

HOW TO READ THE BILL REID BILL

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the First Nations and their material culture have been used as tropes in the construction of national symbols on Canadian money. The twenty dollar bill from the 2004 series of Canadian banknotes, *Canadian Journeys*, was the impetus for this inquiry. The art of Bill Reid is featured on this banknote. Reid is an artist who identifies, on his mothers side, with the Haida First Nations and his art takes its themes and style from the Haida crest imagery. The implications of utilizing a First Nations artist on a Canadian banknote becomes problematic when considering the antagonistic historical relationship Canada has had with the First Nations and the multiplicity of unresolved land claims. Therefore, I ask, how this Bill Reid banknote should be read. In answering this question I have divided this thesis into three parts. First, I analyze a historical precedent for this contemporary banknote. The 1870 two dollar bill is useful for it both gives an example of the use of First Nations as a trope in representing the nation and it helps expose the importance of money as a national symbol at the time when Canada was struggling to come together as a modern nation. In the next section I analyze the Bill Reid bill as both a part of a symbolic construction of nation and as a material practice which has regional or territorial implications. In the final section I argue that Bill Reid utilized the language commonly used for colonial justification to elevate his own practice. While carving out a market for his work Reid helped to reify nationally accepted histories concerning the First Nations – namely that they are culturally dead.

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For My Mother, Pauline DeCloedt

Introduction

In 2002 the Provincial government of British Columbia held a province wide referendum on the issue of First Nations land claims. The questions were, as Attorney General Geoff Plant openly acknowledged, intended to elicit a 'yes' vote. For example, question number six: *Aboriginal self-government should have the characteristics of local government, with the powers delegated from Canada and British Columbia. (Yes/No).* Clearly, this is not even a question but rather a statement that is intended to be self evident. In fact all the so-called questions were this sort of statement. In such a configuration the First Nations are not perceived as being capable of organizing their own system of government. That is, since the power would be "delegated" one can only assume that it could just as easily be withdrawn. However, roughly a third of B.C.'s voting population returned the mail-in referendum. The government took the approximately eighty percent positive returns to be a resounding endorsement.¹ This "experiment in direct democracy" would seem to give the Provincial government licence to tell those First Nations putting forward land claims that "we" (the colonial authority) will do for "you" (the dispossessed and colonized) what is in "our" (the non-Native majority) best interest. Also, this action reinforces the constructed binaries that homogenize all First Nations into an alienated "them" and "we" appear to be the greater benevolent polyglot helping to manage "our" indigenous people. Many Canadians (at least in British Columbia) seem to share a paternal narrative concerning the First Nations

¹ CBC (2002). In this report some of the strongest attacks on the referendum can be found. For example, David Cadman the president of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation is said to have called the process racist. As well, Jim Sinclair, of the B.C. Federation of Labour is quoted as saying, "the referendum has got less to do with democracy and more to do with cheap politics." Undoubtedly both men have political positions at stake and need to be understood within such paradigms.
http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2002/04/08/bc_treaty020408.html

population. The writer and academic Thomas King describe it as, “a kinder racism that is cut with a genuine fondness for Natives and Native culture, a racism infused with a suffocating paternalism.”² Perhaps the non-Native Canadians are worried that the First Nations will gain control over the natural resources that have made the settler society so successful.³

In 2004 the Bank of Canada issued a twenty dollar banknote as part of the *Canadian Journey* series of notes. I will refer to this banknote as the Bill Reid bill ⁴due to the prominence of the Haida artist Bill Reid’s work on the note. Although, for much of his life Reid had difficulty positioning himself, his identity, as Haida (his Father was of Scottish ancestry), Reid went on to be one of the most famous First Nations artists. With the above preamble, concerning the referendum, in mind I want to question what is at stake in the use of Bill Reid’s work on a Canadian national banknote? What stories and histories are brought together and how do they function as a tool – a national tool – in telling a *Canadian Journey*? How can this Bill Reid bill be read?

I recognize that First Nations and First Nations art has had a complex history of being represented for national purposes in Canada. There is a growing bibliography of scholarship concerned with the revision of the national narrative as it concerns the representation of First Nations. Some of the scholars that have been invaluable for my

² King (2003, 145).

³ The use of ‘crown’ land is of particular interest. In 2004 the Haida Nation won a court case against the British Columbia Minister of Forests. The complaint was put forward in 1999 that the Minister had approved a the transfer of a Tree Farming License to Weyerhaeuser Company Limited without consultation with the Haida Nation even though they have claimed title to all the lands and surrounding waters of Haida Gwaii (still officially recognized in Canada as the Queen Charlotte Islands). The Appeals Court found that, for the Honour of the Crown, and with respect of the 1982 Constitution Act section 35, the Crown has the duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples with regards to resource extraction. This court record can be found on line: <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/2004/2004scc73/2004scc73.html>

⁴ No image will be supplied because the special concerns and restrictions regarding the reprinting of money. This is an important point for the materiality of money has a special value.

research are Marcia Crosby⁵, Leslie Dawn⁶, Daniel Francis⁷, Ronald Hawker⁸, Amelia Kalant⁹, and Eva Mackey¹⁰. Where my contribution departs and expands is at the intersection of the national symbol and money as object. The First Nations and their material culture have been variously, and often vigorously, appropriated, objectified and pulled from history to enter a national time and become part of the assemblage of Canadian national symbols¹¹ that are intended to connect citizens to what Benedict Anderson has coined an “Imagined community.”¹² Anderson, Hanna Arendt¹³, Homi Bhabha¹⁴, James Clifford¹⁵, Ernest Gellner,¹⁶ Anthony Giddens¹⁷ and David Harvey¹⁸, will help me re-construct a nuanced perspective of how the modern nation has been constructed. The process by which a national symbol receives its status is not dissimilar to Clifford’s description of the authentication process of so-called primitive art. The objects must be removed “from their current historical situation—a present-becoming-future.”¹⁹ This movement is an academic exercise of quantification wherein a culture, a

⁵ In the “Construction of the Imaginary Indian” reprinted in *Vancouver Anthology: the Institutional Politics of Art*, Crosby does not deal directly with the national issue. Her argument is directly concerned with the colonial power and politics involved with constructing imaginings of First Nations people.

⁶ Dawn (2007).

⁷ Francis (1992).

⁸ Hawker (2003).

⁹ Kalant (2004).

¹⁰ Mackey (2002).

¹¹ Crosby (1991: 267) describes how the “collecting and displaying ‘Indian’ objects and collecting and displaying ‘Indians’ as objects” has been going on for hundreds of years and one of the consequences has been several often contradictor constructions of what she calls the “Imaginary Indian.”

¹² See Anderson (1983).

¹³ Arendt (1968) provides an understanding of nation through a highly critical look at the origins of Totalitarianism. What becomes painfully clear is that nation with its great champion nationalism is always on the verge of fascism.

¹⁴ Bhabha (1994) provides a theory for the “narration of nation” that has proven indispensable.

¹⁵ Clifford (1988) has been instrumental in bringing critical theory to focus upon anthropology.

¹⁶ Gellner (1997).

¹⁷ Giddens (1990) work on “time and space compression” and the role of money in the cognitive consequences of modernity provides a counterpoint to the paradox of the materiality of money.

¹⁸ Harvey (1990).

¹⁹ Clifford (1988, 228) describes a “Machine for Making Authenticity” wherein there are multiple movements between binaries towards the authentic at the top or conversely toward the inauthentic at the

people, a community or nation can be understood or categorized through the collection of material objects. It is the social-scientific accumulation and documentation of a particular community.²⁰ However, in Canada what has been at stake is nothing less than the national narrative—the justification for colonization. This has been often linked to the discourse of disappearance. In the nineteenth century the tribal or the traditional worlds of colonized peoples were seen and described as vanishing in the wake of progress²¹. Images of First Nations people were used as tropes in this discourse and continue to be tropes as the narratives adjust to growing political awareness and the realization that indigenous peoples are not simply integrating nor vanishing.

First Nations did not disappear. Therefore the discourse needed editing or re-writing. In Canada there had been the constitutional mandate to subsume the First Nations within the body politic through a process called enfranchisement.²² The modernisation of the “Indian” was equated with cultural death. The paradox of cultural death and contemporary existence of First Nations opens the concept of culture, as it has been variously employed, for re-examination. As Clifford has noted, “the term [culture] has designated a rather vague ‘complex whole’ including everything that is learned group

bottom. This construct is intended to show the musicological shifts between the ethnographic and artistic of material culture.

²⁰ Ruth B. Phillips (2006 [1998]), through archival research into the various collecting habits of Native-American and First Nations object for ethnological museum collections, found that in the fever to create definitive collections of the Aboriginal communities in question a market was created for contrived authenticity. There was a subversion of the authenticity machine of museums because of competition between museums.

²¹ Dawn (2006, 3) describes the “discourse of disappearance” as a foundational truth upon which the academic field of Ethnology was based upon the 19th century. He also describes it was the excuse by which government policy toward land acquisition was based in the Americas.

²² Enfranchisement was the process by which an “Indian” became Canadian by conforming to certain aspects considered to be modern and Canadian. Thereby, an “Indian” with a university degree would no longer be considered an “Indian”, status would be lost. This supposed cultural transformation or death has carried over from the nineteenth century into modern land claims.

behaviour”.²³ However, it has also been conflated with ethnicity and, within Ethnology and Anthropology, it has become quantifiable. As Phillips argues, “[t]he project of ethnological collecting rested on the assumption that ethnicity and material culture were isomorphically related.”²⁴ The problem with the ethnographic quantifiable definition is then that there was no room for change. Within such a paradigm the rapidly modernizing capitalist world appears to be only available to the so-called Western cultures and the Aboriginal cultures that change appear to be dead or dying out.

When Bill Reid began to produce objects emblazoned with Haida crest imagery in the nineteen fifties he joined the many academic voices that cried out to save First Nations material culture from the perceived extinction. Ironically this was done in the name of “our” heritage. As Crosby writes, “Western interest in aboriginal peoples has really been self-interest.”²⁵ Thus Reid had to find a language, a conceptual space, to justify and place his own practice. That is, he claimed the First Nations representation of crest imagery to be dead and therefore had to find a way to describe and position his own works. This would be the rubric of fine or modern art. As the anthropologist Aaron Glass describes, “It was the modernist regime of progress that demanded that indigenous cultures be dead before we could in good conscience, decontextualize their objects and revalue them as fine art.”²⁶ To become fine art First Nations objects had to become universally readable. To this end the morphological language of Northwest coast First Nation’s designs were analyzed and given value through a modernist art discourse of line

²³ Clifford (1988, 230).

²⁴ Phillips (1998, 437).

²⁵ Crosby (1991, 267).

²⁶ Glass (2004, 203).

quality and form.²⁷ This set up a rupture or rift between value systems for there was a growing non-Native market for First Nations objects which were emblazoned with crest imagery. Simultaneously, in the existing First Nations communities, these same images have very particular values in the socio-political life of the communities.²⁸ Therefore, the First Nations crest imagery could be both a universal signifier of human ingenuity, a heritage for all Canadians to protect, and a living part of First Nations socio-political life a —“present-becoming-future”.

Bill Reid’s art objects reproduced on money necessarily become part of the money function. Money must provide a uniform reliable value. This value is ultimately contingent upon the nation within which it circulates. Money acts, at once as a “universal equivalent”²⁹ and the images disseminated are intended to be mimetic of the national narrative. The reliability of money rests upon the nation as guarantor. This means that images or ideas presented on money must be nationally recognizable, they must ‘speak’ nation. Thus money must be at once a universal value that is contingent upon the particular the territorially familiar.

Money as a subject has, in the past two decades, begun to be studied as a social object. Some of the prominent scholars in the field are: Emily Gilbert³⁰, Eric Helleiner³¹, Virginia Hewitt³² and Viviana Zelizer³³. These and others that I will draw from for my argument have reanalyzed early studies of money such as Karl Marx’s *Capital: A*

²⁷ Dawn (2004, 264) describes how Bill Reid had already been talking about his work in terms of its formal qualities before the Bill Holm published, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965), which helped establish “the fundamental formal elements of classic ‘nothern’ form line tradition.”

²⁸ Ron Hamilton (Ki-Ke-In) in an interview with Charlotte Townsend-Gault

²⁹ Gilbert (2005, 362).

³⁰ Gilbert (1999, 2005).

³¹ Helleiner (1999, 2004).

³² Hewitt (1995, 1999).

³³ Zelizer (1994, 1999).

Critique of Political Economy (1977), and George Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money* (1978). Each of the academics has brought, from their own fields, a different approach to the study of money which has broadened the field beyond the confines of Economics.³⁴ Emily Gilbert in her 2005 article, "Common Cents", works through many of the different arguments in the attempt to work out a more nuanced approach to the study of money. For that reason she is worth quoting at length,

[w]hat I advocate herein is the necessity for drawing out the paradoxes of money as always a symbolic referent, a social system *and* a material practice. The symbolism that money represents defines and limits what money can be and do, just as the forms that money assumes resonate in terms of what functions money can perform or what kind of symbolic power it can represent. Neither dimension is sustainable without the other. [...] Revealing money's paradoxes provides a more nuanced understanding that money is at once homogeneous and heterogeneous, a metaphor of modern society and a material object rooted in daily practices, and that it circulates through time and place, across and through various scales that it helps constitute on its passage.³⁵

Gilbert argues for a multi-faceted approach to the study of money. For the purposes of this paper I will limit my concerns to the intersection where money as a "material practice" interacts with money as a "symbolic referent". That is, I will argue that there is an interchange between the material object of money and money as a "symbolic referent" of nation.

In the following chapters I will be "drawing out the paradoxes" in money. However, I will simultaneously be "drawing out the paradoxes" of imaging First Nations people and First Nations art as Canadian national signifiers. In order to give the Bill Reid bill the proper context I will use another banknote, the 1870 Dominion two dollar note. The analysis of this will, first, give a historical account of how central the development of national money was to the newly forming nation. Secondly, through this note I will

³⁴ Gilbert (2005, 358) notes that "Traditional economic definitions of money have largely revolved around the four main functions that money is said to perform: a store of value; a means of exchange; a method of payment; and a unit of account."

³⁵ Gilbert (2005: 361).

expose how the image of the First Nations person – as a trope – functioned in the national imagination. This will help lay the ground work for the changes, contradictions and paradoxes that become evident from within the Canadian national narrative. As “symbolic referents” I will show that the imaging of First Nations people and art is intertwined with money. The national narrative is thus in constant peril because foundationally it was built upon the perceived fall or disappearance of the First Nations. As I begin to tease out Bill Reid’s role in the transforming narrative the paradox Gilbert so succinctly describes, where money is “a metaphor of modern society and a material object rooted in daily practices, and that it circulates through time and place”, will ring true for Reid’s work. Ultimately Reid has become the new trope in the colonial discourse – a constitutional rather than “Imaginary Indian”.

Chapter 2. A nation in notes: natural or not here it is.

It is commonly recognised that one of the first steps in the construction of national identity lies in the delineation of a national genealogy, so that the present can be anchored in a 'viable past,' which by linking the dead to the not yet born can project a national consciousness into the future.³⁶

The 1870 two dollar bill is, in the genealogy of Canadian national money, at the cusp of both the modern Canadian nation and the movement toward centralization of national money. That is, Canada at confederation was but a few provinces trying to gain greater autonomy from the colonial mother England. As a material object the Dominion banknote was an attempt to create, as Gilbert notes in the above quote, a common monetary language that would help disseminate a "national genealogy". The past was re-imaged, reconstructed, so as to present the future with a past that would serve as a way to link, to unify, events, spaces and people into a national narrative. Eric Helleiner notes, "Nineteenth century analysts often drew a parallel between money and language because both acted as a basic medium of social communication within nation."³⁷ Gilbert's work on this banknote will help me position the note within the monetary and political moment³⁸. However, her analysis of the imagery was cursory and thus I have the opportunity to dig deeper into how this national genealogy was represented. I will explore, with this banknote, how the First Nations figured into the symbolic capital actually printed on this document of monetary national trust.

The idea of a "national genealogy" presupposes a family or community that can trace its roots back to some origin or founding members. However, as Benedict Anderson has argued the nation is an "imagined community." That is, individuals or citizens of a

³⁶ Gilbert (1999, 35).

³⁷ Helleiner (2004, 111 – 112).

³⁸ Gilbert (1999) briefly examines this and other Canadian banknotes while giving an overview of monetary centralization.

nation are linked together by an idea of that community no matter how distant and disconnected each may be from the other.³⁹ Therefore the genealogy is not necessarily founded upon a categorical lineage. I find Anderson's description of the "apprehension of time", national time, as "simultaneity" particularly useful for understanding the socially cohesive strength of nation. He equates, this "apprehension of time", with a medieval religious experience such as a Christian might experience in a foreign church. Anderson notes, "Christendom assumed its universal form through a myriad of specificities and particularities: this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, this morality play, that relic."⁴⁰ The universality, he argues, of these 'specificities and particularities' would, for the practitioner, give an experience of *simultaneous* connectedness with the whole of the perceived community. The various "specificities and particularities," or mediums, are connected horizontally to an ascending plane of national consciousness. Anderson quotes at length a passage from the literary theorist Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*. Auerbach describes 'the sacrifice of Isaac' as being horizontally connected to the crucifixion and,

both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding...the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is *simultaneously* something which has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future (emphasis in text).⁴¹

This 'plan of history' that is able to link these circuitous events is not entirely dissimilar from the "national genealogy" described by Gilbert. In the construction of a "national genealogy" there is the attempt to "devise such a plan of history" where national symbols

³⁹ Anderson (1984, 6-7) goes on to describe the community as a sort of fraternity were no matter how large or small the community or the impossibility of knowing each member, the community "is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."

⁴⁰ Anderson (1983, 23).

⁴¹ Ibid., 22-23. For more on simultaneity Anderson also suggests that Walter Benjamin's work *Illumination* uses the idea of "Messianic time" which also tries to come to terms with the instantaneous apprehension of past and future. Anderson goes on, in this section, to look at how the idea reemerged in literature. See pages 22 through 31 of *Imagined Communities*.

would simultaneously represent a national genesis and a quality or ideal that would project into the future. This is most commonly felt abroad. Travelers quickly identify with the Canadian maple leaf. This symbol automatically links an individual to a particular perception of a place and a people that has historical and international implications. Canadians generally are encouraged to adorn their travel bags with the maple leaf so as not to be confused with people from the United States. The specificities of such a perception are unimportant for my point. Simply, this symbol is a powerful signifier of difference. Difference creates a territorially homogenous perception of community. Also this community need not be related to any particular genealogy. The ideas which the maple leaf symbolises have few particulars and many generalizations. Therefore, a multiplicity of specific symbols, objects and events can stand-in and be representatives for a national community. Each of these generalities, such as 'multiculturalism', come to mean a variety of things historically, nationally and internationally and yet as an idea are naturalized, because of ubiquity, throughout the community.

The nation, as I have suggested, gives its currency legitimacy. However, this is not a one-sided relationship. In as much as the symbols of nation are disseminated on currency, nation is reproduced endlessly in commercial transactions. This is reminiscent of what Homi Bhabha has to say about the narration of nation. Bhabha writes: "In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative."⁴² In my interpretation and translation of this idea with regard to national currency I recognise that currency in its every transaction is relied upon for its recursive

⁴² Bhabha (1994, 209).

uniformity. That is, it is self referential, in its recursive function, as a symbol of nation. Currency actually reproduces nation in its every transaction. Every transaction, in effect, justifies, reinforces and legitimizes nation. The trust relationship within which the holder of a banknote partakes is transferred to a third party in any particular commercial exchange. The ubiquity and uniformity of the commercial transaction are part of its power. Each member, each citizen, each tourist, in everyday social acts, partakes in the reproduction of nation.

The 1870 two dollar banknote, in its design, offers the holders an imaged assurance that the confederation project is the key to unification. The symmetry in the lettering and numbering combined with the signatures and serial numbers, suggest authority, authenticity and uniformity. The portraits and vignette are where the stories move from the monetary/state to the mythic/national. On the left there is the profile of General Wolfe. In the center vignette is a seated person, smoking a pipe, upon a bluff overlooking an oncoming train. On the right is a bust of General Montcalm. Gilbert suggests that the adversaries were able to be imaged together because, “both Wolfe and Montcalm died in battle [on the Plains of Abraham in 1795, which] made it possible for both leaders to be commemorated as heroes, and thus for both French and British people to be recognised.”⁴³ Although, Upper and Lower Canada had been joined in the Act of Union in 1841, French-English relations were (and are) front and center in the Canadian national imagination. The 1867 Constitution Act created the Dominion of four provinces: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. British Columbia joined in 1871. Yet on this banknote these adversaries are joined as a symbol of unity for the nation to come.

⁴³ Gilbert (1999, 36).

I purposely ignored the center vignette for it is the lynchpin, the unifier of the two afore mentioned Generals. Centered between an ascending '*Dominion*' on the left and a descending '*of Canada*' on the right is an image, a seated male figure. His gender identity is confirmed by his bare muscular upper body and casual, slouching posture with a rifle straddled over splayed knees. His seat and the space he inhabits are rather indistinct. It is likely a rock he is sitting on with nondescript foliage behind him. Both his glance to his left and the angle of the rifle draw the viewer's eye into the image. A train, coming from somewhere behind him speeds off to the right of the image beyond him bisecting the image. On the other side of the train is a stand of trees the height and breadth of the foliage balance the image of the man. The size and position of the man in relation to the trees and train give the distinct impression that he is upon a bluff. Next to the train, and below the man, there appears to be a four legged animal – perhaps a bison. The movement of the train through the image and the balanced elements of both the man and the trees lead the eye to the centered horizon, to a faint mountain range – a vacant center. Subsequently the man and the trees can be understood as framing for the train and the seemingly limitless horizon.

The figure is a problem – who is he? How and why he can be identified are important questions. Gilbert, in her analysis of the note, identifies the figure as a “native chief.” The primary reasons he can be distinguished as such are apparently the bare dark skin and the feathers in his hair. However, unlike his French and English counterparts on the note there is no concern with the individual – truly he is intended to be a ‘type’ or more aptly a convention or trope – he is not a particular person. He provides access to an imagined place. He is the signifier of the space and place that is being developed into

Canada. He is the ‘imaginary Indian,’ as recognized by Daniel Francis and critiqued by Crosby, and has become so ubiquitous that it is a common trope – rendering articulation redundant. As Mackey succinctly describes: “Aboriginal people are necessary players in nationalist myths: they are the colourful recipients of benevolence, the necessary ‘others’ who reflect back white Canada’s self-image of tolerance.”⁴⁴ The way the writer Thomas King describes the early construction of this trope will illuminate the way the First Nations became part of this construction:

in the second half of the nineteenth century a strange thing happened in North America. After three centuries of trying to eradicate Indians, Europeans suddenly became interested in Indians.... A particular Indian. An Indian who could be a cultural treasure, a piece of North American antiquity. A mythic figure who could reflect the strength and freedom of an emerging continent.
A National Indian.⁴⁵

Precedent has produced this imaginary/national Indian. Daniel Francis, in the first part of his book, *The Imaginary Indian*, looks at the painting “The Death of General Wolfe” by Benjamin West of 1771. Francis introduces this discussion with the question: “[w]hen white Canadians of earlier generations asked themselves what is an Indian, how did they know what to respond?”⁴⁶ This painting, coincidentally appropriate, has both an image of General Wolfe and a dark skinned, bare chested man with feathers in his hair, seated, with a rifle across his lap. Francis describes the man as a “Mohawk Warrior,” perhaps in accordance with West. Francis’ question is clearly rhetorical because it was through popular images such as West’s paintings that the ‘Indian’ was known. Francis tells us that this “Indian” was a type created by a “handful of artists, writers and photographers who made the arduous journey into “Indian country” and returned to

⁴⁴ Mackey (1999, 2).

⁴⁵ King (2003, 78-79).

⁴⁶ Francis (1992, 14).

exhibit what they had seen there.”⁴⁷ With First Nations people being seen as either assimilating or disappearing altogether the discourse of disappearance justified expansion and the paternal need to protect and preserve First Nation’s cultural essence?⁴⁸

This imaginary/national Indian is the construct of the ‘great’ artists of ‘Indians,’ not ‘Indian artists,’ but the European settler painters, photographers and writers such as: Benjamin West, Robert A. Sproule, George Catlin, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edward S. Curtis. All had hoped to capture the essence of the so-called ‘Indian’ that had been floating into European consciousness since the time of first contact. West may be seen as supplying an early precedent for the “Imaginary Indian”. However, *The Death of Wolfe* is a history painting. The First Nations person, as a trope, provides the event with the appropriate exoticism for the location. There is little else in the image that gives the event place. The constructed First Nations person on the Dominion two is doing something somewhat differently.

The conventions utilized on the Dominion two are those of English landscape painting, particularly those of the picturesque. Gilbert’s argument regarding this ‘type’ of imagery on currency can be useful in that there has been a conscious decision to construct a “compositional division of native and settler, nature and civilization.”⁴⁹ Thereby the “imaginary Indian” is the nature contrasting the civilization – the very space where a ‘civilized’ nation can grow. Gillian Poulter’s work on English colonial imaginings of both “‘the native’ and ‘*the habitant*’” exposes this same duality in that, “the rules of the picturesque were readily amenable to such a purpose since there was an easy

⁴⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁸ Hight (1990, 120). Hight shows how in the United States the Act of Removal, of 1830, was couched in a paternal language that saw the extinction of First Nations people as inevitable and in need of saving from themselves.

⁴⁹ Gilbert (1999, 37).

correspondence between the notion of visual contrast and the already established modes of representation of the Native people.”⁵⁰ Poulter, in this argument draws on the writings of William Gilpin who had “popularised the Picturesque in the published accounts of his travels in Britain since the mid 1770’s.”⁵¹ Leslie Dawn, in discussing the important influence of British landscape painting on the Canadian painting, notes that it was not until the mid to late 1770’s that the landscape “could claim a place next to history painting, in importance.” Until this time landscape had a more utilitarian purpose “as portraits of the estates of the new landed gentry.”⁵² Dawn recognises that this purpose, however, did not completely die off with the genre’s ascension to art status. The “imaginary Indian,” in the vignette, can now be better understood. His size and proportion in the image are only important in as much as he provides the proper quantity of roughness or otherness—balance for the composition. Canada then could simply be that vast picturesque space in which the imaginary/national Indians once dwelled.

As a tool in national communication this banknote must be recognized as part of the struggle towards coherency and subsequent centralization. The Canadian monetary scene in the Nineteenth century can be understood as polyglot. That is, many banking institutions were issuing currency. As Gilbert has noted, the Provincial government tried a number of times to centralise and homogenize currency. In 1866 Alexander Tilloch Galt, then Finance Minister, finally was able to pass the Provincial Bank Act. This was only a partial victory which “encouraged (but not obliged) [the banks] to rescind their note-issuing privileges; only the largest bank, the bank of Montreal, did so.”⁵³ It was not

⁵⁰ Poulter (1994, 13).

⁵¹ Ibid., 12

⁵² Dawn, Leslie (2006, 34).

⁵³ Gilbert (1999, 32).

until Confederation that the government was able to make real headway in the push for a national currency. The Bank Act of 1870 for the first time was able to put limits on the issuing privileges and “as a result, the lowest denomination notes – the \$1 and \$2 – which were used as ‘hand-to-hand’ currency by a large part of the population, moved solely into the hands of the federal government.”⁵⁴ Confederation then signals the beginning of a push toward both political and monetary centralisation. This two dollar note that I have been examining was truly a forerunner. It was one of the first in the nation’s attempt at a unified monetary voice. As the imagery reveals the note clearly plays upon certain notions of nation. Yet, Canada as a national narrative was (and is) far from a unified, centralized, coherent story.

The centralizing of currency functions to communicate both a monetary and social coherency in the nation-state. As Eric Helleiner has noted,

“territorial currencies were seen to foster national identities not just in these symbolic ways. In a more concrete sense, some policy makers hoped that territorial currencies would cultivate a national consciousness by fostering economic communication and interaction among the members of the nation.”⁵⁵

Helleiner is clearly interested in the communicative function of money. Money communicates both the symbolic nationalism and monetary stability to create a “national consciousness” that is territorially defined. This stability tries to unify difference. That is, with confederation the central or federal government had to do more than extend its authority, it had to become part of the daily life of all citizens. As Giddens recognizes the “movement to money proper involves the intervention of the state, which acts as the guarantor of value.”⁵⁶ As “guarantor” the nation-state enters into a contract with the money holder. Money becomes an everyday contract between citizen and state. Only in

⁵⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁵ Helleiner (2004, 110).

⁵⁶ Giddens (1990, 18).

this way could the government create a “national consciousness”. However, money creates revenue, for this reason the banks were reluctant to lose their issuing privileges.⁵⁷ The use of ‘territorial’ also implies that the money helps protect interests within that region. As Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerick has argued, in relation to *The German Inflation* post first World War, the push toward greater centralized control of currency was due to the fear that foreign currencies would strip the nation of the seigniorage revenue.⁵⁸ In a colonial nation like Canada where “the Dominion had neither a deep history nor an ancient *volk* with distinctive lore” the pursuit of a “national consciousness” is a political imperative.⁵⁹

Money is at once national or ‘territorial’ and supplies all citizens, who have the means, with an object that is a uniform medium through which to make commercial transactions, and also an exclusionary device that provides a monetary advantage within the given region. Of course, it is not entirely exclusionary. As a language of monetary communication, those familiar with and in possession of the particular currency are able to communicate with it or through it. However, on the banknote is an official representation of a certain idea of nation. Therefore the mode of communication, in a visual sense, is multi-layered. Perhaps it is because of this complicated relationship between the nation, as a construct, and the territorial social life of currency that, as Gilbert notes, “Traditional economics’ definitions of money have largely revolved around the four main functions that money is said to perform: a store of value; a means of

⁵⁷ Gibert (1999, 27-28). A centralized currency issued by the government was first proposed by Lord Sydenham in 1841. It was fought by the banks and generally perceived as impractical because of the diversity of both coinage and paper banknotes in circulation.

⁵⁸ Holtfrerick (1986, 313).

⁵⁹ Dawn (2006, 7). The claim of nation as unified territory required management. It required the creation of seemingly homegrown traditions and culture producers. Dawn goes on to argue how the seemingly British tradition of landscape painting was taken up, modernized, and re-presented as an “indigenous tradition.”

exchange; a method of payment; and a unit of account.”⁶⁰ None of these definitions deals with the symbols of nation, the territorial and communicative functions or the financial strength currency affords a centralized government.

The arguments concerning the communicative social role of currency have been largely dominated by ideas that focus on currency as an object that helps dislodge labour from commodity thereby dislodging monetary transactions from social place and time. Gilbert and Helleiner recognise that for,

“theorists such as Marx, Simmel, and Giddens [...] money plays an active role in the time-space compression associated with modernity and in fact they suggest that what makes money so useful is precisely its ability to separate and extend subjects and objects, sales and purchases in time and space, for it is this separation across time and space that liberates transactors from the constraints of barter exchange.”⁶¹

With all commodities becoming part of an exchange system they take on a value-form which is independent of their use-value. As Marx notes, in direct barter, “the articles exchanged do not acquire a value-form independent of their own use-value.”⁶² For Simmel the object of money, the banknote, token or coin, in itself, is arbitrary. For him, “money is simply ‘that which is valuable’, and economic value means ‘to be exchangeable for something else. All other objects have a specific content from which they derive their value. Money derives its content from its value.”⁶³ Simmel is able to maintain such a position precisely by dealing with it as an abstraction in an objective study. Consequently, he is able to avoid the contradiction which I am trying to raise. Money has a value. As a tool in helping to maintain centralized power, in vast regions of a colonized territory, currency functions to supply the government with steady revenue while simultaneously communicating a national image.

⁶⁰ Gilbert. 2005: 358

⁶¹ Gilbert, Emily and Eric Helleiner (1999, 11-12).

⁶² Marx (1906, 100).

⁶³ Simmel (1978, 67).

Before nations began to abandon the gold standard,⁶⁴ the exchange value of money was held in trust, in the form of gold and/or silver by the state or lending institution. Marx, however, recognised the irony of this seemingly concrete value. That is, gold as a value is abstract, as he writes; “the function of a gold coin becomes completely independent of the metallic value of that gold.”⁶⁵ Marx exposes this contradiction and then allows it to dangle unresolved. He does not extend his argument to the object of money and its material relation to the nation-state. That is, when trying to come to terms with “why gold is able to be replaced by tokens that have no value,” he recognises that “this token must have an objective social validity of its own.” This “social validity”, for Marx, is realized through the movement of money, as he argues, this “forced currency [...] can take effect only within that inner sphere of circulation which is co-terminous with the territories of the community, but it is also only within that sphere that money completely responds to its function of being the circulating medium.”⁶⁶ The contradiction lies in the fact that money, although essentially universal, is only legal tender within the territory where it is of value. Its value is dependant on its ability to circulate. However, its ability to circulate is dependant on its “social validity”. However, Marx left out the next step in this equation. He did not reflect on how the material token of money functions beyond circulation. That is, as Helleiner argues, money was viewed “as a symbol of a modern, independent nation-state.”⁶⁷ Banknotes needed to reflect this in their material form. Therefore, although nationalized money now seems to be a natural

⁶⁴ Jeffrey Sachs and Felipe Larrain (1999, 84). Nation-states began to abandon the gold standard in the 1930 during the depression because of the massive devaluation. As currencies moved from a value redeemable in gold to legal tender economies began to recover.

⁶⁵ Marx (1906, 142).

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 142.

⁶⁷ Helleiner (2004, 157).

and necessary social object in everyday affairs, national money is a forced construct of an “imagined community”. The success of money is the ability to appear inherently legitimate and of value, and thus to circulate making all trade contingent upon a national trust.

The vignette on the Dominion two is being reconfigured spatially by the train. The train is more than bisecting the image, it is bringing a new modernizing order to what was otherwise considered uncharted. As Giddens argues, “in conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly *phantasmagoric*: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite a distance from them.”⁶⁸ The centralization of government and money attests to this. As Hannah Arendt has astutely argued, “Nationalism, then, became the precious cement for building together a centralized state and an atomized society, and it actually proved to be the only working, live connection between the individuals and the nation-state.”⁶⁹ That is, as modernity continues to reconstruct and depersonalize place that which promotes nation becomes the only thing bonding “imagined communities” together. Therefore, as Canada pushed for independence the centralizing of the government helped maintain this colonizing push of modernity and the imaging of nation. Nationalistic images emblazoned upon banknotes helped to maintain nationalist imaginings.

Money can then be seen as partaking in two important aspects of national time. First, currencies give citizens a portable piece of nation – nation as a collection of symbols, objects and stories that always exist in the transactional present of money exchange. Money connects citizens to nation both through symbolic nationalism and

⁶⁸ Giddens (1990, 19).

⁶⁹ Arendt (1968, 231).

monetary access to everyday transactions. Secondly, currency takes part in the time/space compression. These central banknotes which, through their ubiquity, are taken for granted, unify a commercial language and provide every transaction with a single guarantor—the central government.

I have tried to expose both the contradictions inherent in the national banknote how it is a way in which to gain better access to how that contradiction functions and the narratives in which it participates. That is, the images reproduced provide the citizen with a conciliatory image where icons from the two dominant colonial nations are elevated into unified national time. Meanwhile, First Nations people have been used to define a territory in which they are effectively denied. They are not intended to be specific contributing players in the new Dominion. First Nations people were utilized in national imaginings as symbols for the land available for colonizing. Therefore, centralization of Canadian money, in effect, is a colonial act of monetary territorial domination.

Chapter 3. Constructing a Canadian Journey

It is commonly recognised that one of the first steps in the construction of national identity lies in the delineation of a national genealogy, so that the present can be anchored in a 'viable past,' which by linking the dead to the not yet born can project a national consciousness into the future.⁷⁰

In this chapter I give a detailed reading of the Bill Reid bill. In doing so I take issue with the reading of the most prominent work featured on the banknote, *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, made by James Tully in his attempt to prescribe a socially inclusive constitutionality.⁷¹ I argue that Tully projects his argument upon the sculpture without a proper formal analysis. My interest in the formal aspects of Reid's work is twofold. First, as this chapter demonstrates the particular way in which *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* is reproduced and read is literally one-sided. This imbalance undermines Tully's argument. There is also the formal recombination of Reid's work on the banknote that produces a very specific reading within the national context. Secondly, and this has more relevance for the final chapter, the way Reid argued for a formal reading of his work and the crest imagery of the Northwest Coast First Nations in general, has had implications for the way in which First Nations communities are perceived in the modern Canadian context. In keeping with my attempt to open up a more nuanced reading of money I argue that the struggles, tensions, between the universal and the particular inherent in the reading of Reid's work are compounded or duplicated in the elevation and reproduction of his work on national currency.

Between 2001 and 2004 the Bank of Canada released the 'Canadian Journey' series of banknotes. The series had two purposes: first to thwart the extensive counterfeiting that had been plaguing Canadian currency for sometime. The second purpose was to

⁷⁰ Gilbert (1999, 35).

⁷¹ Tully (1995).

celebrate Canadian achievements. Each note is thematically constructed. In descending order: the one hundred is titled *Exploration and Innovation*; the fifty is titled *Nation Building*; the twenty is titled *Arts and Culture*; the ten is titled *Remembrance and Peacekeeping*; and the five is titled *Children at play*. The thousand dollar banknote officially began to be removed from circulation in 2000. The one and the two dollar paper notes were discontinued with the release of the one and two dollar coins. The twenty is prominent in this paper, in part, because as David Dodge, the Bank of Canada's Governor, has declared "the twenty is the most widely used note. It accounts for almost half of all the banknotes in circulation."⁷² The Canadian national money has been pared down to these five notes with the twenty being the most ubiquitous.

I read this as an attempt to produce an image of a legitimate nation-state through constant repetition.⁷³ The "recursive strategy," as described by Bhabha, is the continuous representation in the attempt to produce sameness—stability is the illusion produced by uniformity and repetition. Bhabha describes the site of "*writing the nation*" as a conceptual split between the constant accumulations of disparate "rags of daily life" some of which "must be turned into the signs of a coherent national culture."⁷⁴ However, there is always a split between the recursive, the repetitious strategy of the "performative" and the pedagogical. The performative, in this case, can be understood as the attempt to reproduce nation through the circulation of banknotes. That is, money in its territoriality circulates as an official act of defining nation—nation must be universal—nation must be

⁷² Bank of Canada. Press release (29 September 2004). <http://bankofcanada.ca/en/press/2004/pr04-22.html>.

⁷³ In chapter one I used Hannah Arendt's comments concerning the increased atomization of the modern nation-state and how nationalism was the precarious bonding agent through which citizens could connect to and within the constructed space of nation, the boundaries of which, as Helleiner describes, are defined by the circulation of currency.

⁷⁴ Bhabha (1994, 209).

available to all citizens. The split is that the disparate “rags of daily life,” which are elevated and disseminated as national signifiers, are forced and the centralizing attempt to create a unified national voice is undermined by a shifting political pedagogy. The pedagogy and the “rags of daily life” are intrinsically regional. Therefore, the “recursive strategy” can be understood as the attempt to create coherency, to create a stable universal image of nation against a shifting pedagogy that struggles under the weight of competing interests.

What are the myths of the new millennium and where are the fissures in the ‘recursive strategy’? I will argue that the national narratives are undermined by “the rags of daily life” which have undergone the movement into signifiers of nation. This is inevitable for those “rags”, people, events and art, have specific contexts which defy attempts to be universalized. In a general sense the Bill Reid bill constructs a narrative of First Nations success. In particular the myths of equality, tolerance and multiculturalism are being reproduced and juxtaposed against progress. The work of Reid has been recognised as being a symbol of the Canadian multicultural constitution. Tully in his work *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*, describes Reid’s sculpture *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* (1991), the most prominent work reproduced on the twenty dollar banknote, as “a symbol of the age of cultural diversity.”⁷⁵ I argue that the universalizing project, within which Reid’s work takes part, having its roots in modern colonial power struggles, is not merely incapable of unifying a national identity but also masks the perpetuation of colonialism.

The Bill Reid bill is reproduced within the theme of *Arts and Culture*. The images have been all taken from the work of Reid. However, as reproductions they appear to

⁷⁵ Tully (1995: 17).

function in two ways. First, they become elements in the over-all design of the banknote. Secondly, in as much as they represent a specific view of Reid's work, they can be recognised as mimetic references. That is, the holder of the note is expected to bridge the gap between the reproduction and the actual object. However, the reproductions have been rearticulated in a contrived arrangement where the sculptures spatially interact in an entirely new fashion with both each other and the security features. Therefore, the notes can be described as art objects in and of themselves not dissimilar to the way one might look at a collage.

Compiled, arranged and engraved by Jorge Peral, the Art Director of the Bank of Canada, four of Reid's works are featured along with a quote from the writer Gabrielle Roy. From the left lower corner is the reproduction of the sculpture *Raven and First Men* (1980). A stylized bird – the Raven – with its head slightly turned to the right and wings frozen in mid-motion stands upon a clam shell. The Raven appears enormous in relation to the men who can be seen in the opening gap of the clam shell. There is only one human figure discernible from this angle. With an arm and a leg out of the shell, with a hand and foot positioned on the upper shell, this figure appears to be trying to prise free from the shell. Unfortunately the woven, shiny, metallic strip surfaces on both the Raven's head and upon the shell. Visually the security strip and the text isolate and diminish the impact of this reproduction. The metallic and holographic security features appear to be additions, like a stamp of authenticity, shiny and obtrusive. They seem to be separate additions that do not integrate with the overall design. These features effectively subordinate the image of *Raven and First Man* within the design program.

The text by Roy, from her 1961 novel *The Hidden Mountain*, reads: “*Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?*” This text begs a comparison with the quote taken from Waddington’s poem on the hundred dollar note because of the indefinite use of “we”. It is safe to assume, within the context of a national banknote, that the “we” is intended to be the greater Canadian “we” – implying a collective “we”, a community. The emphatic use of, “ever”, and, “in the slightest”, creates a kind of authority that is only possible through revelation. The revelation, so it seems, is that the “arts” are the foundations for all communication, because, “ever”, also has implications for time. In this way, “ever”, also relates to the concept of simultaneity, the “past and future in an instantaneous present,” described by Anderson.⁷⁶ Ever is always past, present and future, it is *forever*. This can be read as the setting up of a national time, where the arts make community possible.

The movement to the right is abrupt or without transition. That is, unlike the fifty with the scales in upper left of center section, or the ten with the doves descending on the text, there are no transition markers or elements to lead the eye. In this way the left side is further diminished in its importance. The main focus is on the *Spirit of Haida Gwaii* (1991). The large canoe that appears overcrowded with figures on the right. As a two dimensional reproduction, the forms of the figures cannot be followed because of the overlap. The *Spirit of Haida Gwaii* stands out because of the dark taupe colour used in its reproduction and because of the brightly coloured works which fade into the background. Behind the canoe on the left is a large circular Haida Grizzly Bear motif (1988) in yellow, with a faint orange tint on the right side of it. Out from behind this circular motif is a length of intertwining figures, *Mythic Messengers* (1984). These intertwining figures

⁷⁶ Anderson (1983, 24).

fade from the orange of the circular motif into the green of the note and, as they disappear into a dark green margin, they are tinged with purple. There is a shadow cast below the canoe giving the impression that the circular motif might be a sun, either rising or setting. However, the highlights on the figures in the canoe counter this reading. That is, if the light on the canoe were that of a setting or rising sun all detail would be washed into a black silhouette. This is an imaginative space, a space that has been made beneath the banner of Canada, created by a master engraver of currency as homage to and of the work of Reid. The large 'Canada' logo above firmly claims this space.

This is a Canadian salute to, and a claiming of the art of, Reid. With his death, it is possible to place him, in effect through his work, in the disparate genealogical space of nation. The work, however, has implications for First Nations in general and the Haida in particular. This celebration could in effect be read as First Nations prosperity under the Canadian banner. The narrative of Reid's personal relationship with Canada, in national time/space, takes on epic proportions because of the symbolic placement of his work, the *Spirit of Haida Gwaii* in particular, at both the Canadian embassy and Vancouver International Airport. There is a connection being made between the twenty dollar and fifty dollar banknotes for both represent sculptures that have copies on display in both the east and the west.⁷⁷ The key to the importance of this placement, it would seem, can be found on the Canadian coat of arms, written in Latin the motto of Canada reads: *a mari usque ad mare* (from sea to sea). The Canadian motto was taken from the Bible, Psalm 72:8, which reads, "His large and great Dominion shall / from sea to sea extend: / It from

⁷⁷ The fifty dollar banknote contains a reproduction of *The Famous Five* sculpture featuring the five women responsible for having women, on 18 October 1929, recognized as persons by the British Privy Council. This sculpture, designed by Barbara Paterson, is reproduced and "can be seen on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, and in the Olympic Plaza in Calgary, Alberta." ([http://www. Bankofcanada.ca](http://www.Bankofcanada.ca)).

the river shall reach forth / unto earth's utmost end.”⁷⁸ The sculptures, elevated to national symbols, reinforce the Christian claiming and justification of the Dominion of Canada.

The *Spirit of Hiada Gwaii* is a massive bronze sculpture weighing 4,900 kilograms, 6.5meters long, 3.9meters high and 3.5meters wide. There are thirteen figures in the canoe. However, from the angle shown on the note only seven are discernable. Bill Reid wrote a poem as a way of telling the cryptic tale of this sculpture. This document both helps to identify these figures and expose ambivalence by providing access to a broad range of interpretation. Reid begins the poem by positioning the canoe: “a long way from Haida Gwaii, not too sure where we are or where we are going.”⁷⁹ This canoe is not in any definite space and “we” are once again brought along for the ride. Reid, although unsure about location or direction, finds some comfort in the center figure, for he “seems to have some vision of what is to come.” Yet, by the end of the poem Reid is no longer sure, he seems to lose confidence, he asks—“is he lost”? As well, the figure’s identity becomes ambivalent for Reid writes that he “may or may not be the Spirit of Haida Gwaii.” Reid describes the rest of the figures starting with the one that sits at the bow.⁸⁰ This stubby-tailed figure is the Bear, his “broad back deflecting any unfamiliar, novel or interesting sensations.” This creature is not only defensive its backward looking position on the canoe is symbolic of a world view – “forever fixed on the past.” Now Reid works counter-clockwise, from the view on the banknote, describing the various figures which are out of sight until he gets to the raven. The raven, “of course he is the

⁷⁸ Psalms 72:8. *The Holy Bible: Containing to Old and New Testaments*. King James, (London).

⁷⁹ Reid (2000, 228-230). The poem from which all these quotes (unless otherwise specified) carries the title of Reid’s sculpture.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 17.

steersman;" he is the one to add uncertainty; he apparently is influenced by "whim." Despite the Raven's importance Reid spends more time with the next figure, the one he calls "the Ancient and Reluctant Conscript." The title, Bringhurst tells us, is taken from a Carl Sandburg poem called "old timers," from the collection *Cornhuskers* (1918). Sandburg replicates a type of man throughout history: one who washes the pans, grooms the horses, does all the unglamorous jobs that support the great men in moments that punctuate history. Reid extends his role to one that "builds on the rubble and once more gets the whole thing going." Reid is ambiguous about what this "whole thing" might be. This figure's presence, in Reid's poem, seems to signal an indefinite purpose for the entire entourage. His ferocious paddling partner is the Wolf and he is "chewing on the Eagle's wing." The Eagle Reid describes as proud and imperial. The little creature with his tongue out is the frog, which Reid describes as "the ever-present intermediary between two worlds."⁸¹ Reid concludes his poem with musings about the leadership and cryptically suggesting "the boat goes on, forever anchored in the same place." On the one hand Reid is unsure about place, destination and direction. Then there is constant movement in the same place. It is as though location is arbitrary. Reid lets ambiguity play upon the imagination and *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* is left to the viewer to define.

With the completion of *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* in 1991 Bringhurst and the photographer Ulli Steltzer created the book *The Black Canoe: Bill Reid and The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*. Steltzer photographed every step in the sculpture's creation from inception to completion. Bringhurst, who had collaborated with Reid on the 1985 publication *The Raven Steals the Light*, writes accompanying essays. Bringhurst is able to weave history

⁸¹ The poem from which all these quotes (unless otherwise specified) carries the title of the work, *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*. It is reprinted in *Solitary Raven: The Selected Writings of Bill Reid*, pages 228-230.

and myth linking all the figures to their respective Haida narratives. He also describes the conceptual space which Reid inhabits as a Haida artist: “Reid moves back and forth across a boundary [...] between the stone age and the machine age, between the tribal and the colonized world.”⁸² Bringhurst describes the Haida morphology as a dead visual idiom when he writes that Reid “knows that those who see the sculpture now will neither recall the arcane details nor comprehend the inner meaning of the old heraldic system.”⁸³ This seems to imply that the work should be simply enjoyed for its aesthetic qualities and that Reid endorses this position.

Tully, using Bringhurst and Reid as definitive sources, describes the central figure by its Haida name, as “*Kilslaai*, the chief or exemplar,” because of the symbolic “speaker’s staff,” and the ceremonial attire.⁸⁴ Tully interprets and utilizes the sculpture to outline his concept of “constitutional recognition”. Tully would like the sculpture to be understood in terms of a “constitutional dialogue, or multilogue, of mutual recognition.”⁸⁵ What he means by this is that the sculpture seems to present an image of diversity. The figures, Tully argues, are “vying for recognition,” and yet “without imposing a meta-language or allowing any speaker to set the terms of the discussion.”⁸⁶ I commend Tully’s desire for a constitutional reform that should occur without violent revolution and is based upon diversity. However, I must take issue with his reading of the sculpture because as a symbol for national diversity there are issues concerning access which manifest visually and speak to cultural knowledge. This cultural knowledge, it seems, is

⁸² Bringhurst (1991, 79).

⁸³ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁴ Tully (1995, 18) and Bringhurst (1991, 78).

⁸⁵ Tully (1995, 24).

⁸⁶ Ibid., 24.

necessary to understand the sculpture “in the right spirit.”⁸⁷ That is, a certain amount of knowledge must be understood about Haida cosmology before diversity in a universal sense can be gleaned. There are two problems with this proposition: first not everyone who views that sculpture, or the banknote for that matter, will have access to the information upon which Tully’s argument rests. Secondly, Tully does not question or distinguish between access to the cosmological comprehension of these figures and ownership in the sense of family crests with which these figures and there subsequent stories originate.⁸⁸ His visual reading is based on his ideas of constitutional reform and he has tried to make the sculpture fit his mould. Therefore, his argument is undermined by both the visual information and lack of contextual information.

Tully claims that there is no one voice in the montage of stories, which the figures represent, that “sets the terms of the discussion.”⁸⁹ This seems to be a compositional matter and the view on the banknote is the most commonly reproduced for a reason. The head of the central figure, standing in the middle of the canoe, is at the apex of the composition. The gaze of this figure in conjunction with the biting sequence creates the strongest visual dynamic in the composition. This is also punctuated by the raven, the “steersman”, who looks over the right shoulder of the central figure in the same direction. In as much as the primary figures and primary action are on one side of the boat the composition is unbalanced. Therefore, the sculpture will predominantly be seen and

⁸⁷ Ibid., 23. Tully describes proper viewing or “approaching *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*” as a process of shedding the colonial mind set that would have the viewer see it as “something already familiar.”

⁸⁸ Doreen Jensen, in an interview with Lynne Bell and Carol Williams (1997/98, 2940). Jensen, of the Gitksan First Nation talks about family crests as “earned identity” this is something that is socially and financially exchanged. This is meant to highlight the complex relationships between the crest imagery, the cosmology behind them and the communities in which their meanings are socially connected to ownership. In as much as Tully utilizes only Reid and Bringhurst as authorities he is connecting himself to a body of knowledge that has been defined by anthropologists and ethnographers rather than from within the First Nations communities themselves. This is an issue that will be taken up in greater detail in the next chapter.

⁸⁹ Tully (1995,23).

reproduced from this side effectively silencing the figures on the other side. Consequently, Tully's thesis that the sculpture is a "*symbol of the age of Cultural diversity*" is undermined for there is not the sense—visually—that each story is given equal treatment.

In the context of the banknote the circular Bear motif and the *Mythic Messengers* are positioned in such a way as to form the background for the canoe. The perspective, in which the canoe has been reproduced, leads the eye into this national space defined and delineated by Haida morphological and mythological forms. With a bear, facing inward, at the bow and a bear, facing out as background, the narrative is being enclosed. What is the message being carried or disseminated by the *Mythic messengers*? The position they hold on the banknote and their fading and transforming colours give the impression of clouds reflecting the colour of the sun and therefore, effectively, carrying the message of the new or ending day. If Bringhurst is correct in suggesting that the dominant perception that the "heraldic system," as he called it, is something no longer understood then we are seeing the sun set on *The spirit of Haida Gwaii*. Reid, it would seem, is in agreement with Bringhurst. The final line of Reid's poem about the sculpture holds the enigmatic key, "The boat goes on, forever anchored in the same place." The seeming contradiction of continuation and immobility can be solved by considering Reid's adherence to the use of the crest images or the "heraldic system" as an artistic system.⁹⁰ Rather than creating images and objects as heraldic symbols for specific families in the present, Reid

⁹⁰ Reid, Bill (2000, 115-130). In a lecture Reid gave at the Museum of Anthropology titled "The Classical Artist on the Northwest Coast", and reprinted in his collected writings, he takes part in defining the "arts" of the Northwest Coast by the formal attributes first defined by Bill Holm in *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*.

reconfigured the crest images as a permanent bronze memorial to the past.⁹¹ The banknote seems to try and compositionally reify this by creating the ever-setting sun, which never actually sets. In creating a memorial for Reid the Bank of Canada has positioned First Nations crest images in a perpetual national past.

Turning the note over, with this in mind, the new portrait of the Queen seems very vital and alive. The size of the image and the seemingly broken border makes the Queen appear to be metaphorically beyond the bounds of the note and with the water mark portrait she appears literally ingrained in the national fibre. The new wrinkles and heavy eyelids of age only add to the effect. The Queen has aged with the nation and still seems vital. The centre block of the buildings of parliament is the back drop for her portrait. The Bank of Canada makes it clear, in the comments about this note, that Canada, as a constitutional monarchy, has the Queen as the head of state.⁹² The Queen does not belong to any Canadian political party she is simply the symbol of state authority. Within the ceremonies of government the Queen's representative, the Governor General, maintains specific duties such as the speech from the throne. More importantly there is Crown Land. As noted in the introduction of this paper the return of these lands to the First Nations is highly contested. The Queen is also the only imaged figure on the banknotes still living. Unlike the Prime Ministers, artists or activists the Queen does not need to be dead to be elevated to a position of national importance. The crown defines the colonial English center which remains a national image of authority and legitimacy.⁹³

⁹¹ Reid, Bill (2000, 45). Reid had referred to Haida art and First Nations art in general as "dead art." In the following chapter I will investigate further how Reid worked within the narratives of cultural death.

⁹² Bank of Canada, (<http://bankofcanada.ca/en/banknote>).

⁹³ Mackey (1999, 157). The centrality of whiteness in Canada, Mackey argues, is based upon a "dominant and unmarked ethnicity." What is important is that "white" in Canada is not perceived as "ethnic," therefore, the "customs, beliefs, practices, morals, and values [are seen] as normative and universal."

The banknote gains its authority and authenticity from the colonial paradigm of imposed centralised strength. Land held in the Queen's name – Crown land – is a major issue in First Nation's land claims. There remains a prevalent perception of colonial entitlement to the land stolen from the First Nations. The figures imaged in Reid's work come from narratives that communicate specifically different notions of ownership and belonging. These figures have been created from within and through a narrative that utilizes a Haida morphology that requires translation or, as Reid notes, with regard to the wing-biting "wolf, [...] he was an important figure in the crest hierarchy." Reid's use of the past tense is in line with Bringhurst who also described the "heraldic images" as no longer in currency. However, crests are the symbols connected to family and community. Doreen Jensen, a Gitxsan artist, describes clearly her relationship and responsibility to her family's crest symbols. The viewing of crest symbols has a number of social functions, she says, "you look at a piece you know that a family has been represented: it's like opening a book and reading, if you understand the language of that culture."⁹⁴ In order to gain a better understanding of the way in which Reid utilized the Haida morphology a study of Reid himself will be necessary. In the next chapter I want to examine more closely why Reid was chosen. I need to investigate the narratives that informed his practice and how they might fit within a national narrative.

⁹⁴ Doreen Jensen interviewed by Lynne Bell and Carol Williams (1997/98, 291).

**Chapter 4. How Bill Reid Became National: the power of access and having
'some right to tell the story'.**

“The truth about stories is that that’s all we are.”⁹⁵

Reid died in 1998 and in 1999 a symposium was held in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia: “The Legacy of Bill Reid: A Critical Enquiry.” An edited volume *Bill Reid and Beyond: Expanding on Modern Native Art*⁹⁶ emerged. Nika Collison, one of Reid’s grandchildren, reflects in the forward on the tributes to Reid, “I was taken by how many ‘Bills’ there seem to have been.”⁹⁷ Those who knew him and those who had been influenced all knew a different Reid. By trying to understand the narratives that Reid intentionally or otherwise took part in, told and reproduced, what will ultimately emerge is a particular fractured reflection of Reid as seen through the lens of national narratives. Regardless of Reid’s artistic intentions or, as Doris Shadbolt describes, his “arduous journey back to claim his identity”⁹⁸, there is an official story that ultimately became the national Reid narrative. Through a careful examination of this changing narrative and why Reid became the protagonist of the non-Native’s narrative of revival I will argue that the paradox of Reid’s narrative resembles the paradox of money. That is, Reid, for all his reliance on the Northwest Coast and the Haida specifically, became the universal—disembedded—First Nations artist.

In this argument for a national disembedded Reid I will work through a number of arguments put forth in the critical re-evaluation of his legacy regarding the idea of a First Nations cultural revival. I will follow this with the narrative of disappearance and cultural

⁹⁵ King (2003, 3).

⁹⁶ Duffek, Karen and Charlotte Townsend-Gault (2004).

⁹⁷ Collison (2004, 1).

⁹⁸ Shadbolt (2003, 30).

death upon which the revival was based. That is, I will expose certain aspects of the *Indian Act* and the early twentieth century attempts to erase First Nations culture, and how this played into academic discourse about culture and the qualities of the authentic aboriginal. Finally I will return to Reid's own words. The way he navigated the complexities of his own position, I argue, will help expose why he was the right choice to accommodate the constraints involved in the designing of a national currency.

The official story about Bill Reid, according to Crosby, is "typical of the kinds of narratives that have been written about the 'post'-contact aboriginal experience."⁹⁹ It is the story of re-discovery and recovery. "The plot almost always", she writes, "begins with historic and/or geographic displacement and loss—the various effects of colonization."¹⁰⁰ In Reid's case it became a heroic story of revival, for Reid is often attributed with sparking a "renaissance" in First Nations art.¹⁰¹ This loss and the perceived cultural revival are the subject of much of the Art historical revision taking place in the book *Bill Reid and Beyond*. Glass describes Reid as part of a history of "Culture Brokers", women and men who, positioned between cultures, mediated cultural and economic trade between the First Nations and colonizers. Glass contends Reid is one of many in the history of First Nations/settler relations who took on such a role. Glass makes the useful acknowledgement "that there are two very different histories at work here." One is the internal "*production, performance and living* First Nations art" and second, is the non-Native re-discovery and re-inscription of the First Nations objects as

⁹⁹ Crosby (2004, 111).

¹⁰⁰ Crosby (2004, 111).

¹⁰¹ Dawn (2004, 251-280). Dawn notes, that "throughout the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, leading scholars [...], otherwise given to sober reflection and insisting on historical grounding, spoke repeatedly of the 'miraculous rebirth' of Northwest Coast Indian art, culture and identity." Dawn goes on to use Joan Vastokas article "Bill Reid and the Native Renaissance" of 1975 as an example of how Reid had become emblematic of a revival, which Dawn argues, was essentially a construct perpetuated by non-First Nations community.

art (emphasis in original).¹⁰² The latter was not only unaffected by the contradiction that the presence of the former posed but was able to profit from the increased material production. This is important because Reid, on the one hand, helped to re-inscribe objects embellished with Northwest Coast designs as art and on the other tried to come to terms with a cultural identity that he felt lay hidden somewhere in the past. In relation to the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia Karen Duffek describes this as “shifting ground.” That is the Museum maintained and nurtured a relationship with Reid which persisted through the shift from salvage ethnology and narratives of cultural death and high art to the increased First Nations assertion of a cultural continuum. This gives an indication that Reid’s cultural recovery or, in Shadbolt’s words, this “claim[ing] of Identity” is better understood as a re-construction.

Duffek describes how there was a concern for how these two histories collided and could coexist. She writes that in the early 1980’s on the Northwest Coast there “appeared to be a major shift within an otherwise market-driven revival: the renewed production of ‘art’ for Native use.”¹⁰³ In as much as Reid is positioned from the market perspective—“I never started out to do anything but make pretty baubles for pretty people.”¹⁰⁴ He became trapped between the communities for which the motifs and narratives, which he reproduced, have socio-political importance and the market for these objects which was, for the most part, non-Native.

¹⁰² Glass (2004, 191).

¹⁰³ Duffek (2004, 71-92) In her essay “On Shifting Ground: Bill Reid at the Museum of Anthropology” uses the conference “Northwest Coast Indian Artists in Dialogue” held at the Museum of Anthropology in 1984, which focused on the issue of cultural value versus market value, as the background for her discussion. With a particular focus on the interviews, by Margery Halpin with both Bill Reid and Robert Davidson, Duffek complicates the relationship the Museum, Galleries, and art market have with and against First Nations artistic production.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 83.

It is in these differing values that Reid's story as a National narrative begins to show similarities with the contradictions of national or territorial currency¹⁰⁵. As with currency, Reid gained legitimacy from a territorial or regional connection and simultaneously argued for, and created, art according to a universal formal criterion through which the art could be comprehended and consumed. Therefore, 'place,' as First Nations socio-political territory, could continue to be denied, emptied and acquisitioned. The way Mackey describes this is useful. She argues that "early narratives of nationalism often had Native people representing Canada's heritage and past."¹⁰⁶ It is important to recognize the ownership implicit in the apostrophe. The national imaging of the First Nations has not been for First Nation's empowerment; as Mackey has argued, it "provides a link between the settlers and the land."¹⁰⁷ In such a configuration the First Nations had to be generalised. Furthermore their culture had to be idealized. Reid took part in this in as much as he helped to perpetuate the idea that socio-political First Nations objects had been stripped of their connectedness within the narrative of the modern nation-state. In his own writings he has described the First Nations objects emblazoned with crest imagery as "gifts that the Northwest Coast peoples left for their descendants – and that they left, as it turns out, for the whole world."¹⁰⁸ The presupposition that they were somehow left as an artistic legacy for the world is, as Mackey argues, that they were "thereby transformed into a form of *cultural property* that the Canadian nation has inherited."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Helleiner (2003). He describes national currencies as territorial, because of the geopolitical importance in defining the territory of state sovereignty and because the nation-state is the body in which it circulates and maintains its function.

¹⁰⁶ Mackey (1999, 77).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁸ Reid, ed, Robert Bringhurst (2000, 145).

¹⁰⁹ Mackey (1999, 77).

Dawn notes, that the term “revival”, as it was used in relation to Reid’s role in the reinvigoration of First Nations art on the Northwest coast, “occluded the specific and complex histories of accommodation, negotiation and resistance of individual people.”¹¹⁰ The way Crosby describes it Reid “actually began speaking in the middle of a much larger narrative.”¹¹¹ Dawn shows how there was a shift in perception through the first half of the twentieth century. That is, for at least the first two decades of the twentieth century “both ethnology and art history worked jointly with the government of Canada to produce an image of the Indian that was based on cultural decrepitude if not total disappearance.”¹¹² By the same token the narrative of revival was not the product of Reid alone; he took part in a conversation with academics that proved very beneficial to his art practice. The thread that binds Crosby, Dawn and Glass is that they recognize Reid’s role to be a trope in the complex exchange between First Nations and colonizers. Reid’s role was intimately linked to salvage ethnology and concepts of art and culture, contemporary to Reid’s rise in the art world, and the myth of universal modernity.

Reid began his public Haida homecoming when, in September 1954, the CBC documentary of the totem pole salvage mission to Haida Gwaii aired. As the narrator of this documentary he claims to “have some right to be telling this story,” due to his matrilineal connection to the Haida.¹¹³ However, as Crosby notes, Reid has had trouble with his identity. He vacillates between being within and without the Haida culture. Crosby writes, in verse: “He was other; he was centre / He said ‘they’; he said ‘we’. / He loved ‘them’; he was deeply disappointed in ‘them.’ / Pronoun referent, / often

¹¹⁰ Dawn (2004, 253).

¹¹¹ Crosby (2004, 112).

¹¹² Dawn (2004, 252).

¹¹³ Reid, ed. Robert Bringhurst (2000, 37-44). Reid’s radio broadcast was reproduced in the posthumous collection of his writings edited by Bringhurst.

unknown.”¹¹⁴ Reid remained ambivalent, for most of his life, toward his cultural identity. This seems to have a good deal to do with the concept of culture within which Reid argued his position toward ‘us’ and ‘them.’

This ‘within and without’, this vacillation between ‘us’ and ‘them’, is indistinguishable from the contradictions inherent in the concept of money as discussed in the first two chapters. That is, the territorial pedagogy competes with the seemingly universal function. Reid used the specific, the localized, to communicate an idea of universal art to a non-Native community. In as much as Reid claims “some right” to the story, his authority is performed. Like money that gains its value only as a value that circulates, the market and museum systems relied upon the universal importance of First Nations art and Reid’s art gained value through this system by helping to disseminate this idea. His public campaign for a universal ability to culturally consume First Nations art helped sell both his work and, ironically, the paradigm of cultural death within which he was the cultural authority. This is perhaps part of the reason why the artist Ron Hamilton, “a Nuu-chah-nulth ritualist,” critically commented that “Bill Reid has milked the words ‘Haida’ and ‘Indian’ for everything they are worth, but has never taken responsibility for being either of them.”¹¹⁵ That is, Reid reached backward to an anthropological and art historical past for Haida culture. Even his social activism was couched in a constructed notion of First Nations past as nature bound.¹¹⁶ The culture, as he perceived it, was inextricably linked to a particular constructed past that exists only in objects emblazoned

¹¹⁴ Crosby (2004, 111).

¹¹⁵ Hamilton (2004, 118).

¹¹⁶ Reid, ed. Robert Bringhurst (2000, 217). In this section titled “Becoming Haida” Reid makes a direct equation between the nature and First Nation’s past with the claim that, “killing the forests, you also kill forever the only authentic link the Haida still have with their past.”

with crest images. It is an anthropologist's story, not a First Nation's, which he was telling during the Totem pole salvage.

In the early fifties when the potlatch ban was lifted there was an assumption among the settler society that First Nations culture was dead. Wilson Duff, the curator of Anthropology at the B.C. Provincial Museum (1950 – 1965), wrote an article for *Canadian Art* in 1954 titled, "A Heritage in Decay – The Totem Art of the Haida." In this article Duff juxtaposed the narrative of "cultural extinction" with recognition that "British Columbia is fast becoming 'Totem land'".¹¹⁷ Duff was anxious about the corporate use of stylized Totem pole-derived images while presenting the First Nations culture that produced actual poles as dead. This "heritage in decay" focused on objects made in the nineteenth century while ignoring, or deeming anomalous those First Nations who continued to produce objects emblazoned with crest imagery. Reid used this very notion in his proposal to the University of British Columbia for the commission to carve and recreate a Haida village on the Point Gray campus, consequently on Musqueam land. The synopsis of cultural death Reid gives is generic yet ambivalent enough not to be accusatory: "while the coming of the white man greatly stimulated the artistic growth of the west coast Native, it also doomed their culture to extinction. Disease and alcohol almost exterminated them".¹¹⁸ Although Reid's Haida heritage is part of his credentials it is interesting to note the use of 'their culture.' This would be the same indefinite pronoun referent Crosby describes. This distancing creates an anonymous genealogy which has the appearance of being politically safe and separate from the issues facing the Haida in the present.

¹¹⁷ Duff, Wilson. (Vol. 11, no. 4, 1954, 56-58).

¹¹⁸ Bill Reid, "proposal" (Artists biofile: Bill Reid 11-1, Audrey Hawthorn – Box 1, Museum of Anthropology archives, University of British Columbia, 1958).

As Duffek writes, “Reid based his artistic approach on a firm belief in the death of Haida culture.”¹¹⁹ For an exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery titled *People of the Potlatch*, he wrote: “this should be remembered about Indian art: it is dead art.”¹²⁰ Reid wanted the visitors to the museum to view the works with the same reverence they might bring to ancient Greek or Egyptian art. This story, according to the reasoning behind the salvage paradigm, is of death and loss of culture—the poles would not need salvaging otherwise. As Clifford argues, the “salvage ethnographer could claim to be the last to rescue ‘the real thing.’ Authenticity, [...], is produced by removing objects and customs from their current historical situation—a present-becoming-future.”¹²¹ That is, objects like the poles are taken out of time, as it were, and placed in a constructed past. Therefore authenticity, ironically, only exists in the past. This political “present-becoming-future” is too shifting, too fluid, and too open-ended to be authentic. Authenticity requires the binary opposite—inauthentic, and if that which is salvaged is authentic all that comes after is not. This ‘salvage paradigm’, as it has been called creates an awkward space for Reid’s artistic practise. As Crosby notes, “salvage ethnography leaves no way to see totem poles and other objects, oral histories and ritual, as systems of signs whose meaning *remain*, changed and invested elsewhere—as in contemporary political organizations,”(emphasis in original).¹²² Therefore, because the totem poles mark socio-political space, Reid required the nomenclature ‘art’ or ‘fine art’ as a conceptual space within which to re-discover the formal elements separately from the socio-political space that Crosby clearly sees as ongoing. As Glass succinctly notes:

¹¹⁹ Duffek (2004, 71).

¹²⁰ Reid, ed. Robert Bringhurst (2000, 45).

¹²¹ Clifford (1988, 228).

¹²² Crosby (2004, 117).

“Reid embodied, more dramatically than anyone else, the complex dialectics of contemporary Native art: salvage paradigms in anthropology and the universalist aesthetics of modernism provide a rationale for the removal and decontextualization of indigenous objects and imagery, while the perceived loss of this ethnographic context was a precondition for that material transformation into fine art.”¹²³

The cultural erasure, presupposed in the act of salvage, was not simply a fictional narrative. The 1876 *Indian Act*¹²⁴ had been intended to ease assimilation or erase the ‘Indian problem’. King describes it as a “magical piece of legislation” for the way in which it gets amended and First Nations people are transformed, “among other things, [it] paternalistically defines who is an Indian and who is not, amendments that can make Indians disappear in a twinkkle.”¹²⁵ That is, the Indian Act made First Nations people disappear, as it were, through enfranchisement, “get a university degree and, poof, you’re no longer an Indian.”¹²⁶ In other words, hybridization would extinguish the authentic “Indian” and create in its place the modern Canadian.

Dawn describes the Department of Indian Affairs under Frank Pedley and then Duncan Campbell Scott, at the turn of the century, as waging a war on First Nations Culture¹²⁷. In 1895 the Indian Act had been amended so as to prohibit the Potlatch and First Nations dancing. Apparently the laws were hard to enforce for Scott made several amendments in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, even through the most vigilant persecutions in the 1920’s there had been active resistance. As Dawn describes, there was a conflict between the federal position and policies and the potential posed by First Nations dances, “the potential for a Native presence to draw tourists would

¹²³ Glass (2004, 108-32).

¹²⁴ J. Leslie and R. Maquire, eds., *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1978).

¹²⁵ King (2003, 132).

¹²⁶ Ibid., 132.

¹²⁷ Brian Titley (1988) in *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* describes Pedley and Scott as treaty makers. They were in charge of making sure First Nations people did not impede settler progress.

militate against the official position of the Canadian state.”¹²⁸ That is, First Nations dances became the favourite spectacles of both Banff Days and the Calgary Stampede. Because of popularity and the increase in dances throughout Scott’s tenure “he was more or less obliged to admit a measure of defeat respecting his policies.”¹²⁹ For his policies were intended to erase, in effect, First Nations as distinct political communities. As Scott is quoted, in 1920, as saying, “[o]ur object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department.”¹³⁰ This assimilation ideology ironically found its greatest allies in art historical and anthropological work that tried to save First Nations culture.

Ronald Hawker describes the institutionalisation of First Nations’ cultural death as a “modernist paradox” because of the way it functions. He describes it as a mechanism which is used to create an opposition which in turn helps define and justify the nation-state’s claims through progress: “[t]he premodern operates as the negative defining the positive space as a geographic trope, and as the foundation upon and over which the industrial state is built.”¹³¹ This could easily have been said about the vignette on the 1870 two dollar bill. That is the First Nations person upon the bluff is part of the geography that is being redefined or civilized by the rational inclusion or intrusion of the train. Hawker tells the story of Stanley Park and the simultaneous removal of the First Nation inhabitants and the raising of the Kwakwaka’wakw carver Charlie James’ pole, a

¹²⁸ Dawn (2006, 135). Dawn goes in to detail about the resistance dancers and their connections with fairs and exhibitions. There was opposition to this legislation from the organizers of the Calgary Stampede and Banff

¹²⁹ Ibid., 135.

¹³⁰ Duncan Scott, reprinted in J. Leslie and R. Maquire, eds., *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Center, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1978), 115.

¹³¹ Hawker (2003, 60).

pole commissioned and carved for the Parks board, which ironically was intended to be a reminder of the past. It was not a specific past because the Squamish First Nations had only recently been evicted.¹³² Paradoxically there was, well under way at the time, a Totem Pole Preservation Committee, attempting to relocate and preserve totem poles. Headed by Scott, this joint venture between Indian Affairs, the Parks Board, the Victoria Memorial Museum and the C.N.R., set out to relocate totem poles along the railway line for the viewing pleasure of tourists.¹³³ Thus, simultaneously there was persecution and preservation, all couched in a paternalistic language that assumed disappearance. Subsequently, ironically, there could be First Nations people, First Nations objects emblazoned with crest images, and no First Nations culture—"not a single Indian in Canada" as Scott desired. According to Glass, "it was the modernist regime of progress that demanded indigenous cultures be dead before we could, in good conscience, decontextualize their objects and revalue them as fine art."¹³⁴ It is important to think in terms of a dual narrative. First Nations cultures were only dead in the sense that the non-Native communities institutionally maintained such a narrative. Therefore, the "modernist regime", in this case the nation-state of Canada, trying to consume First Nations people with the narrative of progress and the systems of modern art, tried to subsume First Nations art into a universal aesthetic. In both cases the political "present-becoming-future" is banished to the past. First the colonial administration required the

¹³² Hawker (1998, 95).

¹³³ Dawn tells us that the Totem Pole project began in 1924 and by 1927 the committee was encountering resistance from the First Nations communities in the Skeena. The Gitxan First Nations may have been recognized as the owners of the poles; however, the project was also described as an attempt to raise the First Nations appreciation for their cultural heritage. The project was argued as essentially a heritage project, Harlan Smith the project coordinator, wrote in a letter arguing that this preservation serve the communities for the "Indians' children and their children's children can always see them and remember their fathers and the old customs." Clearly the "customs" are placed in the past.

¹³⁴ Glass (2004, 204).

narrative of death, cultural if not actual, in order to be positioned as the positive present. Therefore this past, which Reid idealizes as ‘classical’, is made inaccessible. It is made the opposite of progress. As Mackey succinctly describes, “cultural identity in Canada means the proper coordination of [these] subordinate cultures, defined as less progressive folk *survivals*, within the totality of a *normative* national culture and the project of nation-building (emphasis in original).”¹³⁵ The modern re-articulation of First Nation crest imagery safely generalized it, depoliticized it and made it a mass-consumer consumable.

The process of dislodging First Nations objects began with museums and collectors. The cultures of so-called ‘primitive’ or ‘pre-modern’ societies were increasingly being described in terms of material culture—culture that could be quantified through collection. As Ruth Phillips has described, “[t]he project of ethnological collecting rested on the assumption that ethnicity and material culture were isomorphically related.”¹³⁶ Subsequently, authenticity became an issue. That is, a ‘race’ could not be defined taxonomically if there was contamination. Therefore, cultural death and assimilation were synonymous. I am again reminded of that “magic piece of legislation” and Thomas King’s reading of ‘enfranchisement:’ “[b]ecome a clergyman or a lawyer and, presto, no more Indian.”¹³⁷ Any First Nations person who takes a ‘progressive’ role in the newly constructed colonial world would no longer be seen as ‘authentically Indian’ for they have, in effect, entered into modern social progress, as it

¹³⁵ Mackey (1999, 151).

¹³⁶ Phillips, Ruth B. 1998. “The Collecting and Displaying of Souvenir Arts: Authenticity and the ‘Strictly Commercial’”, reprinted in Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins edited *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*. Malden: Blackwell, 2006.

¹³⁷ King (2003, 132).

might be defined. Subsequently, the objects they make and emblazon with crest images would not be 'authentic'.

Phillips describes how the race to complete collections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century put anthropologists on parity with collectors, "museum ethnologists, like the rare art collector, merged with the tourist-collector."¹³⁸ The tourist-collector collects curios for memory and prestige. In these disparate collections the collector is actually the focus. That is, each particular object, in their respective difference, tells the story of adventure and travel—they are trophies, visual aids in the narrative of adventure. The makers of the objects and their communities are merely the settings for the adventure. The difference for the rare art collector is that the stories are more intently concerned with the qualities of the objects. The context becomes more important, not for the particular utility of an object within its community but for difference itself as a signifier of value. Therefore the story of the object is one that is intended to focus upon uniqueness as value. This uniqueness is not necessarily created through the connection with a particular 'artist.' In the case of cultural uniqueness the object is often valued for what might be perceived as a lost skill set or other 'imagined' conditions, deemed no longer in existence, through which the object was made.

I must stress 'imagined' for the recreation of a particular culture or community through a collection of objects is always the construct of the imagination and as such is focused on difference. It is when these differences become blurry that authenticity is called into question. These imaginings have real consequence for the people—for the First Nations—who are being categorized as part of the past. These institutions, which are positioned as the authorities in the science of human history and culture, define

¹³⁸ Phillips (1998, 444).

through collection and re-presentation the First Nations for the settler societies. Subsequently, the persistence of First Nations resistance can be disregarded as an anomaly, for the First Nations do not fit within the academic imaginings—they blur the boundaries. For “authenticity” as Clifford writes, “has as much to do with an inventive present as with a past, its objectification, preservation, or revival.”¹³⁹ The loss or change in a particular quality or cultural contamination, of an object is perceived as cultural change. Clifford rightly asks: “What criteria validate an authentic culture or artistic product?”¹⁴⁰ The new objects are not authentic in the sense that the culture, now that it is perceived to have changed, is closed. That is closed within the museum context.¹⁴¹ It is as though change or progress is solely the possession of Euro-American modernity. Therefore, when Charlie James carved the totem pole for Stanley Park it could be consumed as part of a generic identity, part of a particular constructed past, a period, or an era, which is authentic and closed in the history constructed by non-aboriginal authorities.

As Clifford recognises this rise in value coincides with modern art’s movement toward the ‘primitive’. He notes that “[i]n the mid-nineteenth century pre-Columbian or tribal objects were grotesque or antiques. By 1920 they were cultural witness and

¹³⁹ Clifford (1988, 222).

¹⁴⁰ Clifford 1988, 221).

¹⁴¹ Clunas (2006, 186-208). In “Oriental Antiquities/Far Eastern Art” describes the collecting habits of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum with regards to their late nineteenth century collecting in China. At one point he makes the important observation that, “the museum cannot allow itself to document its own frequently changing display arrangements, since then it will have a history, and if it becomes a historical object in its own rights, then it can be investigated, challenged, opposed, or contradicted.” What I find interesting is the need for an appearance of timeless objectivity. Without this the dam breaks and the Museum is open for scrutiny. Clifford does this in *The Predicament of Culture*, when, in the chapter in collecting, he runs through a litany of questions such as: “What moral and political criteria justify “good,” responsible, systematic collecting practices?” (Clifford, 222). Clearly the guise of science clouds more than it reveals. Once the museum is exposed as a historical instrument of the nation-state its pedagogical intentions can be juxtaposed with the historical circumstances of its collections.

aesthetic masterpieces.”¹⁴² To become ‘masterpieces’ they had to be consumable, they had to be rearticulated in a language which at once elevated their aesthetic qualities and diminished the social relations within which they were made, “[i]ndeed an ignorance of cultural context seems almost a precondition for artistic appreciation.”¹⁴³ This was certainly the case with the Abstract Expressionists. In 1946 there was a show of “Northwest Coast Indian painting” at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York. According to Serge Guilbaut, a scholar of American Abstract Expressionism, Betty Parsons “was now attempting indirectly to define what living American art was.”¹⁴⁴ This show was organized by the painter Barnett Newman with the intent of giving some North American precedent to the Abstract Expressionist movement and “defending the work of his group from populist attacks”.¹⁴⁵ The Northwest Coast objects, although shown in a contemporary art gallery, were used didactically in attempts to bolster the artistic propositions of the abstract painters. Context for the objects was clearly not an issue, as Newman is quoted as saying: “It is our hope that these great works of art, whether on house walls, ceremonial shaman frocks and aprons, or as ceremonial blankets, will be enjoyed for their own sake [...] they constitute a kind of heightened design.”¹⁴⁶ What is important for Newman is the universalizing potential of abstraction. That is, instead of the socio-political particular he is looking to a deeper cognitive potential for abstraction. This functions in much the same way as Jürgen Habermas’ description of the “negation of culture” in modernity. He describes the attempts of art to attain greater autonomy and how as “a deliberate project: the talented artist could lend authentic expression to those

¹⁴² Clifford (1988, 228).

¹⁴³ Ibid., 200.

¹⁴⁴ Guilbaut (1983, 119).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 118.

¹⁴⁶ Barnett Newman, reprinted in Serge Guilbaut, *How New York stole the Idea of Modern Art* (1983), 119.

experiences he had encountering his own decentred subjectivity”.¹⁴⁷ That is authenticity was possible, within progress, through the “talented artist.” Therefore Newman does not differentiate between the ceremonial and the everyday, nor the public and the private, the social value is, in effect, replaced by a universal assumption about First Nations cognitive relationship with the images. Similarly, as Glass describes, Reid felt “the past was gone, [...] presenting itself as merely an ideal for future contemplation and inspiration.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, art could be created out of the past, the so called “dead art” of the First Nations, precisely through Reid’s contemplative “decentred subjectivity”.

Reid helped provide the formal language for consuming First Nation’s design when working with Bill Holm on the book *Form and Freedom* (Holm, 1975). These two men, in Holm’s book, take turns giving analysis of First Nations objects in a conversational style. That is, casually they compare qualities of both composition and craftsmanship. Reid’s own work is featured, a gold box, which he refers to as “‘arti-fake’ [...] it set out to do nothing but be a miniature Northwest Coast classical chest of gold.”¹⁴⁹ Reid seems to contend that his work can not be ‘authentic,’ for it is part of the present production of an artist, or a student work—a study of a “classical” piece. Regardless, the work is vindicated for Holm deems it “a great thing.” Reid continued to educate the mostly non-First Nations communities. In 1979, Reid gave a lecture at the Museum of Anthropology UBC, “The Classical Artist on the Northwest Coast.” Published in the anthology of his writing, *Solitary Raven*, it gives a more elementary reading of the forms on the Haida and Northwest coast objects. Reid describes the *ovoids* as foundational forms. They are the abstract forms through which the genius of the artist

¹⁴⁷ Habermas (1998, 9).

¹⁴⁸ Glass (2004, 203).

¹⁴⁹ Holm (1975, 134).

can be seen. The way Crosby sees this type of formal analysis is useful, “[t]he ovoids, formlines and U-forms, codified, described and finally prescribed by Bill Holm, were used to identify ‘masterworks’ made by an individual depoliticized artist of genius and mastery.”¹⁵⁰ The ‘code’ is important. If the imagery can be broken down, “codified”, it can be read in its parts. Each part or form then can be judged accordingly. This ‘code’, which made the Northwest Coast crest images seem universally consumable, also disembedded them from their socio-political positions. Therefore, a so-called ‘masterwork’ needs only to fulfill some imposed formal requirements and not necessarily have a particular value attached to the crest imagery. Ultimately Reid’s own work is couched in this modernist paradigm.

Reid began to change his story; perhaps his success demanded it. In 1969 through a Canada council grant Reid went to England to study. Before he left he completed a commissioned screen for the Victoria Provincial Museum. The CBC documented this with a short televised report which can still be seen in the on-line archives. Reid is presented walking through a typically dark BC forest filled with ferns and tall evergreen trees. He stops before his sculpture, *The Farewell Screen* (1968), as though coming upon a discovery. In his cryptic description he says that it is a memorial, “perhaps one too many”, and that he will no longer be making memorials to the Haida.¹⁵¹ What exactly is meant by this is left ambiguously unanswered; certainly he does not mean that he will stop carving images that utilize Haida crest images.

This is perhaps when Reid began to see his own work as extending beyond the confines of copying. In a combined interview, Reid and the artist Robert Davidson spoke

¹⁵⁰ Crosby (2004, 108-109).

¹⁵¹ The CBC legacy of Bill Reid on-line archives have an extensive set of clips both video and audio set to a time line of Reid’s life. http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-68-1273-7226/arts_entertainment/bill_reid/clip4

to Marjorie Halpin in 1984. Halpin, the curator of ethnology for the Museum of Anthropology, interviewed the two artists as part of the event “Northwest Coast Indian Artists in Dialogue.” Halpin begins with a reference to the importance of dancing for Haida culture. Reid admits to having no experience with dancing. Halpin then asks the direct question: “How did you find out about the culture?”¹⁵² What is interesting about this question is that culture is presumed to be extraneous to the people who are of that culture—is something to be “found.” Therefore, the question can be understood as being couched in the ethnographic set of assumptions which authenticated culture through collection. The answer could be both simple and complicated.¹⁵³ One might expect the answer to be genealogical in nature—‘my mother raised me’—or something of this kind. Considering the context perhaps Reid’s answer is not surprising. He said that “the only source I had was books and museums and the odd acquaintance with some people from the villages.” What he is talking about specifically is a connection to carving the Haida crest imagery. What is interesting is how his description turns. That is, he is equating culture to carving the system of design as he understands it. He describes himself as simply copying the nineteenth century material available to him. Then he states that: “When I started playing around with the Haida designs, I was absolutely convinced that there was nothing new that could be done with them”. Here he is perhaps speaking about cultural death, not to mention a denial of all the First Nations people working with crest imagery between the nineteenth century and when he began producing his work. As Crosby argues, there were, in the early to mid nineteenth century: “aboriginal artists like Mungo Martin and George Clutesi, who produced material culture in the public sphere as

¹⁵² Halpin reprinted in the Duffek (2004, 76).

¹⁵³ For an in-depth account of the etymology of the word ‘culture’ see Raymond Williams *Keywords* where he calls ‘culture’ one of the most difficult words to define.

forms of resistance.”¹⁵⁴ Death, for Reid, is the perceived lack of continuity in carving and design. Presumably nothing else could be done with them because the culture is now closed and complete. All the authentic objects have been accounted for. However, he goes on to say that: “one day I just did something that didn’t relate to the old designs, [...] I eventually began to understand something of the complexity and the differences that can be derived from these basic forms out of which Northwest Coast art is constructed.”¹⁵⁵ In this way Reid is describing his shift away from being a mere copyist.

Davidson continues in this vein and describes what might be called a typical artistic trajectory. He says that a student must copy their master in order “to start understanding the rules or the formula.” However, Davidson goes on to connect this with cultural progression. That is, he says that through this system of mentoring, “generation after generation updated and gave those mythologies a meaning.”¹⁵⁶ For Davidson the “rules” are simply the tools through which to learn how to re-articulate the stories, the mythologies that are handed down from generation to generation. These myths are then eventually made meaningful for the new generation. In Davidson’s description there is a clear connection to community and continuation—“once we start creating that meaning, we’re no longer imitating.” This “meaning”, it would seem, comes from the connections the objects make in the community. Earlier in the interview Davidson said that he did not begin to carve masks until he “started singing and understanding the songs”.¹⁵⁷ Certain objects gain their meaning, their value, from within a performance. These performances apparently require several layers of knowledge and, perhaps more importantly, the

¹⁵⁴ Crosby (2004, 117).

¹⁵⁵ Reid in an interview with Halpin, incorporated into Duffek (2004, 77).

¹⁵⁶ Davidson in an interview with Halpin, incorporated into Duffek (2004, 77).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 75.

meaning is socially contingent. The modernist, formally universal, understanding of art has no place in the social life of the objects Davidson is describing.

Tony Hunt, the grandson of Mungo Martin, was part of an earlier session of the same event that brought Reid and Davidson together. For Hunt, a “mask had meaning only after the dancer took the mask and used it.”¹⁵⁸ According to Hunt such an object does not stand alone. As an art object it requires a dancer to bring it to life, so to speak, and as a performance this—bringing to life—is something that happens within a certain setting, under specific conditions. That is, the audience both receives the performance and through comprehension and participation dispels disbelief so that meaning can be made and the mask is brought to life. The Australian Aboriginal artist Gordon Bennett similarly understands that the qualities of an object, redefined as art in Euro-colonial institutions, cannot be simply quantified through the object’s formal design. As he describes, “the aesthetics of a culture are located not externally in an ‘art’ object, or in narrow definitions of aesthetic standards, but internally in the conceptual space between signifier and signified.”¹⁵⁹ This is a complex process which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I want to make clear that the modernist formal interpretation, espoused by both Reid and Holm, are not merely inadequate as tools for comprehending the nuances of First Nations material culture, but they effectively take part in the denial of the continuing social significance and the potential for meaning to grow and change with the community that developed the objects.

This assessment exposes the contradictions in the non-Native cultural consumption of First Nations crest images. The moment it is recognized that not all

¹⁵⁸ Tony Hunt in an interview with Halpin, incorporated into Duffek (2004, 75).

¹⁵⁹ Bennett (1993, [2006] 516).

objects can be universally assessed and some communities value certain objects for meanings gained within the context of particular performances, the art value system can be recognized as imposed. This imposition, as I have tried to show, has more than a lingering connection to colonial control and consumption of the First Nations lands.

Reid for his part embodied these contradictions. The way he saw his own position was as a bridge builder. At the end of the interview with Davidson by Halpin, Reid makes a very telling analogy between himself and Colonel Nicholson, played by Alec Guinness, in the 1957 film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. Reid recognizes that he might be building bridges for the enemy and that it is, in effect, “*a one-way street*.” However, even though he can see that, “*nobody sees beyond the images of the iconography*,” he does not see that the way in which he helped educate the non-Native public is, in part, responsible for and helps perpetuate this blindness. His solution is interesting. Reid suggests that, “*when you start making Northwest Coast art, you have to become involved in some way with the people*.”¹⁶⁰ With the indefinite “*you*”, Reid retains the universal position that the art is available to all. However, there is equally the indefinite responsibility of becoming “*involved*”. Clearly the problem lies, not in simply selling art objects that utilise First Nations crest imagery. The bridge is not the things themselves; it is the access and the perceived universal value. Just as the “*aesthetic of a culture*,” that Bennett describes, is not external to that culture, neither is the universal formalist narrative.¹⁶¹ That is, the power of the formal elements comes from a narrative constructed from within the modern colonial nation-state and is thus projected upon First Nations objects. Of course it would be curious to assume that First Nations do not see their crest images as aesthetically

¹⁶⁰ Duffek (2004, 87), emphasis in original.

¹⁶¹ Bennett (1993, 516).

pleasing. However, what is at stake is control of the image's potential for political potency in the "present-becoming-future."

I began this chapter with work focused on the revision of Reid's role in the "revival" of First Nations arts on the Northwest Coast. As was exposed through this inquiry, "revival" was not merely a construct, within which Reid was an active participant, but it was based upon older colonial constructions of First Nations culture. This opened the argument to delve deeper into the narrative of disappearance and cultural death, which Reid actively propagated through both his writing and in his educational lectures. Reid, himself, became a trope for the universally disembedded First Nations person—in as much as he was the central figure in the "revival". The "revival," in effect, confirmed the discourse of cultural death. This discourse, institutionally developed, had the effect of creating the perception that cultural death was a foregone conclusion because culture, as it had been applied to the First Nations, was constructed as a static, quantifiable entity that industrial progress made untenable. The "revival" was really a market revival in the non-First Nations community. Reid, in responds to a question by Halpin regarding being a "legend" for his role in the revival, angrily states, *"Don't go complaining about this \$1500 you got paid for that bracelet made in two days last week, because I made the same thing, only for five dollars, and we developed the market."*¹⁶² Reid seems to be angry with other producers of objects emblazoned with First Nations crest imagery because, presumably, he is able to sell his work for more. However, what is interesting is his insistence on the market and his role in its development. Halpin is talking about Reid as an 'elder' or role-model for Davison and the developing youth and Reid is talking about the non-First Nations art market. Reid's legacy might well be the

¹⁶² Duffek (2004, 83) emphasis in original.

reinvigoration of the market for First Nations crest imagery. Unfortunately, it appears to have been developed under the paternalistic guise of “revival”.

This has led my argument back to the centralisation of the modern nation-state. That is, Mackey describes the modern re-construction of folk or primitive culture and suggested that “[t]his particular concept of culture was possible because of the development of a ‘totalizing project’ that involved the entire adult population in the electoral process of a parliamentary democracy.”¹⁶³ That is, Mackey argues the centralizing movement of modernity produced an atmosphere where “folk” traditions, which persisted, were deemed “*survivals*” from the past.¹⁶⁴ However, this requires consensus. This construct played a part in the institutionalization of dichotomous divisions between the modern and the perceived primitive. The spatial design metaphor, of the primitive being the negative space or “foundation” upon which the modern is superimposed or constructed as the progressive, which Hawker uses is quite effective.¹⁶⁵ This brings me back to the 2002 referendum on First Nations land claims. The paternalistic nature of those questions puts the First Nations into one category and all the rest of British Columbia is not merely lumped together as another community, it is presupposed that British Columbians are the positive progressives and the First Nations are the negative space clinging to primitive traditions. Subsequently, Reid helped reify these traditions.

In this study I began by working through the relationship between the centralization of the modern nation-state, currency's role, and how in Canada the

¹⁶³ Mackey (1999, 152).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 151.

¹⁶⁵ Hawker (2003, 60). As described earlier in the chapter, Hawker argues that the primitive is the necessary opposite the “foundation upon and over which the industrial state is built.”

imagined/imagined First Nations person was utilized. The 1870 two dollar banknote, in the context of Confederation, helped me to consider the complex ideas surrounding currency as both a disseminator of nation and a tool in the modern industrial time-space compression. Through the work of Benedict I was able to recognize that the images of both general Montcalm and Wolf, although enemies, were able to be brought together in a national time that is elevated and linear. It is a time that joins disparate people, places and events in a lineage of progress. For the citizen there is the sense of simultaneity. One can be anywhere and come upon a national symbol and feel connected to the whole of the nation. The First Nations figure on the banknote belongs to the history of reproducing the First Nations as signifiers for the vast, seemingly untamed, geography of the so-called new world. These images were part of the narrative of disappearance. As noted with regards to the work of George Catlin in the United States and Benjamin West in Canada there was a sense that the semblance of the First Nations was being immortalised for posterity. As Kathryn Hight notes “Catlin has been called one of America’s first ethnologists”.¹⁶⁶ This is how art first took part in the institutionalization of the discourse of disappearance.

The Canadian nation-state, as a modern colonial construction, has been superimposed upon the First Nations. Reid, in his role as a bridge, does not bridge two politically present communities; rather he bridges the colonial perception of the First Nations past with the imposed “colonial present”¹⁶⁷. Currency helps facilitate this for, as discussed in earlier chapters, currency represents a national time where events, objects, texts become simultaneously present and past. Currency also creates a valuable link

¹⁶⁶ Hight (1990, 119)

¹⁶⁷ This phrase is taken from the title of Derek Gregory’s 2004 book *The Colonial Present*.

between the central government and all the inhabitants of the national territory. Currency permeates society as an economic tool of communication. Subsequently, all monetary transactions are dependent upon the trust relationship that can only be honoured by the federal government. Bill Reid has become part of that national past. As such, he confirms in every transaction utilizing the Canadian twenty, how First Nations traditions can be embraced, by and for all Canadians, from within the progressive present, as objects. That is, the transaction is successfully completed as long as First Nations are understood as belonging to a narrative of universal human progress and not as part of a persistent opposition to colonization.

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