural philosophies to new generations.

Like the Our Peoples exhibit, the goal of this exhibit is to take the explanation and display of Native cultural and ceremonial philosophies out of the traditional archeological and anthropological frameworks so often used in museums, and allow the included Native communities to explain their philosophies, as they best saw fit. The curators and designers involved still provide an organizational backbone – the solar and lunar calendars, introductory and closing panels, and choosing ceremonies still practiced by living cultures – but the content of the individual community spaces was largely chosen and negotiated by the community curators (Her Many Horses, personal interview). Furthermore, the great majority of the explanatory labels within

⁵⁶ By Ed Archie Noise Cat (Salish), 2003.

each community space are written in first person (sometimes singular, more often plural) and signed by the community curator or curators.

In terms of spatial organization, regardless of whether or not a visitor is aware of the solar and lunar organization, the consistent introductory and closing materials for each community space create a sense of content organization; a visitor knows that a tall blue panel means an entrance into a new community's space, and can expect to find something about ceremonial life inside, and to find out something about who the community curators are and where they are from when one exits that space. Within each community space, a visitor must re-orient and do a little bit of exploring every time, for no two spaces are alike in how the community curators chose to portray their ceremonies or philosophies (and entering a symbolic kiva space is much different than entering a cedar plank house space). Experientially, each space is unique, and demands the active attention of the visitor to interpret what each Native community has presented.

However, unlike the Our Peoples exhibit, the larger historical narrative is not of primary concern, and rather than discussing survivance or adaptation, the primary emphasis within the Our Universes gallery is on continuing tradition with much less orientation towards history. While the individual community sections demand exploration on the part of the visitor, the general organization of Our Universes is far more structured than Our Peoples, and nowhere are visitors asked to "argue" with what they see and hear as in the "Making History" section of Our Peoples. If anything, the rhetorical framing of Our Universes in terms of respect, as "teachings"

passed down from “ancestors” to “succeeding generations” encourages a different kind of participation from visitors, one in which they are encouraged to explore in order to understand (and be taught), and listen in order to understand (and be taught), but not necessarily to challenge what they find there. In fact, though it is not precisely clear who the “succeeding generations” are in the opening script – are the non-Native museum visitors who are willing to listen included in this? – the general sense is that of succeeding generations within the communities themselves, potentially positioning the non-Native visitor as an outsider observing the practices of Native communities, which in a sense invokes the older museum frame again.

Placed a floor below the Our Peoples and Our Universes exhibit galleries (and so potentially the first visitors will see in their ascent up the stairs), the Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identities exhibit gallery draws together the historical narrative and the acknowledgment of traditional cultural philosophies in its exploration of present-day Native lives and identities. The organizational theme for this exhibit gallery is explicitly “survance” and identity, both in terms of general questions surrounding Native survival, resistance, and identification, and in terms of eight contributing Native communities. The Native communities involved in this exhibit gallery are the Campo Band of Kumeyaay Indians (California, USA), Urban Indian Community of Chicago (Illinois, USA), Yakama Nation (Washington State, USA), Igloodik (Nunavut, Canada), Kahnawake (Quebec, Canada), Saint-Laurent Metis (Manitoba, Canada), Kalinago (Carib Territory, Dominica), and Pamunkey Tribe (Virginia, USA).

As the organizational backbone of this exhibit, Vizenor's concept of "survivance" receives explicit treatment in terms of multiple themes that each have their own section. The introductory panel/wall that visitors find when they enter is called "Faces of Native America," and presents more than 60 photo portraits of people who identify as "Native." Meant as a challenge to the stereotypical images that historical portraits – such as the Catlin collection in Our Peoples – now evoke, this section introduces the idea of "survivance" in more detail, and asks visitors to consider what it means to be "Fully Native" by questioning whether blood quantum is the primary identifying trait of Native people. Curved like the panels in Our Peoples, the "Faces of Native America" (Appendix B, Figure 5) continues around into a section called "Body and Soul," which continues the discussion concerning questions of who is "Native" and who is not and provides some historical context for U.S. government policy regarding blood quantum, Native bodies as artifacts and quantifiable objects, and BIA government of identity. In this way, the concept of "definition" is connected as part of "survivance."

Other themes, such as language, place, self-determination, social and political awareness, economic choices, and traditional and contemporary arts, are examined in separate sections that curve through the center of the gallery and are also interspersed in between the community spaces that are set around the circumference. Within each section, objects, images, and printed text are interwoven for larger effect; within the traditional arts section, for example, four large wall panels are emblazoned with floor-to-ceiling images of a traditional mask, basket, moccasins, and eagle feather war

bonnet, and these images are provided small explanatory labels with culture of origin and approximate age of the objects. Set within each image, however, is a glass case that displays a contemporary Native artist's work which, while invoking the traditional image around it, also brings the art form into the 21st century with innovation and parody: the contemporary mask is made from metal and kitchen utensils,⁵⁷ the basket is woven from 35 millimeter film strips,⁵⁸ the "moccasins" are actually beaded Converse sneakers,⁵⁹ and the "war bonnet" sports rows of baby bottle nipples instead of feathers.⁶⁰ Explanatory labels beneath the displayed objects provide contextual information and the artists' names, and some audio context is also provided. In another example, the section on social political awareness presents a collage of objects from the 1960s and 1970s, from hand-made dolls to album covers with Native musicians, from Red Power merchandise to books by Native scholars. The surrounding wall is a collage of photographs of Native protesters. The label next to it reads (in part): "Survivance means doing what you can to keep your culture alive. Survivance is found in everything made by Native hands, from beadwork to political action... The things that we make, also make us" (Jolene Rickard and Gabrielle Tayac, "Survivance is more than just survival" label).

The eight community sections of the exhibit also provide contemporary Native peoples explaining how they define themselves as "Native," including a mixed-nation urban Native community (Chicago), a mixed European-Native

⁵⁷ By Lawrence Beck (Chnagmiut Eskimo), 1972.

⁵⁸ By Gail Tremblay (Onondaga/Mi'kmaq), 2000.

⁵⁹ By Teri Greeves (Kiowa), 2004.

⁶⁰ By George Longfish (Seneca/Tuscarora), 1981.

community (Saint-Laurent Metis), and a Native community not currently officially recognized by the U.S. government (Pamunkey). Like Our Peoples and Our Universes, each community section was created with the help of a group of community curators. Each section is titled with the name of the community, then a subtitle (sometimes with the official name of the community instead of the “known” one, sometimes with a further description), and then an introductory statement about that community from its curators. Nearby is a map so that visitors may locate where each community is from, and an introduction and photo of the community curators is also provided. Within each space, each community describes what is most important to it – language, culture, land/environment, food, sovereignty,⁶¹ etc. – and how change has happened, and how those things it values are enacted and supported today. The great majority of labels within these alcoves are written and signed by the community curators, and the images (most often photos and photo collages of community members and community spaces) and objects (hard hats, sports equipment, language keys, etc.) were also selected by those community curators.

The primary goal of Our Lives is to underscore the notion of “survivance,” to demonstrate that change in the lives of Native peoples and communities has not led to erasure, but instead a complicated and varied sense of what “Native” is in a contemporary world. That it is employed here as a major thematic structure suggests a framework for resisting the established and often stereotypical discourses of Native

⁶¹ Though the labels written by the NMAI curators do not address “sovereignty” specifically – instead, “self-determination” is most often the term of choice – the word and idea of “sovereignty” does appear in labels written by some community curators, most overtly in the Kahnawake section.

identity, and instead actively acknowledging Native peoples' survival and resistance in a multitude of ways. As an introductory panel states,

We are not just survivors; we are the architects of our **survivance**. We carry our ancient philosophies into an ever-changing modern world. We work hard to remain Native in circumstances that sometimes challenge or threaten our survival. *Our Lives* is about our stories of **survivance**, but it belongs to anyone who has fought extermination, discrimination, or stereotypes. (Jolene Rickard, Cynthia L. Chavez, Gabrielle Tayac, "Now: 21st Century" label, bold and italics in original; see Appendix B, Figure 6)

By invoking "survivance" as the conceptual frame for the exhibit, all encounters within it may be understood in terms of both "survival" and "resistance," challenging those historical narratives that understand Native communities as dead, now "impure" (culturally or racially tainted), or fully assimilated. By naming the Native communities the "architects of [their] survivance," the label also asserts agency on the part of Native communities in what the visitor will see, rather than passivity.

How those encounters within the exhibit occur, however, is largely up to the visitor, for aside from the opening text panel on survivance embedded in the photo portraits of the "Faces of Native America" display, the organization of the exhibit is open to exploration. The thematic framework of the exhibit – social and political awareness, language, arts, etc. – tends to curve through the center of the gallery in intermittent pieces or lies interspersed with the community sections, which are also

curved and create smaller alcoves around the perimeter. A visitor is given no map of the display, and so must explore the individual community or thematic displays in order to create a coherent sense of what “survivance” means here. The only real point of visitor flow control is the single entrance/exit to the gallery, and so no matter how one chooses to walk through it, the “Faces” of contemporary Native people are the first and the last images that visitors see.

Yet that same openness and reliance on the visitor to make meaning can also create difficulties, for unlike Our Peoples, which began with a familiar historical narrative, or Our Universes, which provides an explicit explanation and organization of what visitors will see, Our Lives describes a rhetorical discourse of survivance/self-determination/sovereignty that visitors outside of Indian Country will likely find unfamiliar, and Native community realities that challenge what visitors may believe. Though the thematic framework for survivance is there, and the community spaces are to an extent self-contained and self-explanatory with a repeating pattern in their introductory materials, the degree to which a visitor may come to understand survivance as the intended tie to bind them all – or accept it, once recognized – remains a question. On the other hand, like the Our Peoples exhibit, such a layout encourages dialogue between exhibit and visitor, and so one may understand the goal of this exhibit as, if not outright persuasion, at least provoking discussion.

As they are described above, one can see three distinct approaches to presenting Native nations’ perspectives on history, philosophy, and contemporary

life, although what they all have in common is the pervasive and persistent push to present Native perspectives in the first place instead of exclusively the Euro-American scientific or anthropological perspectives as they have been previously embodied in the museum exhibit genre. Within these three permanent exhibits, the NMAI strives to define itself as unique among other Smithsonian museums that do privilege scientific and/or anthropological discourses, but in a way that would change the exhibit genres as they stood in the Smithsonian Institute in order to promote discussion and acknowledge the many different perspectives that may be called “Native.” However, because the mandate to discuss and interact with exhibits that visitors may expect to passively peruse as concrete “truth” is not a part of the larger Smithsonian approach – at least not in its history with presenting Native peoples – these exhibits may also cause frustration in numbers of visitors whose genre expectations have been thwarted. Cognitive dissonance may be produced, but whether or not that dissonance is put to constructive use is another question entirely.

Honoring Our Children: The HCCM (Semi)Permanent Exhibit

The Honoring Our Children: Through Seasons of Sacrifice, Survival, Change and Celebration exhibit currently forms the major core for the gallery space at the HCCM. As its title suggests, its materials are organized around the chronological themes of sacrifice, survival, change, and celebration in Haskell Indian Nations University’s history, with an additional section honoring Native veterans (which provides its own timeline). The exhibit materials – primarily printed text and archival images – are mounted on metal mesh panels suspended from the ceiling, so that the

display may be taken down and reassembled with more ease. This was the inaugural exhibit for the HCCM, and has now found a place as a semi-permanent installation – and a defining exhibit – for the HCCM and Haskell’s history.

As it is currently installed, the center of the gallery has a tile replica of the Haskell Medicine Wheel embedded in the floor, and above it hang four semi-transparent cloth banners, each with an image from Haskell’s history printed on it. The primary light source comes from the large windows and skylights in the gallery, which is unusual in standard museum practice (Rahder, “Re: Feedback”). Surrounding the Medicine Wheel and the photo-banners, the exhibit panels create a rough circle along which a visitor can wander, in the rough thematic order listed above, and the veteran’s section making up the back wall of the exhibit gallery (Appendix B, Figure 7). The material related to each theme is color-coded with a border around most labels and images: “Sacrifice” materials are bordered in blue, “Survival” materials are bordered in red, “Change” materials are bordered in gray, and “Celebration” materials in green. The Native veterans also have a shade of red for their label borders, but because the veterans’ section is clearly spatially separated from the rest of the exhibit and the “Survival” sections, there is little confusion.

The primary materials used in the Honoring Our Children exhibit are printed text and archival images, with a few selected objects contained in small cases along the east and west walls. The printed text consists of archival materials (such as letters, newspaper clippings, records, etc.), excerpts from archival materials (including area newspapers, speeches, and Haskell’s Indian Leader newspaper), image labels, and

occasional commentary from the exhibit curators and Haskell students. The image labels are not signed by the curators, and many explanatory labels culled from archival resources only bear the citations of their sources, suggesting that these are meant to stand factually alone. Other labels that provide narration or observations from Haskell students are attributed to their writers. The photographic images appear to come directly from Haskell archives, beginning with the images of the first Haskell students and the subsequent chronology of Haskell's student body into the present (Appendix B, Figure 8). The objects selected for display appear to be there in support of the narrative the language and images tell: one display case contains tools used by early Haskell students, one case contains a purple and yellow feather war bonnet (presumably belonging to the Haskell mascot), one of them contains silver jewelry made by Haskell students, and the final one is dedicated to the athlete Billy Mills, one of Haskell's best known graduates. The veterans' section also has a replica of Haskell's World War I Service Flag, the original clay version of the "Haskell War Mother" memorial sculpture,⁶² and a commemorative plaque from the Vietnam Veterans of America acknowledging Native veterans' service.⁶³

In terms of spatial organization, the map provided on the exhibit's brochure (see Chapter Three) shows clearly delineated areas for each theme and a suggested order of perusal for the visitor technically organized around and oriented to the four

⁶² By Barry Coffin (Potawatomi-Creek), 2005. The larger bronze version of the statue stands outside of the HCCM.

⁶³ There is also a ledger book at the entrance, set there not only for visitor comments as is standard in many museums, but also for the express purpose of asking visitors, especially Haskell students and alumni, to tell their stories and leave contact information for the collection of oral history interviews (Rahder, "Re: Feedback"). This use of the ledger is not explicitly discussed in the publicity/orientation literature, however, nor is it mentioned as a major feature of the exhibit itself.

directions and four seasons (Rahder, “Re: Feedback”), beginning with “Sacrifice,” on the southeast side, moving to “Survival,” on the west side, moving towards the north corner to “Change,” following the veterans’ exhibit along the entire back (north) wall, and then completing the circle with “Celebration,” next to “Sacrifice” on the east wall. However, as noted in the previous chapter, the exhibit had been disassembled from its initial placement for the sake of becoming a traveling exhibit, and upon returning to the HCCM, it was reassembled in approximately – though not exactly – the same order. The current exhibit still begins with “Sacrifice,” though that section’s materials quickly become combined with “Survival,” and significant overlap occurs in all the sections, sometimes with one mesh panel containing materials from all four sections. Such groupings seem to occur when other topics emerged in the reassembly of the exhibit – for example, the Haskell Band – and materials pertaining to it from all four original sections were drawn together. The veterans’ section remains along the back wall, but appears to be contained in a smaller space than previously, for the northwest and northeast corners of the gallery are now occupied with a small version of the Rinehart photos exhibit, and an exhibit of art by Haskell students, respectively.

A visitor will thus enter the gallery space, and begin perusing the panels, with the map on the brochure providing some guidance. The panels, as noted above, still bear the rough organization of the original exhibit layout, and the materials themselves provide a kind of color-coding. Within the somewhat mixed layout, each theme/section still provides a title label, sometimes with contextualization, sometimes without. For example, the panel bearing the title label “Sacrifice” primarily addresses

the medical difficulties of early Haskell students with only a small, unbordered label at the bottom which reads, “Not only did Haskell reflect the policy and ideology of the government Indian boarding schools [sic] ultimate goal to assimilate our children, we must never forget the many other boarding schools, day schools, and non-reservation schools that existed and still exist” (Johnnie Fields (Potawatomi-Seneca), “Sacrifice” panel). By contrast, the “Change” section has a titular label with clear color coding that also provides several contextualizing quotations from local sources pertaining to the era addressed, which create a framework for the rest of the “Change” materials.

As observed previously, the rough organization of the exhibit is both thematic and chronological, tracing Haskell’s history from its inception as a government boarding school to its current status as an intertribal university. A visitor will read about the arrival of the first Haskell students, their education, labor, diet, illnesses, and death rates (1884-1887) (“Sacrifice”); the introduction of military-style organization on campus designed to dissolve tribal affiliations and students’ rearrangement, alliance, and resistance through extracurricular activities (1887-1930s) (“Survival”); Haskell’s time or reorganization under new federal policy and a Native superintendent, and Haskell students’ continued adaptation and education, even under the 1945-1961 era of termination policy (1925-1968) (“Change”); and the last several decades of Haskell’s push towards self-determination, successes in the arts (the Thunderbird Theater and Haskell Band are highlighted), and continued reorientation toward a Native culturally-based curriculum in Haskell’s evolution into

a full-fledged university (1970s-present) (“Celebration”). Furthermore, the “Honoring Our Native American Veterans” section traces a timeline of Haskell students’ military involvement, from the early military-style training implemented at Haskell in its early years, through WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, and into today’s current military campaigns.

The rhetorical goals of the Honoring Our Children exhibit are multiple, for as noted in Chapter Two, the HCCM serves multiple audiences with different priorities and needs. Because the audience is first and foremost the students and alumni of Haskell, the exhibit stands as a way to tell the story of previous Haskell students, their struggles, and their accomplishments to Haskell’s present student body. In this way, the exhibit becomes a grounding point for new students, continuing students, and former students alike, as the exhibit is a touch point for remembering both the sacrifices of early students and the strength of those who made Haskell what it has become (Milk, personal interview). It is, in many ways, a chronology of a healing process still in the making (Milk, personal interview). Furthermore, given the HCCM’s existences as a kind of liaison point between Haskell and the greater Lawrence and Kansas City communities, the exhibit tells the history of Haskell for those who may not be familiar with the history of government boarding schools or that epoch of local and national history regarding Native peoples. As the initial panel states, the Honoring Our Children exhibit only addresses one of many schools that were a part of government assimilation policy, and while visitors will only hear the story of one, all should be remembered.

In terms of spatial organization, it is clear that the original exhibit, at least as it was depicted on the original brochure by its curators, had a clear layout and a preferred route for visitor flow. Visitors were asked to move in chronological order from “Sacrifice” across the gallery to “Survival,” then the “Change,” along the wall of the veterans’ section, and then on to the final section “Celebration.” However, though the rough organization is somewhat preserved in its current permutation, the exhibit as it stands does not quite support the same clearly delineated approach. The orientation to the four directions and four seasons, for example, remains more implicit than explicit; because the significance of such an approach is not made obvious currently (nor was it in the original brochure), its role may remain ambiguous for a visitor unfamiliar with its meaning. Additionally, because the gallery itself is open, with no floor-to-ceiling partitions, and arranged in a circular fashion, it is questionable whether visitor flow was ever controlled to the extent the map suggests; while visitors might eventually recognize the internal organization of color-coding and chronology within the exhibit materials, it is entirely possible for a visitor to go in the opposite direction (beginning with “Sacrifice” and moving to the right to “Celebration,” then filling in the gaps), or to wander at will through the exhibit. Though a more structured narrative approach appears to have been the original goal, the spatial organization allows for more flexibility for visitors as they make their way through, and hence suggests more flexibility and opportunity for narrative-making on the part of the visitor.

In terms of the language and images employed as exhibit materials, as already noted much of what visitors will find is archival resources, excerpted as explication or support for the thematic sections, and accompanied at times by further observations or interpretations of history by Haskell curators and students. While the plural first person “we” is occasionally invoked, for the most part the narration provided by the curators remains in third person, or is absent and allows the visitor to make sense of what she reads. It is not uncommon to find a label with quotations from historical sources whose major contextualization comes from its thematic organization or a cluster of ideas and images around a particular topic. Little explanation is made of the photo images presented, and the labels provided are minimal – perhaps a name or a location, and a date – and decoding the images’ significance depends on their authority as archival sources, proximity to printed explanation, and the visitors’ associative observation.

When compared to the NMAI, the HCCM’s audience – Haskell students, Haskell alumni, and surrounding communities – is considerably smaller and yet at the same time, by virtue of its location and its sponsors, more immediately oriented towards serving the Haskell community and the 150 Native nations it represents; the NMAI exists for Native nations in the sense that it is the first Smithsonian museum to attempt to consult them or promote their perspectives, but on the other hand, as a part of the Smithsonian it is catering primarily to a clientele of non-Native tourists, and is geared in many ways toward challenging the historical narratives held by non-Natives. (This is not to say that Native people are exempt from being taught the same

history or believing it, but it is to say that the NMAI means to challenge the Euro-American rooted idea that Native peoples are gone). As a result, the rhetorical power of the exhibit genre at the NMAI focuses on challenging a widespread historical narrative and asserting the presence of Native nations as a kind of declaration of self-determination, while at the HCCM's the same genre is focused on establishing a local historical narrative for the purposes of remembrance and continuity with the local communities' histories.

In reference to the NMAI's three permanent exhibits, the HCCM's exhibit has the most in common in terms of narrative and structure with the Our Peoples exhibit, as both are constructed along a historical narrative and they intend their visitors to roughly follow that narrative, but their organization allows for more flexible exploration. On the other hand, in terms of how the content is treated, they are, in a sense, at odds. In the context of challenging long-standing assumptions about Native peoples and the construction of history, the Our Peoples exhibit exhorts the visitor to engage, challenge, and argue with what he finds, resulting in almost a kind of self-referential, genre-deconstructing move that uses the exhibit to undo what previous exhibits have done. By contrast, Honoring Our Children relies on the authority of documented Haskell history, the larger historical narrative of government boarding schools, and the authority of the museum exhibit genre itself to add weight to its narrative – visitors are not meant to challenge it so much as absorb it. Yet the challenge Honoring Our Children does issue is also one of self-determination and sovereignty, for in documenting Haskell's history it does not stop after “Sacrifice” or

“Survival,” but instead asserts that “Change” and “Celebration” are also a part of Native history and contemporary Haskell life. Thus, what appears to be a very traditional museum exhibit also issues a challenge as well via the content it displays.

As a result, language and image reflect that difference in orientation, with the HCCM leaning towards a more traditional museum format, and (generally speaking) the NMAI more self-referentially challenging. For example, at the HCCM, the exhibit labels are not always signed and it is not clear who the curators were and who is speaking (except that the speakers who sign their work are Native, as shown by their tribal affiliation). Images tend to stand alone on authority as transparent documentations of history,⁶⁴ and archival sources stand as though requiring little or no explanation. By contrast, at the NMAI, objects within the permanent exhibits are used to create an artistic effect, are explained for detailed contextualization, and are often used to challenge narratives of timelessness in Native art. The labels are always signed by the person(s) who wrote them to establish who is speaking and from what position, and little in the permanent exhibits is taken for granted to be self-explanatory – it is acknowledged that some perspective is always being established. Ultimately the genres are used for similar goals – changing the larger narrative of American history concerning Native peoples – but the way the genre is employed on the way to that goal is significantly different. For the HCCM, the rhetorical emphasis falls on establishing a public, historical narrative for Haskell – a narrative which

⁶⁴ Although it must be noted that the approach taken with the Rinehart photograph collection is significantly different, for as observed in Chapter Three, visitors are encouraged to understand the multiple ways those photographs have been interpreted, depending on the perspective of the viewer. Such an approach, however, is not mentioned in the Honoring Our Children exhibit.

needed voicing for the sake of grounding Haskell students and contributing a Native Haskell perspective on its own history to the surrounding non-Native communities. The generic choices made in this voicing make Honoring Our Children look like a standard museum exhibit, perhaps making it more acceptable to a number of audiences, but at the same time offer multiple meanings to those audiences and a subtle challenge to a local historical narrative that does not always recall Haskell's origins.

Diba Jimooyung: "Telling Our Story": The Ziibiwing Center Permanent Exhibit

The permanent exhibit titled Diba Jimooyung: "Telling Our Story" is the major installation at Ziibiwing, and in many ways is Ziibiwing's primary reason for existing. It is the exhibit designed to encapsulate the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan's history, both as an individual nation and as a group part of the larger Anishinabe cultural world. It is located at the literal center of Ziibiwing: a visitor enters through doors in an entrance depicting a modern architectural sense of a teaching lodge, and finds the Diba Jimooyung directly ahead at the end of a foyer constructed to resemble the architectural sensibility of the inside of a teaching lodge (the other wings of the building extend to the right and left). Bringing together spiritual, historical, and geographical narratives, Diba Jimooyung uses a variety of museum genre features such as dioramas, video (both animated and documentary), scale models, object displays, archival documents and photographs, and artwork to depict the Saginaw Chippewa sense of community history and identity.

As described in Chapter Three, the major narrative that drives the exhibit is the “Seven Prophecies,” which are Anishinabek teachings that encompass both the historical time line of the Anishinabe (and specifically the Saginaw Chippewa) and an explanation of guiding traditional beliefs about Anishinabe purpose and origin. The “Seven Fires” are therefore the thematic backbone of the exhibit, and the exhibit itself has been divided into 15 topical and roughly chronological “Areas” under the “Seven Fires” organization. Large oval explanatory labels function to introduce topics and mark when one of the “Seven Fires” is being addressed (usually mounted on the walls as guides), and rectangular panels explain exhibit sections and displays in more specific detail (these are usually mounted on display railings in front of the materials for which they provide information). Each panel has two titles: first, one printed in red in Anishinabemowin, then beneath it an English title printed in black. The majority of printed text is printed in black and is in English, but wherever an Anishinabemowin word appears, it is printed in red. Explanatory narratives are also provided aurally via motion sensors that are activated when visitors walk through a particular section. The visitor is signaled by the sound of a drum, followed by a short narration in Anishinabemowin, then a narration in English.

Upon entering the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, a visitor will discover a variety of means – in addition to the printed text and aural storytelling – deployed to educate viewers about Anishinabek and Saginaw Chippewa history. With the exception of Area 2, Areas 1-5 are life-size dioramas that introduce the visitor to the seasonal life-cycle of pre-contact Anishinabek peoples, beginning with a model of the Sanilac

petroglyphs made by Anishinabek ancestors to preserve sacred teachings, through a walk-through model of a teaching lodge, a series of dioramas depicting the harvest of maple sugar and wild rice (Appendix B, Figure 9), and then a walk-through model of a winter lodge, complete with a hunter bringing back a deer. Interspersed through the dioramas and models are artifacts and replicas of objects used within each setting, and mannequins are dressed in replicas of pre-contact clothing. On the walls facing the dioramas, maps are mounted to trace the Anishinabek migration route from their place of origin to their current locations in the upper Midwest and Canada. Area 2, though not a diorama, is one of two theaters embedded in the exhibit sequence; as the “Creation Theater,” Area 2 introduces visitors to an animated version of the Anishinabek creation story to provide a foundation for the lifestyle the dioramas depict.

Areas 6-8 address European contact (in this narrative, they are the “Light-Skinned People”), first with “Contact and Co-Existence” depicting peaceful trade relations (Area 6) via artwork depicting contact (by both historical and contemporary sources) and a display case that shows manikins in Anishinabek clothing that incorporated European trade items. Area 7 depicts the effects of colonization, but in this space the displays emphasize archival sources – full reprints of treaties, photographs of tribal members and children in boarding schools, excerpts of letters from U.S. government officials, and a mock-up of what a treaty signing table might have looked like – to demonstrate the losses the Anishinabek and Saginaw Chippewa

sustained. Area 8, “Environmental Changes,” also draws on archival sources to demonstrate the destruction of the landscape due to logging and over-hunting.

Areas 9-15 are a recovery and reassertion of Anishinabek and Saginaw Chippewa identity in the face of loss, beginning with sections on “Blood Memory” (Area 9), “Language” (Area 10), “Anishinabe Strengths” (Area 11), “Introduction to Sovereignty” (Area 12), “Identity Theater (Area 13), “Spirit of Sovereignty” (Area 14), and “Continuing the Journey” with the Seven Grandfather Teachings (Area 15). Areas 9-11 provide an assertion of Anishinabe identity based in blood, language, and community that has survived the losses of previous eras, and visitors may rest in the “Blood Memory” alcove, interact with the hands-on Anishinabemowin vocabulary displays, and examine displays depicting traditional arts (beadwork, basket weaving) that have survived into the present, as well as displays that show contemporary Saginaw Chippewa community members participating in these arts, learning Anishinabemowin, or taking part in community activities. Areas 12-14 introduce visitors to Anishinabek and Saginaw Chippewa understandings of sovereignty, citing both U.S. historical sources and their own history as precedence for claiming sovereignty. The “Identity Theater” provides a documentary-style short film that introduces viewers to contemporary Saginaw Chippewa community members and how community identity is maintained, and Area 14 traces the contemporary history of the Saginaw Chippewa’s struggle for sovereign recognition, including its adoption of a U.S.-style constitution, its claims to local hunting and fishing rights, and the development of gaming on the Isabella Reservation, and employing a combination of

artwork, archival photos, and manikin figures sculpted to depict contemporary Saginaw Chippewa leaders (these have motion-sensor-activated narration for each). At the end, using Woodland-style Richard Bedwash artwork,⁶⁵ Area 15 explains the Seven Grandfather Teachings that are the foundation of Anishinabe life, challenging the visitor to live in a similarly respectful way. The final panel a visitor sees as she exits is a dedication to “All Our Relations,” past, present, and future, and a “thank you” to contributors and supporters of the exhibit.

In terms of rhetorical goals, this is an exhibit designed to tell Anishinabek and specifically Saginaw Chippewa history from a Saginaw Chippewa perspective; the first oval panel of the exhibit, bearing the exhibit’s name, extends an invitation to “Take a journey with us. Let us tell you our story” (“Diba Jimooyung: Our Story” panel; see Appendix B, Figure 10). Using the multiple exhibit techniques described above, the curators and designers of the exhibit endeavor to portray a history, from creation to the present, through Saginaw Chippewa eyes. The intended audience is both Saginaw Chippewa/Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek, however the Saginaw Chippewa audience is privileged in the sense that, as the Ziibiwing Research Center Coordinator Anita Heard describes it, the Diba Jimooyung exhibit is about “self-identity” and “self-definition,” and so is geared toward supporting community heritage and teaching Saginaw Chippewa identity to present and new generations (personal interview). Former Ziibiwing Center Director, Bonnie Ekdahl, put it another way, in that the exhibit was designed “...for our own people first. Knowledge

⁶⁵ See Chapter Three for an explanation of Woodland art and Bedwash’s work.

is healing, and this is about knowing one's identity" (personal interview). However, the exhibit is not meant to be exclusionary, as the wording – "Take a journey with us" – also implies insiders of the community speaking to/inviting in outsiders. In reference to the use of the "Prophecies" and the community debate surrounding their inclusion in the exhibit, Ekdahl stated, "The prophecies include all people," and so the story told in Diba Jimooyung is not for the Saginaw Chippewa or Anishinabek peoples alone (personal interview). Given how little mainstream audiences know about Native history or any particular Native nation's history, Diba Jimooyung also seeks – sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly – to challenge the historical narrative about the Saginaw Chippewa, and to present it from that community's perspective. It must also be noted, though, that many of the means to this presentation are fairly traditional museums structures, especially the dioramas. When asked about the design of the first gallery "Areas," Heard noted that the dioramas were a little "dangerous" because of their tendency to "freeze" history; on the other hand, she also asserted that "people learn best from what they know – objects under glass [and the like] – but the story should be from the community's point of view" (personal interview). In other words, so long as the community's perspective is privileged and shapes the use of dioramas and object-based displays, traditional museum techniques – or genres – can be used to reach an audience that might otherwise find the Saginaw Chippewa inaccessible.

Via the spatial organization, the Diba Jimooyung exhibit is a carefully structured narrative that provides a significant amount of control over visitor

movement, in that – with the exceptions of the theaters and the model lodges – visitors cannot skip over a section of the exhibit, nor can they wander randomly to areas of their choice. The exhibit is laid out in such a way that visitors must move from one “Area” to the next, in the chronological and “Prophecies”-guided order of the Saginaw Chippewa story. However, within sections visitors may explore, for several are sizeable with several sub-sections or displays. Furthermore, the shape of the individual Areas’ spaces is intended to influence visitor perception: current Ziibiwing Director Shannon Martin describes the general design as “curved for harmony, and jagged for hard times” (personal interview). As a visitor may observe, the sections telling the pre-contact history of the Anishinabek are curved, and the “Creation Theater” is a perfect balanced circle, but the end of “Area 6: Contact and Co-Existence” turns a sharp corner into “Area 7: Effects of Colonization,” which is a section full of sharp edges. It in turn gives way to “Area 8: Environmental Changes,” which has both a curved wall and a crooked wall: the curved wall shows photographs of unspoiled landscape, and the crooked wall displays archival images of lands that were stripped for lumber. With “Area 9: Blood Memory,” the walls become curves again, and continue through the end of the exhibit.

The specifics of language and image also play a role, and within the context of Ziibiwing and the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, language becomes plural with the use of Anishinabemowin along side English. Though the printed explanatory texts are still primarily in English – a choice that encompasses a larger selection of audiences – the labels on those texts are always first in Anishinabemowin, as observed above, and

then translated into English, sometimes with additional Anishinabemowin vocabulary interspersed in the text. The aural narrative is also partly in Anishinabemowin, allowing visitors who prefer to listen to an Anishinabemowin narration to follow it as a guide, rather than the English narration. The result is a mixture that underscores the multiple facets of contemporary Anishinabemowin and Saginaw Chippewa existence, one that speaks more than one language. Furthermore, the use of Anishinabemowin highlights the fact of the language's continued existence and use, which furthers the purpose of creating a Saginaw Chippewa identity many community insiders and outsiders may find more "authentic," and lends authority to the history told within Diba Jimooyung. The English-language narration itself also presents a departure from the scientific/anthropological language associated with traditional museums, for while it does employ more academic-sounding terms on occasion – "colonization," "subsistence economy," "decimation," – and technical labeling for objects, the majority of the narrative text is told in a first-person plural "we," and none of the labels are signed by curators or community members. The narration also consciously challenges popular historical narratives at times, as in the "Ezhimaamiikowaadjimigoo Yaang: The Outlandish Stories Told About Us" oval panel, which directly addresses with considerable irony the stereotyping used by non-Native artists and media to portray the Saginaw Chippewa during the period of colonization as "barbarians" and U.S. government figures, such as Michigan Territorial governor Lewis Cass, as heroes of civilization.

The images used in the exhibit play both a supporting role to the printed text narration, and sometimes also take a more prominent role in the exhibits. The dioramas and model lodges, as three-dimensional “images,” provide a more vivid and immediate demonstration for visitors than could sketches or labels of the objects used in these activities, and the lodges especially provide a more experiential element – one can walk inside, smell the sage and the leather inside the teaching lodge, and though one may not touch the objects, one can at least get a better contextual sense of their use. The theaters provide concise, multimedia introductions into foundational aspects of the exhibit and Saginaw Chippewa identity that are more immediate than reading a label. Archival images and document reproductions are also powerful tools, for the photographs provide historical documentation and support for the Saginaw Chippewa story, as do the complete reproductions of the pivotal treaties between the Saginaw Chippewa Nation and the U.S. government. In those places where archival images are difficult to find or have little place, artwork is used to continue the story and illustrate ideas, for example in paintings from “Area 6: Contact & Co-Existence” and the Richard Bedwash depictions of the “Seven Grandfather Teachings” in “Area 15: Continuing the Journey.”

When comparing Ziibiwing’s rhetorical goals to those of the NMAI and HCCM, at first glance, it appears Diba Jimooyung had more in common with Honoring Our Children than the exhibits at the NMAI. More specifically, like the HCCM, Ziibiwing’s permanent exhibit is establishing a local narrative for the grounding and perpetuation of the local community, and for the education of local

visitors and the surrounding non-Native communities. On the other hand, Diba Jimooyung is far more nation-specific, instead of having to encompass multiple Native nations' narratives – or focus on the experience in common, as the HCCM does – and so the Ziibiwing exhibit has the latitude to incorporate culturally-specific features such as the local language and the origin story specific to that people and place, whereas the HCCM cannot without risking exclusion. Yet in the sense of creating a space wherein an entire Native nation's story can be told, from creation to contact to revitalization, Diba Jimooyung appears to be what the individual community sections of the NMAI's exhibits would have liked to have done, had there been space and time. The total narrative effect of Diba Jimooyung is in a sense like the backbone narrative of Our Peoples, in how both attempt to address the large historical narrative of contact and conquest, and challenge it from a Native perspective; certain parts of Diba Jimooyung also resemble the ways different Native communities told their stories across the three exhibits. The sections of Diba Jimooyung addressing contact narratives and survival resemble those community alcoves in Our Peoples; the sections of Diba Jimooyung addressing the “Seven Prophecies” and the “Seven Grandfather Teachings” actually have significant overlap with the teachings discussed in the Anishinaabe (Hollow Water and Sagkeeng Bands, Manitoba, Canada) section of Our Universes; and the last third of Diba Jimooyung, where contemporary Saginaw Chippewa identity, language, culture, and sovereignty are addressed, looks very much like the community sections of Our Lives. What the NMAI succeeds in doing is presenting particular aspects of multiple communities'

stories and cultures, united by cross-cultural thematic frameworks. What Ziibiwing succeeds in doing is addressing those particular aspects and themes through the uniting lens of one Native nation's experience.

Within the realm of spatial organization, Ziibiwing's Diba Jimooyung provides the mostly tightly structured exhibit, and as noted above leads its visitors through the narrative with little opportunity for the visitor to choose their directions, unless it is within a specific section of the gallery. This is not to say that in the rhetoric of space, Diba Jimooyung means to be constrictive in its meaning-making capacity, but that it instead has a very specific meaning it would like to impart to its audience. While the HCCM's exhibit was originally intended to be more structured in a similar manner, its current arrangement and the openness of the gallery floor in general allow for considerably more freedom for visitors to explore and construct an understanding of their own, though the chronological nature of the materials displayed does create a framework that, even taken piecemeal, suggests a preferred order for viewing and meaning-making. When compared to the NMAI's exhibits, though the contents of Diba Jimooyung span the entirety of the three NMAI galleries (though from a specifically Saginaw Chippewa perspective), the spatial organization of Diba Jimooyung resembles Our Universes the most in how the gallery is organized in a particular way to guide visitors in a more precise direction and impart a particular meaning.

When comparing the language and images of Diba Jimooyung to the exhibits of the other two sites, Diba Jimooyung is the only exhibit in which none of the labels

are signed, which can be interpreted as a printed invocation of traditional museum authority; on the other hand, because the labels are so often in first-person plural, that traditional museum authority is undermined and/or changed. One could argue that the traditional authority has been replaced by the voice of the speaking community, or even that the community has adopted for itself that position of authority from which to speak, or even both. The HCCM, by contrast, mixes its approach with labels, sometimes grouping archival sources together to provide context (and leaving those groupings unsigned), and sometimes by providing a narrative that is signed by a Haskell curator/student. At the NMAI, all the labels are signed, which is, as noted above, an overt move to undermine traditional museum – or even Smithsonian – authority and asking curators from the Smithsonian and the Native communities to claim their work, their words. In a way, the very situatedness of Diba Jimooyung within a community creates that claim, as does the title itself: “Telling *Our* Story” (emphasis mine). Therefore, the signed labels are not necessary at Ziibiwing in the same way as they are at the NMAI, or even at the HCCM. The language, too, of Diba Jimooyung reflects its location within a community, for it is told as a personal narrative, not as an objective historical account. The HCCM appears to wish to invoke that objectivity more often in its often third-person approach and descriptions, although it also focuses on the personal stories of some Haskell students and veterans as well. Within the NMAI exhibits, the language used in Diba Jimooyung looks most like the community narratives of any of the three NMAI galleries, although the suggestion for how visitors should approach looks the most like Our Universes: just

as Our Universes describes its contents as “teachings,” suggesting an approach of respect and reverence, Diba Jimooyung’s organizational backbone comes from the “Seven Prophecies” and ends with the “Seven Grandfather Teachings,” with a specific challenge to all visitors to live a respectful life.

The images and objects used in Diba Jimooyung are used in the service of the overarching narrative, although many of the objects – especially if they have a sacred use – are replicas and are marked as such. Like the exhibits at the NMAI, the images and objects in Diba Jimooyung are painstakingly labeled and also placed in context – for example, in the dioramas – so that the relationship of the object to its intended activity (and that significance) is clearer. Also, like the Honoring Our Children exhibit, Diba Jimooyung makes extensive use of archival materials, especially in the sections pertaining to colonization and its effects. However, at times some of the photographs and treaty reproductions are meant to read as ironic, and not as self-explanatory texts. Specifically, the oval-panel narrative guides the visitor through the images for the sake of calling them into question, rather than accepting them at face value – the “Signing of the Treaty of Greenville” painting is one example – and incorporates this ironic use of image into the narrative of Saginaw Chippewa colonization. Such a use of images recalls the “Making History” portion of Our Peoples, and the “traditional” artwork section of Our Lives in how it asks visitors to look twice.

Overall, then, the exhibits from each site demonstrated the situated nature of each institution’s rhetorical goals and emphases. The NMAI’s exhibits work to

promote a Native perspective and collaboration in meaning-making that has not been seen before within the Smithsonian, and in the process are always working to balance between imposed structures – of Smithsonian itself, but also in the specific thematic backbones used to unite the materials in each exhibit – and the stories told by the collaborating Native communities involved in each gallery space. In addition, the exhibits also must negotiate between the museological power structure that lends them authority, even as they attempt to open the floor – literally – for visitors to challenge that authority in narrative-making. The HCCM, in contrast, is a site where a history and a narrative is in the process of being established, both for the education and healing of Haskell students and to orient them to their places in that Haskell narrative, and for the education of the surrounding non-Native communities who – for whatever reason they find Haskell attractive – likely have little background in Haskell’s origins and evolution. The major exhibit here on one hand leans heavily on the authority of the museum structure and exhibit structure as a means to tell that narrative, as in many visitors’ eyes such structures lend veracity to the contents; on the other hand, in the very stories it tells of “Sacrifice,” “Survival,” “Change,” and “Celebration,” it challenges what traditional museums before it have acknowledged as “truth.” The Ziibiwing Center, unlike the other two, is firmly situated within the Saginaw Chippewa nation and community, and so likewise reflects an emphasis on telling the story of its community. However, making that story accessible to multiple Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek audiences creates a demand for a generic format recognized by all, and so Diba Jimooyung is a site that negotiates the use of many

conventional museum structures, but in such a way as that those structures are shaped by the Saginaw Chippewa narrative, and that story is always of first concern.

Summation and Conclusion: Museum Exhibits and Rhetorical Sovereignty

The permanent exhibits from the three institutions, as described above, demonstrate a range of approaches to respond to the difficulties of appropriating the museum exhibit genre for the purpose of constructing Native representations by Native peoples. Sometimes these exhibits overtly challenge the accepted historical narrative and the very authority of those institutions (including museums and their genres) which make and uphold it; at other times, the museum exhibit as a genre is employed in what appears to be fairly conventional ways, though always with an eye toward a Native-driven narrative. Often the challenge and the seeming conventional approach can be found in the same exhibit, creating a museum exhibit that simultaneously strives to establish the authority of its narrative even as it challenges the narrative-making process, though to what extent the irony is highlighted self-consciously as a part of the exhibit itself varies, often depending on context and anticipated audience. Like the museum publicity/orientation literature, these exhibits demonstrate a variety of approaches to representation in a museum setting. In this final section, I provide a summary of each institution's exhibit descriptions and a discussion of how each site uses the genre of the museum exhibit to forward particular representations and in doing so, enact rhetorical sovereignty.

Within the NMAI, the three major permanent exhibits – Our Peoples, Our Universes, and Our Lives – approach Native representation from multiple angles in

an attempt to address the multiple narratives that exist to describe Native experience in history and the multi-faceted landscape of Native identity. Its primary anticipated audience is non-Native tourists, though the NMAI is also a touchstone for many Native visitors. As Paul Chaat Smith observes above, the primary goal of Our Peoples is to reverse the anthropological gaze and introduce a Native perspective on contact, survival, and adaptation, via the introduction of a familiar historical narrative of contact rewritten from a Native perspective and supported by eight Native community assertions of their own history, survival, and revival. Our Universes seeks to explain Native communities' traditional philosophies and establish them as long-standing epistemologies that have endured, presently in intertribal contexts, but also primarily through the ceremonial narratives of Native nations, eight of which who share a part of those narratives in the exhibit. Finally, Our Lives presents a multi-faceted view of Native identity as it is translated into an intertribal context of what it means to be "Native" via blood affiliation, language, culture, community, art, and socio-political awareness, as well as what it means to belong to eight specific tribal communities – some of which qualify as "Native" by conventional definition, and some of which challenge and contradict that definition.

At the HCCM, the Honoring Our Children exhibit constructs a foundational narrative for Haskell Indian Nations University from the perspective of the students who lived, studied, and sometimes died there. Its target audiences are first the Haskell students, families, and alumni, but it is also intended to educate the larger non-Native public. Using "Sacrifice," "Survival," "Change," and "Celebration" as guiding

descriptors in the Haskell narrative, as well as a Native veterans' section to honor Haskell students who have participated in the U.S. military, the exhibit substantially expands on the already-established narratives about Haskell that have been written from the perspective of the BIA and Haskell administrators. Though many of the techniques used in the exhibit – the use of text panels, archival materials, and a reliance on these archival materials to document history, rather than interpret it – appear to embody the conventional museum exhibit genre, the very history that Honoring Our Children tells brings student stories and influence on the course of Haskell's evolution to the fore, challenging the established narrative and the historical accounts that were previously considered authoritative.

Inside the Ziibiwing Center, Diba Jimooyung: "Telling Our Story" utilizes the museum exhibit genre to develop a public narrative of Anishinabe and Saginaw Chippewa history, culture, and identity. Its primary audience is the Saginaw Chippewa community itself, for teaching Anishinabe culture, but also for the surrounding communities and tourists who come to the Soaring Eagle Resort. In its desire to create a comprehensive narrative, Diba Jimooyung covers materials from the Anishinabe creation story and pre-contact lifeways, moves to contact and colonization, and then cultural revitalization, using the "Seven Prophecies" as a thematic and cultural guide. However, to make it accessible to the greatest number of visitors, the features of the museum exhibit genre that curators and designers chose appear conventional to the extent of the use of dioramas, objects in cases, and reproductions of official documents. Yet on the other hand, within the context of the

cultural center and its goals for cultural revitalization, as well as the way the exhibit calls accepted history and representation into question, those same features can also appear innovative.

Recalling Lyons' definition of rhetorical sovereignty – “the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires... to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 449, italics his) – and Barker's sense of physically and socially contextualized sovereignty, discussing these exhibits in terms of rhetorical sovereignty again eschews a ranking and instead requires a discussion of how rhetorical sovereignty emerges in each site through the museum exhibit genre. What can be said of all of the exhibits is that each must consider the rhetorical and intertextual connotations that come attached to the museum exhibit genre; as Jamieson argues in Chapter Two, pre-existing “antecedent genres” and their social implications can have a tremendous influence on the framing of new situations. While I would not argue here that the exhibits in these three institutions are significantly different enough to be considered new genres, and that conventional museum exhibits are “antecedents,” what I do assert is that the attitudes and associations attached to conventional museum exhibits that have come before can and do have an influence when the genre is applied in new physical and social contexts. In the Bakhtinian terms evoked at the beginning of the chapter, these museum exhibits as genres are still answering to their predecessors in their rhetorical approaches, even as they are creating new utterances under new circumstances. Negotiating that influence and those ties to past and present as they set their rhetorical

goals is also part of the work that these exhibits do as genres, whether overtly or subtly, and their approaches will depend on their contexts.

As already noted in Chapter Three, the NMAI is part of a larger Smithsonian complex, one that in its museums exhibits has – at least in regards to the portrayal of Native peoples – leaned toward the more conventional museum genre, working with an anthropological/ethnographic approach that sets the academic investigator as the expert and the one who speaks for the Native peoples described in a given exhibit. Before the NMAI, there was little discussion of Native peoples as contemporary nations at all. Therefore, Our Peoples, Our Universes, and Our Lives, are a kind of Smithsonian revolution in that there were Native members of the curatorial teams and that Native communities were consulted and exerted considerable influence over what they contributed to the NMAI. The contents of the exhibits often present versions of history or perspective on Native issues that visitors find different from what they know, and specifically in Our Peoples they are exhorted to challenge the very notion of “history” itself. The spatial organizations are mostly fluid, allowing for visitor exploration, and so it could be argued that more than any Smithsonian museum, narrative-building is fair game for both curator and visitor alike – a tremendous step away from what the Smithsonian has done in the past for Native peoples. On the other hand, the extent to which the Native communities involved could influence the larger exhibit structures was limited, for the majority of the contributions remained bound to individual community sections, which were guided by thematic backbones provided by curators. Individual Native curators also had a significant influence on the shape

and contents of the exhibits as those thematic backbones emerged, but given the Smithsonian structure and the very foundation of the NMAI itself – the vast Heye collection of artifacts and objects – their influence was also limited. In fact, if one reads those exhibits in relationship to the larger structure of the NMAI, they are still very much surrounded by the conventional trappings of a museum, share less floor space than the café and both gift shops together, and are flanked by conventional object-driven displays that fall back on previous exhibit models. It could be argued, then, that within the bounds of the three permanent exhibits, Native peoples have exerted unprecedented influence and have found their strongest voice yet within the Smithsonian complex; however, within the NMAI itself, those Native voices must compete with more conventional versions of the genre, such as Native objects on display with little context (Windows on Collections), that may inadvertently by association categorize those voices and the three permanent exhibits also as a series of artifacts on display in a more conventional fashion.

Like its publicity/orientation literature, the HCCM's exhibit, Honoring Our Children, on first glance appears to be a standard museum exhibit, and one that relies more on printed text and image rather than elaborate presentation to drive its narrative. Its reliance on historical and archival sources also make it appear more conventional than something like the NMAI's exhibits, which appear to draw far more from Native communities for their material. However, through examining the exhibit, it becomes clear that the HCCM, on behalf of Haskell, is establishing a Native community story (not a BIA story, or a U.S. government story), one that is

united by the boarding school experience at large but specifically as it developed at Haskell. Though the simplest and perhaps the most conventional of exhibits at the three institutions, Honoring Our Children is nonetheless able to use that exhibit genre structure to build and tell the Haskell community's story from Haskell student perspectives rather than the already canonized histories of Haskell; the archival materials it draws from are the evidence that Haskell students did and do have a story to tell, and it is a story passed on for the sake of present and future students, as well as the larger non-Native community. On the other hand, because the exhibit looks so much like so many that have come before it, the subtlety of its assertion of a new narrative might be missed, especially by those visitors who do not have an immediate connection to Haskell, its history, or the Native community; choosing a more conventional genre of public discourse might make it more accessible and even acceptable to multiple audiences, though it may also have the potential to downplay the significance of the fact of Haskell students speaking in the first place.

Ziibiwing's Diba Jimooyung is in many ways an overt statement of cultural sovereignty, and it uses the museum exhibit genre to narrate that sovereignty for its audiences. Because the exhibit has only one community for/to which it is responsible – the Saginaw Chippewa, within the larger Anishinabek cultural context – the Saginaw Chippewa community has been able to guide the entire exhibit in more explicit ways than the communities involved with the NMAI, and can go into more specific cultural and historical detail than can the HCCM. It would appear, then, that the Ziibiwing Center had the greatest freedom in choosing what it would portray

relative to the other two sites, both in terms of the museum genre features it employs and the material it chooses to cover. The result is an exhibit that uses standard museum features including dioramas and artifact displays, but one that also uses such features in the service of telling the Saginaw Chippewa story in the way its members (and no other outside influences) agree to tell it. While acknowledging that, to an extent, using standard museum exhibit features runs the risk of cementing a living cultural story in place (see Heard, above), the curators of Diba Jimooyung were also concerned for the accessibility of that narrative, and preferred using genres that visitors (both Saginaw Chippewa and non-Anishinabek) would recognize. The exhibit's rhetorical goals are to tell the Saginaw Chippewa story in a meaningful way to multiple audiences, and the museum exhibit genre in part makes those goals possible; yet, as within the NMAI, because Diba Jimooyung is a museum exhibit, visitors may not understand the narrative as community- and sovereignty-defining, and may instead reduce the stakes to "mere" history, or mere artifact.

Like the publicity/orientation brochures that provide an entry context for these exhibits, the exhibits themselves as a genre are always negotiating between the site, the various anticipated audiences, and museum exhibit genre in all its visual and printed speech genres as it has been inherited from within (at the Smithsonian) and without (at the HCCM and Ziibiwing). While the curators and designers at all three of the sites work to appeal to their audiences while simultaneously creating a narrative to challenge what is accepted by the mainstream as "history," that common ideal produces distinctly unique examples of the museum genre depending on each

institutions' specific rhetorical goals. Rhetorical sovereignty, then, is something invoked at each site in the balance between reaching those rhetorical, narrative goals and using the familiar museum exhibit genre, a genre that still carries a burden from past uses in the service of monolithic history-building, and leaves the possibility open for interpretation from the point of view of that monolith.

Chapter Five
Selling the Message:
Representation in the Genre of Museum Gift Shops as Exhibits

Introduction: The Rhetoric of Museum Gifts Shops When Understood as Exhibits

Much has been said and is still being discussed regarding the issue of selling Native cultural artifacts (or their imitations) and the difficulties in unraveling the relationship between the makers, brokers, and buyers of Native art and tourist items; still more has been said specifically regarding the status of Native art and how it is regarded, bought, and sold in art museums and galleries. Yet little has been said regarding museum shops themselves, especially those within museums and cultural centers with an anthropological or ethnographic collection as its main attraction, and therefore its selling point in the museum gift shops. Falk and Dierking, as noted in Chapter Three, specifically address how visitors consider their time spent in the museum store just as important – if not more so – as their time spent among the museum or cultural center’s exhibits (90). Furthermore, their purchases in the museum shops are something visitors consider significant, as a representation or mnemonic device for their museum visit and what they had learned or experienced there. Falk and Dierking come to the conclusion that

[t]he museum that wishes to communicate accurate information to the public and facilitate positive memories [and associations] must do so in the gift shop as well as in the galleries. Properly presented, the gift shop may be one of the best educational tools a museum possesses...

[g]ift shop items can be sold in ways that make the shop an extension of the exhibits. (91)

However, how to handle such a recommendation immediately becomes embroiled in issues of representation, Native identity, and cultural appropriation – even unto a kind of “cultural imperialism” – that puts museum gift shops at risk for “appropriat[ing] and distort[ing] elements of these cultures for their own purposes” (Meyer and Royer, xi), and creating a display for visitors that condones that very appropriation. Especially within the context of museums and cultural centers with anthropological or ethnographic collections as their foundation (as opposed to art museums), scholars are asking questions about why tourists and visitors purchase items from museum shops (or trading posts, or art markets) and what those interactions and transactions mean for the Native peoples involved. In addition to Falk and Dierking’s assertion that visitors buy objects simply to commemorate museum visits, Margaret Dubin argues that non-Native buyers purchase Native art objects because “...the act of collecting allows collectors to resolve [perceived historical or cultural] discontinuities by incorporating alien objects and people into their own lives, on their own terms” (Dubin 9, addition mine). While the Native artisans who produce the objects may understand their work as “encouraging tribal solidarity in the present by providing evidence of continuity with a sovereign past,” those who purchase the objects may understand them in an entirely different way, even to the point of “Indian products... represent[ing] and even replac[ing] their makers in the American consciousness. Objects replace people, just as the material

culture removed from reservations has replaced its creators...museum shops are full of objects created by living Indians who remain hidden, on view only occasionally as performers of culture, containers of race” (Dubin 11). For Dubin, the process of “translation,” or negotiating the meaning of an object, is one set within unequal power relations, though she also asserts that resistance to the translation of the consumer is possible (131-9). Likewise, Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer acknowledge that even in the face of “cultural imperialism,” contemporary commercialization is difficult to condemn outright because the relationship between Native peoples and the sale of Native-made objects is not a black-and-white issue: one must also deal with concerns of “economic need and its relation to cultural integrity, self-determination, and the formation of native [sic] as well as non-Indian identity...many Indians still manage to negotiate autonomous voices and identities” (xviii). What can be agreed is that the making, buying, and selling of Native objects is a system in which meaning is always in the process of negotiation.

Therefore, understanding how a museum or cultural center gift shop – one site among many where meaning around material culture is translated and negotiated – functions to communicate to its visitors appears an important endeavor, if one that has not necessarily been set in rhetorical or generic terms or brought to museum visitors’ attention. Though scholars and activists are concerned with the issues described above, the average museum visitor is typically unaware and mostly searching for a way to affirm in a material way his or her museum experience via a final shopping trip, and for good reason. As Neil Harris observes, museums have a long history of

borrowing display and attention-grabbing techniques from institutions such as world's fairs and department stores to keep their visitors occupied; the museum shop in particular, then, is a unique meeting of anthropological and commercial display (Harris 80). In keeping with both his and Falk and Dierking's studies, the museum shop can function as an extension of the museum exhibit, a simultaneous educator and also marketer.

Within the context of this chapter, the gift shops of the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing will not be considered so much of an extension of the museum exhibit genre than as a genre in its own right, though a genre related to that of the museum/cultural center exhibit. As another kind of visual/textual display genre that is designed to communicate to the visitor in much the same way a museum exhibit does, such a genre has rhetorical force in how it frames questions of "translation" of the objects for sale and the meaning-making interactions within the store itself. Given the potential for this negotiation of meaning, the museum shop as a display genre therefore presents another communicative opportunity through which rhetorical sovereignty can emerge. In this chapter, I first establish the generic framework of the museum/cultural center gift shop as I observed it at the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing; secondly, I describe and analyze the museum gift store(s) at each site in terms of a display⁶⁶ genre for how each store/display emerges out of its unique context, using the same organization as previous chapters that begins with the NMAI,

⁶⁶ As a term here, "display" is meant to invoke primarily the aspects of the museum exhibit as discussed in Chapter Four (not to be confused with "display" as being a section of an exhibit, as it is most often used in Chapter Four), though the association between a museum display and a store display are historically and connotatively close, and at times difficult to distinguish and separate. As such, the emphasis will remain on "display" within a museum context.

moving to the HCCM and then providing a comparative analysis of the two, then moving to Ziibiwing and ultimately providing a comparative analysis of the genre at all three sites; finally, I conclude with a discussion of how rhetorical sovereignty may surface in the translation of objects and the negotiation of meaning as the act of consumption is framed and communicated at all three institutions.

Museum/Cultural Center Gift Shop as Genre

Like the museum exhibit, a museum/cultural center gift shop can be understood as a complex secondary speech genre⁶⁷ that encompasses many other genres in its make-up and organizes a number of utterances within a particular context. While one could make the argument that a museum gift shop is more productively perceived as a genre system and all its interactions across multiple communities, especially given how contractors usually not associated with museum staff or curators typically handle sales and inventory, such an approach is beyond the scope of this chapter. On the other hand, if one understands the gift shop in terms of a display in and of itself – especially given how that perception already exists among scholars, and so has precedent – one can begin to explore how the presentation of the gift shop can be used to communicate particular ideas to visitors as a genre.

In fact, in terms of rhetorical approach, many of the features of a museum exhibit also figure in museum gift shops – though with a much different purpose. To reiterate Hooper-Greenhill’s description of the rhetorical features of a museum

⁶⁷ As noted in Chapter Four, Bakhtin’s sense of a secondary genre include “novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary...that absorb and digest primary (simple) genres” that come more directly from everyday speech acts (Bakhtin 62), although this chapter, like Chapter Four, will also extend the secondary genre rhetorically to work with context and anticipated audience.

exhibit, possible features include “the style of communication in displays, which includes the way the objects are used or placed, the way the text is written, the provision within the exhibition for various forms of sensory engagement (including visual, tactile, auditory senses), the use of light and colour [sic], the use of space, and so on” (5). Museum gift shops also include these same characteristics,⁶⁸ but with the essential difference that the most emphasis is placed on the consumption of the objects on display rather than education about them, though the objects may be replicas or samples of what the visitor has just seen in the exhibits.

Yet given the unequal power relationships in the process of “translating” the gift shops and their merchandise, it is important to note those power relationships more so within this display genre than perhaps others, if for no other reason than museums and cultural centers are striving to make the discussion surrounding the interpretation of exhibits and history more transparent, but not so much within commercial spaces/displays. The discourse and purpose of such a shop is often taken for granted; however, the material transactions in such sites do not stand isolated or as self-explanatory, but are heavily influenced by a privileged rhetorical generic visual and printed display that communicates a great deal about what is value-worthy in Native cultures, whose work is valuable, and how that value should be translated or derived from the object purchased. In addition, because of the emphasis placed on objects in the museum shop display space, I would argue that because the translation

⁶⁸ In a similar vein, museum cafés also may be “read” for how they support or market what the museum exhibits display, and while such an analysis is outside the reach of this chapter, it should be noted that both the NMAI and Ziibiwing have cafés near their gift shop spaces that function to provide further advertising space and become a kind of display in and of themselves.

of those objects-as-texts is perhaps less straightforward than the printed or imagistic texts to which most viewers are more accustomed (otherwise the practice of printed labeling would not be so entrenched), the purchased objects' meanings are all the more ambiguous in the understanding of the discourses at work, and audiences may be all the more dependent on the rhetorical and communicative framework within which the objects are set for deriving meaning from what the audience sees and experiences. Hence the museum gift shop communicative framework becomes more important than ever.

Using multimedia display techniques and a variety of primary genres, the museum gift shops (as I encountered them at the three sites) are organized in predictable patterns that are far more object-driven in their organization and generally lack any kind of thematic or historical narrative to guide the visitor's path as in the permanent exhibits, except as already provided by the exhibits themselves. Within a museum gift shop, a visitor will generally encounter a space within which objects are given primacy – the items becoming the primary images – clustered in smaller sections that are organized by object and price, with shelves, tables, and cases of items for sale. Printed and additional imagistic text (explanatory labels, price tags, “sale” signs, etc.) are employed as support for the explanation and sale of the objects, and spatial organization is designed to both restrict traffic flow at typically one entrance/exit while at the same time providing an open organization of objects within so as to allow visitors to wander at will or go directly to items of interest. Cash registers are typically located at the primary entrance/exit, and at those same counters

one may also often find promotional literature encouraging the visitor to contribute to or join the museum/cultural center's patron society.

As already noted, the objects in the museum store are at center stage, and therefore the kinds of objects available, their quality, their arrangement, and their price all create a collage of images of the museum for the visitor to read and select from. Items may vary from institutional promotional merchandise (t-shirts, mugs, hats, tote bags, stuffed animals, gift books or museum catalogues, postcards, etc.), multimedia merchandise (books, CDs, videos, DVDs), tourist-oriented items (toys, small reproductions of exhibit objects, blankets and smaller textiles, dream-catchers, cheaper jewelry, small pottery items), and fine art-oriented items (name brand blankets such as Pendleton; jewelry, basketry, pottery, or sculpture by known Native artists; other hand-made objects and textiles by Native artisans; collectable books detailing the work of specific well-known Native artists).⁶⁹ Depending on the value of the item, a visitor can handle the object in question, read its individual label, or at the very least inquire after an object (and often read its label) if it is locked behind glass. Items are often arranged to provide the greatest visual selection to the visitor. Cases of more valuable items are mostly likely located within sight of (if not right next to) cash registers so that staff may monitor them and answer visitor questions.

Printed texts (sometimes with accompanying images) are used in support of the objects and their displays. General labels may be placed so as to guide a visitor

⁶⁹ The distinction between tourist items and fine art is one that, while debated, is generally maintained in scholarly discussion of the production and sale of Native material culture, and the gift shops visited here tend to demonstrate that distinction, as will be further discussed.

searching for something more specific – such as “Books,” “Apparel,” or “Music” – or they may be more specific to explain what individual objects are – for example, “Zuni fetishes,” “Ecuadorian carved gourds,” or “Navajo sand paintings.” Such specific labels often also provide an explanation of the origin and function of the object, or in the case of replicas, the origin and function of the original class of objects; such labels exert a double influence, in that they can help to place a given object back into the context from which it came, while simultaneously heightening the exoticism (and therefore often the desirability) of the object to someone outside that context. Labels may also describe the makers of the items or provide biographies of specific Native artisans, sometimes with the goal of proving the “authenticity” of the object. In addition, “sale” signs and stickers are frequently used to attract visitor attention. Printed/imagistic texts also include the museum collection catalogues and gift books, posters, and postcards manufactured specifically for the promotion and explanation of the museum/cultural center, as they are not necessarily included with the “books” section, but rather often merit smaller displays of their own. Promotional literature encouraging paid patron memberships to the facilities is often located within the gift shop, as opposed to the welcome desk or interspersed with exhibits.

Spatial organization, as already marked, is regulated through a limited number of entrances and exits, but is mostly open within the boundaries of the gift shop itself. Such an open arrangement, at least within the gift shop, allows for greater visitor freedom in negotiating the meaning of her visit, for here she may freely choose what she finds most attractive or most representative of her visit. Though smaller

explanatory narratives may be provided for individual objects, there is no larger thematic backbone to the gift shop other than the museum/cultural center itself, and so perhaps here more than anywhere else on the site, the visitor has the most choice about how to represent that experience to herself. On the other hand, the organization of item clusters – typically books and media towards the back, cheaper items and promotional items toward the front, expensive or collector's items safely within cases and out of touching range if not sight – does exert an influence on what a visitor might purchase, especially if she is pressed for time or money. Cash registers are also placed near entrances and exits for ease of visitor traffic flow.

Other multi-sensory means of input may be employed, though as with the other features, with the goal of selling something to the visitor. Music may be playing in the background, but that music is likely a sample from the store's available CD collection; video monitors may be playing, but the images are likely from a movie or documentary stocked by the shop or promoting the museum/cultural center; pleasant lighting and colors are typically present, though they are used to specifically highlight merchandise in addition to providing a comfortable experience for the visitor.

As described above, museum shops – as displays – bear a certain resemblance to museum exhibits, and so the kind of analysis that follows will be similar to that of the museum exhibits, though shaped by the issues of commercial translation of objects. I examine the way the generic structure of the museum shops communicates to visitors, and how the goals of that communication also derive from the uniqueness of the site itself and its individual overall communicative aims regarding the

translation and negotiation of meaning of the merchandise for sale. In the sections that follow, I describe and analyze the museum/cultural center gift shops as they appear at the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziiibwing with the goal of using cumulative analysis and comparison to establish what these museum shops have in common as displays and communication, and also where they differ according to their particular contexts.

The Roanoke and Chesapeake Stores: Shopping and Education at the NMAI

The NMAI has two museum gift shops, termed within their promotional brochures as “museum stores,” and their placement in the museum allows for the most immediate visitor access. Given that visitors must climb to the third and fourth floors for viewing the permanent or changing exhibition galleries, the location of both the Roanoke and Chesapeake stores next to the stairs (on the second and first floors, respectively) is convenient for visitor perusal, either on the way up to the exhibits or on the way down afterwards. However, the two stores are not copies of one another and doubled in location for convenience’s sake; the Roanoke store stocks a wider selection of “souvenir items” (Roanoke & Chesapeake: Museum Stores brochure) for a tourist audience, while the Chesapeake store specifically specializes in “hand-made crafts and stunning vintage jewelry created by world-renowned contemporary artists” aimed at “art collectors” (Roanoke & Chesapeake: Museum Stores brochure).

The Roanoke store is the larger of the two, and provides a wide array of items for visitors of a range of ages and budgets. Upon entering, a visitor is greeted with full shelves, tables, and racks of merchandise (Appendix C, Figures 1-2). One may

browse shelves of Pendleton blankets, racks of smudge sticks, sachets, dream catchers, and bead jewelry, or go to the back wall of the store, which displays a variety of books on Native American history, spirituality, literature, and children's books (both by Native and non-Native authors), as well as special table displays for the NMAI museum books (Native Universe: Voices of Indian America; Spirit of a Native Place: Building the National Museum of the American Indian; and National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Map and Guide). Other items include Zuni fetishes, small Peruvian carved gourds, Navajo sand paintings, and small textiles and carvings. There are also shelves of toys, including musical instruments (pipes and drums), hacky sacks, and stuffed animals, and also NMAI and Smithsonian logo apparel.⁷⁰ Another section of the back wall is dedicated to Native music and movies, with an adjoining section of posters depicting contemporary Native artists' painting and photography. In addition, there is a small section for Native-inspired cookbooks along with wild rice, Lakota popcorn, frybread mix, and other food items for sale. Prices range from just a few dollars for a pen or frybread mix to several hundred dollars for the most elaborate jewelry, with the average item costing approximately between \$15-\$40.

The major supporting printed texts are interspersed within the merchandise, sometimes as large general labels for visitor orientation, such as "Native Music" or "Navajo Crafts," as well as small explanatory labels for objects that are designed as

⁷⁰ There were NMAI-specific logos for apparel, mugs, etc., but also a section of t-shirts and tote bags that bore Smithsonian Cherry Blossom logos with no apparent connection to the NMAI other than the Smithsonian umbrella.

2.75”X4.25 cards for visitors to take with them when they make their purchases. Positioned in at least 25 locations throughout the store, next to the objects they describe, these small labels generally consist of a title, such as “Birch Bark,” with an explanation of where the material or item comes from, the regions in which it was used by Native peoples, the uses to which it was put, a note declaring that the merchandise available is “evocative of objects found in the collection” of the NMAI or is a version of what the NMAI’s collection does hold, and then finally a statement to the effect that “All income from our sales supports the chartered educational purposes and activities of the Smithsonian Institution.”⁷¹ The Smithsonian logo appears in the top left corner, and the labels are not signed by any author. The cards also appear to fall into roughly four categories, covering specific objects or topics (for example, “Smudge Sticks” or “Lacrosse”), categories of objects labeled by the peoples/nation they come from (“Apache Basketry”), general categories (“Food Traditions”), and objects directly associated with a specific exhibit. Price tags are found on all items, and occasional red “SALE” signs marking reduced-price items are also present. Other texts available to the visitor include brochures detailing how to become a NMAI member, and also the NMAI’s Indian magazine, available for purchase (or free with the purchase of an NMAI membership).

The spatial organization of the Roanoke store is roughly that of a circle, with the jewelry counters/cash registers forming a core in the center of the space. The side

⁷¹ Falk and Dierking assert that while many museum professionals do not always take advantage of making an overt connection between museum exhibits and gift shops, the U.S. government does, in that “the Internal Revenue Service requires a museum to sell only items that bear some educational relationship to its collections if it is to maintain its tax-exempt status as an educational institution” (90).

of the circle facing the stairs is open (creating two spaces that are entrances/ exits), creating a sense of open space – though the cash registers are positioned around the center in such a way as to be close to the main traffic areas. Shelves line the outside walls, with open spaces for a window and an occasional decorated and lighted space on the wall; the floor space is occupied with multiple tables and racks displaying merchandise. Visitors wander freely among the tables and racks, and can generally handle and inspect all the objects available, with the exception of the higher-end items in the glass cases.

The negotiation of meaning regarding the merchandise one can purchase at the Roanoke store appears to lie primarily in the hands of the museum's authority and the connection a visitor might make between the exhibits and the objects, though items such as hacky sacks are more difficult to connect with the exhibits than something like pottery. Dubin argues that tourists historically have not been in search of objects that are "authentic" in the sense of anthropological or ethnological collections, but more in the sense of Native-made objects; that is to say, tourists tend to be happy with calling objects "authentic" so long as a Native American made them (18). Yet museums' collections do still "establish a hierarchy of value against which individuals can measure their collections," and so buying from a museum store imprints the object with a kind of authority regarding its authenticity even if that object is not a work of art per se (Dubin 83), but something like a smudge stick or a dream catcher. Therefore, that the Roanoke store's range of wares is so wide seems to seek to establish a reflection of the exhibits – even as the exhibits cover two

continents' worth of Native nations, so does the Roanoke store attempt to provide a range of objects to represent them. All of the objects for sale can be tied back to the Native nations who are represented in the exhibits, specifically as a featured community (though the labels do not overtly make this connection) or by objects in the collections. And even as the Roanoke store carries small items that may seem trivial when compared to the ethnographic collections of the NMAI or bear no immediate connection to any Native culture except in terms of its commercial value from Native maker to non-Native buyer, even those items carry the imprint of Smithsonian authority. Connected to that authority are also items that bear no connection at all to collections or Native peoples, except via the NMAI: t-shirts, tote bags, water bottles, coffee mugs, etc. that bear the NMAI logo or in some cases only the Smithsonian logo. In the case of these objects, the only attraction for purchasing them is the authority and attraction of the institution itself.

The labels – especially the small explanatory cards – seem to reinforce this sense of museum authority, although the labels can be understood as carrying the dual purpose of providing factual information about the objects (as opposed to pop-culture mythology) and establishing the authority of the museum and therefore the authenticity of the object. The language of the labels is entirely in third person, and though the language is not especially technical in terms of the specialized language of anthropology or ethnology – children are a part of this audience, and so the labels must be accessible – it is still removed and reads in a comparable way to a paragraph out of a grade-school history book. The claim of authenticity at the end of each card

is particularly noteworthy, for where the writers can directly connect the object described to objects in the museum's collections, they do; if they cannot make direct connections, then the card asserts authenticity because the objects in question are "evocative of objects found in the collection" ("Birch Bark" card); and if they cannot make that claim, they note that the object is made by Native Americans ("Dream Catchers" card). In the end, in addition to simply being attractive or interesting objects, the merchandise is made more desirable with supplementary labeling and explanation to show connection to the museum's collections or exhibits and thereby establish authority, or at the very least show that it is Native-made and so attractive via its exoticism.⁷² As for the NMAI membership promotional materials, their location at the Roanoke shop as opposed to the welcome desk may appear peculiar – they do promote the NMAI after all, and they are free. Yet their ultimate purpose is also to sell something, in this case official affiliation with the NMAI, and so their location at the gift shop counter becomes logical given their connection to commercial exchange.

In terms of spatial organization, if the research on meaning-making within exhibit spaces holds true, then the open space of the Roanoke store and its proximity to the exhibits suggests both an openness to visitor interpretation and a connection to the exhibits' contents. Because there is no thematic narrative within the store itself, it

⁷² Some tourists may also be seeking opportunities to purchase items in support of Native communities and those communities' income, though the last sentence on every label card appears to indicate that all income from the sale of the merchandise goes to support "the chartered purposes and activities of the Smithsonian Institution," and so there is no guarantee that philanthropic motivations to purchase are supported by the NMAI. If visitors are reading the cards closely, the more philanthropic motivations for purchasing an item there generally can be ruled out.

relies heavily on visitors having already been through the exhibits for contextual knowledge not provided by the labeling, or on the general attractiveness of the items themselves if the visitors have not yet been to the exhibits or were not thorough in their visit. The only particularly regulatory features of the space are the cash registers, the presence of which highlights the fact that the store is ultimately commercial in purpose and not just another exhibit.

The Chesapeake store stands in marked contrast to the Roanoke store⁷³ in its anticipated audience and therefore the kind of objects that it sells and their arrangement. Located on the first floor next to the café, the Chesapeake store is at once more immediately accessible to NMAI visitors as they enter the museum, and at the same time the furthest distance from the exhibits; if proximity to exhibits can enhance connection between merchandise and museum collections, then in that respect the Chesapeake store is more removed than the Roanoke store. Among the merchandise included at the Chesapeake store, a visitor may find jewelry by named Native artists (as opposed to simply being “Native made”), large textile wall hangings displayed on the high back wall, pottery and baskets by specified Native artists, ledger art and Lee Marmon prints, hand-tooled leather bags and handmade textile bags, Pendleton blankets and jackets, larger and more ornate versions of the Peruvian carved gourds found at the Roanoke store, more elaborate Zuni fetishes and Hopi kachinas (by specified Native artists), contemporary Native art pieces (glass vases, sculpture, pottery, all named by Native artist), and a variety of books on the main

⁷³ As one father, overheard, put it to his children upon entering the Chesapeake store, “Um, kids, I think we’re in the wrong place – don’t touch anything – we need to go...”

collections at the NMAI as well as on Native artists featured in the Chesapeake store (Appendix C, Figures 3-4). The books detailing the NMAI itself found at the Roanoke store are also for sale at the Chesapeake store. Prices range from around \$65 for the simplest of the jewelry to pots, baskets, and wall hangings that move into the several-thousand dollar range, with the extreme end being a piece of jewelry for \$16,000. The average price for many items appears to fall between \$100 and \$600.

Like the Roanoke store, the Chesapeake store makes use of small, portable card labels that visitors may take with them, as well as fixed labels next to objects indicating an individual artwork's title (if there is one) and labels that indicate who specifically made a piece, sometimes with a brief biography of the maker. Though not nearly as numerous as the explanatory label cards in the Roanoke store, the Chesapeake store still makes use of them in limited numbers, and they follow a similar general format with item or topic as the title, regional information for the item or topic in question, which Native communities produce the item(s) in question, the technique for production, a note saying that samples of the items can be found in the NMAI collections, and the standard declaration of the educational use of the income from sales. These cards also fall into several categories, with one card describing the general purpose of the NMAI (this one is found at the cash register), several covering regional or general topics ("Pueblo Potters of the Southwest," or "Contemporary Native American Art"), some covering specific kinds of items by their makers ("Jémez Pottery"), and some addressing specific kinds of objects by class ("Kachinas," "Ledger Art"). Price tags are also a standard text found in the store, as

well as the same brochures promoting NMAI patron membership, the NMAI Indian magazine, and also the Indian Art magazine and the Smithsonian magazine.

The spatial organization of the Chesapeake store works within a more rectangular space, though both windowed walls curve, following the curvilinear structure of the building itself. The cash register is located at the center of this space, forming a ring of counters with museum literature (mostly the publications mentioned above). The space itself is generally less congested with racks or tables of goods, and more free-standing glass cases are in use, ostensibly for the protection of the objects on display. Glass cases are recessed into the back wall, creating more space for visitors to move, and the shelving built into the windows allows for a dual-display capacity for the objects; they may be for sale within the shop, but given the largest window shelf shares a wall with the café, the objects for sale also serve as aesthetic ornaments for the café and advertisement within the café for the Chesapeake shop. There is only one entrance/exit to the Chesapeake store, which is open space with no door frame or doors, and while the cash register is located at the center of the store – hypothetically the best vantage point to observe visitors, but further from the entrance – at the time of my visit, there was a security guard at the entrance to the store.

The inventory of the Chesapeake store vividly illustrates the store's anticipation of a much different audience than the Roanoke store, likely one with motivations to purchase that go past a mere "commemoration" of one's visit to the NMAI (Roanoke & Chesapeake: Museum Stores) and reach into the realm of building one's own collection of Native objects (or, in the most general sense, a

collection of exotica). “Authenticity” of the items for sale is of the utmost importance, though “authenticity” appears to have at least a two-fold meaning: the object is not only Native-made, but made by a well-known Native artist or a brand associated with Indian Country; and the object has value as an ethnographic art object and not only a souvenir. If Dubin argues that “tourists” have been generally happy with an item so long as it had a Native maker, then these buyers are interested in merchandise that – while still being produced for a collector’s art market – has the imprint of ethnographic authenticity of the museum as well, with the price tag to show for it. The ethnographic tie to the museum even shows up in the display techniques themselves, for while the tasteful and attractive display of expensive items in glass cases with careful lighting carries connotations of department stores or fine boutiques, it also carries the connotation of the traditional museum displays for artifacts, and given the museum store’s location within a museum, that connotation is all the stronger. Unlike the Roanoke store, the Chesapeake store promotes itself as dealing in objects legitimate in terms of being made by specific Native artists (with the exception of a small number of items in the Roanoke store) as well as in terms of being more closely associated with the authority of the NMAI and Smithsonian’s collections, as the details of the description labels will reveal.

The label cards found in the Chesapeake store do follow the same general pattern as the cards found in the Roanoke store, with several noteworthy exceptions: there are no cards that tie merchandise to a specific exhibition; the language of the cards, especially in regards to specific categories of objects identified by their region

or makers, tends to be more technical; and every card emphasizes that the objects described for sale have direct ties to the NMAI or larger Smithsonian collections. The lack of cards that tie a category of merchandise to a specific exhibit is not especially surprising, given the general organization in both stores does not revolve around specific exhibits, but the lack in the Chesapeake store of ties to an exhibit suggests the emphasis falls on the objects themselves as objects, and less on them as items that come from a particular storyline or context that an exhibit would provide. The organizational information that is provided is similar to that of the Roanoke store, in which the cards play an explanatory role in giving the reader general information about a specific object – what it is, where it comes from, an overall sense of what it might represent. However, the cards in the Chesapeake store do lean towards more technical language that one might expect in a lecture on art history rather than general grade-school level history. For example, the card for Apache basketry in the Roanoke store briefly describes the basket-making technique, a description of a basket's features, and a statement that these baskets are a “symbol of pride for the Apache people” (“Apache Basketry”). By contrast, the “Laguna Pottery” card from the Chesapeake store provides a precise geographic location for the Laguna Pueblo, a brief discussion of Laguna Polychrome pottery, its traits, and its relationship to Acoma pottery, and a statement on the dates for when production of modern pottery making was adopted at Laguna. The “Laguna Pottery” card is far more academic in its discussion, as specialized knowledge of what “Laguna Polychrome” is and how it fits into a larger discussion of regional pottery is assumed of the reader. This seems to

indicate the anticipation of a reader who either seeks or already holds membership in a collector's community. Finally, not a single card declares the item in question to be "evocative of" or "representative of" pieces in the NMAI collection as do some cards from the Roanoke store; every card from the Chesapeake store claims that examples of each object are a part of the NMAI's collection, or the NMAI's collection and other parts of the Smithsonian complex (including the National Museum of Natural History and the National Anthropological Archives). Such ethos-building for the objects establishes a closer tie to the museum's authority as a determiner of historical and/or ethnographic authenticity and therefore value. Likewise, the use of other labels to indicate the authorship of particular Native artists underscores a desire to legitimate an object's authenticity via the name of a demonstrably⁷⁴ Native person, while also providing a commercial outlet for an established artist whose work is in demand.

The spatial organization of the Chesapeake store is more spacious and objects are not grouped in such close proximity as in the Roanoke store, though it maintains a generally open space with the cash register counter at the center, with objects on racks and shelves grouped around it. Such open organization again encourages uninhibited visitor perusal of items for sale, although the general distance from the exhibitions suggests perhaps an isolation from those narrative contexts. Like the labels that tend to speak of the objects in terms of the history of their production and their technical features, the distance from the exhibits' contextualizing narratives

⁷⁴ How Native membership is demonstrated can be a difficult business, especially given the cultural cachet of that comes with certification can mean buyers are willing to pay higher prices. Currently, providing a Native artist's name, tribal affiliation, and sometimes tribal enrollment number is one of the most common, if controversial means of authentication.

reemphasizes the Chesapeake's inventory as art objects or more ethnographic objects and less a part of the story of the Native peoples featured at the NMAI. One could argue that the relative proximity to the Potomac, the open entry space and site for frequent performances by Native musicians, writers, and dancers, signals a closeness to Native culture like that of the exhibits, although the counter argument can be made just as easily: if Native objects are classified as "art" to be consumed at the Chesapeake, then there is the possibility of understanding those performances also as "art" to be consumed, existing apart from their significance in living Native communities. The shop allows for both translations simultaneously.

Overall, the Roanoke and Chesapeake stores at the NMAI appear to share a general goal in providing material ways for visitors to connect to their visit at the NMAI, and though the above inventory list and description of each store is not exhaustive, what can be discerned here is a desire to reach both the tourist audience and the art collector audience. Both stores emphasize the fact that the goods they carry are Native-made in one respect or another, and have ties – however tenuous in the case of some items – to the NMAI's collections. In this way, the stores establish the authenticity of their inventories in the sense of Native production and museum authority. Yet the type, price, and to an extent, the proximity to the exhibits of the objects for sale in each store draw a distinct dividing line between the anticipated purchasers of these objects. Tourists with a limited budget, children on school trips, and visitors with a general interest in things Native are expected to buy from the Roanoke store, and are encouraged to find an object to represent what they found

most attractive about their visit or simply something to prove, authoritatively, they were at the NMAI. Visitors with more money to spend, amateur collectors, and even serious collectors will likely buy from the Chesapeake store, as they are not expected to connect so much with the exhibits as they are with the NMAI's collections, and the authority of owning something made by a well-known Native artist and whose work can directly be connected to a prestigious institution's ethnographic or artistic inventory.

The meaning-making potential of each store as display, therefore, varies markedly depending on how it appeals to its visitors and makes its case for a connection with the NMAI and the Native peoples involved there. The generic display of the Roanoke store seems to communicate an accessibility to Native goods and assumedly therefore Native cultures involved at the NMAI, whether via connections between goods and the exhibits, however subtle that connection may be, or whether by association with the NMAI's collections, however tangential that connection may be. The wide variety and generally lower price of the merchandise encourage that accessibility, though the meaning visitors make with those objects is not clearly delineated, even with the guidance of labels and the imprint of museum authority. The generic display of the Chesapeake store, by contrast, is one that deals in more exclusive merchandise, objects that are defined as more exclusive and more valuable by their simultaneous status as art objects produced by known Native artists, their status as Native objects produced by certifiable Native individuals, and the objects' direct connection with the Smithsonian's collections. With these two stores,

the NMAI at once communicates that there are Native-made objects that any visitor can own, and Native-made objects that only a few can appreciate – but regardless, Native culture can be had under the authority of the NMAI as a branch of the Smithsonian Institution.

A Single Glass Case: Shopping and Education at the HCCM

Unlike the NMAI or Ziibiwing, the HCCM proper does not have a gift shop. While there is a gift shop located on Haskell's campus that sells some Native arts and crafts, there is no gift shop specifically within the physical or charter boundaries of the HCCM. According to the first director, Bobbi Rahder, there is no gift shop for several reasons: first, the HCCM is intended to be “a living cultural center, class space, [and] welcome center” where admission was not charged; secondly, though calendars and postcards have been used as fundraisers, it was never part of the mission to have a gift shop; and finally, as part of Haskell, which is a nonprofit federal institution, the HCCM is also not-for-profit (Rahder, personal interview). However, consistent with the HCCM's mission to serve “as a national center for the study of living American Indian traditions...provid[ing] present day and historical information regarding North American Indian/Alaska Native culture through exhibitions, educational programs, and research” (“Haskell Indian Nations University Cultural Center & Museum”), there is a single glass case of items for sale that all in some way connect to Haskell history or the HCCM itself.

Located in the foyer of the HCCM, to the left of the entrance as a visitor comes in, next to the welcome desk, and directly across from the entrance to the

museum gallery, the items for sale at the HCCM are contained in or displayed on top of a blonde wood and glass case nearly identical to the display cases used in the museum gallery (Appendix C, Figures 5-6). At times on top of the case, and sometimes on the neighboring counter of the welcome desk,⁷⁵ a visitor may find several photocopied booklets on Haskell history compiled from Haskell archives at different points of the 20th century. Highlights of Haskell Institute: A Brief Sketch Of the Half Century of Indian Education At Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas provides a historical sketch from 1884-1936, and was part of a federal survey of national archives supported by the Works Progress Administration in Kansas in 1936 (“Foreword,” Highlights of Haskell Institute). Haskell Highlights: 1884-1978 extends the history another 22 years, derived primarily from superintendent’s reports and The Indian Leader newspaper up to 1978, when Haskell Indian Nations University was still Haskell Indian Junior College. In Loving Memory Of the Earliest Haskell Students: Haskell Cemetery Guide, May 5, 2007 is the most recent booklet, and shares the stories of the Haskell students who perished there, as much as those histories could be compiled from Haskell sources and area historical societies. Each of these booklets is \$1. Within the glass case is a variety of other books spread out on a red Pendleton blanket, including a set of 17 Little Books reproductions that were original printed in the 1940s-1960s by the Haskell press; A Book About Me, a baby book printed by the American Indian College Fund; Beyond the Reach of Time and

⁷⁵ The arrangement of the materials has varied during my visits to the HCCM, but the description I sketch above can provide a sense for how the items are arranged.

Change,⁷⁶ a University of Arizona Press book on the HCCM's Rinehart photograph collection, and Haskell Institute: 19th Century Stories of Sacrifice and Survival,⁷⁷ the most recent publication detailing Haskell's early student stories. These books range approximately from \$5 to \$30 in price.

In terms of printed/imagistic texts, other than price labels or price tags, explanatory text labels are minimum. The Little Books series has no obvious labeling other than price tags, though skimming the covers of the books reveals enough similarities to indicate a series, and all of them bear the mark "The Haskell Foundation, Haskell Indian Nations University." Some of them also have a date on the cover to indicate when they were first published, suggesting historical significance. Beyond the Reach of Time and Change receives mention in the HCCM's main orientation brochure (which, given the welcome desk with all its literature is immediately adjacent, serves as a connected text, though the connection is not immediate obvious). Other than those there is little to explain the items for sale in overt terms, though many of their titles imply an immediate connection with the mission and archives of the HCCM and the Honoring Our Children exhibit.

The spatial arrangement of the display case itself, as already suggested, is part of the entryway into the HCCM and immediately to the left of the welcome desk; since a visitor would go directly straight to the welcome desk for directions or orientation literature, and then right into the exhibit area, it is not likely that the case

⁷⁶ Sometimes not on display, but available.

⁷⁷ It should be noted that both In Loving Memory and Haskell Institute: 19th Century Stories of Sacrifice and Survival are authored by Dr. Theresa Milk, who as a Haskell student was one of the major contributors to the "Sacrifice" and "Survival" sections of the Honoring Our Children exhibit. She as noted before, she is currently a faculty member at Haskell Indian Nations University.

would be noticed on the first pass through the foyer. However, when a visitor returns back through the same doors from the exhibits, he would be directly facing the display case of books and historical materials (now with the welcome desk on the right), and so the display case of items for sale is perhaps the first thing a visitor sees upon emerging from the gallery floor. Within the case itself, the less expensive booklets are on top of the case, and during my August visit the Haskell Institute: 19th Century Stories of Sacrifice and Survival was also among those displayed on top. Currently, within the case, the range of Little Books are spread on display on lying on top of the red blanket, with A Book About Me, Haskell Institute, and one of the Little Books entitled Little Hopi on vertical display across the back of the case.

The selection of merchandise at the HCCM reflects a direct connection to the HCCM's mission as a purveyor of historical information about Native cultures and Haskell as a historical site, though the latter seems to have the primary emphasis. All of the items are books of some kind (no HCCM t-shirts or logo-driven items are present), and all but the Little Books and A Book About Me are historical in their content and pertain to Haskell's history as an institution or, in the case of Beyond the Reach of Time and Change, to the HCCM's collections. Meanwhile, the Little Books are connected to Haskell's history as reproductions of products manufactured at Haskell's historic press during the mid-20th century, and A Book About Me – via its sponsorship through the American Indian College Fund – is still connected to Haskell due to Haskell's status as an intertribal university. Given the anticipated multiple audiences – Haskell students and family, Haskell alumni, school children, and

community/regional visitors to Haskell – the appeal with the single display case and books is not so much to turn a profit with tourist merchandise, but instead to provide inexpensive educational materials to interested visitors who, for various reasons, are invested in Haskell’s history and the HCCM’s collections and archives.

“Authenticity” of items is less of a question in this space, for the items for sale do not rely on their status as being “Native-made” or from a Native culture to make them attractive. Instead, general ethos and authority is tied here to the authority of verifiable, academic, historical truths, to making historical narratives about Haskell and Haskell students available when they may be more difficult to acquire in mainstream historical narratives. Furthermore, much of the material available directly supports the Honoring Our Children exhibit narrative, especially given that two of the books for sale (In Loving Memory and Haskell Institute: 19th Century Stories of Sacrifice and Survival) grew out of the first research for the exhibit (Milk, personal interview). Therefore, the appeal of authority of the merchandise at the HCCM rests on its status as a historical archive and displayer of Haskell history, as a site within the heart of the narrative, rather than outside it.

The explanatory labeling – or general absence of it – serves to emphasize the implicit connection between the exhibits and the books for sale. Though such a connection is not at once obvious should a visitor look at the books before entering the gallery floor, the connections become more obvious upon going through the exhibits, especially for the books dealing directly with the history of Haskell or the exhibits. Even if a visitor does not even go into the exhibits, most of the books

suggest a history of Haskell via their titles and content. The price tags and the information they convey encourage accessibility to further Haskell information, for the most basic booklets are only a \$1, and while the other books may be more expensive, none of them – even the historical reproductions – are excessively costly, even on a fairly limited budget.

The spatial organization of the display case – that is, its location – appears to be located in such a way that the visitor will be more likely to see it coming out of the gallery, though visitors standing in line at the welcome desk might also be likely to see it, as they would be standing next to it. The visitor who can make a connection between the books and the exhibits is probably a visitor more likely to invest in supporting materials, and so placing the display case in the direct line of sight of exiting visitors appears strategic and meant to be appealing because it provides more information on what a visitor has just seen. Meaning-making for a visitor appears to rely a great deal on the visitor making a strong connection between the exhibit and the items for sale. In addition, because there is only one cabinet, the emphasis on selling goods remains minimal, and contributes to the sense of the HCCM as a cultural center, museum, archive, and welcome center to an academic site rather than a tourist stop. A visitor is less likely to buy one of the books as proof of having been there or as a collector's item – though several of the books could become valuable parts of a personal library, and the Little Books do have some value as Haskell collectables – and more likely to purchase as a way of supporting a desire for more knowledge about the HCCM and Haskell.

With what both the NMAI and the HCCM do in mind, their respective commercial angles create a striking comparison. While both institutions are seeking to promote education through the merchandise for sale, and both use the authority of the respective institution and what it holds as a selling point, they are distinctly different in what counts as “authoritative.” At the NMAI, the ethnographic collections are still very much the measure of what is “authentic” – definitely at the Chesapeake store, and to a lesser extent at the Roanoke store. At the HCCM, at least in terms of the merchandise sold, the ethnographic collections that are present take a back seat to the archives and the academic research supporting the narrative of Haskell’s history; “authentic” here means the verifiable histories of Haskell and its students, past and present. As a result, the merchandise at the NMAI museum stores reflects the emphasis on ethnographic collections and art, on objects which are Native-made, though the kinds of objects for sale in each store differ according to anticipated tourist or art collector audiences. Conversely, no such distinction is made at the HCCM, and though there are multiple audiences expected at the HCCM, all visitors are expected to want to know more about the history of Haskell and the tribal histories that converge there. Hence, the items – books – for sale there are all relatively academic in nature, or tied to Haskell’s history or affiliations with other academic organizations.

The printed and imagistic texts that accompany the merchandise reinforce this distinction between institutions. As established already, the card labels at the NMAI in both stores strive to educate potential buyers about the object in question while

creating a link between the NMAI's collections and the object for sale. Furthermore, the only image available on the cards is the Smithsonian sun emblem and the name "Smithsonian Institution", which creates a dual stamp of authority: the printed text proclaims the object is like, or evocative of, or a replica of what is in the NMAI's collections, while the stamp image acts as a literal seal of approval. Via the label card, the object has educational value because it is related to the NMAI's collection, and the Smithsonian approves the message. At the HCCM, however, there are only a few price labels set within the glass case next to the items in question, and most items are left to speak for themselves via a direct though implicit connection to the HCCM's educational mission and its standing exhibits. More specifically, Honoring Our Children is a narrative of Haskell's students' histories, and several of the books cover that terrain in more detail; the exhibit Beyond the Reach of Time and Change, though part of the HCCM's collections, is used to talk about other tribal histories and the history of Native image rather than dwelling on the intrinsic collector's value of the Rinehart collection itself, and the book for sale reflects that emphasis as well.

The spatial organization for the shops in both institutions also seems to reflect differing levels of connection to the exhibits. At the NMAI, the locations of the Roanoke and Chesapeake stores appear to suggest degrees of separation from the permanent exhibits on other floors. The Roanoke store is still the closest, and it is the store whose merchandise bears the closer connection to the permanent exhibits or changing exhibits, especially as some of the items are made by the contributing Native communities. The Chesapeake store is the furthest from the permanent and

changing exhibits, and attempts to establish the closest connection to the collections rather than the narratives about the Native peoples and objects involved with the exhibits. By contrast – and in part because of the much smaller size of the HCCM – the merchandise on sale at the HCCM is quite close to the exhibits, and is located directly in front of the exiting visitor. Both physical proximity and line of sight, as well as the glass case’s contents, suggest a closer connection between exhibit contents and the books for sale. In that respect, the more immediate connection between exhibit and merchandise allows less room for a visitor to negotiate meaning-making, as the books generally exist as reinforcements or supportive material for the exhibits and the narratives established there. At the NMAI, the organization of the stores allows for more visitor perusal and, because of the relative distance from the exhibits and their guiding narratives, does not provide as much guiding information about how the objects for sale are to be understood. If anything, the size of the glass cabinet and the books for sale at the HCCM suggest that the exhibits should remain the primary focus, while at the NMAI the museum stores are almost institutions unto themselves, with or without the exhibits.

Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop: Shopping and Education at Ziibiwing

The Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop⁷⁸ at Ziibiwing is located directly to the left of the main entrance, or, if one is exiting the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, directly on the right hand side (and therefore according to Falk and Dierking, the next likely

⁷⁸ “Meshtoonigewinoong” is subtitled as “The Place Where We Trade At” on Ziibiwing’s “Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop” webpage, though the subtitle at the Ziibiwing Center is simply “Gift Shop/Reception.”

place a visitor is to go). Shaped roughly as an “L,” either end is an entrance/exit, although the main entrance and exit is in the large main foyer; the other end exits towards the restrooms and coat racks. The Meshtoonigewinoong shop stocks a wide array of items, given its aim at multiple audiences, and though it does stock souvenir items and more expensive artwork, it stocks other merchandise that indicates perhaps less a division between tourists and collectors and more an expectation of difference markets between a more local Native audience and non-Native visitors.

Upon entering through the main entrance in the foyer, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop begins on the right with a counter/case filled with goods such as quilled boxes, smaller beaded items, turtle shell pouches (which are under glass) and rows of moccasins and stuffed animals accessible on shelving, with the cash register on the counter top. To the left is small display with sage bundles and braided sweet grass for smudging, a small shelf of strawberry-shaped black ash baskets, and then next is a section of the wall devoted to beads and beading supplies as well as a large make-your-own bracelet display full of beads to choose from (Appendix C, Figure 7). Hanging from the ceiling is a large dream catcher, and directly below it and to the left (past the beads) is a section full of Native-made artwork, with framed prints, dolls, sculpture, renderings in stained glass, some Pendleton blankets, and other items for sale (Appendix C, Figure 8). Directly ahead is shelving containing DVDs and CDs (including Anishinabemowin language CDs and booklets), two racks of smaller dream catchers, and behind those is U-shaped section along the back wall for books. To the right are racks and free-standing shelves of

clothing – among them Ziibiwing logo clothing, Saginaw Chippewa t-shirts and sweatshirts, and clothing bearing the motto “Native Pride” – and stuffed animals, and further to the right along the back wall is a section of Pendleton-brand blankets and clothing. Next to that are shelves of birch-bark goods, primarily miniature tepees and canoes, and other assorted stuffed animals and toy drums. Above the toys is a large framed “Ride With Pride” poster depicting several Native men and women in full regalia riding in a classic convertible, as well as a “Native Threads”⁷⁹ brand skate board. Across from that display are racks of greeting cards, and then a wall displaying more framed prints and some black ash basketry. The gift shop perimeter ends roughly there, with open access to a back hallway where the restrooms and conference room are located. Prices for merchandise range from a few dollars for smaller items such as greeting cards and beads up to \$4,500 for one of the pieces by an Anishinabek artist.

In terms of printed or imagistic texts, the majority of the labeling on products is minimal – mostly consisting of a price tag with a bar code – although some items are exceptions. Ziibiwing carries items made by more than 150 Anishinabek artists (“Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop”), and these objects are at times labeled differently than the books or clothing, specifically with an extra label (besides the price tag) that

⁷⁹ The “Native Pride” clothing, “Ride With Pride” poster, and the “Native Threads” skate board are all products of Native Threads, a Native owned and operated apparel company founded in 1990. On the Native Threads website, the company’s mission statement reads, “Native Threads exists to promote and preserve our Native American culture and tradition through original, contemporary clothing designs and to spread goodwill and prosperity among all whom [sic] cross our path” (“Native Threads: About Us”). According to the website, some of the major outlets for Native Threads products are tribal casinos, resorts, gift shops, and powwows, and marketing samples include the design logo for the 2005 NMAI Powwow (“Native Threads: Manufacturing”).

may bear the title of the artwork or type of craft, the name of the artist, the artist's tribal affiliation, and sometimes the artist's tribal enrollment number. For example, with the rack of dream catchers included in Ziibiwing's inventory, each dream catcher is labeled with a card that on one side includes a description of what a dream catcher is, the assertion that they originated with "Woodland Indians," and their traditional function. On the other side of the card is the title "Native American Made," with the artist's name, tribal affiliation, and enrollment number following ("The Dream Catcher" label card). Other labeling in the store includes more general category labels among the bookshelves to guide visitors seeking specific topics and sizing labels for the racks of beads in the beading supply section. Other major literature/texts may be found at the cash register, as this is actually where a visitor pays the entrance fee into the museum – not at the welcome desk – and where a visitor is also given the literature (whenever a purchase is made)⁸⁰ promoting becoming a patron of the cultural center.

The spatial organization of the Meshtoonigewinoong shop is, as previously stated, arranged along a rough "L" shape, and its main entrance is in the main foyer of Ziibiwing. The cash register and jewelry counter is directly to the right of the main entrance with a vantage point of the entrance and most of the store (with the exception of the far end of the "L" towards the restrooms). The amount of merchandise and a close display arrangement make for the appearance of abundance,

⁸⁰ While technically this literature is free, it is not displayed or distributed with the publicity/orientation literature, and as noted is only given to a visitor when a ticket or merchandise purchase is made. Therefore, the patron solicitation brochure is included here and not with the publicity/orientation literature in Chapter Three.

and while there is a section that appears more specifically designated for arts and crafts, framed prints and basketry appear throughout the store mixed with other merchandise. The books and media are located in the corner of the “L” along the back wall, and the clothing is mostly placed in the center with the exception of a specific wall section for Pendleton items. The beading supplies are across from the cash register, immediately at the main entrance, as are racks of sale items that are made conspicuous by their placement slightly outside the gift shop entrance.

The range of merchandise offered at the Meshtoonigewinoong shop suggests a purposeful support of the Anishinabek communities whose stories are told in the Diba Jimooyung exhibit, as well as an alliance with Native peoples in general, and also a desire to attract non-Native customers along more conventional tourist and collectors’ lines. The large selection of beading supplies and the specific (if not exclusive) inclusion of local and regional Anishinabek artists’ work seems to indicate a desire to support the production of Anishinabek arts and crafts as well as providing an outlet for their sale, though whether that sale is aimed at non-Natives only or also the Anishinabek community is not entirely clear. The apparel for sale also seems to work in several directions at once: there is the Ziibiwing logo clothing, and also clothing bearing the seal and title of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan shelved together side by side; either of these might appeal to a non-Native visitor. However, there is also clothing that has “Property of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe” emblazoned on the chest as well as the simple “Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe” title printed on other shirts and hats, hung out separately from the other shirts; such items

would assumedly be worn by members of the Saginaw Chippewa nation or those with a connection to it. Furthermore, there are also shirts and hats with “Native Pride” embroidered on them, indicating an expectation for a wider audience Saginaw Chippewa shoppers, or a pan-indigenous alliance among Native visitors. Generally speaking, the Ziibiwing logo line appears to be secondary in display with the “Saginaw Chippewa” and “Native Pride” merchandise, emphasizing Ziibiwing more as a place contextualized by the Saginaw Chippewa nation and less a museum/cultural center that is its own reason for existing. On the other hand, much of the rest of the merchandise does not fall so readily into categories, and much is left open to interpretation depending on the viewer/buyer of the merchandise; an Ojibwe dictionary could be an item of curiosity to a non-Anishinabek visitor, while an important component of language-learning for participants in the local Anishinabemowin club, and works of art – or items such as dream catchers – that look generally “Indian” and appeal for the sake of their “Indianness” to someone non-Native⁸¹ may appeal to an Anishinabek viewer because of the power of Anishinabek images and/or symbolism. Prices also vary greatly, indicating an appeal to a range of budgets. Also among the items for sale are things that appear more directly allied with the idea of a museum; for example, among the books – a great number of which are devoted to Great Lakes peoples’ histories – are two from the NMAI, Native

⁸¹ See Dubin for her discussion of the misinterpretation of Native art, especially when iconic images – tepees, horses, feathers, animals, etc. – “that are intended to critique white desire are transformed into the objects of that desire” (Dubin 142). Though her comments pertain specifically to political art by Native artists, the same may be said of much of Native art, in that it may be interpreted in significantly different ways than an artist’s intentions, depending on the possibility of a viewer who desires the object because it appears “Indian” according to mainstream cultural stereotypes.

Universes and the exhibit book Identity by Design, covering the changing Native women's dress exhibit by the same name. Though these books contain references to Anishinabek culture and history, those references are brief, and so their inclusion in the inventory implies an association with the NMAI and the Smithsonian and the authority they carry, however tangential.

The labels – the few that provide more information than item name and price – appear designed to establish the authenticity of the object in question, though this authenticity is based specifically on the fact of the object being Anishinabe-made for an Anishinabe cultural center. This authenticity is grounded not only in an artist's affiliation with a tribal nation included under the Anishinabek cultural umbrella, but also by confirmation of that affiliation with a tribal enrollment number. The artist's work makes the gift shop more clearly “authentic” as a purveyor of Anishinabek arts and crafts from the region, while the Meshtoonigewinoong shop makes the items “authentic” because within Ziibiwing (a keeper and supporter of Anishinabe culture), it provides an outlet for the artist's work. At the same time, the Pendleton and Native Threads items, by virtue of their brand-name labels, create a connection with a larger Native community audience, and then the Pendleton items particularly have an more general association both in Indian Country and among collectors. For those items that have no labels to specifically explain them, it appears assumed that the visitor would either simply associate an object with Ziibiwing by default, and so the fact that it comes from Ziibiwing makes it valuable, that the visitor is able to make a connection between what he viewed in the exhibit and what he finds in the gift shop, or that the

visitor has explicit cultural knowledge and knows what an object is and its appropriate or intended function/meaning.

The spatial organization of the Meshtoonigewinoong shop, though fairly crowded with merchandise, provides enough space to allow for visitors to negotiate how they wish to represent their visit to Ziibiwing with a purchase, though the inventory keeps that representation fairly firmly grounded with Anishinabek cultural boundaries. Such a grounding thereby assures most objects are affiliated in some way with the educational mission of Ziibiwing, and so visitors are in a sense bounded by that affiliation even as they are surrounded by the items for sale. Even so, the gift shop is recognizable as a gift shop, with sale items and cash register near the entrance, spaces that organize particular kinds of materials (artwork here, books there) in a fashion most visitors would recognize, and thus behavior – as a browser and a shopper – is still the implied general norm. Yet the placement of the beading supplies at the front of the store suggests that some of the most frequent repeat visitors are local craftspeople, the music selection of powwow artists suggests that buyers there probably already have a familiarity with that music and know what they are looking for, and the inclusion and forward placement of a section of Anishinabemowin language acquisition materials also all indicate that the Meshtoonigewinoong space is one of multiple meaning-making possibilities, some of which are not immediately available to the non-Native visitor.

In comparison with the NMAI's gift shops and the HCCM's display case, the Meshtoonigewinoong gift shop falls between the two in terms of its size, its

inventory, and how it establishes its authority and appeals to its audiences. Like the NMAI, the Meshtoonigewinoong space includes both goods aimed at a tourist audience and an art collectors' audience, though these items are not completely separated as they are at the NMAI's Roanoke and Chesapeake shops. Such a mixture might have resulted from a lack of space to separate the two kinds of merchandise, but the mixing of the two produces a shopping atmosphere in which socio-economic lines are not so clearly drawn, and a space that tends to avoid better the connotation of museum display that pervades the Chesapeake store in particular. The audience lines that are drawn here lean more towards a line between the local Saginaw Chippewa and Anishinabek community audiences and a non-Native audience, suggesting more of a similarity to the HCCM in its appeals to its Haskell student and alumni community as well as the regional non-Native communities. It is in this respect that the Meshtoonigewinoong gift shop establishes its authority, for while Ziibiwing does have an ethnographic collection, the appeal of the items in the gift shop is not grounded so much in what Ziibiwing has in its collections, but rather in the fact that many of these items were made by members of the Saginaw Chippewa community (or larger Anishinabek community) whose story is being told in the exhibit. Like the HCCM, authority and authenticity of the objects for sale come in part from establishing ties with the people and the stories told in the exhibit – those who produced the exhibit – rather than a likeness or association with specific items from Ziibiwing's collection. However, the fact that the Meshtoonigewinoong shop does still stock artwork with a label and a price cannot only be understood as

supporting local artists; such a move also draws parallels between the Meshtoonigewinoong shop and galleries that sell Native art, much like the NMAI, and so in part the authenticity of the art items sold at Ziibiwing arguably comes from the fact they are sold from an authoritative institution such as a cultural center or museum.

The labels on the merchandise at the Meshtoonigewinoong shop – or those labels that are present, given that most objects do not have explanatory labels – appear to support the idea that authenticity and authority in this commercial space is based on the fact that local or regional Anishinabek community members, certifiable by tribal affiliation and enrollment number, made much of what is for sale. Unlike the NMAI, the labels do not claim any resemblance to objects in Ziibiwing’s collections; instead, they claim their authority by their makers and those artists’ blood and local cultural affiliation, and in more specific terms than the great majority of the merchandise at the Roanoke store (and to an extent, the Chesapeake store). These goods are not just Native-made, they are Anishinabe-made, with traceable ties to the community via their labels. Those items that do not have labels are apparently assumed to be self-explanatory or perhaps easily associated with the Diba Jimooyung exhibit in the same way that the HCCM’s books are directly tied to Honoring Our Children: birch bark crafts are suggestive of the exhibit explanation on the uses of birch bark; the wild rice one can purchase ties directly back to the section about wild rice harvesting; and the black ash baskets and beaded items tie back into the community sections that describe the arts passed down for generations. On the other

hand, for those items without labels, the lack of labeling creates far more opportunities for visitors to negotiate meaning-making than at the HCCM, whose merchandise is so closely linked to the exhibits that visitors are less likely to interpret it exclusively from their own points of view. More like the Roanoke store at the NMAI (and especially in contrast with the items that do bear an “Anishinabe” label), those items not directly tied to Ziibiwing or the local community allow more room for visitor interpretation, creating an advantage when dealing with multiple audiences, but also a disadvantage for the Ziibiwing’s educational mission if the unlabeled items end up confirming a visitor’s stereotypes of “Indianness.” The existence of patron-solicitation literature at the Meshtoonigewinoong shop also suggests a parallel with the NMAI, in that both use their shops as sites for advertising membership as a patron of that institution. Such a fund-raising option is common, but common among museums, and so such a feature at the Meshtoonigewinoong shop evokes a sense of a museum at Ziibiwing.

The spatial layout of the Meshtoonigewinoong shop looks the most like the Roanoke store at the NMAI, in that it is a space with a great deal of affordable merchandise to choose from and the organization allows the visitor to wander freely through it. However, the placement of some of the merchandise – beading supplies, Anishinabemowin language-acquisition materials, “Native Pride” clothing – in prominent places suggests perhaps repeat customers from the local community and particular marketing to them. The Roanoke store, with tourist traffic flow, does not appear to solicit or encourage repeat business with its layout, nor does the

Chesapeake store or the display case at the HCCM (though the ready availability of the materials in the HCCM's foyer does suggest greater accessibility). Additionally, the physical placement of the Meshtoonigewinoong shop at the right-hand side of visitors exiting the Diba Jimooyung exhibit and within vision as visitors contemplate Ziibiwing's exit implies a fairly direct connection with the exhibit itself, much like the display case at the HCCM and its placement in exiting visitors' line of sight. On the other hand, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop might be construed as immediately on one's way into the exhibit space, much like the Chesapeake or Roanoke stores, and an attraction in itself. Also like the Chesapeake store, the Meshtoonigewinoong gift shop actually shares boundary space with the café on site, making the gift shop's goods part of the ambiance of the café, enhancing the "museum shopping experience," perhaps with the emphasis lingering on "shopping."

Overall, what can be observed among these three institutions is an approach to marketing and a rhetorical establishing of authority and authenticity for the merchandise sold, though the approach depends on the site and what it wishes to say via what it literally sells. Though the NMAI has two different stores with two different merchandising emphases – the Roanoke store, which stocks lower-priced tourist goods, and the Chesapeake, which stocks higher-priced collectors' items – ultimately both stores build their reputations on the connections that can be drawn between what they sell and the NMAI's (or other Smithsonian) ethnographic collections. While authenticity is established to an extent through marketing as many of the products as possible as "Native-made," in the general sense of an unnamed

maker or a well-known artist, the consistent reference on the labels is to the NMAI's collections. By contrast, the HCCM has only a single display case of books that it offers for sale in the foyer next to the gallery floor, and the authority – and therefore authenticity – of the books' contents relies a great deal on how they support the narrative of the Honoring Our Children exhibit or the extended historical narrative of Haskell and its academic affiliations. Whether or not these books are "Native-made" is not generally a question, though it must be acknowledged that several of the books were authored by Native essayists or historians, one of whom is a Haskell graduate, and the Little Books appear to be based on traditional stories from a variety of Native cultures. Ultimately the question of authority is based on academic and archival work directly connected to the HCCM's archives and its educational mission. Finally, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop at Ziibiwing establishes an authority and authenticity that stems from the sponsoring Saginaw Chippewa nation and larger, regional Anishinabek community that created the Ziibiwing Center. Working with both a local audience and a tourist audience, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop sells items that are not just "Native-made," but specifically "Anishinabe-made," and while there is a variety of goods that are not exclusive to Anishinabe culture, the authenticity of the merchandise overall comes less from affiliation with Ziibiwing's archives or ethnographic collections and more of an affiliation with the Anishinabe community itself. However, the gift shop does also maintain features that resemble more mainstream museum-store fare, fulfilling the function as a local outlet for artwork

aimed at a collector's audience and keeping tourist items that have parallels in the NMAI stores.

Summation and Conclusion: Museum Gift Shops and Rhetorical Sovereignty

The museum/cultural center gift shops, as they exist in the three institutions described above, demonstrate a variety ways for these institutions to establish the authority, authenticity, and in the end the communicative framework for the meaning-value of merchandise sold at all three sites. Through the display genre of museum/cultural center gift shops, limits are set on what "authority," "authenticity," and then the meaning and value of the objects for sale might be. Like museum exhibits, the museum shop as a display genre has the potential for powerful rhetorical force in influencing meaning-making; however, unlike museum exhibits – which at these three sites are strongly narrative-driven, with objects in supporting roles – the museum stores as displays are object-driven, and so the meaning-making potential lies not in the context of a narrative, but in the context of the authority or authenticity of an object and what that object can be made to mean through its chosen communicative framework. The approach each institution takes in its shop (or display case) adds yet another rhetorical dimension to the museum experience as a whole, and so the museum shop as a genre provides yet another opportunity – often the last chance before a visitor leaves – for the institution to address its anticipated audiences and make a final effort to influence a visitor's narrative experience of the place, as ultimately represented in a purchase. In this final section, I summarize each institution's shop descriptions and how each forwards particular communicative goals

through that commercialized site to emphasize certain meanings of these objects over others, and therefore certain readings of the institutions over others, creating the potential for rhetorical sovereignty.

The NMAI has two museum stores through which to market itself, and it does so in two distinct ways: the Roanoke store is a large shop that caters primarily to a non-Native tourist audience with a variety of items ranging from books, blankets, dream catchers, jewelry, CDs, DVDs, toys, to Smithsonian-logo and NMAI-logo merchandise. Prices here allow for a variety of budgets, and therefore cover the broadest range for potential spending. Many of the objects bear label cards to explain what they are, where they come from, and how they are related to the NMAI's ethnographic collections. The Chesapeake store, by contrast, is designed and stocked for collectors and those who can afford to spend a minimum of \$65 into the thousands for a single item. Here there are fewer objects which are spaced further apart, often placed in protective glass cases, and come with general explanatory labels that tend to be more technical in their language and also state beyond all doubt that the merchandise has direct ties to objects in the NMAI's and Smithsonian's ethnographic collections. Items may also be labeled by specific Native artist rather than being labeled as generally "Native-made" as in the Roanoke store. Authority for the objects in both stores comes to rely on an association, direct or indirect, with the museum's collections, for their connection to a Native maker (though that maker is often not named), and in the case of the Chesapeake inventory, their value as art objects. The spatial organization of the shops allows for uninhibited browsing (except for the glass

cases), allowing visitors to choose what appeals most to them without a guiding narrative other than the labels, and the distance from the NMAI's exhibits extends the narrative distance from the contextual influence of those exhibits.

The HCCM has no gift shop due to its specific educational mission and its non-profit status, though it does have one display case of books for sale in the foyer outside the gallery floor. All of the merchandise is linked to Haskell in one form or another, and the majority of the books for sale relate directly to the history of Haskell – and therefore provides supporting material for the Honoring Our Children exhibit – or the archives and collections included at the HCCM. The books' connection to the HCCM collections does not exactly parallel the NMAI's association of its merchandise with its collections, in that the worth of the items for sale at the HCCM is not determined so much by their connection to the HCCM, but instead because they support the historical narrative as it is built through those archives via the exhibits. The books fulfill the express function of an educational site, and therefore have more value as educational tools rather than “Native-made” objects. There are few labels included with the books, further supporting the sense that their ties to the HCCM exhibits and Haskell history are intended to be self-explanatory, be it for a Haskell student or alumni, or a non-Native visitor desiring to know more about Haskell and its history. The placement of the display case directly in the line of sight of a visitor exiting the exhibits also helps to underscore the implicit connection between seeing the exhibit and then seeking further information and education materials, and

therefore the supporting role the merchandise plays to the exhibits and mission of the HCCM.

The Meshtoonigewinoong shop at the Ziibiwing Center builds the ethos of its inventory based on the support of the Saginaw Chippewa community and regional Anishinabe communities. Though it does stock some general non-Native tourist-oriented items that resemble what might be found at the Roanoke store at the NMAI, including Ziibiwing apparel, toys, books, CDs, and DVDs, and art objects in the price range of some of the Chesapeake's store merchandise, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop also stocks items such as Native Threads merchandise (with "Native Pride" as the motto on the sweatshirts and hats), Saginaw Chippewa-logo merchandise that likely would appeal more to a local Native audience (shirts that say "Property of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe"), beading supplies, and Anishinabemowin language acquisition materials that appear aimed more at a repeat local audience than a tourist audience. Other objects in the store maintain a potential for multiple readings, depending on the viewer. The labeling on objects is not as extensive and tends to be restricted to some artwork and the dream catchers, but the labels here do not rely on a declaration that the item resembles anything in Ziibiwing's collections; instead, the labels declare the artists by name, tribal affiliation, and enrollment number to establish blood and cultural ties to the community that supports the institution and whose story is being told in the exhibit. On the other hand, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop also maintains characteristics – such as having a section for fine art, soliciting

patron membership, and stocking books from the NMAI – that still tie it to more conventional museum store frameworks.

Returning once again to Lyon’s work on rhetorical sovereignty, specifically that part of the definition that deals with “the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires... to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 449, italics his), and Barker’s conceptualization of a contextualized sovereignty, one may ask how and in what ways rhetorical sovereignty may arise out of the commercial display of the museum shop genre. Like the two previous genres discussed, a ranking is not practical or advisable, given each institution’s context determines what kind of communication can happen, and so what can be discussed here is what sense of rhetorical sovereignty develops within each site’s version of the genre, especially given the power relations involved in the negotiation of meaning surrounding the sale of Native goods. There are weighted rhetorical dimensions to the museum shop, and recognition of those rhetorical, generic elements inherent in its communication helps viewers/readers to recognize the roles participants and objects alike are assigned or adopt as they are involved in those discourses, however unconscious that participation or those discourses may be. Specifically in the case of the museum stores discussed above, understanding them as a display genre can reveal how “authority” and “authenticity” regarding the merchandise that drives museum shop displays can be established, and ultimately how the translation, or meaning-making done in the process and discourse of material exchange of museum store goods, may create the

potential for rhetorical sovereignty as well as demonstrate where such communicative opportunities are still scarce.

The NMAI's two stores, the Roanoke and the Chesapeake, both promote the sale of Native-made goods and Smithsonian merchandise, and while efforts are made to educate potential buyers about the cultural context the Native-made goods come from via extensive labeling, the ultimate appeal is to the authority of the NMAI's ethnographic collections and the Smithsonian as an authoritative museum institution that holds and distributes knowledge. The fact that such an appeal is made tends to overshadow what individual Native artists and craftspeople might have intended their work to mean or communicate⁸² – one does not hear any communication directly from any maker, and instead the museum mediates the presentation and communication of the merchandise. That mediation happens in significantly diverse ways between the Roanoke and Chesapeake stores, given the Roanoke's tourist audience and the Chesapeake's collectors' audience; generally speaking, the Roanoke store markets its inventory by generally connecting merchandise to Native makers or the idea of Native peoples, to the NMAI's collections, and to the larger Smithsonian Institute. The only opportunities for Native peoples – or more likely, Native individuals – to speak is within the books or artwork that make overt statements, but given that these items are also for sale and do not greatly influence the overall communication of the museum store genre, their voices may not be likely to be heard

⁸² It is fully possible that the Native artisans and craftspeople may have little to communicate, other than a desire to sell their goods – sometimes mass-produced – for the sake of making a living. However, even that much transparency in the marketing of the object in question would throw power relations into relief and significantly influence the ways one might interpret the acts of marketing and purchasing.

within the context of the museum store. Even if Native peoples were consulted in the writing of the labels – and there is no citation to indicate it – the final appeal is to the NMAI’s collections, not the Native peoples themselves. Within the Chesapeake store, the potential for individual Native artists to speak through their work is greater, given the Chesapeake’s greater emphasis on art work (and it is likely that more can be overtly said and/or understood via a sculpture than a hacky sack); however, because not all items have individual labeling, and because the items are valued as art and connected to the ethnographic collections (even the contemporary Native art) as much if not more so than as Native-made objects, that rhetorical potential also appears to be minimum. That the NMAI provides an outlet for Native-made goods that may influence the economic well-being of Native individuals and communities cannot be ignored, and that some of the items for sale are valuable for their educational value and their ability to call Native and non-Native relations into question must be acknowledged, but the general tendency seems to lean towards Dubin’s observations, that in these places the objects appear to take the place of their makers, at least in their inclusion in the museum store genre at this site.

The lack of a complete store on the HCCM site and the emphasis on educational books as the items that are sold there create a different situation for communication and for the realization of rhetorical sovereignty. At this site, the majority of the books available pertain directly to the educational mission of the HCCM and its current exhibitions, without an emphasis on “Native-made” objects (though a number of the books are Native-authored). Instead, the emphasis falls on

academic sources and essays that expand on the narratives and discussions provided in the exhibitions, creating an appeal that does not rest so much on the claim that this information comes from the archives as an authoritative source, but that the information comes from the histories, contributions, and narratives provided by those who have lived and worked at Haskell, as contained in the archives. The result of avoiding a gift shop, privileging education as a goal and the voices from Haskell's history (past and present) as the educators, and placing the educational materials as support for the exhibits rather than an attraction in itself is such that "the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse" via goods for sale privilege historical Haskell voices, many of them Native, and some of them Haskell alumni. While substantially smaller in scope and in some cases not as high of quality (referring to the photocopied \$1 booklets), and therefore in some respects more likely to be overlooked, the merchandise that is there and its presentation – a small version of the museum store genre – creates a more pronounced potential for control over the means of communication and interpretation of the items for sale and the exhibits they support, even if a smaller inventory means a more restricted communicative opportunity.

At the Ziibiwing Center, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop's presentation and merchandise are grounded in the context of the Ziibiwing Center as a cultural center and a space closely connected with the local Saginaw Chippewa community and larger regional Anishinabek communities, suggesting a significant potential for rhetorical sovereignty. The store stocks the wares of more than a hundred

Anishinabek artists and craftspeople, Anishinabemowin language materials, beading supplies, and Native Threads and Saginaw Chippewa-logo merchandise, establishing a strong connection with local Native communities. However, because Ziibiwing seeks to attract a non-Native tourist audience as well as a local Anishinabek audience, the overall organization of the Meshtoonigewinoong shop bears a strong resemblance to more standard museum shops, in that it has Anishinabek art mostly set aside in a section of its own, invoking the idea of the art collectors' gallery, as well as the standard museum/cultural center-logo merchandise, toys, books, etc. There is also a certain amount of merchandise that could appeal to either a Native or non-Native audience, though what an object would mean could vary tremendously according to who is looking at it. Thus, the Meshtoonigewinoong shop can be read in multiple ways simultaneously: as a site promoting Anishinabek culture and the artists and craftspeople who embody it by name (rather than the ambiguous "Native-made" label) as an extension of a cultural center, but also as a site attempting to invoke the aura and authority of a museum shop whose merchandise is "authentic" because it is sold at a museum or cultural center, not so much because of the community it represents. In this way, the strength of the potential for rhetorical sovereignty is exercised here in a store that supports and grounds itself in a Native community, but at the same time is alloyed with standard museum store features that on one hand allow for a wider audience, but on the other also more ambiguous and possibly

counter-productive interpretations from those who are not a part of that local Native community.⁸³

As with the previous two genre discussions, the museum store as a display genre has the difficult task – perhaps even more so, given the public discussion of the sale of materially embodied Native culture is not often a priority yet – of negotiating meaning in a complex power structure involving the Native producers of merchandise, the various middlemen who distribute it, the museum shop itself, and the anticipated customer audience. Within this power structure and its accompanying discourses, the final representational word, so to speak, provided as an object's selling point, can occur within a museum or cultural center's gift shop. The location of this communication at a museum or cultural center gift shop creates a potential for the enactment of rhetorical sovereignty, should the discourses of privilege involved be recognized and acknowledged. Yet striking a balance between marketing an object and remaining answerable to the Native communities or individuals who produce it is not easy given the weight assigned to making a sale, especially under circumstances where the museum stores have a certain distance from the education aspects of the exhibits and are meant to stand as attractions themselves. Therefore, it would appear that within the museum store as a display genre, the potential for rhetorical sovereignty – in this case, control over negotiating the “translation” of merchandise –

⁸³ One could also argue the ambiguities of selling one's own culture, but given the circumstances here under which the Ziibiwing Center exercises a considerable amount of control, rhetorical sovereignty could also be understood as an exercise in the choices made about which artists are to be supported and whether and how these sales are to be made. That does not obviate the difficulties of the questions surrounding the sale of Native cultures, but it does transfer much of the decision-making power to Native communities' hands, which is a step in the direction of Native communities' self-determination.

seems greatest when the merchandise and its producers are more closely tied to the institution that provides the context.

Conclusion: Rhetorical Sovereignty Across Representational Genres

Summing Up an Emerging Pattern: A Genre Repertoire Analysis

In Chapter One, I presented the historical context for the analysis of this study, namely the ongoing work to define “sovereignty” within contemporary Native communities and how that work applies to the problematic historical legacy of Native image in Euro-American museums. Chapter Two covered genre theory, the methodological tool with which I have endeavored to reveal the rhetorical and communicative force museums and their communicative structures wield in mainstream cultural discourses about Native peoples. Within Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I have described and analyzed individual genres or genre systems across the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing for the kinds of representations of Native peoples they present and what that may mean for rhetorical sovereignty. What I do here is briefly recap what each institution does and vertically track the generic patterns presented at each institution, to examine each site’s overall genre repertoire (at least as it is captured here) for the sake of understanding, in sum, how each institution presents itself and creates potential for rhetorical sovereignty. The same cumulative analysis technique between institutions that I followed in Chapters Three, Four, and Five is also observed here. Following the genre repertoire analysis, I discuss what implications this study may have for genre theory, and then for the questions of Native representations and museums first addressed in the introduction and Chapter One. Finally, I suggest possible questions and investigative opportunities that this study prompts for further research.

As noted in Chapter Two, Amy Devitt asserts in her understanding of genres that they do not work in isolation. To the contrary, genres may work in systems as “a set of genres interacting to achieve an overarching function within an activity system...[in other words as] a genre set identifiable by those who use it that has clearly linked genres with a common purpose” (56). The example presented in this study of a genre system is the publicity/orientation literature. But genres (or genre systems) with differing purposes within the same activity system also work together, which Devitt refers to as a “genre repertoire,” or “the set of genres that a group owns, acting through which a group achieves all of its purposes, not just those connected with a particular activity,” (57). Taken together, then, the publicity/orientation literature, the exhibits, and the gift shops may be understood in terms of a “genre repertoire” that communicates an overarching message in the activity system it is a part of. The following analyses of the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing could be understood as genre repertoire analyses, meant to offer an overview of what each institution provides by way of Native representations in total.⁸⁴

The Genre Repertoire at the NMAI

At the NMAI, the genre repertoire presented to visitors through publicity/orientation literature, exhibits, and stores, is one that in places works to create change in the Smithsonian’s past practices regarding the representations of Native peoples, but at the same time also leaves the distinct potential for contradicting

⁸⁴ It must be acknowledged, of course, that the genres covered in this analysis are not an exhaustive list of everything that goes on in a museum or cultural center, or even necessarily everything of what a visitor might encounter. What can be said, here, is that this is perhaps the list of major genres (or systems) that a visitor will find, and are all therefore pivotal for discussion of representation in sum.

itself in the process of meaning making. Among the publicity/orientation brochures, the NMAI provides an array of perspectives: the general information brochure emphasizes living Native peoples, especially through visuals of performance; the rotating exhibit brochure, Identity by Design, highlights present-day dress designers as major collaborators in the exhibit and a sense of “celebration” and “style,” even while drawing on the NMAI’s collection of Native women’s dresses; the special features brochures for the café and museum stores attempt to accentuate these standard museum features as unique because they have “authentic” Native products, while the events calendar calls attention to Native performance and presentation again; and the goSmithsonian>> museum guide casts the NMAI as a rather collections-driven site. Within the permanent exhibits, the NMAI makes its most overt challenge to the narratives of history-making, even asking visitors to dialogue with what they encounter in each of the three galleries (“Making History”). In Our Peoples, the standard Euro-American contact narrative is represented through Native eyes and Native communities’ versions of their own histories; in Our Universes, Native communities communicate key philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of their communities’ lives that have survived the destruction of Euro-American contact; in Our Lives, contemporary Native perspectives on survivance, community, language, political awareness, and identity are presented to reveal the complexity of what being “Native” means. Finally, within the Roanoke and Chesapeake museum stores, visitors encounter an array of goods that are arguably “authentic” because many of them are Native-made, though the ultimate message sent

by the stores is that the goods are authentically “Native” by association with the NMAI’s and Smithsonian’s artifact and art collections rather than by what Native producers and artisans say about their own work.

The overall image presented by the NMAI is one that in some senses works against itself, in that some genres within the museum allow for a tremendous potential for Native peoples to speak – specifically the museum exhibits as they are constructed – while genres such as the museum stores fall back on more typical museum models that commodify Native-made items and assign value according the hierarchy of the museum collections rather than what Native craftspeople and artisans assign to their own work. While the NMAI appears to acknowledge some responsibility to the Native communities it works with, the primary audience for the NMAI remains the non-Native tourist. The museum exhibits and the museum stores provide the starkest comparison of this contradiction, for one may literally walk from a space where curators have made extended efforts to incorporate Native voices, with those voices often dictating the shape of the exhibits themselves, to display spaces where Native peoples’ work is an item for sale with its communicative value translated through the world of tourism, ethnographic collections, and art. The publicity/orientation brochures foreshadow this contradiction, in that the materials that address the exhibits and activities, and are made for use within the NMAI proper, emphasize performance, living cultures, and Native communities’ voices, while those brochures that address the NMAI’s place within the larger Smithsonian complex or features other than

exhibits and activities (i.e. food or other products) stress objects with far less Native-provided context (and if context is provided, it is the context of the Smithsonian).

If rhetorical sovereignty is “the inherent right of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires...to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse” (Lyons 449, italics his), then the NMAI’s exhibit galleries provide the most potential for that rhetorical sovereignty, and though the general information brochure, rotating exhibit brochure, and events calendar are a step away from the exhibits themselves, they, too, reflect a more “living” and “contemporary” emphasis on Native cultures. The NMAI exhibit genre’s context – and therefore, to an extent, most of the genres that describe the exhibits – is most closely tied to Native opportunities to speak, to decide those “goals...styles, and languages of public discourse” if not exactly the “mode.” The goSmithsonian>> brochure, the café and museum store brochures, and the museum stores, by contrast, offer little opportunity for goals, styles, or languages to be changed, for they are connected more closely with the larger context of the Smithsonian as an institution, and are not attempting to establish the value of what they offer via the ethos of Native collaboration or voice, but instead via the authority of a museum with extensive and valuable (in the stereotypical collector’s sense) collections. One might speak of the NMAI’s genres operating in terms of a spectrum, with the exhibits set at one end, strongest in rhetorical sovereignty as they are closest to the Native communities that produced them, then the general information brochure, changing exhibits brochure, and events calendar negotiating in the middle between those Native voices and visitor

orientation, and then the goSmithsonian>> brochure, café/museum stores brochure, and museum stores at the far end, invoking the attraction of Native peoples while assigning use-value according to the Smithsonian's status as a museum. I suggest such a spectrum at the risk of creating an absolute binary, but that absolutism is also negotiable: the fact that Native communities are using museum exhibits as a means of communication and expression keeps that end from negating the usefulness of museum genres, while the Smithsonian's desire to create a space with Native voices somewhat mitigates the difficulties in representation. Nonetheless, the resulting range of genre communication and the potential for rhetorical sovereignty indicates the struggle for the Native communities involved to communicate consistently as they would wish throughout the genre repertoire of the NMAI, and the Smithsonian's difficulties in invoking any other kind of authority than its own.

The Genre Repertoire at the HCCM

At the HCCM, the genre repertoire presented to visitors through the publicity/orientation literature, exhibits, and commercial display case is one that more subtly changes and subverts what appear to be the standard museum generic structures, in such a way that it can simultaneously appear to fully adopt those genre structures with little change (opening the possibility for visitors to read it as a regular museum, or interpret it with less regard for the HCCM's goals), but still turn those structures – for the most part – to its own purposes. The publicity/orientation genres available to the visitor include the general information brochure that introduces the reader to the HCCM's major features and collections; the Honoring Our Children

exhibit brochure, which provides an overview of the HCCM's major current exhibit and grounds the visitor in the narrative of Haskell's student's histories; the special feature brochures that cover in more detail those aspects of the HCCM that contribute to making it place for healing and dialogue, rather than only a space for archives and artifacts; and finally, the regional orientation brochures that extend from the immediate context of Haskell Indian Nations University to the city, region, and state levels and how those various rhetorical sites perceive and market the HCCM. The major exhibit, Honoring Our Children, provides a Haskell-student-driven perspective on Haskell's history, drawing on the stories of Haskell students and other of the HCCM's archival sources to produce a narrative to educate both Haskell students and outside community members about the site it serves as an archive, a place of healing, and a welcome center. In terms of commercial outlets, the single display cabinet in the foyer offers a small range of educational materials that are either directly about Haskell's history, or are reproductions of documents or items in connection with Haskell's history – not ostentatiously marketed, but set in close literal proximity to the exhibit gallery and close contextual proximity to the educational goals of the HCCM.

The image presented by the HCCM through its genre repertoire appears internally consistent, at least with the audience of Haskell students, faculty, and alumni: already having something of a context for Native communities' histories and the histories of boarding schools, Haskell students, faculty, and alumni would likely more readily recognize those aspects of the HCCM –for example, the Garden of

Healing, and the orientation of space to the four seasons and four directions – that make it more than a standard museum, and would likely also recognize those efforts of the fellow students who put the exhibit together not merely as curators doing a job, but as the efforts of people who are also tied to the histories they tell. Those visitors who are not connected to Haskell or any Native communities might find these subtleties less significant, opening up the possibility of reading the HCCM as just another regional museum. There are smaller signposts – such as the explanation of the Medicine Wheel, or the Beyond the Reach of Time and Change brochure – that suggest the HCCM is a place for dialogue about history and Native representation, though such markers appear to be lost on some outside audiences who publicize the HCCM more as an archive (the History Map) or an art gallery (DouglasCounty Newcomersguide), depending on that publication’s rhetorical goals rather than the HCCM’s presentation of itself. However, though the space devoted to it is small, the display case offering the educational books and booklets connected to Haskell’s history helps to reinforce the HCCM’s educational mission for both audiences. Overall, it seems that while the HCCM’s own representation of itself and its purposes across the genres it produces is consistent, that consistency is interrupted by the texts produced by outside communities for an audience not associated with Haskell or the HCCM.

In regards to rhetorical sovereignty, the HCCM presents a site within which fairly standard museum genres are employed in standard and recognizable ways to the museum-goer, with no particular revolution in the outward structure of the genres

themselves. The major change from past museums' use of these genres lies with the rhetorical goals of these genres and the dual audience these genres are intended to reach. The Honoring Our Children exhibit perhaps provides the most vivid example of this, in that while it appears to be a regular museum exhibit based on archival research and presentation, its intention is to shift perspective from the authority of a museum articulating an objective history through displayed objects, to the authority of Haskell students articulating a lived history, both through the stories of past Haskell students and their own interpretations of the present. Rather than providing a range of objects to look at, this exhibit relies almost exclusively on printed text – the written story – with the effect of drawing visitor attention to those stories rather than perusing objects from a distance. For Haskell students, faculty, and alumni, this kind of approach creates an educational and emotional touchstone that is meant to teach Haskell students the history of the community they are now a part of, and to learn how to speak of that difficult history. The HCCM becomes a means of identification. For those regional visitors not familiar with Haskell's history, the exhibit becomes a way to make previously unheard stories known and educate the larger community about what Haskell's past and continued presence means. On the other hand, given the variety of ways the HCCM is portrayed in the literature produced outside of the HCCM proper, what Haskell's presence means differs widely according to the regional communities' purposes, and so outside of the HCCM and Haskell, the rhetorical sovereignty becomes significantly more difficult.

With both the NMAI and the HCCM, the strongest potential for rhetorical sovereignty appears to lie in the exhibit spaces, and some of the major conflicts with Native representation occur as outside communities or influences attempt to publicize or advertise these sites for their own purposes. Though they employ diverse approaches to their respective exhibit galleries, both the NMAI and the HCCM do the most obvious work within the museum exhibit genre to incorporate Native communities' voices. Likewise, the NMAI and HCCM both appear at odds with representations others have made about them: in the case of the NMAI, the goSmithsonian>> brochure recasts the NMAI's image as artifact-driven rather than community-driven, and in the case of the HCCM, the regional literature that promotes it simultaneously puts the emphasis on the HCCM as an archive, an art gallery, or historical resource, depending on that publication's own rhetorical goals (and with little regard to the HCCM's). However, the NMAI and the HCCM differ widely in how they handle the commercial aspects of their respective sites; part of this is due to the differing statuses of each institution and how commercial features may or may not be handled. Conversely, each site also does make particular choices about what it can do in terms of what it literally sells within the bounds of its individual charter, and those choices create significantly dissimilar rhetorical displays for visitors. The NMAI gift shops, in many ways due to their context within the larger Smithsonian Institution, encourage the interpretation of Native communities and cultures through the lens of tourism and the measuring tool of Smithsonian collections, with the result of creating a contradiction with the NMAI exhibit galleries, which rely on the

authority of Native community perspectives for their significance. The HCCM, even with a small range of books and other textual offerings, reemphasizes the historical and educational features of the site, and though one could argue that the measuring stick for what the HCCM sells is itself, what the HCCM is – a site meant to function as a welcome center for Haskell, an educational site for students and community members, and a place for healing and dialogue – creates a distinctly different kind of yardstick than the authority of ethnographic collections at the Smithsonian, and one with which the HCCM's internal genre repertoire is more overall consistent.

The Genre Repertoire at Ziibiwing

At Ziibiwing, the genre repertoire provided for visitors through the publicity/orientation literature, permanent exhibit gallery, and gift shop is one that appeals to multiple audiences, and desires to maintain a strong connection with the local Anishinabek community represented through Ziibiwing, as well as orient and education both Anishinabek and non-Anishinabek audiences about the living culture and history of that community. However, that division in audiences also creates a division in appeals that creates potential for misreading the site's rhetorical goals. The publicity/orientation literature presents an assortment of representations: the general information brochure takes the permanent exhibit as its primary emphasis, focusing more on Anishinabek world-view orientation than actual spatial orientation of the entire cultural center building; the rotating exhibit brochure, though more object-oriented, maintains the language of history and cultural continuity begun in the general information brochure; the special features brochures again emphasize

Anishinabek cultural knowledge and orientation to it (the Little Teaching Books) as well as the Native artisans for whom Ziibiwing is an outlet (5th Annual Indigenous Peoples Art Market), rather than drawing attention to physical features of the facilities; and the general regional orientational literature – the Tribal Observer – presents Ziibiwing as both a haven and meeting place for community cultural activities as well as a “premier” tourist-worthy “museum” with a noteworthy collection of artifacts. The permanent exhibit and centerpiece of Ziibiwing, Diba Jimooyung, uses some standard museum display techniques in the course of its telling, though it becomes apparent through dual Anishinabek and English language use as well as exhibit content choice that the emphasis remains on narrating history from an Anishinabek (specifically Saginaw Chippewa) perspective. Finally, the gift shop reflects the dual audience solicited in the Tribal Observer, in that merchandise choices appear to reflect both the desires of the local community members who purchase items or sell merchandise as Anishinabek artisans in solidarity with their culture, and the anticipated expectations of a tourist audience looking for “Indian” art and museum memorabilia.

The overall image presented at Ziibiwing is one of cultural continuity and ongoing revitalization, specifically for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, the community that built Ziibiwing; yet there are also places in the genre repertoire employed that perhaps counterbalance, to an extent, the declaration of cultural sovereignty with rhetorical appeals that come directly from questionable aspects of the standard museum structure. The majority of the publicity/orientation

literature makes a distinctive statement in its orientation towards providing a visitor a virtual Anishinabek world-view workshop as opposed to emphasizing the physical aspects of the cultural center itself. Anishinabek epistemological context – the “lifeways” in the cultural center’s full title – is the most important feature within the general information brochure and special features brochures, and even the sample rotation exhibit brochure is careful to set its object-driven display within self-spoken cultural context. Even though a map of the Diba Jimooyung exhibit is a part of the general information brochure, the map is provided (and arguably the exhibit space itself) as a physical outline of that Anishinabek culture and those lifeways.

Furthermore, the Diba Jimooyung exhibit itself, though it uses a number of what Heard refers to as “objects-under-glass” techniques, remains oriented towards the process of telling Anishinabek story, with the objects presented as support for that story, rather than the other way around. On the other hand, the Tribal Observer’s double presentation of Ziibiwing as a cultural center of Saginaw Chippewa activity and as the “Midwest’s Premier American Indian Museum!” appears contradictory, as does the gift shop when it markets some goods through the frame of Native and Anishinabek cultural identification, and others through the frame of selling tourist goods and art collectibles. A split in audiences is one of the easiest explanations of this phenomenon – trying to attract a Native/Anishinabek audience as well as a wider tourist audience is no small task – although the contradictions in tactics create the possibility for confusion or misreading on the part of the audience likely to know the least about Ziibiwing: non-Native tourists. Making Ziibiwing appeal to them as a

museum with rare collections and a gift shop produces the hazard of invoking the mainstream ideological framework that only understands Native cultures as objects at a distance, which might work to cancel out some of the central ideological re-orientation work done through the publicity/orientation literature and the exhibit. While Ziibiwing's emphasis on and context within the Saginaw Chippewa community mitigates that danger somewhat, and the difficulties of attracting non-Native visitors is acknowledged, the balancing act between appealing to an audience through standard museum structures and speaking an alternative ideology through them is tricky.

In terms of rhetorical sovereignty, then, that balancing act between speaking the Saginaw Chippewa story clearly through a genre repertoire that a non-Native audience – or even a Native audience – will recognize is a significant pivot point. Because of the way emphases are placed within most of the publicity/orientation literature and the exhibit on speaking from an Anishinabek and then a Saginaw Chippewa perspective, and the deliberate self-consciousness with which that speaking is done, there is great potential for rhetorical sovereignty in these spaces. Since the Saginaw Chippewa community drives the telling of this history, it has a powerful influence over the arc of the entire telling, and that community context creates a potent framework that draws its authority for speaking from the community itself, not the museum structure it happens to be using. However, because non-Native audiences (and perhaps some Native audience members) may not recognize that significant shift in where authority is drawn from, invoking “the” museum as an advertising appeal

may set the museum framework and its attendant tendencies toward objectification as the source for authority. That is to say, in spite of all the work to contextualize the telling of the Saginaw Chippewa story, the speaking done at Ziibiwing could be interpreted as important not because it comes from the Saginaw Chippewa people, but because it happens in a museum. The gift shop may also send such a message: while much of merchandise is selected because it supports the history told in the exhibit or it supports Anishinabek artisans, because of existing commercial frameworks those same items may take on significance for non-Native visitors not for their connection to Anishinabek culture per se, but because they are “Indian” things from a “premier” museum shop.

Like the NMAI and HCCM, some of Ziibiwing’s strongest potential for rhetorical sovereignty comes through the exhibit spaces, especially given the emphasis on the Saginaw Chippewa community’s speaking its own history within its own context. Also, like the special features brochures at the HCCM, Ziibiwing’s publicity/orientation brochures and its special features literature provide extra context for how the site is to be interpreted and understood for visitors within and without the contributing community. If anything, Ziibiwing is especially careful to provide a range of materials closely connected with the exhibit to make sure that their story is heard and that visitors understand how to grasp what they see, read, and experience. But also like the NMAI and the HCCM, Ziibiwing struggles with how representations of the site are made to audiences immediately outside the Ziibiwing or Saginaw Chippewa purview, although unlike the HCCM and to an extent, the NMAI (since

part of the control lies with the Smithsonian Institution proper), the more contradictory representations found at Ziibiwing were made by the Saginaw Chippewa community itself in an effort to self-market, rather than other institutions creating that representation for it. One may argue, correctly, that such a situation comes about as a result of the complexity of a situation in which Native peoples have little voice unless they use the “enemy’s language,” so to speak, in order to be heard by a mainstream audience. Nonetheless, that complexity and those particular choices here create a potential to render ambiguous those particular meeting places of insiders and outsiders – in this case, Ziibiwing – and while non-Native visitors may better understand Ziibiwing’s goals once they are there, purposefully representing Ziibiwing through a standard, object-oriented museum framework may create extra world-view orientational problems for those visitors to comprehend Ziibiwing as something other than a standard museum.

In sum, even given the diverse contexts from which these museum/cultural center site derive, a pattern across the arc of the publicity/orientation literature, exhibit, and gift shop genre repertoire seems to appear. At this point in time, the most potential for rhetorical sovereignty comes out of museum exhibit spaces, for it is here, in each institution, that Native voices most clearly and directly speak to their anticipated audiences, though how that speaking occurs does depend on the individual context of the site and the approach each has taken. Most samples of publicity/orientation literature – often because they are introducing the exhibits – are fairly consistent with the exhibits’ purposes, and so brochures and the like generated

for use within the bounds of the museum extend the potential for rhetorical sovereignty and supporting the exhibits, though Native peoples are not always the writers or promoters of their own exhibit spaces. However, that literature generated for promoting the museum/cultural centers outside the sites' boundaries, while still a part of the publicity/orientation literature genre system, presents more issues regarding representation: the more audiences it wishes to reach, the more it tends to fall back on conceptualizations of museums that those audiences might find most familiar, but at the same time reduce Native peoples back to the problematic object displays that have deprived them of voice in the past. A similar problem emerges in the museum shops that echo or still fully espouse the framework of art collection or ethnographic collecting; while museum shops do have the opportunity to promote the work of Native artisans and sell educational materials to support the work of the exhibits, the pitfall left open is the possibility of relying too much on conceptual frameworks that allow objects and their value to be determined on Euro-American museological and tourist scales of value, omitting Native peoples from the meaning-making process of the commercial transaction and therefore erasing the possibility for rhetorical sovereignty.

Communicative Potential Revealed Through Genre Theory

As Devitt has observed, "The real complexity of genres, as of societies, can best be suggested in examining actual genres in actual settings" (Devitt 66), and so genre theory application in real life situations can lead to fruitful analysis. Within the particulars of this study, genre theory is used in the service of the larger context of

rhetorical sovereignty and what genre theory can assist in revealing in a discussion of museum rhetoric and communication. To reiterate, using the analytical lens of genre theory, a viewer can find one way to grasp the rhetorical and communicative power of the museum/cultural center site via the genre repertoire presented to visitors, and thereby begin to follow how rhetorical sovereignty may become a part of the museum structure. All of this is not to say that the distinctive, contextualized approaches each museum/cultural center site takes are not of worth; as Barker asserts, there can be no discussion of sovereignty without a discussion of the place or circumstances in question, and I hope that I have addressed those differences between sites adequately. The NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing emerge out of such different situations that the manifestation of rhetorical sovereignty will by the nature of each circumstance be unique. Yet what genre theory can provide is a way to look at such diverse sites together, to understand what patterns and pitfalls there may be in the process of creating the potential for rhetorical sovereignty. Through the lens of genre theory, one can see how the communicative features of a museum are more than forms that visitors recognize. The publicity/orientation literature, exhibits, and museum stores all speak to the visitor, and together create a constellation of possibilities for what each site can mean. While visitors are of course involved in the process of meaning-making in this encounter, the museum/cultural center genre repertoire described here sets the representational framework, and provides opportunities – as well as blocks – for Native peoples to speak to multiple audiences.

When one understands the communicative operations of a museum in terms of genre, one can see that these genres, singly and together, are a kind of social action with political and social consequence for the Native and non-Native peoples involved, and bring them together in the process of meaning-making. This genre framework sets the “rules” for engagement, and so also has the potential to change those “rules” and expectations; it also provides the ways for people to act and interact with each other, and in the case of visitors encountering Native peoples speaking their histories for the first time, it can also create the potential for change in those interactions and therefore those interactions’ material consequences. The genres and the genre repertoire they belong to also suggest how power is distributed – both rhetorical and material – and how authority to speak can be derived, however contradictory that authority may be manifested in a museum/cultural center site. Finally – and perhaps most importantly – what genre theory illustrates within the boundaries of the museum is that the communicative structures developed there do not have to continue doing the same kind of rhetorical work that has done so much damage in the past; though those genres may never have been originally developed for use by Native peoples to speak their own histories, those same genres can provide the springboard for creative approaches to reaching multiple audiences in Native nations’ endeavors to claim rhetorical sovereignty, to claim communicative resources and put them to use for the sake of their chosen goals. To cite Devitt’s take on this duality again, “Janus-like, genres inevitably look both ways at once, encompassing convergence and divergence, similarity and difference, standardization and variation, constraint and creativity”

(Devitt 162). Though they carry the weight of history and all the rhetorical connotations, and are in conversation, so to say, with their antecedents, contemporary museological genres and the repertoires in which they operate also must answer to the present needs of Native peoples and audiences alike, setting the stage for difficult, but ongoing change.

The Museological Genre Repertoire, Rhetorical Sovereignty, and Native Representations

In conclusion, I briefly cover the implications of the museological genre repertoire discussed above and in preceding chapters for Native museums/cultural centers, for work regarding rhetorical sovereignty, and for what limitations and possibilities there may be to still be investigated.

Museum genres need not be the destructive or restrictive communicative structures that they have been in the past, and they hold a great deal of potential for Native peoples to communicate to and educate others about themselves, their histories, and their lives and contemporary cultures. But because of that past, the inherent connotations museum genres bring with them, and the fact their audiences still often expect those connotations to guide interpretation, negotiating a different kind of meaning through museum genres is no small task, and it is one fraught with possibilities for both success in and inadvertent undercutting of communicative goals. As evidenced above, maintaining agency while reaching multiple audiences, especially those that are outside the museum/cultural center's home community or non-Native in general, is a difficult negotiation that invokes questions of how, as

Lawlor observes, Native communities define and maintain core identity and cultural values while becoming participants in global interactions. Museums and cultural centers are just such sites for both the maintenance of community identity and communicating to a wider audience, but that sphere of communicative efforts surrounding that community's center for speaking is always a site for negotiation. Even if control and agency can be maintained within that site, the outer edges, the meeting places of multiple audiences, are an especially challenging place for establishing rhetorical sovereignty and reaching outside audiences. In reference to the Pacific museums and cultural centers that she has worked with, Kreps asserts that the future of "indigenous" museums is in a "constant state of development," and they will not follow an easily discernible or predictable path. She writes,

Like all cultural institutions they remain incomplete projects, continuing to evolve in response to changing social, economic and political conditions in additions to the changing needs and interests of their communities. The narratives...[of researchers] are both "celebratory" and "anxious" (Feld 2000), as [they consider] how Pacific museums and cultural centres [sic] represent acts of cultural resilience, appropriation and reinterpretation, but also provoke cultural and political frictions that can undermine their intended purposes. What is revealed is the complex character of these institutions in which histories of cultural exchange, domination and resistance, and

the formation of plural identities are inscribed. (“The Theoretical Future of Indigenous Museums” 223-4)

What may be said of Pacific museums and cultural centers can also be said of Native museums and cultural centers in North America, and specifically of the ones covered in this study. The NMAI, the HCCM, and Ziibiwing are all young institutions, and how they will continue to handle their missions, connect with their respective communities, and reach their intended audiences remains to be seen. However, at present one may already observe within the genre repertoire I discuss that creating Native representation through museum genres is both a “celebratory” and “anxious” process, one that can simultaneously demonstrate cultural resilience and reinterpretation of histories in the act of communication – acts of rhetorical sovereignty – and then also create potential problems that might undermine that very speaking. Nonetheless, there is plenty that can be done to create a more consistent series of representations across the genre repertoire, specifically in media that addresses or is produced by an outside audience about Native museums/cultural centers, or in the gift shop, an arena that makes overt statements about how Native peoples, their cultures, and their material products are to be valued.

For articulating the work of rhetorical sovereignty, this study makes a direct application of the term to a concrete situation, or in this case, three examples of material sites whose work is to make representations of Native peoples. In that sense, it is my hope that this study is valuable not only for testing what rhetorical sovereignty might look like in action, but also extend it to cover more than the printed

texts it was first conceived of to address. In addition, by calling the work done in museums/cultural centers a form of rhetorical sovereignty, I hope to have drawn additional attention to the communicative forces, those museum discourses and the larger cultural questions that drive them, as they are shaped and shape perception across multiple communicative opportunities on a museum site. To call those communicative forces “genres” reveals rhetorical presence, but speaking of those genres in terms of rhetorical sovereignty helps to reveal the power relationships embedded within those genres and set them within a larger history of representation, and suggest how those relationships can be altered for the sake of the pressing need, desire, and right of Native nations to claim influence and control in the ways they are portrayed.

The immediate limitation of this study that presents itself is the lack of data on visitor perception; while it is within the scope of the work done here to investigate how museum genres are being used by a sampling of Native museums and cultural centers, what has yet to be done is discover how audience members are participating in the other half of the meaning-making process. What do visitors take away from these sites? Does one kind of genre, or one kind of approach make more of an impact? Do visitors actually challenge history according to the instructions at the NMAI? Do visitors understand the significance of the stories being told at the HCCM? And do visitors grasp the importance of the Saginaw Chippewa perspective of the story told at Ziibiwing, or is it just another American Indian museum to them? All of these questions and more need answering, and so the next logical step is a

visitor study to explore visitor perception of and interaction with the museological genre repertoire described above. To complicate matters further, the nexus of cultural, political, and economic circumstances at any given museum/cultural center site, as it interacts with multiple audiences and strives to make itself relevant to multiple audiences, will shift, and so rhetorically sovereign approaches must change as well. How the NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing will continue to negotiate the process of meaning-making in representation in the next five, 10 or 20 years has yet to be imagined, and would also certainly merit revisiting.

Future considerations aside, what can be said here is that rhetorical sovereignty is often a chaotic process, but a possible one that is grounded in the context of each museum site, its community, and that community's communicative needs. To revisit the Philip Deloria citation from the beginning of Chapter One,

If Indian people found themselves disempowered in one social realm...they also found power in the same place. It is, paradoxically, the same power, and it makes a difference that it flows through different channels. One channel maintains a social hierarchy; the other maintains a contradictory ethic of multicultural egalitarianism. *The power to define and exclude, the power to appropriate and co-opt, the power to speak and resist, and the power to build new, hybrid worlds are sometimes one and the same*, and that power flows through interlocked social and cultural systems, simultaneously directed and

channeled by humans and yet often beyond strict human control...”

(178, emphasis mine)

Rhetorical sovereignty, then, is arguably a way of finding communicative power in those genres, at those museum sites that have habitually written Native nations’ communicative goals and desires out of historical narrative. But as Deloria suggests, resetting the flow of that communicative and rhetorical power through channels now influenced, if not controlled, by Native peoples can make a significant difference in the kind of communication that can occur and the social actions that are both the process and the outcome. Despite the difficulties and contradictions of the process, the enactment of rhetorical sovereignty through museum/cultural center genres has changed how Native peoples are represented – though not yet enough – and holds the potential for more change to come.

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Appendix A: Chapter Three Publicity/Orientation Literature Photographs

Figure 1: NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing General Information/Permanent Exhibit Brochures

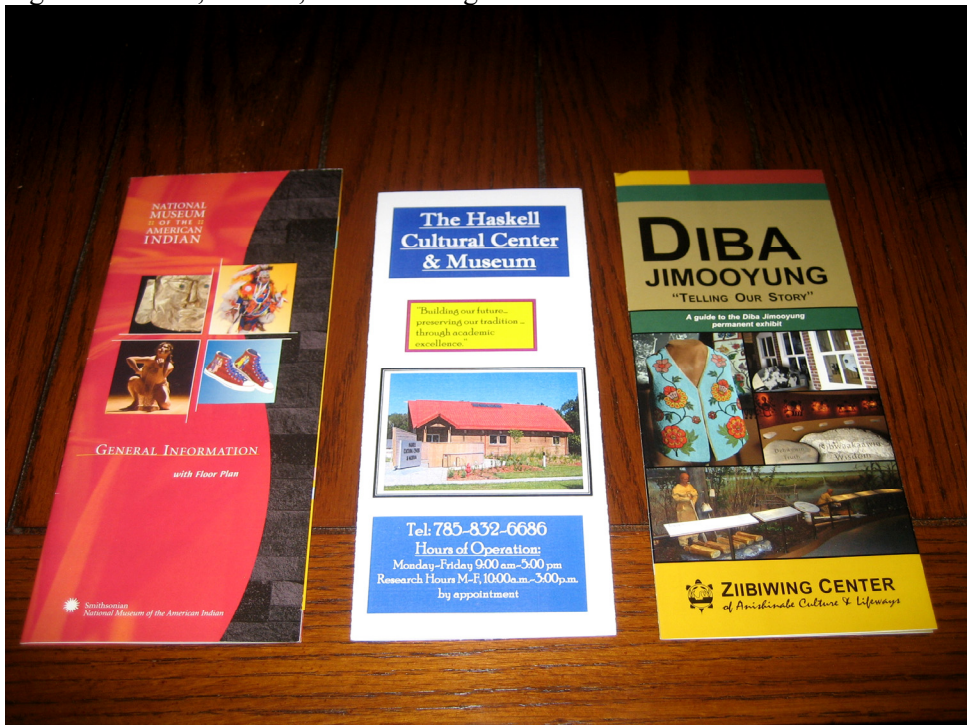


Figure 2: NMAI, HCCM, and Ziibiwing Rotating Exhibit Brochures



Figure 3: NMAI Special Features Brochures



Figure 4: HCCM Special Features Brochures

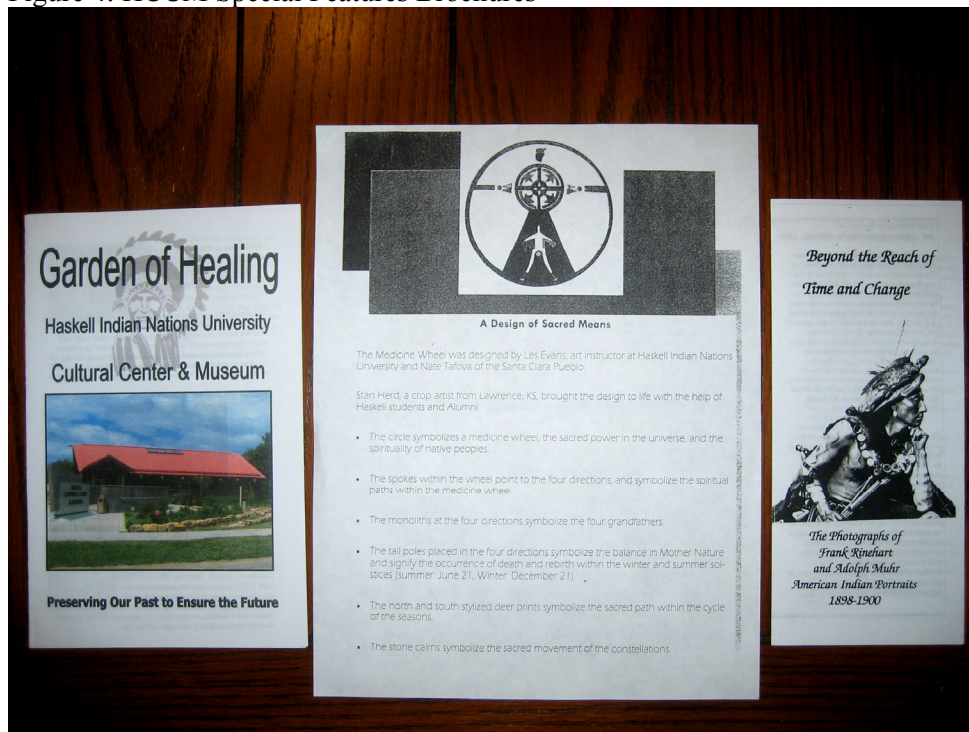


Figure 5: Ziibiwing Special Feature Brochures



Figure 6: NMAI Regional Orientation Brochure



Figure 7: HCCM Regional Orientation Brochures



Figure 8: Ziibiwing Regional Orientation Brochure



Appendix B: Chapter Four Museum/Cultural Center Exhibit Photographs
Figure 1: NMAI, Our Peoples, the “1491” wall merging with “Gold”

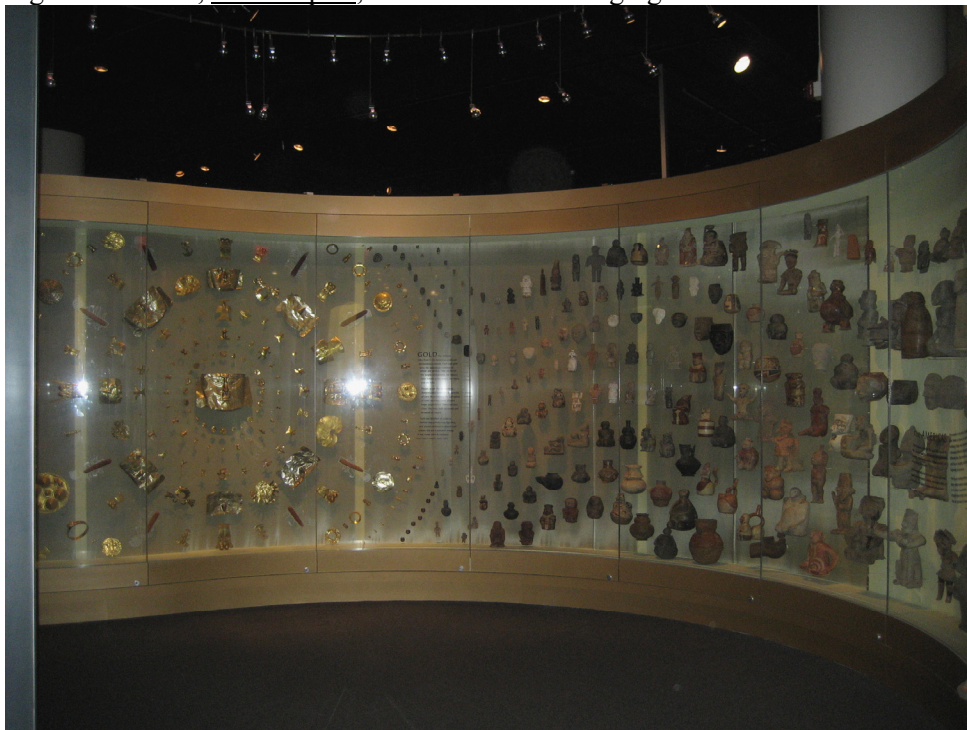


Figure 2: NMAI, Our Peoples, the title section of the Kiowa community alcove



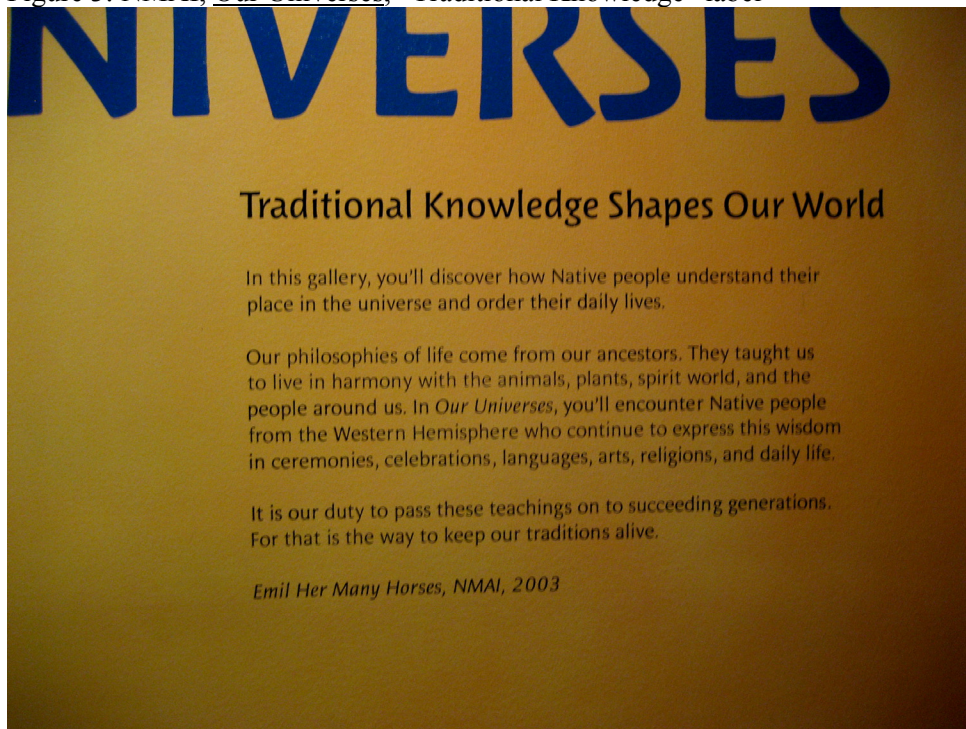
Figure 3: NMAI, *Our Universes*, “Traditional Knowledge” labelFigure 4: NMAI, *Our Universes*, Lakota alcove entrance panel

Figure 5: NMAI, *Our Lives*, “Faces of Native America” opening photo panelFigure 6: NMAI, *Our Lives*, “Now: 21st Century” label in “Faces of Native America”

Figure 7: HCCM, Honoring Our Children, exhibit center with Medicine Wheel



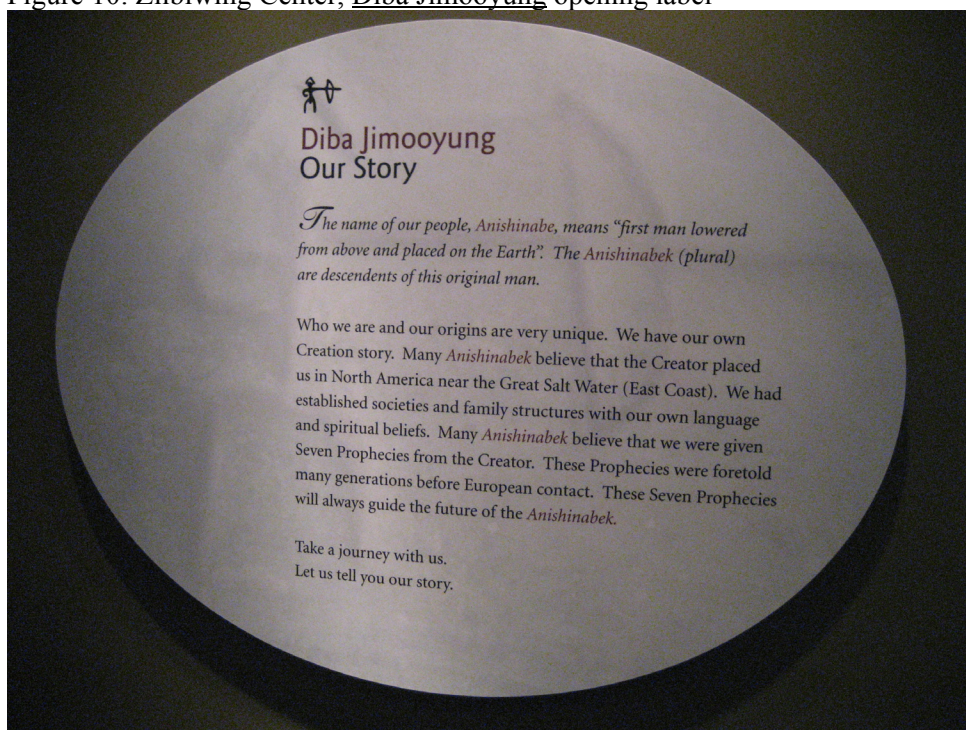
Figure 8: HCCM: Honoring Our Children image and printed text panel from “Sacrifice” and “Survival” sections



Figure 9: Ziibiwing Center, Diba Jimooyung, diorama from “Area 4: Where We Come From”



Figure 10: Ziibiwing Center, Diba Jimooyung opening label



Appendix C: Chapter Five Museum/Cultural Center Gift Shop Photographs

Figure 1: NMAI, the Roanoke Museum Store



Figure 2: NMAI, the Roanoke Museum Store



Figure 3: NMAI, the Chesapeake Museum Store



Figure 4: NMAI, the Chesapeake Museum Store



Figure 5: HCCM, Display Case



Figure 6: HCCM, Display Case, detail



Figure 7: Ziibiwing Center, Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop entrance



Figure 8: Ziibiwing Center, Meshtoonigewinoong Gift Shop art section, books in background



**Appendix D: Human Subject Research Committee, Lawrence Campus,
University of Kansas, and Haskell Indian Nations University IRB Approvals and
Materials**

2/5/2007
HSCL #16435

Lisa King
3546 Dillinger Rd., Apt. B
Carbondale, IL 62901

The Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL) has reviewed your research project application

16435 King/Farmer (ENGLISH) Reading the Museum and the People: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Representational Genres of American Indian Museums

and approved this project under the expedited procedure provided in 45 CFR 46.110 (f) (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Since your research presents no risk to participants and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context HSCL may waive the requirement for a signed consent form (45 CFR 46.117 (c) (2)). Your information statement meets HSCL requirements. The Office for Human Research Protections requires that your information statement must include the HSCL approval and expiration date.

1. At designated intervals until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the HSCL office.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.

3. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at <http://www.research.ku.edu/tutor/hsp/index.shtml>.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the Committee immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform HSCL when this project is terminated. You must also provide HSCL with an annual status report to maintain HSCL approval. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from HSCL one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

David Hann
Coordinator
Human Subjects
Committee - Lawrence

cc: Frank Farmer

University of Kansas
Information Statement

The Department of English at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

This study is entitled “Reading the Museum and the People: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Representational Genres of American Indian Museums.” We are conducting this study to better understand the role of museums and cultural centers in defining Native sovereignty, specifically in terms of how Native nations are

represented and who controls that representation. This will entail your participation in an interview concerning your work with the National Museum of the American Indian, the Haskell Indian Nations University Cultural Center, or the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways. This interview may take place in person, via phone, or via email, as circumstances permit. The interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to one hour to complete.

The content of the interview should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of the extent to which Native peoples are playing a leading role in defining their histories in a museum setting. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. You will be given the appropriate credit and citation if the information you provide is used in the results of the study, unless you indicate you prefer anonymity. If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of the interview indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email dhann@ku.edu or mdenning@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

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Sample Interview Questions

1. What has your role or connection been with this museum/cultural center?
2. What, in your background (educational, professional, or biographical), prepared you for and/or complements the requirements of your present job?
3. Do you have membership in, or affiliation with, any tribal group or nation, and is that group represented in the museum/cultural center?

4. How would you, in your personal experience, describe what it is this museum/cultural center does?
 - a. How and why were the exhibits created and constructed as they are?
 - b. How and why was the publicity literature designed and written as it was?
 - c. How and why was the gift shop designed and its inventory selected as it was?
5. For whom is this place designed?
6. Who, in your observation, are the visitors who come here?
7. How might you, in your experience, define what “sovereignty” means in a large sense? What are the goals of sovereignty?
8. In the context of this museum/cultural center, how might sovereignty be defined? Do you see sovereignty as part of what this museum/cultural center does?
9. If you do see sovereignty as having to do with this institution, how do you see this museum/cultural center working towards fulfilling that definition? If not, why not?
10. What have been some of the difficulties this museum/cultural center has encountered on its way to its goals?
11. What are some of its successes?
12. Names are things that are chosen carefully; can you tell me how and why the particular title of your institution was chosen?
13. How do you see this museum/cultural center changing the typical practices of the average museum regarding representation, i.e. how has this place changed, turned, improved on, or abandoned what museums of the past and present did and still do?



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Haskell Indian Nations University

Office of Institutional Research and Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board

155 Indian Ave

Lawrence KS 66046-4800

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Institutional Review Board

29 April 2008

Lisa King

3546 Dillinger Rd, Apt B

Carbondale IL 62901

HIRB # H0000042

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has given an expedited IRB review to your research project application

H0000042 "Reading the Museum and the People: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Representational Genres of American Indian Museums"

and approved this project under the expedited procedure provided in section III.E.3.(c) of Haskell's Assurance Policies, 45 CFR 46.110 (f) (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for

protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Because your project does not involve deception, OIRSP IRB does not require a debriefing statement.

1. At designated intervals until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the OIRSP office.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify OIRSP about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at www.research.ukans.edu/tutor.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the Committee immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
7. A formal report or document(s) and/or data will be sent to the Haskell Cultural Center for historical record keeping purposes.

Please inform OIRSP when this project is terminated. You must also provide OIRSP with an annual status report to maintain OIRSP approval. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from OIRSP one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



LouEdith Hara

Institutional Review Board Committee Chair

cc: F. Gipp

University of Kansas
Information Statement

The Department of English at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

This study is entitled “Reading the Museum and the People: Rhetorical Sovereignty and the Representational Genres of American Indian Museums” (Haskell IRB # H000042). We are conducting this study to better understand the role of museums and cultural centers in defining Native sovereignty, specifically in terms of how Native nations are represented and who controls that representation. This will entail your participation in an interview concerning your work with the National Museum of the American Indian, the Haskell Indian Nations University Cultural Center, or the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways. This interview may take place in person, via phone, or via email, as circumstances permit. The interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to one hour to complete.

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Sincerely,

Lisa King

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Sample Interview Questions

1. What has your role or connection been with this museum/cultural center?
2. What, in your background (educational, professional, or biographical), prepared you for and/or complements the requirements of your present job?
3. Do you have membership in, or affiliation with, any tribal group or nation, and is that group represented in the museum/cultural center?
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 - b. How and why was the publicity literature designed and written as it was?
 - c. How and why was the gift shop designed and its inventory selected as it was?
5. For whom is this place designed?
6. Who, in your observation, are the visitors who come here?
7. How might you, in your experience, define what “sovereignty” means in a large sense? What are the goals of sovereignty?
8. In the context of this museum/cultural center, how might sovereignty be defined? Do you see sovereignty as part of what this museum/cultural center does?
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10. What have been some of the difficulties this museum/cultural center has encountered on its way to its goals?

11. What are some of its successes?

12. Names are things that are chosen carefully; can you tell me how and why the particular title of your institution was chosen?

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