

**ART AS NEGOTIATION
THE RECIPROCAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANINGS
IN THE ARGILLITE CARVINGS OF CHARLES EDENSHAW**

by

KELLY MARIE RANSOM
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Department of Fine Arts

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Dec. 30, 1993

ABSTRACT

The argillite carvings of Haida artist *Tahaygen* (Charles Edenshaw) can be viewed as a site of interaction and negotiation between the producer – a Native artist who lived during a time of tremendous cultural upheaval and change – and the consumer – curio collectors, anthropologists, and museum collectors who were members of the dominant Western society. This thesis examines the intercultural exchange of various messages between producer and consumer taking place within the object-site, with specific reference to three examples of Edenshaw's argillite work.

A discussion of the historical circumstances surrounding the production and consumption of argillite carvings is first presented to suggest the various different significations that the intercultural art object can hold for both artist and buyer. A model for analyzing the exchange of messages in the object is then explained, and applied to three examples of Edenshaw's argillite carvings. By considering the perspectives of artist and collector during this process of interchange, I attempt to explain how meanings can be reciprocally constructed as part of a *struggle*, on the parts of producer and consumer, to assert both individual and cultural identities, needs and desires. The intercultural object, in light of this reciprocal process, becomes a politically-charged arena for the negotiation and renegotiation of individual, societal and cultural positioning.

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1. Introduction: Dealing with "the Object"

My work as a graduate student in art history has focussed on characterizing how North American Native art has been codified and commodified in Western interpretive discourses and institutional collections and exhibitions. I have been interested in how Native-made objects were coveted by collectors (first as curios and specimens, and later as craft and fine art¹) and how these objects came to function *metonymically* (Clifford 1986; Dominguez 1986; Stewart 1984) as representative of entire cultures. The power of "the object" in these Eurocentric systems of representation is compelling. In museum collections and exhibits, and in the ensuing literature dealing with these collections, the materials gathered from Native artists have been used to "stand for" vast groups of people, to exemplify a social totality of Native culture, to impart an ideological coherency to the diverse social and political groups that make up Native populations. This profound discursive power prompts one to wonder, "how *can* scholars, in the context of intercultural art history, deal with the object? Given the postcolonial crisis of authority, how can we find a way to write and talk about art produced by individuals of another culture?"

The act of *collecting* Native-made objects (whether considered curios, artifacts, or art) has historically featured an almost fetishistic focus on "the object." Collection of these objects began during the first contacts between Native and European society in the 1500's, at which time they were sought as "curiosities" of the exotic, untamed Indian³, and continued throughout the 1700's and 1800's as contacts between the two societies increased. The zeal with which these objects were hunted, amassed and displayed in home interiors and "curio cabinets" during the late Victorian era is remarkable, and it has been suggested (Stewart 1984; Gordon 1984; Cohodas 1993) that this "curio craze" performed an important

ideological function in European society. By appropriating Native objects as souvenirs of their own past, alienated Westerners sought to re-create a sense of inner authenticity, to repair a self-identity that had been damaged by rapid industrialization, urban population explosion and capitalist commoditization taking place during the Victorian era.

Like private curio collecting, the discipline of ethnography has also, since its inception, centered its activity around "the object." Indeed, James Clifford has characterized ethnography as the *collection of cultures*, whereby entire societies are themselves treated as objects: objects to be studied, recorded and preserved (Clifford 1988: 218). During the so-called Museum Age of anthropology from 1880 to 1920 (Sturtevant 1969:622), the ethnographic focus on objects became particularly pronounced. During this period, anthropologists and ethnographers in the New World became overwhelmingly concerned with gathering material culture for institutional collections, a concern that has been outlined in great detail by Douglas Cole in *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (1985). Like the private curio hunters, these collectors were motivated by the discourse of preservation, whereby ostensibly "primitive" cultures were seen as living ancestors of modern European society, a fossilized glimpse into modern man's past that was rapidly disappearing under the influence of Western settlement. The collection of ceremonial and other "traditional" objects, as well as skulls and bones often blatantly stolen from Native gravesites, was considered of paramount importance to the scientific study and preservation of indigenous cultures.

Franz Boas, celebrated founder of professional anthropology in the United States (Jacknis, 1985: 75), was a major proponent in this effort. His development of anthropological method based on rigorous documentation techniques and attention to gathering cultural information such as myths and songs – in addition to objects – was founded on this desire "to preserve." Cole describes how Boas, in gathering objects and information from the Haida during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897, concentrated on the "scientific evaluation of specimens" carried out very much in the spirit of preservation:

Boas' team devoted much of their time to mythology and physical anthropology, especially to making plaster of paris casts of Indians' heads (a new practice and judged as 'the only feasible method of permanently preserving the vanishing type of American Native.') (Cole 1985:152).

And, as was noted as early as 1957 (Barbeau 1957: 177), the choices Boas and other anthropologists made about which objects to collect determined what would later be seen as "traditional culture." By selecting certain kinds of objects based on what was deemed to be "authentic" Indian culture, and sometimes actually *instructing* the Native artist about how to achieve this authenticity⁴, institutional collectors imposed their own biases to delimit tradition, often ignoring contemporary change in their efforts to preserve what was dying out, to reconstruct what had been lost. The collection of objects can thus be seen as a process of actually *creating tradition*, of defining and "fixing" entire cultures by metonymy. This creation is based not so much on contemporary cultures, but on reconstructions of Native "tradition" reflecting the desires and needs of the Euro-American/Canadian collectors (Dominguez 1986).

Once within the context of a museum collection, moreover, the object is subjected to additional codification in the discourses of museum classification and exhibition⁵. The display of cultures, dependent as it is on the objects collected, becomes primarily based *not* on the historically specific sociopolitical context of the producing culture itself, but on the Eurocentric contexts of "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) imposed on the culture during the collecting process. Susan Stewart has observed, further, that the linear ordering of the collection overrides the individual social history of the object's production and appropriation. Through the obfuscation or erasure of original social content and the imposition of a new content, the narrative of production is replaced by the narrative of classification. The quintessential expression of such a recontextualization is the museum collection, for "it is the museum, in its representativeness, which strives for authenticity and for closure of all space and temporality within the context at hand." (Stewart 1984:161).

A similar closure is enacted on the object by *writing*. The text – whether ethnographical, art historical or otherwise – seeks to encode the object in signs, to render the ineffable object comprehensible by bringing it into the world of language. Michel de Certeau discusses this process as a metaphor for the *enscription* of Native American culture by the colonizing European power in ethnographic texts and travel literature:

...What is initiated here is a colonization of the body by the discourse of power. This is *writing that conquers*. It will use the New World as if it were a blank, "savage" page on which Western desire will be written. It will transform the space of the other into a field of expansion for a system of production.... this writing fabricates Western history (de Certeau 1988: xxv. His emphasis.).

Although his nature-versus-culture construction is perhaps an example of Eurocentric simplification, de Certeau's point here is nevertheless a valuable one. Since initial contact, Native cultures have been "enscribed" by ethnographers and explorers into written texts. Myths, stories, songs and histories have been recorded in writing as part of the process of preservation discussed above, and as part of an attempt to contain and control the Other through the signifying power of language. In this way, writing can be said to have been a powerful weapon of the colonial enterprise⁶.

Much of the writing about Northwest Coast objects in particular has ventured to "interpret" these objects to reveal an underlying "meaning." Marjorie Halpin (1993) has observed that this trend is largely an outgrowth of the Boasian paradigm of representationism⁷, whereby all Northwest Coast art is assumed to represent something external, such as an animal or mythical creature, with the role of the interpreter being to discern what is being represented. According to Boas, the meaning of any Northwest Coast image can be determined through identification of "recognized symbols" or pictorial elements:

...the fundamental rule underlying the art is that the characteristic parts of the animal *must* be shown. Thus a beaver, which is characterized by the large incisors and by the tail, *must* contain these elements, no matter how the rest of the body may be treated. The killerwhale *must* show the large dorsal fin, no matter how the rest of the body may be presented (Boas quoted in Halpin 1993: 5. Emphases in the original.).

Halpin notes how Boas rejects conflicting Native explanations of designs because they do not coincide with his understanding of these recognized symbols, which "must" be used as clues to the true meaning of the image. This interpretive approach has been overwhelmingly influential in the field of Northwest Coast art study to date.

An example of the ongoing power of the "Boasian project" (Halpin 1993: 5) is Bill Holm's pivotal *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form* (1965). Holm's book has proven valuable in stimulating interest in and garnering attention for Northwest Coast art among Natives and non-Natives alike. However, its claim to reveal the underlying rules of the northern formline style is problematic. Based on the representationist reading initially asserted by Boas, Holm's analysis rivets the art neatly to an understood framework of seeing, and provides a system for the usage of specific design elements based on a meticulous scientific coding of four hundred museum "specimens" considered to represent traditional art. His codification of the artform is presented as a closed set of rules for understanding the artist's intentions, such as the definitive identification of various animal forms solely by noting certain recurring design elements. In this system of "reading," meaning is considered to be stable, fixed and unambiguous; Holm's interpretation of formline style is presented as an objective scientific effort that reveals the "truth" about what these images mean. His analysis has provided a how-to textbook for some Native artists seeking to re-create the traditional formline style, and has thus had considerable power in "creating" what is understood to be traditional formline design, and what is *continuing on* as northern Northwest Coast design today⁸. Recent findings have emphasized the problematic nature of Holm's system, however, by expanding the canon of "traditional" Northwest Coast art. The infrared photography and other image recovery techniques developed and implemented over the past year by Bill McLennan and Lyle Wilson at the UBC Museum of Anthropology have enabled the discovery of previously unseeable painted compositions on wooden boxes and panels from collections across North America and Europe. Many of these images do not neatly fit the rules as set out by Holm. What was previously thought of as a fixed

system for understanding traditional Northwest Coast design, though of course still valuable, will now need to be reconceptualized.

Holm's system of "rules" is an example of Northwest Coast art scholarship based on the Boasian paradigm of representationism that has been intent on "fixing" the meaning of images by imposing a supposedly objective authority without being sufficiently self-conscious about that imposition. I think it is clear that, with recent developments in critical and theoretical awareness (Jacques Derrida's faulty metaphysics of the origin, Roland Barthes' death of the author, etc.⁹), so-called "interpretations" of art that claim to reveal a transcendental signified can no longer be seriously done. It has become similarly problematic to claim authority over the "voice of the Other" by unselfconsciously interpreting objects made by individuals who are members of another society.

How then to deal with the object? Johannes Fabian articulates the difficulty inherent in the process of "othering" that takes place in anthropological and art historical writing by characterizing the writer's dilemma in the following terms: "if writing is part of a system of intellectual and political oppression of the Other, how can we avoid contributing to that oppression if we go on writing? Is there a guarantee that oppressors will be less oppressive just because they become self-conscious?" (Fabian 1990:767-768). I must say that I share Fabian's unease about this seemingly inescapable complicity. From my own position within the discourse of Western art history, and as a Euro-Canadian, I have wrestled with this dilemma throughout my graduate work. However, rather than choose *not* to participate in the discourse (which is certainly a viable though for me an unproductive option), I have attempted to find a way of accepting this complicity as *the very means* of defusing, or at least diffusing, its associated oppressions. What I've been concerned with in this project is contributing to a moving-forward of the discourse of intercultural art history *from within that discourse*, attempting to open up a discussion of the presence of the Native artist rather than creating a structure solely upon the exclusions perpetuated in so much existing scholarship.

My project is to focus on a selection of argillite carvings produced in the last two decades of the 19th Century by Haida artist *Tahaygen* (Charles Edenshaw), and to explore how these objects can be viewed as a site of interaction and negotiation between the producer – a Native artist who lived during a time of tremendous cultural upheaval and change – and the consumer – curio collectors, anthropologists, and museum collectors who were members of the dominant Western culture. I am aware that my choice of objects for examination imposes a relational structure on these objects that essentially “creates” a meaning itself¹⁰. Recognizing that this is unavoidable, I want to assert that my study should not be accepted as an objective presentation of fact or an attempt to reveal some kind of “truth” message. What I’m trying to do in this project is to open up an area of discussion which I consider to have been closed down in prior scholarship; to create a space for talking about other possibilities, other voices and other messages intermingling within the object. My choice of “examples” is openly based on this agenda.

The objects I have selected are carvings in argillite, a black, slate-like stone traditionally thought to be quarried only on Haida lands, but actually also found in a number of other loci¹¹. Argillite pipes, small figure sculptures, plates, bowls and compotes were carved by the Haida for sale to European traders perhaps as early as the 1820's (MacNair and Hoover 1984: 14). These objects were collected by explorers, traders, settlers, curio hunters, and private curio dealers from across Europe and America, and now reside in private and museum collections all over the world. The particular argillite objects I will discuss in this paper are attributed to Charles Edenshaw on the basis of stylistic analysis and limited contemporaneous documentation. An identifiable “hand” for Edenshaw has been defined and codified by such scholars as Holm, and most sources readily agree on this identification¹².

Existing art historical scholarship dealing with argillite objects has been almost exclusively concerned with identification of iconography and individual “hands” such as Edenshaw's, and discussion of production and collection dates. I am thinking here of such work as Carole Kaufmann's *Changes in Haida Indian Argillite Carvings* (1969); Robin Wright's work

on argillite pipes (1977, 1979, 1980); Leslie Drew and Douglas Wilson's *Argillite: Art of the Haida* (1980); Holm's 1967, 1981, and 1983; and Peter MacNair and Alan Hoover's *Magic Leaves: A History of Haida Argillite Carving* (1984). Many of these texts have also expanded upon identification of iconography to interpret the images carved in Haida argillite objects as a reflection of social and cultural changes. Carol Sheehan's 1981 *Pipes that Won't Smoke, Coal that Won't Burn* is an example of this methodological tendency, although the other writers I mentioned also participate, to varying degrees, in this interpretive investigation.

Iconographic analysis is a traditional strategy of art historical decontextualization that has recently come under attack, particularly in the case of intercultural art objects. Ruth Phillips has identified one of the reasons for this: "There are so many problems with the textual sources available to us in studying Native American historic art that they call into question the whole iconographic process." (quoted in Cohodas 1993: 98). These problems, in particular, call up questions of authority: who is to say what these images represent? Are we to suppose that institutional "experts" are privy to special knowledge about their significations? Add to this the theoretical problems now generally associated with unselfconscious "readings" that I mentioned previously, and you have a pretty strong argument for avoiding iconographic interpretation altogether, particularly when it comes to intercultural art histories wherein artist and historian are not members of the same society. Discerning the "meaning" of objects (as many of these art historical texts have indeed attempted to do, based on iconography) becomes impossible to accomplish, not only because of the problems associated with iconographic interpretation, but also because there are a multitude of other things to consider when dealing with an intercultural exchange:

Meaning is a much broader issue than iconography. In the marketplace for intersocietal curios, value had to be determined on the basis of signification since the objects were made for display rather than utilitarian functions. Indeed, collectors were purchasing the significations of the object much more than its material form (Cohodas 1993: 98).

The intercultural object, made by a producer in one culture expressly for consumption in a second culture, means different things to artist and buyer. The consumer's understanding of the signification of the object is based on his or her own individual, social and cultural context, as well as on the needs and desires that initially mobilize the act of consumption. To the producer, the signification of the object is a function of market demand and his or her own motivations (both individual and cultural) for making art. These significations meet and intermingle within the object-site, creating reciprocal "meanings" that cannot be interpreted as a univocal and unambiguous expression, but that reveal themselves polysemically¹³ in the web of significations generated by both producer and consumer.

My agenda is to characterize this web of meanings that is reciprocally spun by artist and consumer around the argillite carvings I have chosen to discuss. In this project, I will be particularly concerned with demonstrating how "the object" can be seen as a product and process of negotiation between producer and consumer based on the intercultural exchange of various messages. Note my emphasis on the *process* of message exchange rather than on *meanings*; this is an important distinction. I cannot (of course) fully characterize the context from which Edenshaw perceived his work (i.e. understand his intentions), and cannot attempt to discover and proclaim the true "meaning" of his art. What I can do, however, is speak to the interchange of ideas between Edenshaw and the Euro-American/Canadian buyers of his argillite carvings. I can do this because "these objects are intersocietal in conception, made by members of one society to communicate to consumers in another society and thus designed in part to convey messages the consumers wished to receive." (Cohodas 1993: 98). Intended for consumption by Euro-Americans, Haida argillite carvings serve to convey messages that were intended to cross the cultural boundary. I will thus take a look at how these exchanges operate to create multiple meanings, structuring my study around identification and discussion of the *process* with which these messages are transferred.

My methodological approach, to view the object as a site of intercommunication and negotiation between producer and consumer, is inspired by the work of Bennetta Jules-

Rosette who has written about African "tourist art" in terms of its semantic construction within the economic system of commodity exchange. Her model is based on the assumption, after Michel de Certeau, that "the consumption of art and culture is an interpretive process." (de Certeau quoted in Jules-Rosette 1984: 196). According to Jules-Rosette, consumers do not receive images passively, but participate in their creation through semantic contributions made in the purchasing decision. Similarly, the producers of "tourist art" are not limited to a mechanical response to market demand, but are engaged in a dialogue with the consumer in constantly reassessing and rearranging the culturally encoded possibilities for communicating particular messages (Jules-Rosette 1984: 56). Like Jules-Rosette's objects of study, argillite carvings are "tourist art": *commodities* produced by a Native person specifically for sale to White buyers. They are commodities by destination, in Jacques Maquet's terminology (Appadurai 1986:15) and, as such, they have been treated differently by anthropologists and art historians than objects considered to be more "traditional." A reductionist model of art-for-sale has structured this bias, in which "tourist art" is seen as a mere derivation from the more "authentic" forms of traditional or "high" art. Argillite works have been dismissed as a mechanical response of Native artists to the demands of their market, an approach that ignores the rich intermingling of messages taking place in the commodity as a result of its intercultural exchange.

I will begin my paper with a discussion of the historical circumstances surrounding the production and consumption of Edenshaw's argillite work in order to present a way of understanding the various different significations that the intercultural art object can hold for both artist and buyer. I will then move to a formulation of my own methodology for examining the interaction of producer and consumer within the object-site, and apply this methodology to three of Edenshaw's argillite works, carved plates created by the artist in the 1880's or early 1890's. These pieces, somewhat of a stylistic aberration in Edenshaw's corpus because of their highly narrative mode of expression, can be seen as a site and process of message exchange between producer and consumer, wherein the relationship between the two is actively negotiated and restated. By analyzing the dual perspectives

of artist and collector during this process of interchange, I intend to demonstrate how meaning is reciprocally constructed as part of a *struggle*, on the parts of producer and consumer, to assert both individual and cultural identities, needs and desires. In so doing, I seek to provide an alternative to existing interpretations of argillite carvings, and contribute to a necessary reconsideration of Northwest Coast "tourist art" objects and their importance as markers of individual and societal change.

2 Characterizing the Context of Production

Characterizing the social, political and cultural context in which Edenshaw worked involves a detailed review of the artist's own biographical history, as well as a more general discussion of the history of cultural contact between the Haida and Euro-Americans on the Northwest Coast. Both of these projects have been taken on in the past, the latter most notably in Wayne Suttles (1990), Ruth Smith (1983), Mary Lee Stearns (1981), and Florence Edenshaw Davidson in Margaret Blackman (1981)¹⁴; and as secondary to art study in Kaufmann (1969), Drew and Wilson (1980), Sheehan (1981), and MacNair and Hoover (1984). The former project involving study of the Edenshaw family in particular has been approached most usefully by Susan Thomas (1967) and Blackman (1981), though the Edenshaws are mentioned and briefly discussed by many of the writers dealing with Haida ethnohistory of this period. Contemporaneous texts on the Haida include John Swanton (1905), George Dawson (1880), James Swan (1876), Newton Chittenden (1884), Boas (1890), William Collison (1915) and Charles Harrison (1925), each of whom, however briefly, also mentions the Edenshaw family.

The received histories of Charles Edenshaw from these various ethnographic, art historical, biographical and/or popular sources create a conglomerate portrait of the artist that is of questionable use in characterizing the production context. The writers cited above are all non-Native, and their Eurocentric texts necessarily create a limited and biased picture of Haida society. Nevertheless, these sources are all we have to work with and must be considered essential to discussions of Haida history or the individual biography of Edenshaw. *How to work with this dilemma?* These histories must be treated critically, and I intend to follow Derrida's suggestion by presenting them "under erasure"¹⁵ to indicate both their denotations (that which is stated outright) and their connotations (that which is not stated directly, but communicated *indirectly* through the constructions, stereotypes and exclusions made by the writer in each of the various texts). In this way, rather than re-presenting a narrative of Haida history based on problematic sources, I intend to pursue a non-linear

discussion of how the history of Haida society, and the Edenshaw family in particular, has been constructed in both primary and secondary literature. Rather than attempt to fully characterize Edenshaw's own individual and societal perspective based on this discussion (an impossible task), I will highlight some of the features of the constructed context of production that may prove helpful in discussing Edenshaw's role, as producer, in the reciprocal construction of meaning taking place in his argillite work. Note that because the contextual information gathered from these primary and secondary sources provides as much insight on the consumer as on the producer, investigating the historical situation as constructed by observers may give us a useful (if necessarily limited) understanding of the particular interests Edenshaw *and* his various Euro-American/Canadian buyers brought to the negotiation table.

Most sources agree that Charles Edenshaw lived from about 1839 (note that this date is ambiguous because it was not recorded contemporaneously) to 1920, spending most of his life in the town of Masset on the northernmost of the Queen Charlotte Islands, Graham Island¹⁶. His father, *K'lajangk'una*, was of the *Kwaduwas* or *Nikw nqiwe* [Davidson in Blackman, 1982: 60-61; Barbeau's *Naikkum-qegawai* (Barbeau 1957: 90); Swanton's R 13 (1909: 270); ("Those born at Rosespit")] clan of the Raven lineage from Skidegate. His mother, *Qawkuna*, was of the *Shongalth* family of the *Sta' stas* Eagle clan [Swanton's E 21 (1909: 275); also known as *Stast'a - aas Saang gaahl* (Harris 1991:)] centered in *K'yuusdaa* or Kiusta on the northwest tip of the island. His maternal uncle, who had inherited the name of *It-in-so* or *Eda 'nsa* (deriving from a Tlingit word meaning "melting ice from a glacier" or "waterfall" according to Barry Gough 1982: 132), was the lineage chief of the *Sta' stas* clan and town chief of Kiusta. He was later baptized as Albert Edward Edenshaw.

When he was born, Charles Edenshaw¹⁷ was given the name *Dah égin* (Blackman 1982: 70) or *Da-axiigang* (Harris 1991) ["noise in the housepit"], which in Euro-American/Canadian transcription was generally interpreted as *Tahaygen*. Other names he received during his lifetime were *Skil'wxan jas* ["fairies coming to you as in a big wave" (Davidson in Blackman

1982: 53)] and *N ngkwigetklats* ["they gave ten potlatches for him"]. Many sources report that Edenshaw suffered an illness during his early childhood (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72, for example). In later texts, this biographical feature is perpetuated, even enhanced: Barbeau quotes a 1947 statement by a Mrs. Josephine Hambleton Dunn:

"His childhood was sad because he grew ill, and all his relatives died except his mother. She used to get oolachen grease in the spring and gather seaweed, which she dried. These foods and her care restored her son to health. She worked hard, for they were very poor." (Barbeau 1957: 158).

This statement, made about one hundred years after the fact, may have been constructed to emphasize the hardship suffered by the artist in his youth. However, Edenshaw's daughter Florence Edenshaw Davidson also reports that her father was weak and sickly in his youth and did not participate in fishing, hunting and raiding activities (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72). Later in life, it seems that he continued to avoid these kinds of activities, devoting all of his time to art production and marketing. For example, the Edenshaw family traded for and bought the salmon they needed for the winter, rather than having Charles join in the fishing expeditions. Davidson remembers: "Falltime my parents didn't go with the other people up to Ain River to fish for salmon. We used to buy our salmon from other people." (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 83). Again, he did not participate in the halibut fishing like the other Haida men: "...at the beginning of April they left for Yatz, a former seal hunters' camp where the Haida now cultivated potato gardens. Here the men fished for halibut (except Charlie Edenshaw who continued to carve), while the women planted their gardens." (Blackman 1982: 57). The marked difference in work activity may be a function of his personal choice to earn a living through carving, or it may be a result of his inexperience with hunting and fishing activities due to his childhood illness.

According to the account of his daughter, Edenshaw began carving one winter in Skidegate while ill and confined to bed (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72). Whether it was during the illness mentioned above is unclear. Edenshaw was able to obtain the slate freely from the argillite quarry at Slatechuck Creek near Skidegate as his mother's family owned the lands

surrounding the site. Barbeau reports the statement of Mrs. Susan Gray, daughter of argillite carver George Gunya, in 1947 (again, a statement made many years after Edenshaw's death):

No one but my father's old friends in Skidegate were allowed to come and get slate, and they did not have to pay for it. But the others, from Massett and from the villages to the South, had to buy it. As Charlie Edenshaw's sister belonged to Skidegate, he was like one of our own people." (Barbeau 1957:47).

Many sources attempt to construct an artistic heritage for Edenshaw. For example, his father was reportedly renowned as a canoe-builder and carver (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 69), which is mentioned as a possible inspiration for the young artist. Barbeau also notes that *Qanrhwat-Tsingé*, a famous argillite carver from Skidegate during the early years of the artform's development, was part of his father's family. "As Edenshaw learned a great deal from his father's people," Barbeau observes, "Tsingé probably had something to do with his training." (Barbeau 1957: 90). Another inspiration for the artist constructed in the literature is his uncle, Albert Edward Edenshaw. Charles moved permanently to his uncle's household when he was about "eighteen or nineteen years old"¹⁸ (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72), where, Barbeau tells us, he learned the myths of Raven or *Yehl* from his uncle, who had "adopted Yehl as his own culture-hero." (Barbeau 1953:158). Albert was also apparently known as a carver: Barbeau tells us that "Charlie Edenshaw's uncle, Albert Edenshaw, had been a leading iron- and coppersmith; he was among the best carvers of tall totem poles in the islands." (Barbeau 1957:156). It should be noted here that this construction of an artistic heritage for Charles Edenshaw functions to legitimate his curio production as part of a long "tradition" of art-making, and may be more a reflection of the biases of the cited sources than an accurate report of the activities of his relatives.

Edenshaw probably had his first contact with Europeans very early in his lifetime at Skidegate, as traders were frequent visitors to Skidegate and the argillite trade had already grown to become a substantial industry in the area (MacNair and Hoover 1984: 33). After he moved to Kiusta, these contacts with Europeans no doubt continued because Charles' uncle, Albert Edward Edenshaw, was considered an important personage by the Europeans, and was

contacted by them to conduct "chief-to-chief" discussions and meetings. Charles Harrison, in his book *Ancient Warriors of the North Pacific*, tells us that Albert Edenshaw "was a man of great influence in the neighbourhood" and he was "treated with the greatest consideration." (Harrison 1925:174) Albert was also frequently asked to assist White explorers and traders in navigating the waters around the Charlottes. For example, he acted as pilot for George Dawson of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1878 and assisted Dawson with charting the coastline of the Queen Charlottes (Dawson 1880)¹⁹.

Reverend W.H. Collison was the pioneer missionary among the Haida at Masset, travelling by himself to the island and establishing the Christian Church there in 1876. He mentions having contact with "Chief Edenshaw" (Albert), as does his successor, Reverend Charles Harrison. In fact, Albert ostensibly became a "personal and respected friend" of Reverend Harrison (Harrison 1925: 165) who wrote of Chief Edenshaw:

I have no hesitation in saying that it is principally due to his manlike ways, his influence and example, that the Haidas have taken so readily to the ways and customs of the Whites, and that at the present moment they are one of the most advanced and law-abiding races on the coast (Harrison, quoted in Blackman 1982: 66).

It should be noted here that Harrison's approval of Edenshaw is linked, in this text, to Albert Edenshaw's interest in promoting good relations between the Haida and Euro-Americans. This interest is also demonstrated by an episode recorded in many sources in which he defended the captain and crew of the *Susan Sturgis*, a ship he had agreed to pilot from Skidegate to Masset, against the onslaught of attacking Haidas under the command of Masset town chief *Wiha* or *Weah*. The captain of the ship later gave Albert a letter recounting how he had saved their lives, and the text of this letter provided the epitaph that was engraved on a memorial stone for Albert Edenshaw after his death (Blackman 1982: 66).

An interesting article by Barry Gough throws new light on Albert Edward Edenshaw and his strategies to obtain power and prestige as a chief. I want to mention Gough's points briefly here, as Albert Edward's self-construction as a great and powerful chief through strategic

interaction with Euro-Americans is essential to how Charles Edenshaw would later build his own identity in relationship to the colonizing society. Gough discusses the *Susan Sturgis* episode with reference to the statement of the Hudson's Bay Company trader John Work who oversaw the release and ransom payment for the crew of the ship:

Work and other whites who knew these Indians were of the opinion that Edenshaw was party to the whole affair and that it had been ascertained...that 'he shared in the plunder.' ...Some Haida later told Collison that it was on Edenshaw's orders that the schooner was attacked and taken (Gough 1982: 135).

This strategy, wherein Albert Edward was able to benefit through acquisition of property from the ransom payment and still come across as a friend and saviour of the White crew, seems to have caused puzzled admiration among those investigating the episode. For example, Commander James C. Prevost, sent to investigate the plunder of the *Susan Sturgis* in 1853, notes of Albert Edenshaw that he was "decidedly the most advanced Indian I have met with on the Coast: quick, cunning, ambitious, crafty and, above all, anxious to obtain the good opinion of the White men." (quoted in Gough 1982: 135). Another investigator, William Hills, noted:

He has great good sense and judgement, very quick, and is subtle and cunning as the serpent. Unfortunately like all his countrymen he has no perception of right and wrong, but what self interest dictates: he is ambitious and leaves no stone unturned to increase his power and property (quoted in Gough 1982: 136).

Prevost's investigation, although it could not prove Edenshaw's involvement due to the conflicting testimonies of the parties involved, thus generated some key contemporaneous texts that provide valuable information about Albert Edward Edenshaw. From these texts emerges a picture of an individual who appears to have been operating strategically in his activities with the White man in order to increase his power and prestige. His knowing complicity with (and manipulation of) Euro-American agendas, such as the Church's desire to convert the "heathen," explorers' requirements to navigate through local waters, and traders' needs to obtain trade goods, served not only to legitimate Edenshaw in Euro-

American eyes, but also perhaps to increase his status in relation to other Haida within his own society.

It should be noted that Albert Edward's status as a "great chief" was not universally accepted among the Haida, and that his particular manner of increasing prestige may not have sat well with some of his contemporaries who were less enthusiastic about adopting the White man's ways wholeheartedly. Although we do not have substantial contemporaneous documentation of this dissenting viewpoint, we do know that some of Edenshaw's own people testified against him in the *Susan Sturgis* inquiry (Gough 1982: 132). In addition, Stearns notes that Albert Edward's claim to be "the greatest chief of all the Haidas" (as reported by Chittenden) was looked upon with skepticism by other Haida: "It was part of the political game for chiefs to glorify themselves and the people treated such extravagant statements with scorn. So preposterous was Edenshaw's claim to be the great chief of Masset during Chief Weah's [town chief of Masset's] tenure that no one bothered to correct the White visitors who readily accepted it." (Stearns 1981: 228). Further, Stearns' field work in the Masset area in the 1960's and 1970's indicated to her that "claims to highest rank by Edenshaw's children and grandchildren on the basis of their paternal ancestor's achievements and pretensions were and are angrily rejected by other [Masset] villagers." (Stearns 1981: 231). Albert Edward, while recognized as a powerful hereditary chief of the Sta' stas lineage who had also won the chiefship of the multi-lineage village of Kiusta while in his youth (Gough 1982: 132), was definitely not considered by the Masset Haida to be a more powerful figure than the town chief. Albert Edward's depiction in the literature as "an extremely wealthy and powerful chief" (for example, in Blackman 1982: 54), is thus likely more a function of his relationship with the White man (reflecting European impressions of his power) than his true status among the Haida. This is an important point to consider: the societal status inherited by Charles Edenshaw from his uncle, constructed as it was on a knowing complicity with Euro-American agendas, likely had an important effect on the way in which Charles structured his own self-identity as an artist.

Albert Edward Edenshaw had several houses besides the largest in Kiusta, and the Edenshaw household moved around frequently to take advantage of certain properties (such as fishing sites and potato cultivations) and for economic advantage. This nomadic movement appears most prominently in the literature to have occurred after the 1862 smallpox epidemic, which raged throughout the Queen Charlottes and elsewhere along the Northwest Coast. The Native population in the Charlottes was sharply reduced as a result of this epidemic, which was only one in a series of epidemics that hit the area during the 1800's. Charles Edenshaw and most of Albert Edward's household managed to avoid succumbing to the disease, but a large number of Haida died during this period, not only from smallpox but also as a result of other factors. Alcoholism, prostitution, and increased intertribal conflict taking place throughout the late 1800's in larger population centers such as Victoria, where Haida from the Queen Charlottes gathered to trade and work, served to further increase the mortality rate. As a result of these combinative pressures, the Haida population fell from an estimated 8,428 in 1842, to as little as 588 by 1915 (Boyd 1990: 255). Although the Edenshaw family's movements prior to the epidemic are not thoroughly documented, we have ample documentation reporting that the household moved frequently among its properties in the years following 1862. These moves were likely prompted by changing economic advantages in these various areas. For example, Dawson reports that "The people are abandoning that place [Kung] for this [Yatza], because, as was explained to me by their chief. Edensaw [Albert Edward], they can get more trade here, as many Indians come across from the North." (Dawson 1880: 155). They moved to Kung in 1863, then to Yatza, then Tou Hill near Rose Spit, then finally to Masset in 1884. The move to Masset, Smith suggests, was initiated to take advantage of educational and religious facilities in that community (Smith 1983: 46). During this time, Haida from all over the Charlottes were moving away from their small villages to the centers of Masset and Skidegate, as Western colonization broke up former social patterns and families sought the economic advantages and municipal facilities of the larger centers. Masset was the site of a Hudson Bay Company trading post, the headquarters of the Commissioner of the Peace for the British government, and the location of a newly-established Anglican mission.

After the Sta' stas Eagles moved to Masset, the Edenshaws apparently adopted Christianity quickly. The influx of the Christian Church among the Haida is reported in most sources to have been the single most powerful manifestation of Euro-American/Canadian influence on Haida lifestyle and cultural practices. Reverend W.H. Collison, first missionary among the Haida, writes about their conversion to Christianity in his book, *In the Wake of the War Canoe* (1915) which is notably subtitled: *A Stirring Record of Forty Years Successful Labour, Peril and Adventure Amongst the Savage Indian Tribes of the Pacific Coast, and the Piratical Headhunting Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C.* Conversion, Collison writes, was accomplished under the guise of medicine. The traditional medicine men came to be seen as lesser in power than the new God, who could prevent the spread of the disease through vaccination. The presence and pressure of the Church among the Haida imposed many cultural changes. Traditional Haida practices, such as totem pole raising and potlatches, were challenged and eroded. "Church socials" and "dinner parties" were set in place as substitutes for potlatches and feasts; the placement of tombstones on proper burial sites replaced the erection of memorial poles; and the singing of hymns replaced the "heathen" dances and songs of the traditional culture. Collison writes in 1879 about the success of such efforts:

On the arrival of the Indians from the other villages before Christmas, the usual custom of dancing with painted faces and naked slaves with their bodies blackened casting property into the water was dispensed with and I had trained about 100 adults and children to sing the anthem "How beautiful upon the mountains." (quoted in Blackman 1971: 51).

Further changes encouraged by the Church include an erosion of extended family residence and matrilineal descent in favour of nuclear family residence and patrilineal descent; a negation of mythic explanations for natural occurrences in the world; the introduction of the English language and emphasis placed on literacy; abandonment of the potlatch system as a means of affirming identity; and changes in puberty rituals and a resultant dwindling of female power in the culture (Blackman 1982: 48). New political and economic structures were also pervasive during this time. The 1876 "Indian Act," for example, outlined legislation for the control of the Native population by the Canadian government, and led to such

structures as the Indian Reserve Commission system which in turn brought about the splitting up of communal properties and the reduction of lineage authority. The appointment of Indian Agents to mediate contact between the Natives and the Whites in the 1880's marks the beginning of a period of close government supervision over the Haida and their lifestyle (Blackman 1982: 150-151).

Charles Edenshaw and his wife, *K'woiy ng*, had married in a Haida ceremony in the early 1870's, and they symbolically reenacted the ceremony in the Catholic Church in 1885. *K'woiy ng* was baptised "Isabella Edenshaw" and *Tahaygen* named "Charles Edenshaw" by Reverend Charles Harrison, the successor to Collison, just prior to the Christian ceremony (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72). The very first convert of the Church had been Albert's son *Cowhoe* or *Kahu*, who was "baptised by the name of George and became the first Haida Catechist, and eventually the first teacher of their own race in the school at Masset." (Harrison 1925:175). He was also appointed the first Peace Officer to help enforce the laws of the Canadian government in the Masset area. Isabella's brother, baptised Henry Edenshaw, was also quick to adopt Euro-American/Canadian ways and beliefs. It was Henry who provided the English names for all of Charles and Isabella Edenshaw's children, while Charles provided the Haida names (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 76).

Davidson (in Blackman 1982) provides the most useful information about Charles Edenshaw's children. According to her accounts, the Edenshaws had a total of ten children (two boys and eight girls), but one of the boys and three of the girls died early in childhood. The second son, *Ginawen* (Robert), drowned at age 18. Robert had been a favorite of his father's because of his talents as a carver and desire to carry on his father's artistic work. Edenshaw also had an heir, the son of his sister in Skidegate who had married a White trader. His name was Charles Gladstone and he came to live with Charles and his family for two years in the 1890's, but eventually decided to renounce the chiefship that would have been his birthright and become a commercial fisherman in Skidegate. As a result, Edenshaw had neither sons nor nephews

to assist with household duties and, following his succession to the title of lineage chief of the Sta'stas, to carry on the chiefship after his death (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 74, 83).

Although the Sta' stas clan had been greatly reduced in numbers over the years, with the position of lineage chief no longer considered as powerful as the town chief as discussed earlier, it is reported that Charles Edenshaw inherited his uncle's title in 1894 and was recognized by his own people as a prominent citizen in Masset (Barbeau 1957: 158). He earned all his income by carving, although it must be noted that his wife and daughters also worked to support the family. Nevertheless, Barbeau tells us that he "made a great deal of money, bought a sailing boat, and built two houses." (Barbeau 1957:158). His wealth was not overtly comparable to that of his uncle Albert Edward Edenshaw, whose ostentatious display of property and riches was continually used to enhance social leadership, but Charles and his family did hold a number of potlatches (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 72 and 84). He had many commissions for his work, and he travelled to Victoria, Washington, and Alaska to fill orders and sell his carvings (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 80-81).

Although he did not sign any of his pieces, Charles Edenshaw's many contacts with museum collectors and anthropologists have left us contemporaneous record of many of his works. In 1897, he served as informant to Franz Boas, relating Haida myths and explaining their depiction in designs for blanket borders, tattoos, and art objects (Boas 1927). In 1900, along with his brother-in-law Henry Edenshaw, he provided much the same assistance to J.R. Swanton, the Haida ethnographer for the Jesup North Pacific Expedition (Swanton 1905a). Cole (1985) provides the most valuable source of information about the Euro-American/Canadian ethnographers and museum collectors with which Edenshaw came into contact. According to Cole, these included George Dawson, the Canadian government geologist who mapped the coastline of the Queen Charlottes in the 1870's with the assistance of Albert Edward Edenshaw and who collected from the Haida in 1878; James Swan, who travelled to Masset in the summer of 1883 to gather legends and myths and who also hired Albert as pilot; Franz Boas on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History in 1886, 1888, 1897, and

1900; James Deans, a museum collector hired by Boas to collect Haida material for Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition in 1893; Deans again, with George Dorsey of the Chicago Field Museum in 1897, who purchased art objects and carving tools from Charles Edenshaw; Swanton and C.F. Newcombe in 1900 as mentioned above; and Newcombe again in 1901 and 1902 acting on behalf of both Dorsey at the Field Museum and Boas at the American Museum.

Although we have less contemporaneous documentation for it, Edenshaw likely conducted a greater proportion of his business with private "curio" dealers, tourists, and collectors. He had a number of local "patrons" as well, who were in close contact with the artist and who purchased works from him on a regular basis. Examples of these (again, most usefully summarized in Cole 1985) are Reverend William Collison (who also received argillite and other objects as gifts from Edenshaw), the Port Essington trader Robert Cunningham, the Victoria curio dealer A.A. Aaronson, and the Masset Indian Agent Thomas Deasy, each of whom we know collected objects from Edenshaw. Although documentation of these meetings is scarce (existing largely as museum accession notes crediting the original collector of a particular object²⁰), it is very likely that Edenshaw accepted commissions from and sold works into this market. The particular agendas of these groups of consumers are discussed in the next chapter of my paper.

3. Characterizing the Context of Consumption

Buyers of Edenshaw's commodities included two primary groups of people: curio collectors and private dealers; and anthropologists and museum-hired collectors. In this chapter of my paper, I will examine these two groups of consumers in order to propose a way of understanding the various significations that the intercultural object could hold for its different buyers. Examples of Edenshaw's argillite work will be invoked throughout to demonstrate how these significations operate to satisfy the consumer's particular needs and desires, and stimulate demand for certain kinds of objects.

Characterizing the "consumption context" associated with Edenshaw's argillite work ideally entails a broader discussion of the general social, economic and political forces in Euro-American/Canadian culture that mobilized the desire for the Other as a means of reifying Western cultural identity. An analysis of the development of the late capitalist need for cultural commodification based on the ideologies of colonialism, industrialism and tourism is certainly crucial to a complete understanding of the curio trade phenomenon. However, since this work has already been undertaken at length (Jules-Rosette 1984; Clifford 1986; Cohodas 1993), I do not intend to dwell upon a discussion of these issues here. Instead, I will move directly to a specific analysis of the groups of Euro-American/Canadian buyers involved in the consumption of Haida argillite carvings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the various needs and desires that motivated their purchases. In this analysis, I will be less concerned with drawing a detailed historical picture, as this too has been accomplished elsewhere (Sheehan 1981; MacNair and Hoover 1984; Cole 1985). My contribution will be to focus on those aspects of the "consumption context" that perform a function in the process of intercultural negotiation taking place between the artist and the collector.

3.1 The Argillite Medium

Edenshaw produced utilitarian objects in other media (primarily wood) for his family's own use²¹ and for sale to Haidas and other Native groups such as the Tsimshian²², in addition to producing these objects for consumption by Euro-American/Canadian buyers. Argillite, however, was a medium expressly reserved for intercultural objects that were purposefully carved for Western consumption. In certain instances, argillite objects might be sold to a Native buyer but, during Edenshaw's time, this happened only when the Native buyer was acting as middleman. Swanton (1905: 58) notes, for example, that argillite carvings were a hot trade item with mainland Native groups because they could in turn be traded lucratively to White collectors.

The history of the consumption of Haida argillite carving, demonstrating the shifts in style and form incorporated by the artists in adjusting to the demands of the marketplace, has been well examined (Kaufmann 1969; Wright 1977; Sheehan 1981; MacNair and Hoover 1984). The earliest buyers of argillite carvings were the fur traders visiting the Northwest Coast, who had almost completely exhausted the supply of sea otter pelts from the Queen Charlottes area by the 1830's. In search of new trade items to support the burgeoning desire for potlatch wealth and recognition, the Haida began producing small carvings in carbonaceous slate, likely during the 1820's and 1830's. These carvings became very popular with the traders, perhaps as a result of the unusual character of the argillite medium (which was thought to be quarried only on the Queen Charlottes¹¹) or the intriguing iconography of interlaced humans and animals that the Haida initially incorporated.

3.2 The Burgeoning Curio Trade

By the 1880's, the trade in argillite curios had expanded to include tourists, adventurers and private collectors; local shopkeepers, trading post agents and hotel proprietors; and a network of curio dealers and middlemen who bought from the Native artists on a regular basis. Cole discusses the rise in the tourist art market in southern Alaska during this period, noting that most of the excursion steamers did not stop along the British Columbia coast

but "as early as 1881 Jacobsen had found Skidegate greatly affected by the tourist trade; the next year Swan was impressed by tourism's effect upon his collecting." (Cole 1985: 96). The popularity of argillite carvings continued to grow among these new groups of consumers. Argillite curios were literally hunted down by tourists on excursions to Alaska and casual visitors touring the Northwest Coast. While gold and silver were the most popular items for purchase (Cole 1985: 97), argillite was certainly bought in significant quantities, as evinced by the large number of argillite objects that have been donated and sold to ethnological museums worldwide by private curio collectors.

Edenshaw may have produced argillite objects for the tourist market while he and his family were in Ketchikan, Alaska. His daughter Florence remembers, "When I was little we went to Ketchikan summers so my dad could carve and my mother work at the saltery there." (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 80). He also sold argillite objects to local curio dealers such as George Cunningham in Port Essington (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 81) and A.A. Aaronson in Victoria²⁰, who likely re-sold many of the items to tourists and local curio collectors as well as collecting objects themselves. In addition to tourists and amateur collectors who only briefly visited the area (if at all), there were also a number of local residents who were in direct contact with Charles Edenshaw on a regular basis and who bought from him frequently. These people included the Anglican missionary Collison, much of whose collection is now at the UBC Museum of Anthropology (Cole 1985: 293), and the Indian Agent Deasy (Cole 1985: 293). Deasy sold his own collection to the avid American collector Pearsall, who later sold his large (almost 600-object) collection to the University of Florida (Cole 1985: 293).

Although he certainly produced many objects in other media such as wood and – collaboratively with his wife – painted basketry, Charles Edenshaw "specialized" in carving silver, gold and argillite (Barbeau 1957: 154), media that were very popular with curio collectors and dealers. He also produced objects in gold, such as bracelets and other jewelry. The Masset missionary Harrison remarked that,

There was also a native jeweller in each village who made from half dollar and dollar silver coins, and also from gold coins, bracelets, bangles, finger rings and earrings. The first man to attempt the manipulation of the silver and gold was chief [Charlie] Edenshaw. (Harrison, quoted in Blackman 1982: 70).

This emphasis on Edenshaw and his work has been perpetuated in more recent literature as well. For example, MacNair asserts that "Edenshaw's fame comes mainly from his work in non-traditional media, especially silver and argillite." (MacNair et al 1980: 68. Note the "non-traditional" label). The jewelry connection in Edenshaw's argillite work is also suggested by the artist's particular style of carving in this medium. His use of metalwork techniques in the production of argillite carvings, evinced by such characteristic design features as the gadrooned borders, finely incised cross-hatching and tooled surfaces that decorate many of his argillite pieces (and also appear on his gold and silver work) may suggest an effort on the part of the artist to create an understanding of argillite objects as particularly fine, jewellery-like pieces. The shiny, luxurious black of polished argillite does indeed call to mind a precious stone, and Edenshaw's artistic treatment of the medium served to enhance this quality. Drew and Wilson (1980: 53) note that the tools used today for argillite carving are jeweller's tools.

Edenshaw clearly produced his argillite objects with the market's demands in mind, not only by perhaps enhancing the jewelry-like quality of the argillite and thus boosting its value among curio collectors, but also by anticipating the forms of art his buyers wanted to purchase. For example, his corpus contains many examples of "translated Euro-Americana" which was part of a larger trend among Haida argillite carvers to incorporate European styles, forms and imagery into the argillite medium. Examples of these conglomerate pieces in Edenshaw's body of work include argillite compotes, plates and bowls that emulate Victorian tableware, perhaps modelled on "a small set of English plate, presumably silver, in possession of the Edenshaw family." (Barbeau 1957: 163, an account collected from Henry Edenshaw). Although specific commissions for combinative works could have been the reason behind the development of these forms, Edenshaw's interest

in this direction may indicate a market-directed artistic choice. Responding to what was perceived to be in demand (European-type objects fashioned in argillite by a Native person), Edenshaw and other Haida artists employed elements that "spoke" to the Euro-American/Canadian buyer, such as familiar forms, themes, and decorative designs. In the case of intercultural objects (objects produced by one culture expressly for consumption in a second culture), a certain degree of semantic "translation" must take place because, as Graburn (1976) notes, the two cultures do not speak the same cognitive language. A certain amount of give-and-take likely takes place between producer and consumer before the "message" describing what each wants is successfully translated²³. Curio collectors desired exotic objects that were of obvious Native workmanship, and it is possible that this desire may not have been fully understood by the carvers, who produced "White goods in Indian form" to satisfy what they perceived to be the demands of the consumer. However, even though Euro-American forms and decorative elements were initially incorporated in these objects, the black and shiny argillite medium and frequent addition of "traditional" Haida carved surface design provided the distinguishing features of Native artifice which combined to make argillite objects satisfactorily exotic and culturally representative. It must also be suggested that the curio collectors were pleased with the Haida renditions of European tableware and "busy Victoriana" (MacNair and Hoover 1984: 129). Not as concerned with acquiring only authentic and purely traditional objects as the institutional collectors, curio hunters continued to purchase the argillite forms that were borrowed from Euro-American culture, indicating a satisfaction with the conglomerate mode.

It is likely that Edenshaw's choice of medium, form, and carving style for his argillite curio production was at least *somewhat* a function of what he perceived to be in demand. However, to suppose that the meaning of Edenshaw's "tourist art" is solely dependent upon market demand would be erroneous. There is considerably more that needs to be taken into account in characterizing these pieces' semantic content. I will continue this line of argument in chapter 4 of my paper, after first briefly characterizing the some of the motivations of Edenshaw's second group of buyers, the institutional collectors, in the consumption of argillite work.

3.3 The Anthropologists and Museum Collectors

Argillite carried a different meaning for this other major group of consumers of Haida argillite. As I mentioned earlier, institutional collectors did collect argillite, but many of them considered the black stone carvings to be "non-traditional" and completely a function of market demand. This bias has been apparent throughout the years of collection activity on the Northwest Coast. For example, J.W. Powell of the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Ethnology writes in the 1890's that because these carvings "were designed for sale to the higher race, they chiefly embody the ideas of the white race and in no proper sense represent Indian arts." (quoted in Cole 1985: 292). Newcombe, also, "did not particularly care for those carvings unless they illustrate some story or feature otherwise inaccessible in works of art." (quoted in Cole 1985: 293). A reductionist model of tourist art, in which the object is seen as a mere derivation from the more "authentic" forms of traditional or "high" art, led most anthropologists (Barbeau is a key exception) to largely disregard argillite work as semantically uninteresting or less relevant to the study of Native cultures. We know that some institutional collectors did collect argillite pieces for museums²⁴, but this occurred much more infrequently than collection of objects considered more "traditional" such as masks and wooden boxes.

Edenshaw had direct contact with anthropologists and museum collectors many times throughout his career and produced objects in argillite and other media for sale into this market. For example, he served as an informant to Franz Boas in 1897 and to James Swanton in 1900. These museum anthropologists asked him to recount Haida myths and legends, illustrate crest designs, blanket borders and tattoos, and carve scale models in wood of traditional Haida houses and poles. Boas, in his work published as *Primitive Art* in 1927, recorded his approval of Edenshaw as an informant and supplier of information, commending the artist's attention to detail and ability to explain myths represented in Haida flat design in a clear and recordable manner. Edenshaw's "European" attitude, oral language skills, and reliability were also cited as factors in choosing him as informant. (quoted in Cole 1985:153). The point to make here is that Edenshaw took it upon himself

to learn to communicate with Euro-American/Canadian ethnologists, and was successful in gaining their trust as a spokesperson for his culture. Along with his brother-in-law Henry Edenshaw, he became an important figure for these anthropologists – and other collectors such as Newcombe, Deans, Swan, and Emmons – who based a fair amount of their understanding of "traditional" Haida culture on the information provided by the Edenshaw family. In turn, this market seems to have been actively cultivated by the artist as a regular and reliable source of demand for his art.

This demand was more conspicuously for "cultural information" or explanation of more "traditional" forms of art such as illustrations of blanket border designs and tattoos (such as those collected by Swanton and Boas). No record of Edenshaw's argillite works appears in the documentation of Swanton, who collected only wood objects from Edenshaw, but we know that Newcombe collected argillite from the artist²⁵. Another institutional collector who also bought argillite from Edenshaw was G.M. Dawson, the Canadian government geologist who collected Haida objects in the area in 1878. Although his collection was essentially a private collection made while in the field for the Canadian Geological Survey, Dawson immediately loaned his collection to the museum at McGill College where his father was curator, and he was the main force in directing the Survey's own museum, which would later become the collection of the National Museum of Canada, towards ethnological collection in addition to geological materials (Cole 1985: 79). His collections were thus institutionally funded, supported and housed, and the motivation behind them was to preserve, on behalf of the Canadian government, as many Canadian Native objects as possible. According to Cole, Dawson "keenly resented the exportation of Canadian Indian material to the United States or abroad." (Cole 1985: 80).

Edenshaw also produced a number of argillite model poles and houses (several examples of which have been identified in his corpus, based on his idiosyncratic "hand" as laid out in Holm 1965, 1967, 1981). The making of models for museum displays and world's fairs had become a popular trend, especially since the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago

in 1893. This anthropological interest in scale models cannot be considered as the primary source of inspiration for Edenshaw's model houses and poles in argillite, however. Edenshaw had been carving model poles perhaps as early as the 1870's for the curio trade (MacNair and Hoover 1984: 114). In addition, the models commissioned for museum and World's Fair exhibits were all, as far as we know, made of wood; no argillite models seem to have been ordered specifically for this purpose. For example, James Deans, a Hudson Bay Company trader who was enlisted by Boas to gather Haida material for exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair, collected three boxcarloads of Haida material in 1893, including a wooden scale model of the entire village of Skidegate (Cole 1985: 124). Deans also collected two full-sized wooden house posts of Edenshaw's in 1892. These may very well have been exhibited at the Exposition, and Barbeau tells us that Edenshaw's "illustrations, his ornate bowls, his exquisite silver bracelets and other jewelry were well represented at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, as well as his miniature totem poles, carved chests, and models of feast houses"(Barbeau 1957:178). Although no record of argillite among the anthropologists' documentation for the Chicago Fair exists, some of the exhibited objects were indeed argillite carvings: the Chicago Field Museum accession records for a group of argillite poles and an argillite plate (see Appendix) thought to have been carved by Edenshaw, for example, indicate that these objects were exhibited in the Fair before becoming part of the Museum's permanent collection.

3.4 Edenshaw's Use of Myth and Crest Imagery

I would also like to mention, in this chapter dealing with Edenshaw's market, that the artist's use of myth and crest imagery in his argillite work, like that of other Haida artists, has been interpreted by some scholars to contravene what is understood to be traditional Haida rights and privileges for displaying certain images (e.g. Barbeau 1957: 175; Sheehan 1981: 79). In carving totem poles and other argillite objects for the Euro-American/Canadian consumer (both curio collectors and anthropologists), Edenshaw incorporated imagery from Haida myth and from his own inventory of crests (those belonging to his family) and also, sometimes, from the crests of other Haida families. Most historical sources agree that

each Haida family had the right and privilege to use only certain crest images. Some scholars have mentioned that in many of his works, Edenshaw incorporates images to which he did not have access. For example Barbeau, in his description of some of Edenshaw's late totem poles, tells us that "they embrace more themes than a single craftsman belonging to the Eagle or Raven groups was in the habit of appropriating when carving for strangers." (Barbeau 1957:175). This embrace may indeed indicate a relaxation of the rules of proper crest/myth display, but other explanations for this development abound: it could be, for example, that there was a lack of strict "rules" for displaying imagery in the commercial argillite medium. Or, Edenshaw may have been communicating various crests and myths at the *request* of their owners. It is also conceivable that the Haida population had been reduced to the point where the survivors had access to a wider inventory of crests. These explanations, while based purely on speculation, are perhaps more likely than the reasoning put forth by MacNair et al (1980), who speculated that the change may reflect the Haida's inability to express themselves culturally and to assert their clan heritages in their "traditional" ways, so that they were compelled to express their traditional crest identities in a form condoned by White society (MacNair et al 1980:70). Another interesting theory about this change in crest/myth image display conventions is presented in Sheehan's 1981 *Pipes that Won't Smoke; Coal that Won't Burn*. Sheehan presents Wilson Duff's "interpretation" of Haida argillite carvings, establishing periods of "sense" and non-sense" in the history of the artform's development to account for the change in display of Haida imagery. This example of representationist interpretation, applied in this case to Haida argillite carvings, is presented here as a backdrop to my own approach to argillite objects detailed later in chapter 4 of my paper.

The "reading" of argillite carvings postulated by Duff and Sheehan follows the temporal categories initially laid out by Kaufmann (1969), and attempts to interpret the objects carved in each category to determine the reason for changes in form and expression. In this project, the argillite object is defined as a transparent indicator of the artist's intentions. For example, in the so-called "Haida non-sense" period (Kaufmann's Haida I), Sheehan

demonstrates that artists incorporated Haida imagery but recombined this imagery into a culturally meaningless form. At least, explains the author, "the images on these pipes resist interpretation by classical Haida iconographic conventions." (Sheehan 1981:79). When the author doesn't understand the images according to what she considers to be "traditional" iconographic conventions, she assumes that the Haida artists intended the objects to be "non-sense." When the images fit the rules, however, they are deemed to be chock-full of poignant cultural meaning. For example, in a discussion of the phase of development Sheehan calls "Haida sense" (Kaufmann's Haida II), in which images deemed to have significance for Haida cultural awareness were incorporated, the author reports Duff's interpretation that the "argillite carvers were carving images of 'all that it meant to be Haida' as a kind of last testimony to their culture and society." (Sheehan 1981:25). Duff, through Sheehan, thus neatly constructs intentions for the Native artist, a construction arising directly out of the salvage paradigm, the motivating bias that underlies the search for "authenticity" in Native art and culture.

Sheehan (and Duff) are not alone in this construction of meaning for the Haida artist, and for Edenshaw in particular. For example, MacNair proposes that Edenshaw's "depth of expression perhaps reflects the dilemma and tragedy Edensaw must have faced. The onerous task of leaving a testimony to the past and a legacy for the future surely weighed heavily upon him." (MacNair et al, 1980: 70). Hoover, meanwhile, refers to Duff's speculation that Edenshaw "was painfully aware of the precarious state of the Haida oral tradition; indeed that he was afraid that many of the old stories were in imminent danger of being lost forever, and that he attempted through his art to record the most important of the traditional stories." (Hoover 1983: 67). A similar theory is voiced by Kaufmann (1969)²⁶ and Thomas (1967). Edenshaw is often chosen by scholars as a "spokesman" of his era, and he is represented as a courageous bearer of the responsibility of saving his people's culture through his art.

I hope it is clear that assigning a "sense" or "non-sense" label to the objects as Duff and Sheehan do, or constructing a "saviour" role for the artist and viewing his work accordingly, are both highly problematic. Depicting Edenshaw as the "saviour" of Haida culture as an explanation for his incorporation of myth figures is a retrospective construction based on the discourse of preservation rather than an accurate assessment of Edenshaw's intentions to preserve the "dying" Haida culture. To characterize argillite carvings as a direct expression of the artist's intentions and to make assumptions about these intentions, meanwhile, is to claim authority over Native voices. To seek out (and of course find) a univocal message in these works is to completely ignore the role of the object as a site of reciprocal construction involving two cultures (with complexities within those cultures) and multiple layers of meaning. In my own approach to the subject, I will be concerned with exploding the "myth of meaning" that underlies "readings" such as these. I want to show that there is an intermingling of messages taking place in Edenshaw's work. Addressing this intermingling, it seems to me, both assesses the influence of market demands and the wielding of colonial power, and also recognizes the political agency of the Haida artist in response to these forces within the arena of the object.

In my analysis of the reciprocal creation of meaning in the intercultural art object, presented in the next chapter of my paper, I attempt to offer an alternative to the interpretive approach exemplified by Duff and Sheehan. This chapter is intended to formulate the methodology I have been using to explore the interaction between producer and consumer taking place within the object-site, in preparation for applying this methodology to a particular set of examples of Edenshaw's argillite work.

4. The Reciprocal Construction of Meanings in the Intercultural Object

Their nature as intercultural objects makes argillite works a product and a *process* of exchange between the producer and consumer. *What exactly do I mean by claiming that an object is a process?* In this chapter, I will sketch out the ways in which the intercultural art object can be viewed as a process of negotiation and exchange, with reference to the examples reviewed in the previous chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 were intended to demonstrate that the intercultural object, made by a producer in one culture expressly for consumption in a second culture, means different things to artist and buyer. The consumer's understanding of the signification of the object is based on his or her own individual, social and cultural context, as well as on the needs and desires that initially mobilize the act of consumption. To the producer, the signification of the object is a function of market demand and his or her own artistic motivations. The object itself stands as a concretization of the development of thought and mutation of significations, from both the producer's and consumer's points of view, leading up to and structuring the moment of creation. In order to characterize these significations more specifically and indicate how the object can be seen as a product and process of negotiation between producer and consumer, I have developed a particular methodology of analyzing the intercultural exchange of various messages within the object-site.

The intercultural object as entity exists as a concrete, physical container of certain events (choices made) that took place in the contexts of production and consumption leading up to the moment of the object's creation. Knowingly carving with consumption by purchase in mind, the producer makes certain artistic choices based on what is perceived to be in demand and on other motivations related to his understanding of the market and to his own personal and societal agendas in producing art. Similarly, in making certain purchasing decisions based on needs and desires, the consumer contributes to the development of the object's form and meaning. It is pertinent here to take a brief look at the different

kinds of message exchanges that can take place within the intercultural object during this reciprocal process:

Processes of Exchange	Producer	Consumer
1. Message <i>intended</i> by the producer to reach the consumer succeeds in crossing the cultural boundary. Successfully received and understood by the consumer, this message then stimulates a response that may or may not be communicated in the purchasing decision.	✓ →	✓
2. Message intended by the producer to reach the consumer does <i>not</i> succeed in crossing the cultural boundary. Misunderstood, received incompletely, or not received at all, this message then may or may not stimulate a potentially inappropriate response from the consumer which is communicated in the purchasing decision.	✓ X	?
3. Message unintended by the producer is nevertheless perceived by the consumer. May cause a response from the consumer communicated in the purchasing decision which the producer may not, in turn, comprehend.	? X	✓
4. Message is incorporated by the producer for his/her own consumption or for consumption by his/her own people rather than for the buyer. Consumer may or may not understand completely, and respond accordingly.	✓ X	?
5. Unintended messages, such as gender bias, <i>go undetected</i> by both producer and consumer (i.e. subconscious messages that are there regardless of whether the producer or consumer are aware of them).	? X	?
6. By making a purchasing decision, talking with the producer or alerting middlemen about preferences, the consumer communicates a message about his/her needs and desires that the producer receives and understands. The producer then may or may not respond by producing the object as requested.	✓ ←	✓
7. By making a purchasing decision, talking with the producer or alerting middlemen about preferences, the consumer communicates a message about his/her needs and desires that the producer <i>does not receive or does not understand</i> . This may lead to production of an object that does not meet the demands of the consumer.	? X	✓

The complexity of these interactions, even when the message is not communicated successfully across the cultural boundary, is clearly evident. Each complete or incomplete transmission of a message causes a response that may or may not be re-sent back across the cultural boundary, and which then may or may not be accurately or completely received. This in turn initiates further interaction. Earlier, I referred to this communicative complexity as a "web" of significations reciprocally spun by producer and consumer around "the object." This web is a process: the process of cultural interchange taking place over time and leading up to the moment of the object's creation, and indeed carrying on after that moment. The process of meaning-creation never stops, as long as either the producer or a consumer of the object is present. (You and I are also, of course, consumers of the objects discussed herein).

Negotiation is a process of give-and-take whereby two or more parties confer with one another in order to arrive at a settlement of some matter. Etymologically, the word derives from the latin *negotari*, to carry on business. In the commercial activity of curio marketing, the use of this term to describe the interaction between producer and consumer is therefore particularly appropriate. Negotiation is very goal-oriented: the parties involved in the negotiation process each bring their concerns to the table with specific objectives in mind. Similarly, producer and consumer bring to the object a set of desires and needs that each of the parties intends to satisfy through the act of producing/consuming.

In chapters 2 and 3 of my paper, I outlined some of the historic circumstances contextualizing the production and consumption of Edenshaw's argillite, circumstances that may have structured some of the concerns and expectations that Charles Edenshaw and his buyers brought to the negotiation table. I summarize these here:

Context of Production:

Historical Circumstance

Family history of close contact with Euro-American/Canadians.

Possible Concerns in Negotiation

Desire to interact with Euro-American/Canadians, in emulation of Albert and in effort to enhance

	individual prestige and family prestige in relation to Western society and among the Haida as his uncle had done.
Physical weakness of the artist in his youth and, later in life, limitation in work activity.	A need to assert art-making activity as a viable full-time career by earning sufficient money and recognition as an artist.
Specialization in carving silver, gold and argillite; referenced as "Native jeweller"; jewelry-like treatment in argillite carving; innovations in form and expression.	Promotion of an artistic reputation for fine, jewelry-like argillite objects that command high prices. An ongoing construction and assertion of a leadership position in the Haida artistic community.
Frequent consultation with European anthropologists as authority on Haida culture and art. Notes commendation in these texts.	Desire to provide anthropologists with the information that they needed in order to enhance ongoing relationship with these buyers, and to promote himself generally as an artist.

Contexts of Consumption:

Curio Collectors

Possible Concerns in Negotiation

- Need to verify self-identity through consumption and display of a commodity produced by another culture.
- Need to validate colonialist oppression through rationalization of Native peoples as childlike and requiring management by Euro-American/Canadian authorities.
- Desire to satisfy curiosity about the exotic.
- Desire to purchase objects of high value and prestige.
- Need to acquire for a particular country the objects considered part of a national heritage/national identity.
- Intention to preserve the "vanishing" Native culture before it was lost.

Contexts of Consumption:

Anthropologists

Possible Concerns in Negotiation

- Desire to amass the most representative and complete collection of Native material culture for a particular institution.
- Intention to race with time in order to preserve "authentic" Native culture before it became diluted through contact with Europeans.
- Desire to textualize the traditional oral culture of the Indians as part of this preservation effort.

These are some of the possible concerns that structure the exchange of messages that are communicated across the cultural boundary in an ongoing process of negotiation between producer and consumer. I would like to turn now to a specific example of Edenshaw's argillite work to investigate the ways in which producer and consumer may come together and interact within the object. By analyzing the dual perspectives of artist and collector during this process of interchange, I intend to demonstrate how meanings are reciprocally constructed as part of a struggle, on the parts of both producer and consumer, to assert individual and cultural identities, needs and desires.

The examples I have chosen to focus on are three argillite plates carved by Edenshaw (attributed by Holm, Duff, MacNair and Hoover) in the 1880's or very early 1890's. One of these objects (*figure 1*) is currently housed in the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, where it has resided since its accession in 1894. I will discuss this object with reference to the two other argillite plates, one now in the Seattle Art Museum (*figure 2*) and one in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin (*figure 3*). I will refer to them throughout as the Chicago plate, the Seattle plate and the Dublin plate respectively. The three plates are very similar. Although they are certainly not identical (differing slightly in size, use of design elements, and subject matter), the plates are similar enough in style, composition and expression for them to be grouped together (initially by Hoover 1983; and by Wright 1986) as multiple iterations of the artist, employing a specific theme in a slightly different way each time. Stylistically, the plates are noticeably different. Hoover observes that the Chicago plate offers a more two-dimensional profile presentation of the scene than the other two plates, which are much more sculpturally expressed (Hoover 1983: 65). A linear development of style and expression among the three has naturally been supposed, and a great deal of discussion has centered on which came first, which second and which third. Holm has characteristically performed a careful examination of the specific design elements incorporated by the artist. He believes that the Dublin plate was carved first, followed by the Seattle plate and then the Chicago plate (Hoover 1983: 66-67), based on the progression of individual design elements and a general development from naturalism to abstraction²⁷.

Collection dates are of no help in discerning useful chronology. The Chicago plate was exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, then accessioned to the Field Museum in 1894. It was lent to the World's Exposition by a J.S. Gould²⁸ of Santa Fe, New Mexico and never claimed after the close of the Exposition. There is no information about how Gould came to have the object, or when he collected it. The Dublin plate was accessioned to the National Museum of Dublin also in 1894. Apparently no record has been kept about where the object came from, although interestingly there is a note on the plate's label advising of the existence of a plaster cast of the object at the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo, Norway²⁹. The Seattle plate, meanwhile, has even less helpful information about its original collection date. The plate was purchased at auction in 1982 by John Hauberg, a private collector, who gave his collection to the Seattle Art Museum in 1991³⁰.

The carving on the face of the Chicago plate depicts two figures in a canoe, one holding a spear or harpoon, and the other an oar. Below the canoe is a sea monster of some kind apparently biting the canoe, which fills up the bottom third of the round picture space. The amount of teeth depicted in this image is notable. The round-headed figure in the stern of the canoe displays a healthy collection of teeth in its wide mouth, as does the human-like figure in the bow, with its smaller mouth and bird-like (also toothed) headgear. The sea monster is seemingly biting the canoe with its teeth, and has a curious tail featuring a second smaller head, complete with open mouth and teeth. Even the canoe, which is possibly carved with a wolf design (Drew and Wilson 1980: 206), features a toothed mouth.

The other two plates differ slightly in the scene represented. The Seattle plate scene, taking up proportionally more space on the object's surface, is similarly composed but contains the following differences: the figure in the bow of the canoe seems more bird-like than human (with the beak replacing the mouth) and seems to perch atop the edge of the canoe rather than be seated firmly inside it; the figure in the stern has a more detailed face, a beard-like feature and head protuberance, and although it holds its hands up as if clutching something, it has nothing to hold. The sea creature is also substantially different,

depicted as a symmetrically frontal face with large round eyes, nostrils and an enormous grinning mouth with rounded teeth and tongue, flanked by arms or flippers with claws. The Dublin plate scene is more akin to this image than to the Chicago version. The substantial differences between the Dublin and the Seattle are that the two figures in the canoe overlap to a greater degree, the figure in the stern has a more definite bearded appearance with no head protuberance, and the sea creature's eyes look up at the canoe instead of forward, its mouth contains pointed teeth and no tongue, and it has no claws.

Regarding the significance of the imagery depicted on the plates, Hoover (1983) brings together several texts that are useful. For example, a note furnished by C.F. Newcombe, apparently written in 1901, can be found on a photograph of the Chicago plate in the Newcombe Photographic Album at the Provincial Archives in Victoria. The note reads:

Steersman of fungus called kugugilgai or wood biscuit (Polyporus). Raven (Nañkilstlas) going to first land (?xagi) to get a woman of the rock chitons with spear. Then all men, no women. Speared the genitalia which grew on rocks and threw them to the men. When caught on organs immediately grew up. When on the men got ashamed and ran to the houses. Ex H. Edensaw 1/10/01. Made by Charlie Edensaw.

This is apparently an account of the mythic scene depicted on the plate, collected from Charles Edenshaw's brother-in-law Henry, who provided translation, guiding and informant services frequently to visiting anthropologists. There is an additional mention in the text of Newcombe's notes accompanying the photograph which is apparently Newcombe's own words describing the statement received from Henry Edenshaw and literally transcribed in the note on the photo. This text reads:

Slate dish No. 17952 represents Nangkilstlas in the act of collecting women's genitalia on the first rock which appeared in the Haida country. This was in the far south. Up to that time the only people were men. N speared the parts and threw them at the men so that they landed on their parts, making them so ashamed that they ran away and hid, because they grew up so quickly. Raven is seen with his cloak of feathers and is steered by a man made of the fungus called wood biscuit. Dish made by C. Edensaw.

Cole (1985) reports that Newcombe was indeed in the Masset area in 1901, collecting information which would later be published as part of Swanton's *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (1905). He also collected objects from Masset in 1900-1901 as part of the Jesup project for the American Museum of Natural History. A sometimes collector for Dorsey of the Field Museum, Newcombe was probably sent a photograph of the Chicago plate by the Field Museum in order to collect some kind of explanation for the piece while he was in the area. Newcombe had been in the Masset region several times already and had previously come into contact with the Edenshaws.

As Hoover (1983) shows, the myth suggested in the statement by Henry Edenshaw is similar to the texts recorded by Chittenden (1884) and Swanton (1905) transcribing the Haida myth of the origin of the female gender. Chittenden, in recording the myth of Raven's discovery of the first Haida in the clamshell, continues the story to account for the first females. In this account, Raven goes off in search of females, accompanied by the males who have just emerged from the clamshell. Then, "upon reaching the lonely island of Ninstints, they found females clinging helplessly to the rocks, whom rescuing and taking for their wives, peopled the land." (Chittenden 1884: 20). The source of this narrative is not noted. In the Swanton text, the myth is told by John Sky as an episode of the "Raven travelling" series of stories. It is part of the "old man's" section of the series (in the first half of the recorded text) and reads:

He then started off. He traveled about. On the way he got his sister neatly, they say. He then left his sister with his wife. And he started off by canoe. He begged Snowbird to go along with him, and took him for company. He also took along a spear. And short objects lay one upon another on a certain reef. Then, when they came near to it, the bird became different. He took him back. And he begged Blue-jay also to go, and he started with him. But when they got near he, too, flapped his wings helplessly in the canoe. And, after he had tried all creatures in vain, he made a drawing on a toadstool with a stick, placed it in the stern, and said to it: 'Bestir yourself and reverse the stroke' (to stop the canoe). He then started off with him. But when he got near it shook its head (so strong was the influence).³¹

He then speared a big one and a small one and took them back. And when he came home he called his wife and placed the thing he had gone for upon her. And he put one on

his sister as well. Then Siwa'as (his sister) cried, and he said to her, "But yours will be safe."³² (Swanton 1905a: 126).

The imagery on the argillite plates carved by Edenshaw does seem to coincide with the content of the myth recorded by Swanton, with one exception. The "short objects" representing female genitalia in the myth episode, if indeed they are the same objects mentioned in the Newcombe recording, are rock chitons. The chiton (*polyplacophora*) is a mollusk with a limpet-like body bearing a shell composed of overlapping plates and a strong "foot" which can adhere firmly to rocks. The sea creature depicted in the Edenshaw plates does not appear to resemble such a mollusk. The Seattle and Dublin plates depict a creature that might suggest a giant supernatural chiton, but the Chicago sea creature is "a different story." This figure is perhaps more closely identified with a mysterious creature mentioned only once by Swanton (1905) known as *Tca'gAn q!atxAna'i* or "sea-ghost." According to Swanton, the sea-ghost "was supposed to have a human face with a bird's beak, a hump on the back, and long hair on the head." (Swanton 1905: 140). Swanton adds that belief in these creatures, more superstitious than spiritual, was still strong among the Haida at that time. The sea-ghost does not figure in any of the myths recorded by anthropologists, and has no known connection either with Raven or with the origin of females. Interestingly, I also found a similar reference to a sea creature in Dawson's text of 1880 in a discussion of Rose Point at the Northernmost tip of Graham Island:

They say that strange (uncanny) marine creatures inhabit its neighbourhood...The father of my informant, with other Haidas in a canoe, saw one of these creatures. It was like a man, but very large, with hair hanging down to its shoulders.
(Dawson 1880: 146)

The creature in the plate's carved scene seems to match the description of Swanton's sea-ghost: it has a hump on its back, there is a suggestion of long hair growing from the head, and the face appears somewhat human, but with a beak-like nose. If this is an appearance of the sea-ghost instead of a chiton in the scene, it does not necessarily mean, of course, that the carving does *not* depict the mythic origin of the female gender. The

sea monster on the Chicago plate, and the strangely grinning giant "mollusk" on the other two examples, may both refer loosely to the wild and potentially dangerous female power associated with menstruation and reproduction for which the Haida had a great deal of respect³¹. A depiction of the myth of the first females would not necessarily require a direct, literal translation of "chiton" or "short objects" as representative of female genitalia but might, rather, invoke the power of femaleness through depiction of a sufficiently alarming or awesome creature. It is the signification of this wild, dangerous power and its acquisition (or capture) by Raven that is perhaps depicted in the carved scene. Alternatively, Raven and his steersman may be shown fighting off a sea creature *en route* to acquiring the chiton-vulva. Note that such suppositions are based on the interpreter's own contextual circumstances; it is necessary to be cautious in accepting at face value an account of the "meaning" of the images in this way.

Accordingly, I would like to move to an examination of the objects based on the exchange of various messages between producer and consumer rather than purporting to reveal the "meaning" of the pieces. In my examination of these message exchanges, I will utilize the model I sketched out earlier in this chapter of my paper. Some of these communications are of course impossible for me to characterize. Because of my own cultural and historical perspective, I am completely unable to determine the intentions of the artist, especially when those intentions involve incorporation of messages that do not successfully cross the cultural boundary. In addition, exchange #7, whereby the consumer communicates a message about his needs and desires that the producer does not receive or does not understand, would seem to be not applicable in this case because we have no evidence that the objects were commissioned and, as the objects were indeed purchased, we can only surmise that the consumer was satisfied that the object did indeed meet his/her needs.

Other exchanges must be characterized very cautiously. Exchange #5, for example, involves unintended messages that remain consciously undetected by both producer and consumer, but that are nevertheless present. For example, in the process of choosing and purchasing

this commodity, the Euro-American/Canadian consumer, as member of the dominant colonizing culture, can be said to be satisfying unrecognized needs and desires. The buyer of the plate in question was likely a private collector or dealer. I infer this from the nature of the earliest known owner of the piece: the object likely arrived at the Santa Fe curio shop of Jake Gold through private dealers and/or collectors rather than from an institutional accessionist. Likely collected, then, by a private collector, the object as "curio" was chosen by the buyer for a number of potentially significant reasons. As has been noted by Cohodas (1993)³, a dialectic between the mythic Noble Savage of the past and the degraded, vanishing Indian of the present structured the fascination with which Euro-American/Canadians looked upon Native peoples, and this dialectic can be said to have mobilized demand for Native-made objects such as Edenshaw's argillite carvings. By purchasing something that was sufficiently exotic and evocative of "indian-ness," the curio collector was satisfying the need to rationalize the colonialist oppression of Native peoples through relegation of Indians to the past: as Noble Savages representing a lost purity and integrity of self, and as childlike figures requiring Euro-American supervision and control for survival.

I will leave further ideas for exchange #5 open, with a suggestion that this avenue offers some interesting, although methodologically challenging, opportunities for future research and investigation. There are serious problems associated with purporting to detect subconscious messages in the intercultural art object, the most obvious being that the subconscious is a purely Western construct that asserts universals across cultures and utterly silences the voice of the Other in its interpretive enterprise. I will merely draw attention here to the unusual depiction of what may represent female power or femaleness in this image without making any suppositions about the subconscious messages it may communicate. I have already noted that to suppose that the sea creature is meant to directly represent a chiton, and to dismiss the myth association on the basis of this spurious representation, is to fall prey to the representationist tendencies of much Northwest Coast study. The sea creature, I have suggested, can be seen as a general personification of the awesome and dangerous power of femaleness with which Raven will create the first women.

This is an intriguing depiction of femaleness, and of the origin myth (if indeed it is a depiction of the myth) and its appearance on these plates, multiply iterated as they are, poses some interesting questions. As Duff noted in a letter to James Van Stone of the Field Museum regarding this plate, the image carved by Edenshaw perhaps depicts the myth of the origin of the female gender, but that "This [image] makes it appear that it wasn't quite that simple, and really a great deal more interesting." (Duff 1970). These plates represent the only example (that we know of) in which Edenshaw issued several versions of a nearly identical image. What were his reasons for doing so? Was his motivation market-generated (and if so, did he produce these works on commission, or did he anticipate demand by creating the plates then selling them), or was he working out an artistic idea for himself through the plates? It may be significant that the popularity of this image has continued to the present day. Claude Davidson, Charles Edenshaw's grandson, was commissioned by four separate parties to create copies of the plate. The raven and canoe image was even borrowed for a Frisbee® design used in a 1991 event (see Appendix). Is there a significance of this myth for producer, for the original consumer (if he/she understood the myth being depicted), and for the generations of consumers that have continued to commodify it? Is there a basis for speculating on a particularly gendered system of selection, production and purchasing of this commodity? I would like to leave these questions open-ended, and note that Exchange #5 offers some rich opportunities for further study.

Other communicative exchanges between producer and consumer can perhaps be discussed more definitively. Exchange #1, for example, is the process by which a message intended by the producer to reach the consumer succeeds in crossing the cultural boundary. Successfully received and understood by the consumer, this message can then stimulate a response that may or may not be communicated in the purchasing decision. Exchange #6 is the process by which the consumer communicates a message about his needs and desires to the producer, through making a purchasing decision, talking with the producer or alerting middlemen about preferences. The producer receives and understands this message, which has been exchanged successfully over the cultural boundary. These

exchanges can be seen as two sides of the same coin, as they represent a give-and-take negotiation between producer and consumer moving back and forth across the cultural boundary.

These exchanges can be seen, in the Edenshaw plate, to be a conversation between the producer and the consumer, and one thing they are conversing about is Haida myth. The scene carved by Edenshaw depicts a cohesive figure group engaged in activity as part of what appears to be a "scene" in a "story." The consumer likely understood this to be so, even though he/she may not have comprehended the particular "story" that was being illustrated. The subject of the illustrated scene does not seem readily apparent (there is no indication in the iconography of the scene, for example, that this is indeed a myth of the origin of females), and unless it were explained directly by the artist in conversation, the communication of the myth would have been an exchange of type #2. The myth subject matter is included as a "message" by the artist, but this message does not pass successfully through the cultural boundary and the consumer does not understand it. However, the very recognition that this is an episode in a story is also a "message" that was likely included by the artist and comprehended by the consumer: an exchange of type #1.

It should be noted here that my (and others') acceptance of the scene as an episode from Haida myth is potentially erroneous, and could thus be categorized as an exchange of type #3, whereby a message unintended by the producer is nevertheless perceived by the consumer. Edenshaw may not have had this particular myth episode in mind in creating the objects, and indeed may not have intended a mythic subject matter at all. The identification of the scene as mythic is primarily reliant upon an understanding of the figure in the bow of the canoe as "Raven" through iconographic interpretation, and upon the account collected by Newcombe which was made several years after the fact, and not by the artist himself. The consumer's desire to see the scene as "mythic" may have thus constructed this understanding.

Regardless of mythic content, however, Edenshaw is doing something quite new in the history of Haida argillite carving in depicting a story "episode." In no other example, among the hundreds of argillite carvings known to have been produced by Edenshaw both pre- and post-dating these pieces, do we see such a straightforwardly narrative treatment of a subject on a two-dimensional, carved surface. Edenshaw's other known argillite plates, as well as plates carved by other Haida artists, treat figures very differently. The image of a creature is consistently used as a reference to certain myths, rather than in a narrative retelling of an episode. For example, the plates in figures 4 and 5 incorporate the image of the sea wolf or Was'go, which is used as an iconographic reference to Was'go myths. In the more complex example in figure 5, Edenshaw indicates reference to two different myths – the clamshell creation myth and Was'go – in the same space. This more common treatment of a mythic subject (the dominant mode in Edenshaw's and other argillite carvers' work) differs considerably from that of the narrative Raven plate, an experimentation of Edenshaw's in which a new expressive code is introduced.

If the scene does indeed present an episode from Haida myth, this experimentation may have been developed by Edenshaw to "translate" Haida myth, previously existing only in orality, into a spatial context for communication across the cultural boundary. In the Was'go plates, the translation from the temporal, fleeting form of the spoken word to the static, autonomous carved object is not achieved directly. These objects contain merely a reference to Was'go myths. No details of a story are given. With the inclusion of the clamshell in the second of these plates, we get yet another mnemonic device (so important to the sustenance of oral culture) rather than an attempt to tell a story within the spatial confines of the object. As a result, these objects do not directly communicate a narrative "story" to the Euro-American/Canadian consumer, who would likely have had no prior knowledge of the particular myths invoked. Perhaps in order to more successfully translate Haida oral myth into the art object for consumption by his Euro-American/Canadian market, Edenshaw creates an innovation in form and expression in the plates discussed here to accommodate such a translation. Why he did not choose to build upon this experimentation

in later works is obscure. The pieces were all purchased and thus can be said to have satisfied the needs of the consumers satisfactorily, and we might wonder why Edenshaw did not respond to that message by continuing to develop in that direction. However, we have no indication whatsoever that increased narrative content was the artist's objective in carving these works, and do not know the circumstances under which they were commissioned and/or purchased. Speculation about why he did not extend the experiment further is quite fruitless.

I would like to be able to draw attention to Edenshaw's connection with anthropologists in text-production as a commentary on his experimentation with a new narrative mode in his art. However, there are problems in doing so. It is certainly true that Edenshaw was an active participant in the textualizing and recording of Haida myths previously existing only in orality. He acted as an informant to both Boas and Swanton in this regard, and his involvement with anthropologists may indeed have given him an understanding of the expectations and desires of Euro-Americans in terms of how myth must be told in a literal or physical context. However, the argillite plates must have been carved prior to 1893, and we have no record of interactions between Charles Edenshaw and anthropologists until 1897. This does not mean that Edenshaw did not come into contact with anthropologists prior to this date, of course. But to rationalize Edenshaw's treatment of myth in this plate with reference to his work in translating myths for Boas and Swanton would be somewhat misleading.

A more appropriate suggestion is that Edenshaw was experimenting with modes of communicating with the consumer of the work, to render the Haida myth episode "readable" or understandable through the use of a new narrative pictorial style. In this translation, the producer includes elements that he knows will appeal to the market: unusual characters, an active and exciting interaction of these characters, and a familiar scene such as the "storm-tossed boat" which incidentally performs an important function in Western journey "myths" and quest narratives (Ryan 1993). The consumer, in turn, by purchasing the object,

perhaps communicated a message back to the artist that his needs and desires had indeed been met. The fact that Edenshaw produced at least three closely similar iterations of this myth scene on a carved argillite plate may attest to the success he achieved in translating his subject matter to a form comprehensible and consumable by his market. The object, in this case, functions as a communicative *bridge* between the artist and his perceived market, whereby the use of a narrative pictorial mode arises as a means of expression across the cultural boundary.

It is convenient to suppose that Edenshaw was responding to a direct request from an anthropologist and/or private collector to carve a narrative depiction of this particular myth in this plate, or was simply copying a Western-style image that he had seen. This would certainly be an easy explanation for the artist's experimentation in this case. It would also fit with the conception of "tourist art" as purely market-determined products: the idea that objects made exclusively for sale are semantically less involved and culturally less important than so-called "traditional" art. I have argued throughout this paper, however, that the intercultural art object cannot be approached from a singular perspective. To assume that Edenshaw was merely following a direct request from his buyer is a simplification of the process of interchange, a process that would be taking place *even in a direct commission* of a particular piece. Interpreting the object on the basis of Euro-American/Canadian demands alone would be to silence the artist's own voice in the exchange.

Conversely, it is also easy to say that Edenshaw had a "message" to deliver to his audience and that this image functions as a univocal articulation of that message. Such an interpretive approach, which shifts attention away from the consumer and constructs meanings for the works by recreating the producer's point of view, is adopted by Hoover (1983), who ventures to "read" the object like a text, interpreting the artist's "message" through contemplation of the object and consideration of the producer's sociohistoric context. For example, he speculates about Edenshaw's intentions, constructing a rationalization for the

artist's use of images from the Raven cycle of myths and his apparent desire to record these traditional stories for posterity: "Could it have been that Charles inherited not only the title and position of his uncle but also the responsibility and desire to pass on the knowledge of this important myth?" (Hoover, 1983: 67). This "important myth" (important to whom?) is contextualized with reference to Barbeau's often quoted assertion that Albert Edward Edenshaw "made the Raven his own culture-hero and his nephew Charley was the first to express it in sculpture." (Barbeau quoted in Hoover, 1983: 67). We have already seen how invocations of heritage – whether it be the uncle's carving ability, the father's canoe carving prowess, or the family's adoption of certain "important" myths – serve to legitimize Edenshaw as artist and master of Haida "tradition." The construction of the Edenshaws as champions of the "culture hero" Raven, similarly, is part of the discursive effort to elevate Charles as a cultural spokesperson whose noble efforts to save the dying Haida culture can be seen in his use of myth:

Another key to Edenshaw's commitment to the Raven cycle was his unique position as a fully enculturated Haida artist at a time of enormous cultural loss... he attempted through his art to record the most important of the traditional stories. (Hoover 1983:67)

Characterizing the effect of Euro-American/Canadian contact as an "enormous cultural loss" buys into the preservationist idea that Native culture was an unchanging, allochronic entity that was being destroyed or "lost" as a result of Haida-European contact. Depicting Edenshaw as "fully enculturated," meanwhile, betrays assumptions about the nature of the cultural change initiated by contact, with "enculturation" presented as a linearly structured process (if Edenshaw is "fully enculturated," are we to assume that others were only "partially enculturated?"), in which Edenshaw's position as cultural representative is described as "unique." This construction distances him from other Haida artists, singling him out as a visionary; it is based more on the artist-genius stereotype of Western art historical discourses than on consideration of the sociohistorical information we have about the Haida artistic community.

Hoover's contribution to the study of these pieces is clearly a valuable one. He brings together the three plates for the first time, and discusses – with considerable insight – the incorporation of this mythic theme in other objects as well. Notably, Hoover does also suggest that Edenshaw was "purposely tailoring his argillite work along lines proven to be popular with the customers" (Hoover, 1983: 67) in incorporating myth into his work. However, Hoover's interpretation is problematic because he constructs intentions for Edenshaw based on Eurocentric conceptions of the role of the artist and on preservationist attitudes towards acculturation. This represents a serious disempowerment of the artist. By claiming authority over Edenshaw's voice, such a reading disallows the presence of the artist and closes the space in which his individual and societal concerns are expressed. The "myth of meaning" underlying interpretive studies like this one thereby constructs a signification for the object whereby the "reader" asserts complete power over expressing this signification, and the Native artist is silenced.

To suppose that Edenshaw was mechanically following the demands of the market in creating these objects is, we have seen, similarly disempowering. This particular kind of "reading" places the responsibility for the image's signification completely onto the Euro-American/Canadian consumer and renders the producer a passive and silent participant: "tourist arts," explains Jules-Rosette, "are considered social signs of their authors' unwitting acculturation..." (Jules-Rosette, 1984: 15). Both of these interpretive approaches see the "meaning" of the object as if it were readily and singularly decipherable. This is simply not the case; indeed, quite the contrary. What we see in process here, I argue, is an interaction between producer and consumer, an active reshaping of the relationship between the artist and his market that takes place as an interchange of messages. These multiple message exchanges create a web of significations surrounding the object that polysemically expresses the work's "meanings."

5. Conclusion:

Towards a Postmodernism of Resistance for the Intercultural Object

The process of interchange taking place between producer and consumer in the argillite plates I have discussed is evinced by the experimentation in stylistic mode and expression on the part of the artist, and the decision to purchase the object (not once but three times) by the market. Engaging in an active negotiation with his Euro-American/Canadian buyers, Edenshaw adjusts the relationship of "tradition" (the continuing and changing inventory of styles and forms available to him) to "innovation" (new stylistic and aesthetic modes with which he experiments) in order to convey new messages, to communicate more effectively with buyers, and to construct and assert his position as an individual within Haida society and in relationship to European society. He attempts to tap into meanings shared with European consumers, such as the shape and form of the object, a plate modelled on European tableware; the use of argillite, a recognized favorite medium with curio collectors; and, experimentally, the narratively interconnected "scene" showing an episode in a story. Included in the "scene," moreover, are elements such as fantastic creatures (such as the sea creature and round-faced steersman who do not appear in any other known Haida works), narrative cues such as the "storm-tossed boat" which were familiar to Westerners, and a suggestion of dynamic action, elements that Edenshaw may have included to appeal to his perceived market. The artist also includes meanings that were likely unrecognizable to the consumers, such as the particular subject matter of the depicted scene: what story is being depicted? Perhaps as a result of his experiences as "cultural informant" to explorers, private dealers and anthropologists, and because of an interest in reasserting this role in the marketplace and among the artistic community in his own society, Edenshaw experimented with the means of relaying the work's iconographic messages. He may or may not have interacted directly with his buyer regarding the particular strategies enacted in this work (it is perhaps more likely to suppose that he did talk directly with the consumer in the case of the plates because of their triple iteration, which may

have resulted from a direct commission to reproduce a work considered successful by the buyer). But regardless, the object represents a complex combination of artistic choices that reflects the artist's perception of market demand, his complicity with and manipulation of this demand, and his own individual and societal agendas for producing art. His experimentation in expression is combined with messages that were intended to be received by the consumer, and the result is a commodity that acts as a communicative link between two very different societies. In order to produce this link, Edenshaw participates in an ongoing process of negotiation with the consumer in which the "point-counterpoint" of message exchanges becomes a structuring mechanism of his own individual and societal identity.

The argillite curio, in this process, is the locus for reshaping the relationship between artist and producer. As Jules-Rosette indicates, "tourist art objects can be seen as vital symbols of change. They engender and embody many of the social and cultural transitions that are taking place in contemporary communities and in the societies of those who purchase the art. Moreover, they demonstrate the process of cultural mediation between Third World contexts and the West." (Jules-Rosette 1984: 9). The object becomes a record of a struggle and an *agreement reached* (at least for the moment) between producer and consumer. This agreement, moreover, can be seen as a politically transformative event. There is something "at stake" in the negotiations taking place between the economically dependent Native producer and the leisured, colonialist consumer. Jules-Rosette contends that "ideology [in the tourist art object] emerges in the broadest sense as a definition of group identity rather than as a particular set of propositions and political commitments" (Jules-Rosette 1984: 192), but I think it is important to see the significations exchanged between producer and consumer as specific materialist forms of conflicting social relations. Peter McLaren (1993) has recently articulated a methodology of "resistance postmodernism" that I have found useful in considering this problem. McLaren's "pedagogy of resistance and transformation" is developed as an appropriation and extension of what he calls the "ludic

postmodernism" of Lyotard, Derrida and Baudrillard (involving the deconstruction of the text based on the open, free play of signifiers), which McLaren sees as a methodology "in which the social is sucked up and dissolved into the world of signs" as part of a "relinquishing of the primacy of social transformation." (McLaren 1993: 120). Resistance postmodernism, on the other hand, politicizes the *différance* analyzed by Derrida and others by situating it amid real social and historical conflicts rather than operating in the abstract semiotic space "above" the materialist struggles taking place.

My analysis of the message exchanges between producer and consumer in the curio art object has been largely carried out in the abstract spaces of McLaren's ludic postmodernism. I want to conclude my project by suggesting how this analysis might be expanded, or recast in the light of a resistance postmodernism, by considering the object as an arena for material conflict. What is at stake in the negotiation between Edenshaw as producer and his buyers, Euro-American/Canadian curio collectors? The fact that the consumer is a member of the dominant, colonizing society and that the producer is a member of an economically dependent group of artists in the politically oppressed Native society, indicates a power differential that likely had some impact on the nature of the negotiations and/or how they were conducted. The Native artist, as an agent for social change, asserts a new "position" for himself – both within his own changing society and in relationship to his perceptions of Euro-American/Canadian society – through his artistic choices of subject matter, form, style and expressive mode. The object becomes his statement of this position, an embodiment of a negotiation for social standing and recognition. The consumer, in turn, acts out the desires and needs endemic to his own society through consumption, such as authenticating his self-identity and rationalizing the colonialist drive to control. In addition to serving his own purposes, however, the consumer's decision to purchase also validates the choices made by the artist (and the "position" put forth therein). The curio object thus reshapes the relationship between the two, enabling a transformative agreement that has real social and historic ramifications. Intercultural art, in this context,

creates a politically charged space in which the two cultures meet and assert their changing social and political positions. Future studies of Native-made commercial objects will, I hope, address this space with full recognition of its import.

In my thesis, I have pursued the notion that the negotiation processes taking place within the argillite carvings created for sale by Charles Edenshaw in the late 19th and early 20th Century are a function of the multiple different message exchanges that take place between producer and consumer within the object-site. These exchanges, I have argued, result in a complex web of significations surrounding the object that represent the agendas, hopes, desires and needs of both artist and buyer. Edenshaw's argillite work, seen on these terms, is a semantically rich arena for the artist's assertion of an individual and societal identity, an identity that does not come to an end in "unwitting acculturation" or "demise of tradition," (Jules-Rosette, 1984: 9) but that exerts an ongoing *presence* in an environment of massive upheaval and change.



Figure 1
Argillite plate attributed to Charles Edenshaw
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, cat. 17952
35 cm diameter, received in 1894



Figure 2
Argillite plate attributed to Charles Edenshaw
Seattle Art Museum cat. 91.1.127
33 cm diameter, received in 1982



Figure 3
Argillite plate attributed to Charles Edenshaw
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, cat. 1894: 704
32 cm diameter, received in 1894



Figure 4
Argillite plate attributed to Charles Edenshaw
British Columbia Provincial Museum 15508, no date



Figure 5
Argillite plate attributed to Charles Edenshaw
University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology A7049
Collected by Collison, 1904

Notes

- 1 Hence the use of the term "art" in the title of this paper. I am speaking from within the discourse of art history, which currently considers Native-made objects to be "art." The aestheticization of Northwest Coast objects is a relatively recent development, dating back at least as far as the 1941 "Indian Art of the United States" exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, wherein Native material culture was officially promoted "from the exotic status of 'primitive art' where it was compared to other tribal and curio traditions, to the more dignified status of 'fine art' where it is compared with the great traditions held in highest esteem by western civilization." (Michael Ames quoted in Ransom 1992). I am aware of this Eurocentric construction, and choose to use the term "art" with self-reflexive recognition of its ideological trappings.
- 2 Throughout this paper, I utilize the words "culture" and "intercultural" frequently, with acknowledgement of Virginia Dominguez's warnings about the discursive objectification and valorization of "culture" in our postcolonial society (Dominguez 1991). In her article, Dominguez questions the apparent transparency of references to "culture" in scholarly and (especially) political discourse, and although I agree with her assertion that references to culture can be politically loaded, particularly in the arena of government policy-making, I am writing from within a discourse that, I believe, utilizes these terms (the case of "art" is quite similar to the case of "culture" though the former word is certainly not as politically potent as the latter) as tools of empowerment for Native peoples. To avoid their usage would be to negate my own discursive context in the interests of being politically neutral (an endless and quite fruitless quest) and would not serve to relieve political oppression of Native peoples. I use these terms with awareness of their ideological opacity; I do not assume a direct and transparent identity of the word "society" with the word "culture."
- 3 As Susan Stewart has observed about souvenirs of the exotic, the indigenous object is associated with "notions of the primitive as child and the primitive as an earlier and purer stage of contemporary civilization." (Stewart 1984: 146). Cohodas (1993) has elaborated this point to show how a dialectic between the mythic Noble Savage of the past and the degraded, vanishing Indian of the present structured the fascination with which Euro-Americans looked upon Native peoples:

The head and tail of this North American coin were thus the negative stereotypes of Native Americans which justified domination and exploitation in order to increase the wealth of upper classes, versus the seemingly positive stereotypes of Native Americans as Noble Savage indulged in by those same leisured classes to fulfill their need for individual significance (Cohodas 1993:105).
- 4 Boas and other museum collectors often made specific demands for the creation of certain kinds of objects. Even the most "traditional" objects were subject to collection-directed manipulation. Cole quotes Boas during his collection activities in the 1920's: "Boas, seeking 'a real good arrow and bow,' suggested that, if unfindable, they be made. This would be all right, 'as long as they were made *correctly*.'" (Cole 1985: 291).

- 5 The study of museum exhibits of Native culture and how these exhibits are organized as a reflection of the agendas of the colonizing Euro-American/Canadian society is a topic that has received considerable scholarly attention (see especially Stocking 1985; Stewart 1984; Jonaitis 1981).
- 6 The process by which cultures are transcribed into ethnographic text is discussed by various writers in the anthology, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford and Marcus 1986).
- 7 Though not entirely, of course. The drive to "interpret" an object (or a text) in order to discern the artist's true message is also part of a more recent structuralist/formalist methodology of literature and art analysis. Literary structuralism arose in the 1950's as a systematic and "scientific" methodology which focussed on the formal structures of the text. Based on the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and (in cultural anthropology) C.S. Peirce, this approach in literary studies found its parallel in the formalist strategies of analyses performed by such individuals as Michael Fried (art history) and Clement Greenberg (art criticism) in the late 1950's and 1960's.
- 8 Holm's writing functions in much the same way as artist Bill Reid's codification of "traditional" Northwest Coast design through imitation and reification of a chosen set of precedents. By promoting himself as an artist of the Haida tradition, and choosing specific elements of that "tradition" to incorporate into his work (such as stylistic idiosyncracies borrowed Charles Edenshaw), Reid contributes to a construction of the public's perception of "traditional" Northwest Coast design. It is notable that both Reid and Holm have had a conscious impact on the marketability of Northwest Coast objects, with the criteria of 'authenticity' and 'tradition' functioning as criteria for marketing valuation. (Cohodas 1993a).
- 9 For a useful overview of deconstructionist theories, see Johnathan Culler 1982.
- 10 I also feel it necessary to mention that I am aware that my choice of Edenshaw as a focus for my thesis perpetuates an overemphasis on this artist as representative of Haida art as a whole. Indeed, my choice of Haida art over other forms, such as the Nuu-chah-nulth or Coast Salish, perpetuates an overemphasis on the Haida in art historical writings about Northwest Coast Native art. I have not chosen Edenshaw specifically to validate his mastery or to purport the superiority of the Haida style. I have selected Haida art and Edenshaw in particular not in spite of, but purposefully *because* of this overemphasis in the literature. The frequent appearance of Edenshaw in existing documentation offers me perhaps the best opportunity available within the history of Northwest Coast art to characterize contextual circumstances of production and consumption and thus formulate ideas about the object as site and process of intercultural negotiation.
- 11 Sheehan notes that argillite is in fact found in many areas on the Northwest Coast, "including the region around the Nass and Skeena rivers, the Squamish area at the head of Howe Sound, and the northern tip of Vancouver Island." (Sheehan 1981: 59).
- 12 For a description of this identifiable "hand," see Holm 1965, 1967, 1981.

- 13 "Polysemy" is a significant term in the discourse of poststructuralism, and I use the word here with full awareness of these connotations. Although its literal definition is "multiple meanings," polysemy, in poststructuralist discourse, connotes the interplay of meanings taking place along the chain of signifiers invoked by the presence of a sign, an interplay that reveals the indeterminacy and instability of the text rather than communicating a definitive meaning. (See Spivak's introduction to Derrida 1976).
- 14 *During My Time* is an autobiography by Florence Edenshaw Davidson, Charles Edenshaw's daughter, as told to Margaret Blackman. The book contains both autobiographical statements by Davidson and observations by Blackman. I refer to the text as "Blackman 1982," and note Davidson's sections of the text with reference to "Davidson in Blackman."
- 15 Derrida introduced the concept of "erasure" in the 1970's to underline the indeterminate meanings of signs: the word is inaccurate but necessary for the conveyance of meaning, and is thus written down and then crossed out, with both the word and its deletion left in the text to be read. For Derrida, this is a process of reexamining the familiar. Hegel explains that "What is 'familiarily known' is not properly known, just for the reason that it is 'familiar'...it is the commonest form of self-deception to assume something to be familiar, and to let it pass on that very account." (quoted by Spivak in Derrida 1976: xiii). For Derrida, it is important to shake oneself out of the familiar, to be aware that what has always been known may not be true. He thus writes "under erasure" to stress the possibilities of meaning which have been excluded in the presence of a sign. (Ransom 1989: 7).
- 16 Throughout my thesis, I use the colonial name for Haida Gwaii, lands whose ownership was appropriated unjustly by the colonizing power. The "Queen Charlotte Islands" label was affixed to the lands by Dixon in 1787 and continues to structure Euro-American/Canadian conceptions of Haida Gwaii today. Please note that my use of the colonizer's terms is not politically motivated. I use these labels to avoid reconstructing the received histories about Edenshaw and Haida society by retrospectively replacing these labels with current politically correct terminology.
- 17 Again, I am using the European name instead of the Haida name to avoid reconstructing the histories received from existing biographical literature. As a standard means of introducing individuals by name in this paper, I mention the Haida name first, with the European name in brackets where this is relevant, then use the European name, where there is one, subsequently.
- 18 According to Haida matrilineal descent, boys went to live with their maternal uncles during their youth and eventually inherited their uncles' positions and property.
- 19 Albert Edenshaw was also notably pivotal to the discovery and mining of gold in the Queen Charlottes during the 1850's, providing assistance in acquiring rights to mine the ore, which was located on Sta' stas land, and arranging for transportation of the gold to the Hudson Bay Company ships. The discovery of gold led to the establishment of the Hudson Bay Company trading post at Masset, and it caused Governor James Douglas of B.C. to proclaim the islands a Crown Colony in 1852.

- 20 For example, the record for National Museum of Canada catalogue number V11-B-777, an argillite chest lid that has been attributed to Edenshaw, records that the piece was accessioned as part of the "A.A. Aaronson Collection" (Barbeau 1953: 159).
- 21 An example of artwork produced for his own family is a wooden settee carved with Isabella's crests and used, as Florence Davidson reports, "as a chesterfield, with a feather mattress" by the Edenshaw family (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 79). He also carved a number of tombstones for Massett people (Blackman 1971), and no doubt had his hand in other projects destined for local consumption, though these projects have escaped documentation.
- 22 Barbeau (1957: 168) claims that Edenshaw actually lived with his Tsimshian "clansmen" for a short while at Port Simpson while in his youth, although I cannot find a corroborative source of this information. Henry Edenshaw reported to Swanton (1905: 101-104) that the northeastern Eagle clan of the Haida, the Stasta'as, were of mixed Tsimshian and Tlingit origin and were the most recently formed of the Haida lineages.
- 23 Another example of the exchange of messages observed by scholars between Haida argillite carvers and curio collectors concerns the incorporation of humour into ship panel pipes. Sheehan, in her publication of the late Wilson Duff's theories of Haida argillite carving (1981), notes that an element of humour or irony may have entered into the imagery of Euro-Americana incorporated into some argillite works of this period. She presents examples of panels and pipes that present non-Native humans interacting with domesticated animals, recalling the interaction of Haida figures in earlier pipes, but represented (according to Sheehan) with a confident degree of humour that pokes fun at idiosyncratic European behaviors and lifestyles (Sheehan 1981: 80-95).

Hoover accurately notes that Sheehan's identification of humour in these images may be no more than "the twentieth century Euro-American perspective of Sheehan." (Hoover and MacNair 1984: 207). However, if the element of humour is indeed present and intended by the artists, the message incorporated as a sort of "private joke" may not have been intended to be received by the consumer. Although it is certainly possible that the Euro-American buyers did "get the message" or indeed may have even requested that this degree of humour be incorporated, it is perhaps more plausible to consider that they may have been largely oblivious to the potentially ironic message of the artist. They continued to buy, however, indicating satisfaction with the result of the new imagery incorporated.
- 24 An example of this activity are the argillite boxes collected by Swan in Skidegate for the Smithsonian Institution (Holm 1981:194). Note that Swan collected argillite more readily than other institutional collectors did: "Argillite carving was one of Swan's weak spots." (Cole 1985: 45).
- 25 For example, Newcombe records in his notes that an argillite frog bowl that he purchased in Masset in 1912 was produced by Charles Edenshaw (now in the British Columbia Provincial Museum, catalogue #9910) (MacNair and Hoover 1984:76).

- 26 Kaufmann, however, suggests that these sacred images and forms, which previously could not be used in art-for-sale, must have lost their important private meanings for the Haida, in order for them to appear on objects made for strangers. (Kaufmann, 1969).
- 27 I do not want to get into a more involved discussion of the chronology of the three objects. The debate is certainly an interesting one, but it does not concern me in this thesis.
- 28 I searched Santa Fe historical records at the Historical Library of the Museum of New Mexico and the Santa Fe Public Archives for a J. L. Gould to no avail. I was, however, guided to the Free Museum (the only Free Museum in Santa Fe during that time), which was run by a Jake Gold. It is possible that the Columbian Exposition recorded the lenders name incorrectly. Jake Gold's Free Museum adjoined the proprietor's Old Curiosity Shop in Santa Fe. Gold apparently employed collectors and dealers as far west as Colorado to acquire Native-made objects for exhibit in his Free Museum and sale in his Curio Shop. See Appendix for accession records of the Field Museum in Chicago.
- 29 Although this is purely speculation, the connection with Norway may indicate the identity of the original collector of the piece (although the Oslo Museum could not verify this). I am thinking here of Adrian Jacobsen, a Norwegian explorer and amateur ethnologist who visited the Northwest Coast in 1881-1883. Jacobsen visited Port Essington, Skidegate and Masset before continuing on to Alaska, and he collected a great deal of argillite material which was later distributed to different museums across Europe. If the Edenshaw plate had indeed been collected by a Norwegian and housed in Norway before being given to the Dublin institution, a plaster cast of the object in Oslo would make sense.
- 30 I contacted Sotheby's in New York (which held the 1982 auction) about the prior ownership of the piece but they advised me they could not give me more information. A note accompanying the object on file at the Seattle Art Museum indicates that the object was found by an antique dealer in a private home in Maine before bringing it to Sotheby's.
- 31 Swanton explains here that "Supernatural beings were unable to bear the odour of urine, the blood of a menstruant woman, or anything associated with these. (Swanton 1905a: 148). Blackman (1982: 27-29, 48-49) discusses the power of women in Haida culture related to their reproductive capabilities. A number of rigid and ritually maintained taboos were observed as a check on this power, which could become dangerous if left unregulated. Blackman reports Florence Davidson' about the power of menstruant women: "Once women change their life, they [men] are scared of them." (Davidson in Blackman 1982: 29).
- 32 Swanton includes a footnote to explain here that Raven's sister will be safe because "The people of the Raven clan, to which Raven's sister necessarily belonged, were thought to have better morals than the Eagle people." (Swanton 1905a: 148). It seems more likely to me that Raven meant that he *himself* would not have intercourse with his sister, whereas he *would* have access to intercourse with his wife. Ironically, on the very next page in the same narrative reported by Swanton, the double-crossing Raven *does* violate his sister, tricking her into having intercourse with him. (Swanton 1905a: 127).

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Appendix

DEPARTMENTAL COPY

Date of Accession Oct. 31, 1893 No. 108

Department A

Field Museum of Natural History
OF CHICAGO

HISTORICAL FILE

Catalogues of Collections
Letters and Memoranda concerning Specimens

Sender J. L. Gould,
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Pueblo pottery, etc.
Carved slate objects.- Haida.

This packet may be taken for temporary use by officials of the Museum, and by them only. They must sign a receipt for it, and return within one month. If any paper is needed for permanent retention, a copy will be furnished upon application. When removed the receipt must be put in its place.

Acc. 108.

Country: U. S. A.
Locality: New Mexico.
Date:
Collection: J. L. Gould.

20468 Earthen olla, bird form
 22469 Earthen olla, brown ornament
 22470 Bone necklace
 22471 Wooden sticks
 22472 Gourd rattle
 22473 Large vessel
 22474 Earthen olla
 22475 Earthen bird figure
 22476 Drum
 22477 Rudely flaked stone axe
 22478 2 wooden stirrups
 22479 Stone for grinding paint
 22480 Metate and grinder, stone
 22481 Earthen human figure
 22482 Woven water basket
 22483 Earthen jar
 22484 Broken pottery
 22485 Earthen vase
 22486 Earthen olla, brown ornament
 22487 Double animal shaped vessel
 22488 Earthen vessel
 22489 Earthen olla
 22490 2 clay human figures
 22491 Earthen jar
 22492 Earthen owl
 22493 Duck shaped earthen vessel
 22494 Earthen water jar
 22495 Earthen deer
 22496 Earthen water jar
 22497 Grooved stone axe
 22498 Earthen olla
 22499 Earthen olla-brown ornament

This copy of an original document in the
 Field Museum of Natural History, Department
 of Anthropology, Chicago, Illinois, is provided
 for the purpose of the under-
 taking of a study of the material re-
 production of the material and not occur
 without written and signed permission in the
 Department of Anthropology, FMNH.

Haida - Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia.

17852 Carved circular dish, slate.
 17953 Model - totem pole carved in slate
 17954 Model - totem pole carved in slate
 17955 Model - totem pole carved in slate
 17956 Model - totem pole carved in slate.

ENT DEPARTMENTAL COPY
ACCESSION No. 108
Date Feb 14 1894
FIELD COLUMBIAN MUSEUM OF CHICAGO.

Report - Department A
Received from J. L. Gould
Address Santa Fe New Mex
To be credited to
Gift, Exchange, Loan, Deposit, Purchase.
For Examination, Returned from Examination.
Collected by Curator, From Museum Expedition.
On Approval for Purchase.
Collector's Name
Date Collected
Locality
Catalog No's 17952-17956

Description of Objects:
Carved Dish 17952
Totem Slate 17953
" " 17954
" " 17955
" " 17956

To be returned unless
sold

Total Number of Specimens
The above is a full inventory (and)
A complete catalog is transmitted herewith.
Notes
(Signed) W. H. Holmes
Curator.

DEPARTMENTAL COPY
ACCESSION No. 108 MS
Date 1894
FIELD COLUMBIAN MUSEUM OF CHICAGO.

Report Department A

Received from *Wm W. Coulter Exp*
Address *Chicago*
To be credited to *W. B. E.*
Office Exchange Loan Deposit Purchase _____
Examination Secured from Examination _____
Collected by Curator From Museum Expedition _____
On Approval for Purchase _____
Collector's Name _____
Date collected _____
Locality *San Marcos*
Catalogue No. *722419*

Description of Objects:
*A collection of 100 specimens of
Lepidoptera from San Marcos,
Mexico. The specimens are all
from the same locality and
are all of the same species.
The specimens are all of the
same sex and are all of the
same age.*

Total Number of Specimens _____

The above is a full inventory of the
entire lot of objects submitted herewith.
None _____

(Signed) *H. S. Palmer* Curator.

DEPARTMENTAL COPY

108

J. L. Gould.

This collection was left at
the M.C.E. and was given for
it suffered considerably from
the fire in D.A. R.R. Reg. storage
then vacant museum.
Accession 108
Nos. 22468 — 22479.

Alaska. 22468 0 - 22473 41, 22468.6, 22468.8, 22468.9

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