EXAMINATION OF THE SYSTEMS OF AUTHORITY OF THREE CANADIAN MUSEUMS AND THE CHALLENGES OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 1997

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ABSTRACT

In order to illustrate why museums are frequently sites of conflict and mediation, this dissertation examines the complex conditions under which knowledge is produced and disseminated at three Canadian museums. Approaching museums as social arenas or contact zones, the dissertation exposes power struggles in museums and dislodges a whole set of assumptions about what museums are and how they function.

For the study I selected the following museums with anthropological mandates: MacBride Museum (Whitehorse), Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife), and Vancouver Museum (Vancouver). The three museums were chosen because their geographical proximity to large communities of Aboriginal Peoples enabled an exploration of the changing relationships between them. Historically, museums have held the power to classify and define Aboriginal Peoples. Relatively recently, however Aboriginal Peoples have in various ways (by imposing constraints on how they and their cultures are exhibited, and through land claims and repatriation requests) been challenging their historic relationships with museums.

In chapter one I discuss my objectives, methodology, and the work of those scholars who shaped this dissertation. Chapter two explores the invention of museums in the western world and begins linking the three Canadian museums with knowledge and power. In chapters three, four, and five I portray the mobility and productivity of three museums (MacBride Museum, PWNHC, and Vancouver Museum) in three distinct regions of Canada. I illustrate their ability to articulate identity, power, and tradition as well as the role they perform in the social organization of power relations. Each chapter begins with a description of the historical roots of power relations at each institution. This leads into a discussion of each museum’s present system of authority: the state, governing bodies,
professional staff and, increasingly, Aboriginal representatives. In the process I reveal some of the political pressures, institutional hierarchies, and personal conflicts that shape knowledge within these institutions.

Chapter six is a review and critical analysis of systems of authority of the three museums and the challenges presented by Aboriginal Peoples. I conclude with the issues raised at the outset, which continue to confront the Canadian museum community, issues of inclusion and the limitations of cross-cultural translation, repatriation, and representation.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the numerous individuals who offered their assistance, insights, and encouragement at various stages of the process. The list of people to be acknowledged is lengthy, and if I have missed anyone, you know who you are.

First, I would like to thank the staff and governing bodies at the MacBride Museum, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, and the Vancouver Museum for permitting me to carry out research at their museums, for taking the time to answer endless questions, and for their encouragement. There are a number of individuals in particular to whom I would like to convey my deepest appreciation: Charles Arnold for making my first research experience less daunting and for his encouragement; Tom Andrews and Elisa Hart for doing interesting work and for consequently making my dissertation more interesting; Margaret Bertulli for sharing her home with me; Al Bowen for his interest in the history of the Vancouver Museum and incredible memory; Alan Cash for those endless discussions on policy; Lynne Maranda for her encouragement and for hiring me to spend four days working with Dempsey Bob; Terry Pamplin for so willingly sharing information; M.J. Patterson for her observations and energy; Rose Scott for her insights and all those home cooked meals; Joanne Meehan for the generosity of her time; Joan Myers for her tenacity; Joan Seidl for her innovation; Glenna Thorpe for her interest; Joseph Wai for all those quotable quotes. Thank you as well to Craig Aspinall, Boris Atamanenko, Sandra Bannister, Val Baggaley, Joanne Bird, Sandy Blair, Barb Cameron, Brenda Carson, Kordula Depatie, Ken Maddison, Bill McLennon, Janet Pennington, Toni Riley, Stephen Topfer, Charlotte Warren, and Wally Wolfe.

I owe special debts of gratitude to Doug Beaumont, Laurent Cyr, Barb Fred, Jeff Hunston, Linda Johnson, Louise Profeit-LeBlanc, Norma Shorty, and Clara Shinkel for taking time out of their busy schedules to speak with me about cultural events and institutions in the Yukon. Thank you to artist Dempsey Bob for his inspiration. Thank you to Stuart Hodgson for his delightful and colourful historical recollection of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Thanks to Robert Janes for sharing his understanding of the processes by which museum knowledge is produced and circulated. Thank you to Barb Winter and Debbie Webster for their insights regarding cultural events in the Northwest Territories. Thank you as well to the staffs of the NWT Archives, Yukon Territorial Archives, and City of Vancouver Archives for acquainting me with archival research.

Thank you to my friends and colleagues Allison Cronin, Allan Ryan, Denise Nuttall, Tim Paterson, and Daniel Roy for their constructive criticism and encouragement. Thank you in particular to my friend Pam Brown for her comments and unstinting support. I am also indebted to students at Simon Fraser University for enhancing my understanding of changing historical relationship...
between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Special thanks to Jennifer Webb for her fine editing skills.

I want extend a heartfelt "thank you" to my thesis supervisor Marjorie Halpin for her valuable insights and patience throughout the construction of this written document. I would also like to pay tribute to my committee members: Michael Kew for his interest and comments and Ken Stoddart for his encouragement. Thank you as well to Michael Ames for helping me formulate the research project and for his suggestions on the final document; Julie Cruikshank for her thoughts on earlier versions of this document and for the respect her work receives in the Yukon and elsewhere; Carole Farber and Jim Freedman for convincing me I could actually do this; Dianne Newell for her interest, thoroughness, and helpful comments on the final document; and Sandra Niessen for her insightful suggestions on the final manuscript—however, I obviously retain responsibility for the remaining flaws.

Financial support for my work in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon was provided by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) and the Northern Research Institute (Yukon). Generous financial support was also provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Doctoral Fellowships) and the University of British Columbia (Graduate Fellowships).

To my parents—thank you for your generosity. Most of all I would like to thank my husband Bruce and our children Natasha and Joshua. Thanks Bruce for your constructive criticism throughout the entire writing process, for keeping our home in order, and for your encouragement. Thank you Natasha and Joshua for your patience. I have depended enormously on the love and support of my family while I have been writing this dissertation.
CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION

Purpose/Objectives

Within the present economic, intellectual, and political climate, museum professionals and their university colleagues are being challenged by issues such as cultural appropriation, the limitations of cross-cultural translations, ethnographic authority, cultural ‘otherness,’ and representation. Museum professionals must also contend with the particularly contentious matter of repatriation. To address these issues what is required is a critical investigation of the circumstances surrounding the production and circulation of knowledge in museums, along with an exploration of the relationship between knowledge and power. A better understanding of the networks of authority within which museum knowledge is constructed and manipulated could be useful in restructuring some power relations and eliminating others.

The specific goal of this dissertation is to explore the conditions under which knowledge is produced at three museums, in order to illustrate why museums are frequently “sites of contestations” (Foster 1985:146) and negotiation. This requires an exploration of the political tensions, institutional hierarchies, and personal and group conflicts that structure museum practices.

1First, I want to acknowledge that in the present intellectual climate the concept of knowledge is undergoing expansion and reconstruction (Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994:4). I acknowledge the constructed nature of knowledge(s), that knowledge(s) emerge from relations of power, and that specific forms of knowledge serve as forms of power. When I speak of museum knowledge I am referring to the collections, exhibits, and programmes constructed from within the specific hierarchical structures that characterize museums.

2Similar to the concept of knowledge, that of power is also being expanded and reconstructed (Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994:4). This reconstruction and expansion of the concept of power can largely be attributed to the late French philosopher Michel Foucault’s (1980, 1983) complex understanding of power. His approach acknowledges the following: the different forms that power can take in the social world; that power belongs to both the dominant and marginalized; and that power "is constituted precisely within the relations between official and unofficial agents of social control and cultural production" (Dirks, Eley and Ortner 1994:4).
For the study I selected the following three Canadian museums with anthropological mandates: MacBride Museum (Whitehorse), Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife), and Vancouver Museum (Vancouver). These museums were chosen because their geographical proximity to large communities of Aboriginal Peoples enabled an exploration of each institution’s changing relationship with them. Historically, each museum has collected, classified, exhibited, and cared for objects created by Aboriginal Peoples. The power of museums to classify and define Aboriginal Peoples is an exercise of control over their lives. In the present intellectual and political climate, which will be described in some detail below, the three museums are learning that Aboriginal Peoples can effectively limit the contextualization of collections representing their cultures. Like some other Canadian museums, the three museums are expected to share authority with Aboriginal representatives whose objects they hold, and whose histories and cultures they represent.

The museums share other commonalities that are of concern in this study. As is typical of Canadian museums in general, all three are dependent upon various levels of government for revenue, which makes them sensitive to political change

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3I deliberately did not include the UBC Museum of Anthropology in this study because the museum’s affiliation with the department from which this dissertation originates would, in my opinion, preclude an effective description and analysis.

4In Canada various words (Indian, Native) are used in reference to the original inhabitants of Canada. I have elected to use the term Aboriginal Peoples because Section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 defines Aboriginal Peoples of Canada as including the Indian, Inuit, and Metis peoples (Elliott 1994:9).

5In Canada the state has functioned as an arbiter of Aboriginal identity since 1850, defining who was and who was not an 'Indian'. "An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada, and An Act for the Protection of the Indians in Upper Canada, both passed on August 10, 1850, defined "Indian" in terms of blood, membership in a particular band or tribe, marriage and/or adoption" (Sawchuk 1992:5-6). Since then "other Acts dealing with membership entitlement, Indian Acts ..., and revisions thereto have followed" (Green 1992:177). It is important to understand that these state imposed concepts of identity are of consequence economically, emotionally, and politically.
and the economic climate of the rest of the country. All three museums are located in Western Canada, in relatively new contact frontiers, where permanent non-Aboriginal settlement occurred. Each museum was established following changing historical circumstances (the redefinition of the region's political boundaries coupled with economic expansion), changes that were also of consequence to the area's Aboriginal populations. All three museums served as spaces in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations came into contact with each other and established ongoing relationships.6

These three museums were also chosen because they represent a cross-section of sizes and types. They range from large (Vancouver Museum), in terms of number of staff and governing bodies, as well as size of collection, to small (MacBride Museum) and have varying relationships with governmental agencies. The institutions differ in age, from a century old (Vancouver Museum) to less than two decades old (Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre). Two of the facilities (MacBride Museum and Vancouver Museum) are directed by non-profit organizations, governed by a board of trustees selected from amongst the region's prominent citizens. The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is a division within the Government of the Northwest Territories. Its governing authority is an elected member of the Legislative Assembly. Two of the museums (MacBride Museum and Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre) are located in Northern Canada, a sparsely populated region of the country. Each museum is a specific articulation of distinct regional histories. Finally, two (MacBride Museum and Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre) of the three museums are under-

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6Historian James Clifford, in Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (1997), approaches museums as contact zones in which "geographically and historically separated groups establish ongoing relations. Notably, "[t]hese are not relations of equality, even though processes of mutual exploitation and appropriation may be at work" (Clifford 1997:194). I will appropriate Clifford's idea of museums as contact zones often throughout this dissertation.
represented in the literature on museums and in public awareness, and merit further consideration.

In this dissertation each museum is historically situated within a changing "web of power relations" (Caputo and Yount 1993:4). These webs of power relations are composed of governing bodies, professionals, and various levels of government. Entangled in these systems of authority, though not necessarily in positions of power, are the Aboriginal communities whose objects the museums hold. Aboriginal Peoples, who have been socially distant from museums due to historical and political circumstances, are now insisting that these relations of inequality change. Understanding the inner workings of museums is crucial to understanding why museums are sites where power is constituted, negotiated, and eventually transformed. Therefore, focusing on these three museums, I intend to describe, analyze, deliberate, and bring into question the webs of power relations within which "human beings are made subjects"\(^7\) of study and objectified\(^8\) in museums (Foucault 1983:208, 223).

**Point of Departure**

I began this project with an awareness of the unhappiness of various groups (e.g., Aboriginal Peoples, women, African Canadians) with their present relationship with museums. The emotional debates that surrounded the Glenbow Museum’s exhibition *The Spirit Sings* (1988), and more recently the Royal Ontario Museum’s *Into the Heart of Africa* (1989), captured the attention of the entire country. What museum workers believed to be innocent practices of

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\(^7\)Influenced by Foucault and those who follow his ideas, I understand a 'subject' to be "a person under the domination of an authority of some sort" (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner 1994:13).

\(^8\)The term 'objectify' is used interchangeably with 'represent.' When I speak of human beings being objectified in museums I mean that they are categorized, defined, and provided with an identity by those who manage museums and their collections. The representation or objectification of human beings is an act of authority over those being represented.
objectification were interpreted to amount to what anthropologist, Virginia Dominguez (1987:132) has referred to as "strategies of domination through appropriation." In both instances, "communities whose cultures and histories were at stake in prominent exhibits mobilized to seriously trouble the museum" (Clifford 1997:205). The late French philosopher Michel Foucault suggests (1983:211) one can begin to analyze power relations by "taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point." I use the controversies surrounding the two exhibits as my point of departure.

The exhibition *The Spirit Sings* was designed to have three distinct themes:

- to present the richness, diversity, and complexity of Canada’s Aboriginal cultures as they were witnessed at the time of contact;
- to explore the common threads that link these cultures together to create a distinctive world-view;
- and to emphasize the adaptability and resilience of these cultures in the face of the dominant influence of European cultures (Harrison 1988:12).

In 1988 the Lubicon Cree asked for a boycott of *The Spirit Sings* for two reasons: the exhibit’s focus on the period of contact coupled with its lack of contemporary Aboriginal voices and presence, and the exhibit’s source of funding. Shell Oil, the very same corporation that provided the Glenbow Museum with $1.2 million to support the exhibition had, since the 1950s, been drilling on lands that were the subject of an ongoing land claim. The exhibition sparked a protest rally on opening day, a court action, a boycott honoured by many museums against lending objects to support the exhibit, many emotional debates, and national and international criticism (Clifford 1997: 204-213; McLoughlin 1993:365-385; Myers 1988:12-16). A public museum with an anthropological mandate became a battleground where current moral, political, and social issues were being contested and negotiated.

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9The exhibition's total budget was $2.6 million (Clifford 1997:205).
The exhibition *Into the Heart of Africa* was equally controversial. This exhibition's goal was to examine critically, "the role played by Canadians in the European colonization of Africa while displaying the rich diversity of African cultural practices and artistic traditions" (Cannizzo 1990:121). *Into the Heart of Africa* "was an exhibit that put into play those familiar postmodern discursive strategies of irony and reflexivity in order to attempt to deconstruct the ideology of Empire that determined its particular collection of African objects" (Hutcheon 1994:5). However, many—though not all—African Canadians who viewed the exhibit "were not seduced by an ironic treatment of the violent destruction and appropriation of African cultures" (Clifford 1997:206). In fact, some members of the African Canadian community denounced the exhibition, calling it 'racist' and a 'colonial view of Africa.' Anthropologist Jeanne Cannizzo, curator of the exhibition, had her home picketed and vandalized and was forced to leave her teaching position at the University of Toronto. Again the museum community was being forced to confront its role in the classification and definition of 'Others.'

Historian James Clifford (1997:209) maintains that "[o]wnership and control of collections have never been absolute; individual donors routinely attach conditions to their gifts." However, in the current political context, groups "that are socially distant from the museum world can effectively constrain the display and interpretation of objects representing their cultures."\(^1^0\) As a culturally, economically, and politically marginalized group in Canada, Aboriginal Peoples were able to mobilize the museum community to re-think and re-evaluate museum practices (Ames 1988; Clifford 1997; Da Breo 1990; Hutcheon 1994; McLoughlin 1993; Trigger 1988a, b). In response to these acts of resistance and to challenges to curatorial authority, the museum community began to take some action. For

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\(^{10}\)Clifford's (1997:204) perspective recognizes that "social distances and segregations are historical/political products."
example, in the autumn of 1988 an entire issue of *Muse*, produced in collaboration with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal co-editors, was devoted to Museums and the First Peoples. And in 1989 a conference entitled *Preserving our Heritage: a Working Conference for Museums and First Peoples* was organized by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association. A recommendation of the conference was to establish a task force “to develop an ethical framework and strategies for Aboriginal Nations to represent their history and culture in concert with cultural institutions” (Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples, 1992). This was done, and one of the principles affirmed by the task force was that:

Appropriate representatives of First Peoples will be involved as equal partners in any museum exhibition, program or project dealing with Aboriginal heritage, history or culture (Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples 1992:2).

Canadian museums received the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* just a few months before I began my research. I used this document as a point of entry during my discussions with museum board members, staff and members of the community, and will have occasion to use the report again in the body of this dissertation.

**Methodology**

The goal of this project was to illuminate the relationship between knowledge and power by describing and analyzing the conditions under which knowledge is produced, manipulated, and disseminated in three museums. As a graduate student in anthropology, and a student of museum practices, I had been exposed to the web of power relations within which knowledge is produced in two powerful institutions (museums and universities). While preparing my Masters thesis, I began to question my role in the production of knowledge from within
anthropology. Following the controversies surrounding both *The Spirit Sings* and *Into the Heart of Africa* my uneasiness intensified. Discussions with students, professors, and exposure to a body of literature on the critique of institutions and anthropology directed me to an analysis of power relations influencing the production of knowledge within three separate museums. My rationalization for undertaking this project was that "[i]t is those most immediately caught up in these fields of power who can best expose them for what they are" (Caputo and Yount 1993:7). Having framed my question I looked for a formula that would help reveal the information I sought.

In the following passages I outline the techniques I applied to expose the power relations within which museum knowledge is generated. I realize that "the research relationship, is also a power relationship between researcher and subject" (Hunter 1993:36). Therefore, I address the dilemmas I experienced when I began to objectify others in the construction of this dissertation.

Foucault’s ideas in regard to the study of power were invaluable throughout the production of this dissertation. Because understanding of power allows for analysis of the multiple of ways power is exercised, including that of the state, I was able to use his work to investigate the role of museums and museum knowledge in the organization of social relations of power. According to Foucault power depends upon the potentiality of resistance, thus where there is power there is resistance. Although Foucault does not claim to have a developed a procedure for studying power relations, his discussions on the relationship between power and resistance are invaluable in exposing power relations. Once I began detailed research at each of the museums various forms of resistance, and therefore forms of power, were exposed.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) has cautioned against being guided by romantic preconceptions of what constitutes resistance, for example the
overthrowing of a government, or the uprising of a class. In fact, resistance occurs at various levels in society in less glamorous ways. Abu-Lughod maintains that these preconceptions about the nature of resistance may blind us to more ‘mundane’ power struggles. And, unaware of our blindness, we may in fact be reproducing hierarchies. I heeded the words of both Foucault and Abu-Lughod during my conversations with museum staff and concerned citizens in the community. While reading through the archival documents I also looked for various magnitudes of resistance.

methods of these anthropological scholars to understand how power is exercised in museums and through museums.

Traditionally, the west has been the domain of sociologists, and ‘the rest’ the domain of anthropologists (Van Maanen 1988:21). Museums, as western inventions whose roots can be traced to Europe, to the Classical Period, fall within the realm of the west. However, "[c]ontemporary political, cultural, and economic conditions bring new pressures and opportunities to anthropology" (Clifford 1997:6). Consequently, "[t]he range of possible venues for ethnographic study has expanded dramatically..." (Clifford 1997:60) to include elitist western institutions such as museums. Here I want to illustrate how the application of traditional anthropological methods enabled me to access each museum’s system of authority and eventually to illustrate why museums are sites of conflict and mediation.

Common to most anthropological practice is what its practitioners call fieldwork. Anthropological fieldwork generally involves physically leaving 'home' travelling to one's designated site of study, taking up residence, and engaging in intensive interaction with the people who inhabit the study site. Conversations between the researcher and those at the study site, along with observational data, are an important aspect of anthropological fieldwork. I also traveled to specific study sites, took up residence for varying periods of time, and engaged in the five fundamental tasks characteristic of most anthropological fieldwork: "watching, asking, listening, sometimes doing, and recording" (Langness 1981:32). In my research, the emphasis was on asking, listening, and recording.

While at each museum I attempted to interview every permanent staff member. Consequently, my understanding of each facility is not derived from a particular individual in the museum's social organization (e.g., director, curator). In an analysis of power relations it was necessary to speak with individuals in various positions of power because, as Foucault (1980:98) has emphasized,
“[p]ower is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation.” Foucault (1980:98) goes on to say that, “not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.” Conversations with each individual in what are intricate networks of power relations, provided me with a clearer understanding of the various junctures at which power is exercised.

Two of the facilities (MacBride Museum and Vancouver Museum) are non-profit organizations, and governed by a board of trustees. Because a museum’s governing body is an important component of the system of authority within which knowledge is created, I also interviewed past and present trustees. The directors at both museums facilitated access to the trustees by providing lists that included names and telephone numbers. It was my responsibility to set up appointments with trustees. I used my position as a graduate student at the University of British Columbia and each director’s name as points of entry into the lives of trustees. Most of my interviews with trustees were conducted at their respective museums or at the trustees’ place of employment.

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is a division within a very powerful institution, the territorial government. Government bureaucrats and elected officials are an important part of the network within which museum knowledge is produced and circulated. Although direct contact with bureaucrats and elected officials was limited, I was able to speak with two former acting deputy ministers, former Commissioner Stuart Hodgson, and government bureaucrats in departments that were indirectly connected to the museum. The reason I name Hodgson, and the reason an interview with him was important to this study, is because he played a significant role in the creation of a territorial museum in Yellowknife.
Whenever possible I also sought out those who were outside each museum's immediate web of power relationships. In Whitehorse I spoke to a number of people who were neither employees nor trustees of the MacBride Museum, but were otherwise involved in cultural productions in the Yukon. Many of those individuals were women of Aboriginal ancestry. Although not as frequently as I did in Whitehorse, I also had occasion to speak with 'outsiders' in Yellowknife. In Vancouver I did not venture outside the museum as often to speak with people in the community. However, I did spend four days engaged in intensive discussions with renowned Tahltan-Tlingit artist Dempsey Bob regarding his work and, to a lesser degree, his relationship with the Vancouver Museum. On other occasions when I attempted to speak to ‘outsiders’ my efforts were thwarted. Furthermore, the Vancouver Museum has a large staff and board, and all paths seemed to lead to members within the network. However, since the Vancouver Museum had recently been in the media, I drew upon these media accounts to supplement my interviews. Whenever possible I sought a diversity of perspectives because “the union of erudite knowledge and local memories” permits “us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today” (Foucault 1980:83).

At the interviews I explained the parameters of my project to each individual as well as some ground rules. Interviewees were allowed to decide whether or not they wanted to be tape recorded, to ascertain whether or not they would be named, and to decide which portions of our conversations were to be ‘off the record.’

Although I realize semistructured interviews are “part of a strategy of tipping the balance of power” (Thomas 1993:89) in favour of the researcher I did have a prepared set of questions to pose to museum staff.11 These questions ensured that interviewees did not simply chart their own agendas. Initially, interviewees were not given the questions beforehand.

11
museum staff were asked to talk about their job descriptions and positions within the museum's social organization. As the interview progressed staff were asked more sensitive questions. In particular, they were asked to address their museum's present relationship with Aboriginal communities. They were also asked to articulate what they, as museologists, could do to create an environment in which Aboriginal Peoples had a greater role in decision-making. Some staff members had been a part of a particular museum's power network for at least a decade, in certain instances much longer. These individuals were asked to recreate a historical context for each institution. I was especially interested in how the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and a particular museum had changed over time.

Interviews with trustees past and present, followed a format similar to that of those conducted with museum staff. My project objectives were discussed and the ground rules were clarified. Interviews with trustees were also semistructured. Trustees were asked to talk about their role within the museum and their relationship with museum staff, in particular their relationship with the chief executive officer. Because trustees are responsible for setting policy and raising funds, the roles of funding agencies in the production of museum knowledge were discussed. I used the contents of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* to initiate a discussion about each museum's relationship with Aboriginal Peoples. Trustees were asked what role they could play in transforming the power relations between the institution they governed and those individuals whose objects their institutions held. Former trustees were asked to reflect upon their museum's past relationship with Aboriginal Peoples.

I recognize that relying on interviews will evoke criticism amongst some in both museums and academia. Observational data is still highly valued in the production of ethnographies and there are those who would argue that "[it] is
probably safe to infer that the more data are based upon direct observation the more accurate they are, while the more they are based upon what one has been told the less accurate they are" (Langness 1981:32). Anthropological work that involves a great deal of 'being there' for extended periods of time may have more legitimacy. In my defense I must argue that when ‘studying up,’ to borrow from Laura Nader (1969), one encounters established barriers that are sometimes difficult to penetrate (Hertz and Imber 1993:3). At each of the museums there were meetings that were deemed highly sensitive and closed to my observation.

As a government-operated institution, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre contained the most barriers. At the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre there are a multitude of locked doors leading to those ‘private spaces’ within which knowledge is produced. Neither I, nor the general public, were allowed to enter these private spaces unescorted. Given the restrictions, I was not in a position to observe many people at work for any extended period of time. Information at the much smaller MacBride Museum was the most accessible. I was allowed to move freely throughout the entire museum. At the Vancouver Museum access to meetings and areas within which staff were working varied. Opportunities for observation were dependent upon who was in control of the various projects. Because the Vancouver Museum is located near my present home, my research there has been ongoing. This may explain why I was able to experience multiple opportunities for participation and observation at that particular research site.

It became apparent early on in the process that I would need to engage in both ethnographic research and historical investigation if I was to grasp the relationship between power and knowledge. Prior to going out into the 'field' I familiarized myself with the social history of museums in the western world, which I describe in chapter two. Later, archival research continued to consume a great
deal of my time. The City of Vancouver Archives, Northwest Territorial Archives, and Yukon Territorial Archives were the primary sources of the archival documents I sought. Staff at the MacBride Museum also allowed me to access additional historical information stored at the facility.

Some might question the appropriateness of historical investigation within anthropology. I turn to the editors (Dirks, Eley, and Ortner) of *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory* (1994:5-6), to support my position. They observe that:

One of the most obvious changes in the field of anthropology in recent years is the extent to which the field has been moving in a historical direction. Only slightly less obviously, history has become increasingly anthropological. On both sides, some extremely interesting and important work has come out of these shifts....

Dirks, Eley, and Ortner add that there is a "very specific convergence" between history and anthropology and that power, in the Foucauldian sense, is the "point at which that convergence is taking place." In that regard, in addition to Foucault, the works of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992) and Christopher Tilley (1990) informed my archival research. Hooper-Greenhill and Tilley are scholars who have used Foucault in their own research. All three call for an interrogation of the past, in an attempt to understand the present. Those scholars who use Foucault recognize that his approach to history "is an opposition to the pursuit of the founding origin of things, and a rejection of the approach that seeks to impose a [... ] developmental flow from the past to the present" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:10). In the creation of this dissertation I deliberately use articles from the past selectively.

**Site Specific Experiences**

Circumstances surrounding conversations and observations at each institution varied. For example, my first visit to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre was very structured. The director of the Prince of Wales Northern
Heritage Centre helped make my first institutional experience less daunting. Prior to my arrival he acquainted staff with the details of my research project. Upon my arrival the director appointed a staff member to familiarize me with the facility, introduce me to the other staff, and arrange my initial meetings with department heads. Consequently, some of the pressure associated with setting up that first interview was eliminated. I also lived with one of the staff members and although we did not talk about the operation of the facility away from the museum, living in her home eased some of the discomfort one deals with in the field. My return trip to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre was less structured.

A month after my first visit to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, I returned to the North, this time to Whitehorse. My experiences in Yellowknife left me with certain expectations, and therefore I was unprepared for the lack of structure I encountered initially. In the summer of 1992, the MacBride Museum had one permanent staff member (director/curator), a permanent part-time employee and a number of summer students. During my first day at the site, the director was attending a meeting, the only other permanent staff member was organizing the bank deposit and trying to fix the lights in one of the galleries, and the summer staff were mowing lawns, vacuuming or attending to visitors. I was greeted with a note from the director, given a desk, and left on my own. Eager to begin work immediately, I spent my first day setting up appointments with people outside of the museum. Fortunately for me one of my committee members (Dr. Julie Cruikshank) has spent many years working in the Yukon. Her list of contacts proved invaluable. Her name also served as a point of entry in arranging interviews.

In retrospect, it was fortuitous that my first day at the site lacked structure. I was forced to go beyond the confines of the museum building to access the
information I sought. It was in Whitehorse that I was able to establish the most contacts outside the museum.

I visited each site twice, once in the summer and once in the winter, for three reasons. For one, researchers, like tourists, are more inclined to visit Whitehorse or Yellowknife in the summer months, before the onset of short days, long nights, and colder temperatures. On the basis of my previous work in the North, I was of the opinion that my autumn and winter visits would be more warmly received by staff at each Northern museum. Second, I wanted to determine whether or not activities in both the private and public spaces of the two museums varied between the summer and winter months. Third, the opportunity for return visits allowed time for reflection, the development of additional sets of questions, and the evolution of different relationships with various individuals at each of the research sites.

Research at the Vancouver Museum has been ongoing since 1992. In spring of 1994 a labour dispute closed the museum for six months. During that six month period struggles between museum staff and volunteers on the one hand, and the chief executive officer and trustees on the other, entered the public arena. A war of words between the two camps played itself out in the media. The survival of the century old institution came into question. This was one of the many reasons the museum has proven to be an excellent research site from within which to study power relations. Furthermore, prior to the labour dispute, which will be discussed in more detail below, the Vancouver Museum produced three consequential exhibits: *Making a Living, Making a Life* (1992), *Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel* (1993), and *Art of Dempsey Bob, Myth Maker and Transformer* (1993). The production of *Making a Living, Making a Life* included extensive consultation with various cultural communities in the region, including two members (Ed and Leona Sparrow) of the Musqueam Nation. In the exhibits featuring the works of Dempsey Bob (Tahltan-Tlingit) and David Neel (Kwakwaka'wakw), both artists
entered the museum on their own negotiated terms and then worked in collaboration with staff during the production of the exhibits. Given that I was interested in the relationship between the Vancouver Museum and Aboriginal Peoples and because staff appeared to appreciate my interviewing techniques, I was asked to interview Dempsey Bob and produce the labels for his exhibit. I agreed and as a result was able to attend exhibit production meetings and work closely with Bob during the preparation of exhibit labels. Although I was not directly involved in the production of *Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel*, I was able to observe various aspects of the process, including how Neel was able to strategically negotiate his way through the museum network. My experiences proved to be invaluable. In addition to my involvement in exhibit production, I conducted research on a volunteer basis for one of the curators. As a volunteer, I was provided with a key and allowed to move relatively freely within the private spaces of the museum.

**The Final Stage—Writing: Moral Quandaries Enhanced**

Once all the information has been gathered, the researcher returns home and begins to construct a text. These texts enable the anthropological researcher to share his or her findings with colleagues, funding agencies, and the group(s) being studied. Fieldwork experiences are generally conveyed in ethnographies, written reconstructions of what an anthropologist has heard, read, and observed. I use some of the writing techniques anthropologists generally employ in the production of ethnographies. However, because my research required that I detect the "historical shifts in configurations or methods of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990:324), I also incorporate a reconstructed ‘effective history’\(^\text{12}\) of each of the institutions.

\(^{12}\)I understand the construction of an ‘effective history’ to be the selective use of events of the past to address issues in the present.
For me, speaking with people about various museological and anthropological issues was the most stimulating aspect of anthropological practice. Spending hours in the archives, examining historical documents in search of material that supported or challenged my objectives was also a very agreeable enterprise. Returning from the field and having to face endless documents, tapes, and scribbled notes was the most daunting aspect of the process. After engaging in research that analyzes the power relations within which museum knowledge is produced and circulated I became very aware of my own position of power, particularly when I began creating my own objectifications of people. It was at this stage in the process that I was made more aware “that power relationships enter into the very process of studying power itself” (Hunter 1993:36).

Practicing anthropology is about making choices. The researcher selects a topic, a study site, a theoretical perspective, and a methodology. Once the researcher enters the field she or he must determine who to interview and who to exclude. She or he must decide which archival documents to include and which to ignore. On returning to one's office to begin the writing process there are further decisions to be made. All resolutions are significant because they are all part of the process of constructing knowledge. Fabian maintains that "[d]ilemmas appear when we consider the consequences of our work—before and after" (Fabian 1991:247). Academically based researchers are in positions of power and it is important that power not be abused.

Drawing upon the work of Johannes Fabian (1991:245-264), I address some of the choices I made and dilemmas I was confronted with during the writing process. The first predicament I encountered when I began to write was what to do with the secrets that I had been entrusted with. It is likely every anthropologist is provided with information that is confidential or 'off the record.' What do researchers do with confidential information once they have induced it? Revealing
this often tantalizing information would certainly make for a more interesting
document, but would do little to ensure further conversations with individuals at
each of the sites of study. I was also entrusted with highly confidential information
that I was not at liberty to disclose. I used this information to enhance my
understanding of the processes by which knowledge is created in museums. I did
not use it as direct evidence of the way in which certain individuals exercise power
over others. In response to those that may accuse me of unscientific conduct I
draw upon Fabian (1991:249) who speaks to this point when he says, "as if there
had ever been any subject matter about which an ethnographer whose writings
matter had said everything he or she knew."

A second dilemma that I faced during the writing process was how to deal
with the question of naming names. My thesis is based on the premise that
museums are social arenas and that an analysis of power relations brings into play
relations between groups or individuals. People are integral in an analysis of the
intricate network of power relations within which knowledge is created. After
speaking with colleagues, professors, and other interested individuals I decided
naming names would be problematic for me and the individuals associated with
each of the museums for a number of reasons. For one, communities protect their
elders and although some in the community may criticize the actions of their
ancestors, it is inappropriate for an outsider to do so. Second, I was concerned that
naming names might create tension in the communities. People at each of the
museums and in each community would have to live with the consequences of my
objectifications. Decisions regarding naming names “involve ethical-moral
considerations and these must be taken seriously by every responsible researcher”
(Fabian 1991:250). After much reflection I decided to withhold names in instances
where the information might be professionally embarrassing or the cause of
conflict. I also honoured the requests of those who asked for anonymity. In
instances where an individual’s name had previously been revealed in the media, I was more likely to do the same in my dissertation.

A third dilemma I faced was in regard to taking sides. In the spring of 1994, Vancouver Museum staff and management became embroiled in a bitter labour dispute. I had been carrying out research at the Vancouver Museum for two years prior to the strike and had come to know several of the staff members well. I felt sympathy for the individuals on strike, some of whom had families and no alternative source of income. In the end I decided to avoid the picket lines. My decision was influenced in part by my two month old daughter and in part because I did not want to forfeit my role as researcher. Fabian (1991:252) would argue that “my decision to avoid taking sides was, on the whole, ‘ethical’ in terms of the rules of value-free sciences.” However, he would quickly add that such a decision is “not an acceptable excuse for the critical anthropologist.” In the end I did take sides by not taking a stand.

My concerns regarding the revelation of confidential information, the naming of names, and taking of sides may be an overestimation of my significance and the significance of this document. However, if I claim to practice critical anthropology I would be remiss if I were to ignore the possible consequences of my work and the uses to which it may be put. It would also be a mistake to underestimate my role in network of power relations within which knowledge is produced. My objective, despite the risk, is to reveal power relations involved in the construction of knowledge rather than to mask them.

Intellectual Influences

In the following passages I highlight the work of those scholars who shaped both my investigation and writing of the conditions surrounding the construction, manipulation, and dissemination of knowledge within museums. When the objectives for this research were first formulated, a historical exploration of
museums in general and of three institutions (MacBride Museum, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and Vancouver Museum) in particular was proposed. Previous anthropology and art history courses made me aware that when one approaches the ideas and theories of any discipline it is imperative to address their formation in a historical context. Evaluating contemporary museum practices would involve a historical reconstruction of their formation.

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's (1989, 1992) critical analyses of the role of museums in the shaping of knowledge from the Renaissance to the present reinforced the need to provide a historical dimension for each institution. Inspired by the work of Foucault, museologist Hooper-Greenhill argues that the inclusion of an 'effective history' allows for a proper interrogation of current museum practices. To understand the present predicament of museums, one in which they struggle with the "difficulties of dialogue, alliance, inequality, and translation" (Clifford 1997:213), I construct what I hope is an effective history of each institution as well as the social history of museums in the western world.

In writing this dissertation I use events of the past selectively, focusing on those historical moments which address issues of relevance to my research. Informed by the ideas of Foucault, I interrogate each museum's past to facilitate an understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge and the processes through which humans are objectified in museums, in particular Aboriginal Peoples. Historian Neil Harris (1990:132) states that "the crises of knowledge and authority [...] are shaping today's museums and may well influence them in the future." Combining historical and contemporary data in the study of museums helped me understand how museums arrived at this historical juncture.

In the process of reconstructing the historical formation of power relations at each museum I began by asking: Who established the museum, and why? What were their sources of power to do so? Finally, what was relationship between the
Aboriginal Peoples of the region and the individuals who established each museum?

As well as looking to archival documents for answers to the questions being posed, I turned to individuals affiliated with each of the institutions for further insights. As all scholars do, I also referred to a growing body of literature that addressed the issues I wished to explore. The dissertation before you, like the institutions included in this study, was also influenced by specific intellectual and political currents. The questions I asked, the archival documents I read, the observations I made, were all informed by particular theoretical perspectives as well as by events inside and outside museums and academia.

Within the past decade academics in various disciplines have demonstrated a renewed interest in museums and material culture research. Prior to that time, material culture research was the domain of archaeologists and museum curators. In an article entitled Exploding Canons: The Anthropology of Museums, Anna Jones (1993) attributes the recent critical interest in museums and theoretical interest in material culture research to two scholars: Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and James Clifford (1988). While I agree that the works of Bourdieu and Clifford have been influential, I would argue there are a number of other scholars (Ames 1992; Dominguez 1986, 1987; Foster 1985; Halpin 1983; Handler 1985, 1991; Jacknis 1985; Kopytoff 1986; Stocking 1985a, b; Thomas 1991; Tilley 1990) who should also be credited for renewing interest in museum practices and material culture research. Within the following passages, I elaborate upon the work of Bourdieu, Clifford, and these other scholars. I also hope to illuminate how each scholar shaped both this research and final document.

In Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste (1984), Bourdieu penetrates the social construction of aesthetic response or 'taste' and
unveils the struggles for power in the realm of the cultural. Bourdieu "elaborates a model of symbolic power describing the role of culture in the reproduction of social relations in contemporary France" (Wilson 1988:47). Through the administration of questionnaires to citizens in various classes of contemporary French society, Bourdieu sets out to reveal the socio-economic derivations of 'taste.' He writes:

Whereas the ideology of charisma regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature, scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits...), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level [...] and secondarily to social origin (Bourdieu 1984:1).

The premise is that aesthetic judgment with regard to visual art, literature, or music is neither innate nor neutral. Aesthetic judgment is influenced by factors such as one's occupation, income, academic education, and the occupation of one's parents and grandparents, because the family itself serves as an important educational institution. Taste in art, in clothing, in furniture, or in food, serves as a status demarcation (Bourdieu 1984). Therefore, "[l]ike money or investments, culture has value; and possession (or lack) of cultural capital increases (or decreases) the social worth of the individual" (Wilson 1988:47).

Bourdieu's work is significant because it illustrates the relationship between cultural, economic, and social capital. His work facilitates an analysis of museums from the standpoint of power relationships in two ways. For one, by exposing the fictions of both the universality and autonomy of taste, Bourdieu lays the groundwork for my analysis of power struggles in the domain of cultural institutions. Secondly, Bourdieu's work is useful in discerning the "fundamental point of anchorage of... [power] relationships" (Foucault 1983:222). This is

13Although Anna Jones (1993) privileges the 1984 publication, it could be argued that Bourdieu's Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) was equally influential.
significant because although “power relations are embodied and crystallized in an institution,” their base “is to be found outside the institution” (Foucault 1983:222). That is to say, the authority curators exercise within museums is derived outside museums. Curators derive their power to transform, fashion, and create (Fabian 1990:756) those whom they objectify within museums from the larger society situated outside museums. In this regard I will devote special attention to governments, governing bodies, chief executive officers, professional staff, and Aboriginal representatives.

An equally useful text to all those who engage in the objectification of the cultural ‘other’ is that of James Clifford, suitably titled *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (1988). The historian in Clifford is concerned with disparate, competing histories as opposed to a linear, progressive History. His interest, as exemplified in his writing, lies in a critical examination of the construction of ‘reality’ from within varying disciplines and, more importantly, attending to the practical implications of such constructions. His text illustrates his understanding of the political ramifications of scholarly work. Clifford forces museologists and other ‘authorities’ to confront the ‘reality’ that there are no facts to be discovered out there, but rather artifacts. The ‘reality’ is that what we find and write is but one version of reality, a version that is steeped in specific and historical processes. Clifford calls for a critique and transformation of the “relations of power whereby one portion of humanity can select, value, and collect the pure products of others” (Clifford 1988:213).

However, struggles for power in museums are difficult to identify and articulate when museums are “associated primarily [...] with a condition of permanence” (Thomas 1994:116) and defined as storehouses of material culture.

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14 In regard to the objectification of the cultural ‘other’ please also see Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s work entitled *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989).
Anthropologist Richard Handler (1993:33) challenges these notions and proposes that, "the museum is first of all a social arena, not a repository of objects." Handler (1993:33) observes that museums are "institution[s] in which social relationships are oriented in terms of a collection of objects made meaningful by those relationships." Clifford makes the same point from a slightly different perspective. He (1997) perceives museums as contact zones in which peoples, geographically and historically separated, establish ongoing though not necessarily equal relationships. When museums are perceived as contact zones, argues Clifford (1997:192, Clifford's emphasis), "their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship — a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull." Furthermore, he (1997:213) regards "objects currently in the great museums as travelers, crossers — some strongly 'diasporic' with powerful, still very meaningful, ties elsewhere." Within Clifford's (1997:193) definition "[a] center and periphery are assumed: the center a point of gathering, the periphery an area of discovery." Clifford's and Handler's definitions of museums are useful in the present context, because the premise of this dissertation is that "[p]ower relations are embedded in the very heart of human relationships, springing into being as soon as there are human beings" (Caputo and Yount 1993:5). Defining museums as repositories of material culture actually serves to mask power struggles within and for museums.

Accepting that power struggles take place in museums, what is it about museums specifically, that makes them sites of contestation and negotiation? What purposes do museums serve for different groups? Again, Handler's and Clifford's definitions of museums and museum objects are useful in helping us understand how certain individuals or groups use museums to exercise power over others, and how groups once silenced are currently seeking "empowerment and participation in a wider public sphere as well as commodification in an increasingly hegemonic
game of identity" (Clifford 1997:200). Handler (1992:21) proposes that museums contain objects that are made meaningful "by other objects, by words, by human activity." Museum objects are made meaningful by the social relationships that constitute all museums. In analyzing the processes through which objects are made meaningful in museums it is important to recognize that not everyone has the same power to contextualize objects. Because not everyone in a society has the same power to control museums and thus to construct and manipulate museum knowledge, a very small segment of the population defines what is important, valuable, and appropriate evidence of the past. From a slightly different perspective, art historian Carol Duncan (1995:8) maintains that those who control a museum, "control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths."

When analyzing the web of power relations within which human beings are objectified in museums, it is crucial to recognize that museum objects can be manipulated to produce a multiplicity of meanings. For example, a Tsimshian potlatch mask may be represented as an object of art, it may be used to tell the story of the suppression of the potlatch by the Canadian government, or the mask may be used to celebrate the actions of a particular collector. If one acknowledges that objects are mutable or subject to interpretation, then one must recognize that determining the meaning of objects entails debates about knowledge and power.

In *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (1991), anthropologist Nicholas Thomas successfully conveys the fickleness or mutability of objects. He illustrates how appropriated objects of Indigenous Peoples of the South Pacific were utilized by various 'agents of colonialism' (i.e., explorers, missionaries, planters, colonial officials, and ethnologists), and proposes (1991:184) that all of the 'agents of colonialism' were in various ways attempting to control the populations. The issue of control and

Museums, like other cultural products, are the result of “specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions” (Wolff 1981:49), and bear the imprint of beliefs and values of those social groups.  

Drawing upon the work of art historian Carol Duncan (1993, 1995), sociologist Janet Wolff (1981, 1983), and others who address the social production of ‘art’ (Becker 1982; Pollock 1988; Williams 1977, 1980), I examine the struggles for power in the production of knowledge in three museums. The usefulness of the preceding works consists in their approach to cultural artifacts as productions rather than as products, allowing one to talk about contestation, marginalization and negotiation based on class, race, and gender. Attending to the processes of production and manipulation of knowledge can expose the struggles for power in museums.

Museums mediate relationships between individuals and groups and are therefore “excellent fields in which to study the intersection of power” (Duncan 1995:6). Throughout the research process I wanted to establish how certain individuals or groups use museums to exercise power over other individuals and/or

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15Janet Wolff (1981) is writing of the social production of art works, but her analysis lends itself to the social production of museums and anthropology as well.
groups. I also wanted to examine how marginalized groups, in this instance, Aboriginal Peoples, use museums as sites of resistance and negotiation.

Carol Duncan's work entitled *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (1995) is particularly useful in critically examining the complex and contradictory motives of museum founders and trustees. While the impulses of museum founders and trustees may appear altruistic on the surface, scholars such as Clifford (1988, 1997), Duncan (1995), Dominguez (1986, 1987, 1992), and Foucault (1983), provide the tools to help illustrate otherwise. Clifford's (1997) latest text was particularly useful in encouraging me to examine instances where Aboriginal Peoples, a group of people who are marginalized both in museums and within the larger context of society, have been able to employ the three museums included in this study to articulate their own desires and to renegotiate traditional boundaries.

Seneca scholar Deborah Doxtator (1994:19) observes that, since the nineteenth century, Aboriginal Peoples of Canada have been “disinherited and disconnected” from their “pasts.” Their material culture has been collected, classified, exhibited, and preserved with little regard for their cultural values or beliefs. The protests surrounding *The Spirit Sings*, and works produced by Aboriginal scholars (Atleo 1991; Brown 1994; Webster (Cranmer) 1992; Crosby 1991; Doxtator 1988, 1994; Hill 1988; McMaster 1993; Young Man 1992a, b), indicate that Aboriginal Peoples want to “‘own’ once again their own cultural past, present and future” (Doxtator 1994:19). The projects that I focus on in the following chapters, events that bring together museum and Aboriginal representatives, indicate that at the very least Aboriginal Peoples want to redefine their historic relationship with museums.

Museums traditionally have spoken with an authoritative voice, seldom if ever acknowledging and discussing their cultural biases. Today, Aboriginal
Peoples are arguing that the official, anonymous voice of the museum speaks from a relative position and that it is never disinterested. Museologists and academics alike are wrestling with the issue of how to make space for the voices of those whom they have traditionally represented. This is done in the recognition “that the Other is never simply given, never just found or encountered, but made” (Fabian 1990:755). A proposed solution to the crisis of representation has been the production of polyphonic ethnographies, or exhibitions that include a plurality of voices. But in polyphonic ethnographies and exhibitions the questions still remain: Who gets to decide which voices to include from within what is inevitably a plurality of voices? On what basis are such decisions made? Whose best interests do these decisions serve?

The release of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992) was initially greeted with optimism. However, five years after the release of the report, tensions between museums and various Aboriginal groups still exist. One major criticism of the report is that it calls for ‘co-management’ but not ‘co-ownership’ of collections composed of Aboriginal material culture (Doxtator 1994:21). Museums continue to assume “responsibility and control over the disposition and use of Aboriginal culture objects and materials” (Doxtator 1994:21). Despite the good intentions of those involved in the construction of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992), Canadian museums continue to exclude Aboriginal representatives' perspectives and political agendas in the planning of exhibits and programmes, and the governing and operations of museums. Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, we might begin by exploring the multiple ways power is applied in museums. The act of remaking or reordering the social world according to museologists’ preferred categories is always an act of authority over the objects and their producers (Hinsley 1992:15). Following philosopher John Caputo (1987:234), I accept that while “[t]here may be no such
thing as pure and disinterested reason, [...] there is no reason why competing interests cannot compete fairly."

Clifford (1997:217) asks: "Why have museum practices proved so mobile, so productive in different locations?" Answering his own question he writes: "Several interlocking factors are at work. The ability to articulate identity, power, and tradition is critical, linking the institution's aristocratic origins with its modern nationalist and 'culturalist' disseminations." In chapter three, four, and five I illustrate the mobility and productivity of three museums (MacBride Museum, PWNHC, and Vancouver Museum) in three distinct regions of Canada. I show their ability to articulate identity, power, and tradition. But first, in chapter two, in reconstructing the social history of museums in the western world, I begin linking the three museums with knowledge and power.
CHAPTER II--CREATING A CONTEXT: 'EFFECTIVE HISTORY'
OF WESTERN MUSEUMS

Introduction

Our familiar common-sense practices, brought about and sustained by our own social, cultural, and epistemological contexts, are tomorrow's quaint and misguided errors, explained by our lack of knowledge and sophistication (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:10).

As Hooper-Greenhill proposes, the past can be a powerful tool in the defamiliarization of the present. To enhance our understanding of power relationships within which knowledge is created in three contemporary museums, I reconstruct the social history of western museums. Beginning with the Classical Period I use events of the past selectively, focusing on those historical moments that address issues of relevance to my research. I am particularly interested in the conditions under which museum knowledge is produced, the relationship between power and knowledge, the role of museums and material culture in the construction and legitimation of power, and understanding why museums are sites of conflict. Therefore, to illustrate the recognizable foundations of the issues I explore in this dissertation, I highlight the practices of savants of the Classical period, seventeenth century monarch and scholars, and nineteenth and early twentieth century social elites and anthropologists in the following sub-sections. Finally, because I am studying three Canadian museums, I examine the historical roots of the Canadian museum movement. I pay special attention to the role of the Geological Survey of Canada as well as that of the federal government.

Muses, Princes, Savants

During the Classical Period the term musaeum had two connotations. In one sense it was the place dedicated to the Muses, a mythological setting inhabited
by the nine goddesses of the fine arts and sciences. In its second sense the term referred to the celebrated Alexandrian library complex (Findlen 1989:60, 1994:49; Wittlin 1970:221). The connection between Alexandria and later museums is based on their shared accumulation of possessions and their “encyclopedic scope of interests” (Wittlin 1970:221). This link is reflected in Alexandria’s collection which comprised statues of thinkers, astronomical and surgical instruments, along with items such as elephant tusks and hides of rare animals (Wittlin 1970:221). Thus, even in its early usage the museum became an institutional setting where the cultural knowledge of the community was collected and ordered. As is still characteristic of larger museums today, Alexandria also served as an affiliation for scholars with diverse interests (Wittlin 1970:221).

Historical records indicate that by the end of the fourth century A.D. the term musaeum fell out of use (Key 1973:17). However, the term emerged again in Florence in the fifteenth century, when “Cosimo de Medici’s collection of codices and curios was referred to in such manner” (Wittlin 1970:223). This Florentine banker and ruler of the republic assumed the role of patron of the arts and sciences and employed scholars to collect on his behalf. He was not alone (Key 1973:22). During the Renaissance “[c]ollecting [...] had become an activity of choice among the social and educated elite” (Findlen 1994:3). The assumption was that by accumulating objects, “one physically acquired knowledge, and through their display, one symbolically acquired the honor and reputation that all men of learning cultivated” (Findlen 1994:3). The Renaissance princes and urban elites used collections to satisfy that period’s “social demands of prestige and display” (Findlen 1994:49).16

16As will become evident in the three chapters that follow, the premise that museums and collections can be used to satisfy social demands of status and display does not end with the Renaissance.
During the Renaissance the ‘Revival of Learning’ was accompanied by a great augmentation of the custom of collecting of curios, which in time came to also involve the ‘culturally curious’ (Hodgen 1964:114-161). At this time dramatic events in science were taking place: there was a discovery of the world outside Europe, a desire by theologians to know more about the moral condition of the people of the ‘newly discovered’ lands, an increased concern with the natural world and the life of humans, and an embracing of the concept of humanism (Findlen 1989; Hodgen 1964:114). Humanist scholars had come to believe that all the information distributed throughout the world might be shown to mean something more if collected, brought into the study, and compared (Findlen 1989).

The collection and ordering of knowledge in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe was a response

to the crisis of knowledge provoked by the expansion of the natural world through the voyages of discovery and exploration, the concomitant explosion of information about the world in general and, more particularly, the moral and social imbalance created by the religious and political events [of that period] (Findlen 1989:68).

It can be argued that ordering the world become a way to control it. Museums, conceptually and institutionally, represented an ‘imposed order’ in what was seemingly becoming a disordered universe (Findlen 1989; Haraway 1985; Hinsley 1981). This also suggests that motives for collecting were not only about humanists’ quest for ‘pure science’ (Findlen 1989:68, Thomas 1991). Centuries later, in very different intellectual, political, and social circumstances, museologists are being forced to come to grips with the implications of this imposition of control practiced by museums. The control museologists thought they had is turning into chaos, particularly when the people for whom they have always spoken are challenging their right to do so.
Using Italy as a study site to explore the rise of museums in early modern Europe and the development of natural history as a discipline, Historian Paula Findlen (1994:8) observes that:

The museum was not only a place in which objects were housed; it was also a setting in which relationships were formed. The human interactions that produced and maintained various collections remind us how much intellectual life was guided by patrician social conventions; patronage, civility, concern for prestige, and obsession with commemoration were all standard features of this world.\(^{17}\)

Throughout the late fifteenth, as well as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collecting specimens of the natural world and of indigenous artifacts was largely confined to prosperous and powerful individuals seeking to fulfill their own aspirations (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:64). However, although museums were embedded within aristocratic society, the practice of collecting extended beyond these social boundaries. Collecting "depended on a network of communication and exchange" (Findlen 1994:157). Objects moved across different social spheres and ultimately arrived at the "libraries, pharmacies, and museums of early modern Italy, where knowledge was put into place" (Findlen 1994:157). The processes by which knowledge is constructed in contemporary museums continue to be contentious and embedded within the social life of the elite.\(^{18}\)

Before I leave the Renaissance and enter into the eighteenth century, I want to make a distinction between the two principal forms of Renaissance collections: the Royal Cabinets and scholarly collections. While these accumulations fulfilled

\(^{17}\)This is strikingly reminiscent of anthropologist Richard Handler's (1993:33-36) definition of a museum.

\(^{18}\)Borrowing from Caputo and Yount (1993), Domhoff and Dye (1987), Foucault (1983), and Ostrander (1987), I define elites as those individuals or groups who hold positions of power in institutions. More specifically, those individuals or groups who occupy positions of authority in museums derive their power from institutions (family, businesses, professional associations, universities) outside of museums.
similar functions, they did so from distinct perspectives (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:64).

The Royal Cabinets were founded to "recreate the world in miniature around the central figure of the prince who thus claimed dominion over the world symbolically as he did in reality" (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:64). These collections of the reigning monarchs, largely concealed from the monarchs' subjects, were representations of their wealth and knowledge (Frese 1960:6; Hooper-Greenhill 1989:64), and the monarch was "the supreme protector of learning" (Frese 1960:6). Writing in 1907 on the function of large museums, Franz Boas would articulate similar sentiments: "It is the essential function of the museum as a scientific institution to preserve for all future time [...] the valuable material that has been collected..." (Boas 1907:930).

As with the princely collections, the driving force behind Renaissance scholarly collections was control over the world. Collecting was a method for naturalists such as Ulisse Aldrovani (1522-1605) and Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) to bring nature indoors by collecting plants and animals, "thereby claiming control through representation over the natural world" (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:64). As they traveled about collecting the natural world, many of these scholars would also gather archaeological and ethnological material (Wittlin 1970:234). Of these 'objects of curiosities,' Boas (1904:514) argues "[i]t is only when their relation to our own civilization became the subject of inquiry that the foundations of anthropology were laid."

The collecting practices and acquisitions of these princes and scholars are important because many of the earliest public museums, which were founded in the second half of the eighteenth century (Wittlin 1970:3), were formed around these preexisting collections. On the Continent it was the collections of royal families
that contributed to the foundation of many noteworthy museums.\textsuperscript{19} The situation in the United Kingdom was somewhat different. In the British Isles there were no Royal cabinets around which to form public museums — rather it was upon the collections of scientists and travelers that museums were founded (Ames 1986:3-6; Collier & Tschopik 1954:768; Frese 1960:6; Key 1973; Wittlin 1970:101, 253). The British Museum, for example, was formed around the collections of physician/traveler Sir Hans Sloane (Alexander 1983:4-5; Ames 1986:3-6; Hudson 1975:8-10; Wittlin 1970:102-102).

The association between British and European museums on the one hand, and Canadian museums on the other, is that founding members looked to these established institutions as prototypes. Consider the following words of William Ferris, secretary/curator of the Art Historical and Scientific Association, in his address to the Association:

Sir Francis Kenyon, President of the British Museum, in his recent annual address on ‘Museums in Modern Life,’ referred particularly to obtaining “Exhibits which illustrate this life and art of what are called the backward races,” and stated “it was most important such specimens should be obtained before they are corrupted by contact with Europeans, or are for ever lost.”

...endeavours should be made to extend the scope of our Museum by following the advice of Sir Francis Kenyon... (Jan. 31, 1922).

At the time the Art, Historical and Scientific Association was the governing body of the Vancouver Museum.

**Private to Public Museums**

Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century public museums took over the functions of the Royal Cabinets: “the protection they afford to learning, the safety and continuity they offer to private collections, their symbolic function of being a

\textsuperscript{19}For example, the Royal Cabinets of the Danish kings became a part of the National Museum at Copenhagen in 1807.
national treasury,” and the obligation to accept donations (Frese 1960:8). What was different in the newly emerging museums was the rigorous ‘scientific’ classification and interpretation to which existing and newly acquired objects were subjected (Frese 1960:8). These transplanted collections were “systematically studied and this research was part of a study” of human beings “in [their] infant stages” (Frese 1960:8).

Public museums are equated with the democratization of culture. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a gradual transformation of prior museum practices and the "creative adaptation of aspects of other new institutions – the international exhibition and the department store,20 for example – which developed alongside the museum" (Bennett 1995:19). Professor of cultural studies Tony Bennett (1995:19) adds that the museum's formation "cannot be adequately understood unless viewed in light of a more general set of developments through which culture, in coming to be thought of as useful for governing, was fashioned as a vehicle for the exercise of new forms of power."
The opening up of museums to the public which occurred during this period both reflected and advanced societal change (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:188; Wittlin 1970:81). Public collections housed in public places replaced the personal, private collections stored in the palaces of princes and domiciles of scholars. The ‘museum’ was re-created "as one of the instruments that exposed both the decadence and tyranny of the old forms of control [...] and the democracy and public utility of the new" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:168). Public museums were

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20In regard to the similarities between museums and department stores Bennett (1995:30) notes that "[b]oth were formally open spaces allowing entry to the general public, and both were intended to function as spaces of emulation, places for mimetic practices, whereby improving tastes, values and norms of conduct were to be more broadly diffused through society."
subsequently established across Europe (Wittlin 1970:81) — museums as ‘instruments of the state.’

Previously, objects had been collected and displayed for the most part within the same social group, but that changed when the museum became a tool for educating the masses, and “a division was drawn between the private space where the curator, as expert, produced knowledge (exhibitions, catalogues, lectures) and the public space where the visitors consumed those [...] products” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992:200). However, in making the historical shift from the private to public museums it is important to keep in mind that the process of separation from cabinets of curiosities to museum specimens occurred gradually and that “[a]s a powerful didactic presence the museum is not much more than 150 years old” (Harris 1990:133). In fact, “[m]any of the early cabinets of curiosities were, until the middle of the nineteenth century, haphazardly organized and managed” (Ames 1992:17).

The building and endowing of museums by private citizens, publicly sponsored displays, and the hiring of administrators, curators and guards, to care for museum collections are practices of the early nineteenth century, or later, in some parts of North America (Ames 1992:15-24; Harris 1990:132-147). The staff who were hired to care for the collections, and the private citizens who established these museums and directed them, created different systems of authority from those of the previous centuries. What remained the same was that a very small sector of society would continue to control museums and shape knowledge. Today Aboriginal Peoples of Canada in particular, are demanding a principal role in determining how museums use the objects of their ancestors to create knowledge.
Anthropology Museums and Anthropology in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Foundations of the Problem

In outlining the formation of anthropology museums, H.H. Frese (1960:6,194) identifies three significant agents: the Royal cabinets of curiosities, nineteenth century European political and economic expansion, and the development of anthropology. The significance of the Royal and scholarly cabinets has been addressed. Here I attend to the economic and social surpluses (Harris 1990:133) that made possible the proliferation of museums in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I also examine the relationship between museums and the development of anthropology.

From the latter half of the fifteenth century Europeans had been journeying to various parts of world establishing trade networks and bringing back samples of the natural world and the cultural products of peoples of faraway lands. However, interest in the world beyond Europe increased markedly in the nineteenth century. This was a period of empire-building and of competing over ‘unclaimed’ regions of the world. The repeated expeditions resulted in a continuous flow of objects for the newly-formed ethnographic collections (Frese 1960:8-9), and the majority of Western and Northern Europe’s larger museums were established in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In North America the establishment of major museums started somewhat later than in Europe but continued for a longer period of time (Collier and Tschopik 1954; Frese 1960:8-10). What is important for the purposes of this discussion is that the majority of these Western museums “have their historical antecedents in 19th century economic expansion and colonialism” (Root 1989:3).

Drawing heavily upon the work of historian Neil Harris (1990:138), I want to explore further the notion that late nineteenth and early twentieth-century museums were “responses to a knowledge revolution, increased personal wealth,
specific patterns of national domination, and anxieties about cultural continuity." It is important to do so because although the museum practitioners are currently perplexed by different challenges, these four social trends continue to influence present museum practices (Harris 1990:138). The continuing influence of these elements will become evident when I explore the conditions under which knowledge is produced at three contemporary museums.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the expansion of knowledge was followed by a proliferation of museums. Museums were particularly well suited to the extension of knowledge about the world and its inhabitants because “they permitted large-scale restatements of the new learning” (Harris 1990:135). Until approximately 1910 the only rival museums had to reaching the masses was printed media. Museums were far more effective than printed media in conveying new theories about the “age of the earth, the size of the universe, the origin of species, the workings of the body, and the mysteries of creation” to the general public (Harris 1990:133).

Paralleling the formation of museums of course was that of new disciplines. Art, history, and natural science museums "served as linked sites for the development and circulation of new disciplines (history, biology, art history, anthropology) and their discursive formations (the past, evolution, aesthetics, man) as well as for the development of new technologies of vision" (Bennett 1994:123).

A second factor that is said to have contributed to a proliferation of museums during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the “availability of unprecedented masses of industrial capital for transformation into civic purposes and individual status” (Hinsley 1992:15). Having achieved economic success American businessmen used museums to secure “both their political base and their
social prestige" (Duncan 1995:54). For individuals like Carnegie, Field, Peabody, and Rockefeller, collections and philanthropic bequests served as forms of cultural capital in much the same way collections and museums had for Renaissance monarchs.

Concomitant with the expansion of knowledge and accumulation of industrial capital was an "increase of domination over the physical world and the creation of centers of empire in Europe and North America" (Harris 1990:134). Harris (1990:134) maintains these centres exploited both the earth's resources and "cultures and peoples of every continent." During this period there was continual flow of people from the economic centres to the frontiers. These excursions by administrators, explorers, military personnel, missionaries, and tourists provided museum collections with a continuous supply of cultural objects, fauna, and flora.

A final contributing factor to the formation of museums in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the sense of chaos Europeans and Americans were experiencing. During this historical period Victorians were encountering many changes, changes that challenged their previously held beliefs and understanding of the universe. Extensive migrations created a sense of alienation, and exposure to a world of human diversity further enhanced Victorians' apprehension. Museums, through classification and exhibition, imposed order upon a seemingly disorderly world (Harris 1990:132-147; Hinsley 1981:7, 83). For Victorians the museum served as a "corrective, an asylum, a source of transcendent values meant to restore some older rhythms of nature and history to fast-paced, urbanizing, mechanized society" (Harris 1990:137). Museums were presented as "unifying and even democratizing forces in a culturally diverse

\[21\text{It should be noted that in Canada private sector contributions have never been as substantial or as well established as they have in the United States.} \\
22\text{The Vancouver Museum was a beneficiary of Andrew Carnegie's wealth in the sense that between 1905 and 1967, its collection was housed in the Carnegie Library Building.} \]
society” (Duncan 1995:54). They were useful to the elites because museums disseminated western European culture, “but they identified it as the definitive national culture” (Duncan 1995:54-55).

As was noted previously, paralleling this formation of museums was the establishment of ‘modern’ anthropology “with its emphasis on the central importance of field research by the anthropologist” (Sturtevant 1969:622). The rise of public museums and the emergence of anthropology during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not occur by chance. To review, I would like to draw upon the work of Dominguez (1987:133) for her concise synopsis of the social conditions during which the emergence of anthropology and public museums transpired:

The expansion of European colonialism, the growth of an almost unbending faith in science, the combined condescension and universalization inherent in global, all-encompassing theories of biological and social evolution, and the successful domination of much of the world’s political economy by 19th-century Euro-American capitalism made the emergence of academic anthropology not only possible but highly likely. [...] The same goes for the rise of public museums, the scramble for ethnographic artifacts and the emergence and popularity of world fairs in the 19th century.

Dominguez (1987:133) goes on to state that she finds it inconceivable that anthropology, “dedicated to the study of humanity by the self-conscious study of others,” could have emerged in any other historical period.

Native Americans were the primary subject of anthropological investigation in North America during the nineteenth century, making that continent’s early anthropological development distinct from that of other countries (Hallowell 1976:53, 58). In 1846 Henry Rowe Schoolcraft urged Lewis Henry Morgan and

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23I address these inter-linked but contradictory impulses again, when I examine the motives of the founding members of the three museums included in this study.
24Although anthropologist Edward Sapir, the first director of Canada’s National Museum and head of the Anthropological Division, “believed in principle that the work of the Division should not be restricted to aboriginal peoples” (Darnell 1976:101-102), in
others to “devote themselves to the study of America’s ‘free, bold, wild, independent, native race’” (Hinsley 1981:20). It was time, argued Schoolcraft, to advance a distinctive American literary and scientific tradition. Studying Native Americans could accomplish that objective. Schoolcraft noted that because Euro-Americans had ‘superseded’ the Natives in America, they were compelled “to preserve the memory of the aborigine…—their history is, to some extent, our history’” (Hinsley 1981:20). Research projects that included the collection of both material and oral culture were “a unique blend of scientific interest, wistfulness and guilt” (Hinsley 1981:23). It is not surprising, proclaims anthropologist Nancy Parezo (1988:5), that the “large scale collecting activities and the beginnings of major systematic exhibits on Native Americans began at the same time that Native Americans were losing their native lands and suffering military defeat.”

**Anthropology and Museums—Canadian Content**

The objective of this research is to analyze the power relations within which knowledge is produced in three Canadian museums. Therefore, I now narrow this historical reconstruction and examine the intricate social network within which Canadian anthropology and museums developed, beginning with Canada’s national museum. This component of my dissertation is primarily informed by the work of Max O. Brice (1979), Douglas Cole (1973), Regna Darnell (1976, 1990), Victoria Dickenson (1992), Carl E. Guthe and Grace M. Guthe (1958), Cornelius Osgood, Barnett Richling (1990), and J. Lynne Teather (1978, 1992). Because an effective history of Canadian museums is yet to be constructed, I supplement the work of the aforementioned scholars with that of Dominguez (1986, 1987, 1988), Harris (1990) and Hinsley (1981, 1992). Although these three scholars do not write about
Canadian museums specifically, I use their analyses of American museums to enable a more critical review of our past.

Regarding the development of public museums, colonial geologist Abraham Gesner, is said to have established Canada's first public museum in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1842. As a geologist, Gesner would have participated in the unprecedented expansion of knowledge about the world that was transpiring during this period. Museums served as medium from within which scholars, like Gesner, could communicate their discoveries to a general audience.

Soon after opening his museum to the public, Gesner began experiencing financial difficulties. Unable to garner government support or the support of an affluent benefactor, Gesner was forced to turn over the collection to the Saint John Mechanics' Institute. The museum eventually became the Provincial Museum of New Brunswick (1931) (Guthe and Guthe 1958; Teather 1992:23). There are many other reports from that period (i.e., prior to 1860) of "museums formed, lost or transformed by private persons, groups and institutions" (Teather 1992:23).

Historical documents indicate that geologists, like Gesner, were an especially important component of the Canadian museum movement in the nineteenth century. Geologists at the Geological Survey of Canada (hereafter 'the GSC') were influential in establishing Canada’s national museum and introducing professional anthropology to Canada. The GSC, established in Montreal by British-trained geologist Sir William E. Logan in 1842, became a cultural institution of great power and influence.

There are a number of reasons for the GSC's role in the history of Canadian anthropology and museums. For one, the original mandate of the GSC included collecting the 'relics' of Aboriginal Peoples. It was essentially the first powerful

25 The Niagara Falls Museum (1827) also claims to be Canada's first public museum (Teather 1992:23).
Canadian institute to provide financial support for the assembly of fauna, flora, and the material and intellectual culture of Aboriginal Peoples. The Geological Museum held some of the Dominion's first collections of Aboriginal Peoples' material and intellectual culture because the geologists who worked for the GSC collecting minerals, also collected the objects, songs, and narratives of Aboriginal Peoples. Second, the GSC sponsored occasional anthropological studies of Aboriginal Peoples. As had the Smithsonian Institution in the United States, the GSC also provided resources for research and a site from within which scholars interested in Aboriginal Peoples could practice. Third, it was R.W. Brock, a geologist and GSC director, who succeeded in persuading the government to establish an Anthropological Division within the GSC. Fourth, the National Museum of Canada was founded as a unit of the GSC. Fifth, the Anthropological Division and Canada's national museum were until 1950 administered by the GSC (Darnell 1990:41-64; Guthe and Guthe 1958: 3; Richling 1990:245-6).

Concerned that the material culture of Aboriginal Peoples would be lost forever to science if it were not collected, Brock believed that the creation of a division solely responsible for preserving Aboriginal culture was essential. An important component of the newly created division's mandate would be the collection of the material culture and ceremonial life of Aboriginal Peoples. Having succeeded in inducing the federal government to create the Anthropological Division, Brock's next goal was to hire a director. Acting on the advice of Franz Boas, recognized as the founder of professional anthropology in North America, Brock hired Boas' former student, anthropologist Edward Sapir, as the Anthropological Division's first director. When Sapir arrived in Ottawa in 1910, the Anthropological Division was administered by the GSC, which was itself

26 I propose that Brock sought the advice of Boas because Boas was recognized as an influential figure in the history of social sciences and more specifically within the discipline of professional anthropology (Cole 1985; Harris 1968; Jacknis 1985).
a sub-department of the Department of Mines (Darnell 1990:41-64; Richling 1990:245-6). The absolute authority was the head of the Department of Mines.

The inclusion of an Anthropological Division within a Department of Mines had various administrative implications that were considered to impede Sapir’s professional work. Consider the following exchange between Sapir (1912) and a colleague:

My work is sailing along smoothly and slowly. I am finding that there is altogether too much administrative and miscellaneous work to attend to, and that energy which might perhaps better be spent on working up field results is taken up with things of very slight interest, but I presume it can’t be helped (from Darnell 1976:116).

Furthermore, although Sapir was director of his division, he ultimately would have to include a number of bureaucrats in the decision-making process.27

In regard to the influence of Sapir upon Canadian anthropology, historian Douglas Cole (1973:43) proposes that Sapir’s appointment as head of the Canadian Anthropological Division in 1910 "brought to an abrupt close the amateur period of Canadian anthropology." Prior to Sapir's appointment, Canadian anthropological work was carried out by pioneers, historians, local archaeologists, and novices. Some of the prominent names from that period were British Columbians Charles Hill-Tout, Father Morice, and C.F. Newcombe.

Sapir remained director of the Anthropological Division until 1925. Soon after his appointment Sapir surrounded himself with other experts. Anthropologists Marius Barbeau, Diamond Jenness, Harlan Smith, T.F. McIlwraith, F.W. Waugh, and William J. Wintemberg were hired to assist Sapir in the fulfillment of his mandate (Darnell 1976). Sapir took his museum responsibilities seriously, and under his direction the Hall of Canadian

27I address this dissonance between bureaucratic administration and professionalism again, when I describe the conditions under which knowledge is produced at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Chapter 5).
Anthropology opened to the public in 1913, a mere three years after his appointment. When considering Sapir's influence upon Canadian anthropology and museums it is important to remember that Sapir was a student of Franz Boas. Consequently, Sapir's model for both ethnographic research and his principles of museum administration and arrangement were Boasian. Boas' major system or principle for organizing cultural objects was according to cultural and geographic areas. This was in contrast to the evolutionary and comparative exhibit principles to which Boas objected (Jacknis 1985). Boasian exhibit principles not only influenced those of Canada's national museum but those of other Canadian museums as well. His exhibit principles are still evident in contemporary museums. It could be argued that Sapir permanently established the course of Canadian anthropology and museums.

**Museums Beyond the Nation's Capital**

When Sir Henry A. Miers and S.F. Markham completed their report on the state of Canadian museums in 1932, there were approximately 125 museums in Canada. At that time there were nine museums in British Columbia and none in either of the territories. The Miers and Markham study (1932) was commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, as part of the search for ways that it might aid in the development of museums as had been previously done with libraries. Miers’ and Markham’s study was based on personal visits to almost every Canadian museum and gallery, as well as on annual reports, correspondence, and publications. They used British and American museums and museum practices as models in their assessment of Canadian museums.

Miers and Markham were highly critical of the state of early twentieth century Canadian museums. They indicated that a lack of government support, lack of a professional network, and lack of professional staff contributed to the dismal state of Canadian museums. Among the many recommendations of the
Miers and Markham Report were for all levels of government to increase museum funding and for the creation of a Canadian Museums Association. The Canadian Museums Association was eventually established fifteen years later in 1947. Museum training and the provision of a support network to museum staff were central to the purpose of the Canadian Museums Association (Guthe and Guthe 1958; McAvity 1992; Teather 1978, 1992).28

Canada’s national museum was viewed more favourably in the Miers and Markham report than were museums outside of the nation’s capital. Still, they were critical of the manner in which the museum was administered. They (1932:25) concluded that

This extraordinary constitution of a Science Museum, comprising Botany, Anthropology, Zoology, and Mineralogy, as well as Geology, is no doubt largely responsible for the comparatively ineffective service rendered to the Dominion by this national museum, in spite of its valuable collections and expert staff.

They attributed its ineffectiveness to its many mandates and an organizational structure that was inadequate to the task of managing all of them under one roof.

In 1950 the National Museum ended a century long affiliation with the GSC and was placed in the Parks Branch under the Department of Resources and Development. Additional changes to the Museum's administrative structure were made in the Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1951). The authors of the Report (1951:320) proposed that "[a] National Museum, ... should enjoy comparative independence of any department in administrative and budgetary matters and in its general policy." In addition, the authors of the Report (1951) proposed that the facility be administered

28 The "idea of collaboration among museums and those interested in them has taken form as the association of museums. This had its origins in Europe" (Coleman 1939:39) in the nineteenth century. Subsequently, the British Museums Association was established in 1889 and the American Association of Museums in 1906.
by a Chief Executive Officer under the general supervision of a representative Board of Directors. The changes to the National Museum's administrative structure proposed in the Report were implemented in the 1960s (Dickenson 1992:60).

Between 1950 and 1972, conditions for the growth and development of Canadian museums in general begin to improve. For one, the release of the Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1951) recommended that the federal government begin to exercise a more active role in the preservation of Canada’s culture and heritage (Brice 1979; Dickenson 1992; Dorais 1992). In regard to the federal government’s position on cultural issues historically, Former Secretary General of the National Museums of Canada, Léo A. Dorais (1992:48) observes that "[t]he Canadian government has always been very 'British' in cultural matters and has followed British parliamentary tradition. For a long time, the philosophy was to leave cultural affairs to the elite."

Second, Canadian museums profited from the increase of national consciousness. The 1967 Centennial of Confederation had a tremendous impact on the museum community. Strong nationalist sentiments were accompanied by growing government support for a variety of museums (Brice 1979; Teather 1992). Increased federal funding put some pressure on both civic and provincial governments to make similar financial commitments to museums.29

Third, after UNESCO declared the 1970s the ‘Cultural Decade,’ an influential museum policy was formulated by the Canadian government (Dorais 1992:48). Following consultation with members of the museum community, the Trudeau government implemented a National Museum Policy (1972). The Policy

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29The MacBride Museum and the Vancouver Museum both benefited from a heightened sense of nationalism. The buildings that presently house each museum’s collection were Centennial projects.
was announced by then Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier in a speech made in Calgary, Alberta. The Policy's two principle objectives were: "democratization" and "decentralization" or "taking the museums to the people." Pelletier (1972, from Dorais 1992:48) spoke of the government's intention to increase access to the products of cultural activity to all taxpayers, not only for a select group as has been the case in the past. [...] Decentralization, in a country such as Canada, signifies an active battle against vast distances in order to make our cultural symbols available to all Canadians.

The federal government committed funds to meet the two objectives.

Last, at this time museum professionals were becoming organized at both a provincial and national level. This increase in professionalism was in part related to Canada's Centennial celebration in 1967. In 1965, the Centennial Commission provided the Canadian Museums Association with money to enable it to establish a number of professional programs (Teather 1992:27-28; Tyler and Trudel 1992:2). Increasingly, professionals became another significant component in the network of power relations that currently permeate museums.

As they inch their way toward the twenty-first century, many museum professionals find themselves confronted by social challenges that differ from those of the 1960s and 1970s. As the most recent addition to the network of power relations that characterize all museums, Canadian museum professionals are now being asked to share power with Aboriginal Peoples and other 'Others.' Certain groups and individuals perceive museum professionals' practices of classification and representation as acts of power and control. For example, Seneca scholar Deborah Doxtator (1994:23), maintains “that in Canada there is still a kind of persistent cultural colonialism that claims ownership over Aboriginal history, archaeological materials and ritual traditions.” The survival of both museums and

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30 In 1961 Parliament passed the National Centennial Act, Bill C-127. This legislation facilitated the creation of the Centennial Commission.
museum professionals is contingent, in part, on museologists' ability to create a legitimate space for all of these other voices in the present network of power relations.

In addition to dealing with a loss of authority, museologists and museums must also contend with spiraling costs. In a discussion about economic predicament of the Canadian museum community, prominent Canadian museologists Barbara Tyler and Jean Trudel (1992:2) characterize the last quarter of a century as follows: "[i]n this period we have seen incredible growth in institutions (1960s and 1970s), a leveling off and even decline (1980s) and major crises" (1990s). As the public debt increased, all levels of government cut back financial support to museums. Increasingly, museums were forced to turn to the private sector for financial assistance. However, given that private sector contributions in Canada are not well established, museums have struggled financially (Tyler and Trudel 1992:2-3).

In the 1990s, write Tyler and Trudel, almost all Canadian museums are experiencing financial difficulties. Tyler and Trudel (1992:2) attribute the crisis to 'globalization,' in particular "the globalization of the economy." With a "major restructuring of the economy and the world [...] all organizations are being reevaluated and redefined according to their worth in the new order of things" (Tyler and Trudel 1992:2). Anthropologist Marjorie Halpin (personal communication, 1996) observes that it is hardly surprising that in the present socio-political climate government is no longer funding museums. Halpin (n.d.:3) adds that “[i]t is in the interest of the state, itself the representation of representations, that meanings be 'fixed' and eternal, deriving from an authentic and idealized past.” Because museums are no longer able to stabilize meaning they may have lost their utility, and thus the patronage of the state. But according to Clifford (1997:219), currently, "[m]useums, those symbols of elitism and staid immobility, are
proliferating at remarkable rate: from new national capitals to Melanesian villages, from abandoned coal pits in Britain, to ethnic neighborhoods in global cities." Museum practices continue to be mobile and productive in various locations.
CHAPTER III—VANCOUVER MUSEUM’S SYSTEM OF AUTHORITY

Profile

Classification: Civic Museum, directed by nonprofit organization.

Established: 1894; 1899 Vancouver Art Association expanded to become Art, Historical and Scientific Association. In 1903, the collection of the Art, Historical and Scientific Association became the Vancouver Public Museum.

Hours of Operation: 10 am to 5 pm, Tues. to Sun. Closed Monday (Sept-May). 10 am to 6 pm, Daily (June-Sept).

Governing Body: Board of Trustees; 21 elected, 1 member of City Council, 12 trustee appointees, total 34.31

Staff: 23 (part-time, full-time, contract, auxiliary); prior to 1994 labour dispute there were 52 (part-time and full-time individuals on staff). In addition, there were 250 volunteers working at least 4 hours per week.

Operating Revenues: $1,090,052 annually (approximate).

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia.

Materiality of the Vancouver Museum

Located in Vanier Park in the community of Kitsilano,32 the Vancouver Museum overlooks Vancouver city centre, False Creek, English Bay, and the Coast Mountains. The Vancouver Maritime Museum33 sits northwest of the Vancouver

31On Sept. 30, 1996, the governance, management, and operation of the Vancouver Museum became the responsibility of the Vancouver Museum Commission Society. The Commission is comprised of seven members appointed by the civic government. The Vancouver Museum Association trustees now serve as a support group to the members of the Commission.

32Kitsilano, one of twenty-two neighbourhoods in Vancouver, was named in 1905 for Squamish Chief Khahtsahanough.

33The Maritime Museum, in the adjacent Hadden Park, opened in 1958 to mark British Columbia’s Centennial.
Museum, the City of Vancouver Archives to the east. Designed by Vancouver architects Gerald Hamilton and Associates, the museum structure is positioned on what was once known as the Coast Salish village of Snaqu (Anonymous, Plywood World 1968; Vancouver Museum (Planning Study) 1992).

Architecturally the Vancouver Museum is unique. Currently situated beneath the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium, the Vancouver Museum is part of the larger $3.6 million H.R. MacMillan Planetarium-Museum complex. When the architect was asked to unite the museum and planetarium, "one of his solutions was to shape the Planetarium Theatre in the form of a Northwest Coast [...][Aboriginal] hat, failing to recognize the flying saucer shape of his final design" (Watt 1987:2).  

Built around a central dome, the white concrete complex is seemingly well located. However, being part of the larger Planetarium-Museum complex has its disadvantages. Overshadowed by the planetarium, the museum’s location is unfamiliar to many Vancouver residents. Trustees and staff struggle to establish a stronger identity for the facility.

Inside the Vancouver Museum there are two levels. One can enter the museum through any of four doors, the two doors that lead directly to the gift shop, a door designated for school groups, or a side door. The entrances into the gift shop are recent attempts to increase gift shop sales. Inside the circular foyer are two admission desks, one for the planetarium and another for the museum. Behind

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34 The Vancouver Museum was a Centennial project. Initially, the Vancouver Museum was to be the sole tenant in the structure designed by architect Gerald Hamilton. As the museum was being designed, forestry magnate Harvey Reginald MacMillan offered funds to construct a planetarium. Hamilton was asked to combine the two institutions in a single structure (Watt 1987).
35 Robert D. Watt held the position of chief executive officer at the Vancouver Museum between 1979 and 1988.
the museum admission desk are a number of vending machines, located in an unsightly lunchroom.

From the foyer one can go to the galleries in either of the three wings positioned on the main floor, or to the lower level, a space allocated for offices and the museum’s vast collection. The main floor of the museum was originally designed with three separate annexes, each in the form of a courtyard. Exhibit galleries were located along the four sides of the courtyards. Landscape architect Phillip Tattersfield designed the garden areas, which were to serve as outdoor exhibit spaces. In 1977 the courtyards in two annexes were roofed over and more space was made available for exhibits.

The annexes were and continue to be separated by a library and a restaurant. The circuitous pattern through the public galleries has been characterized as awkward, forcing visitors to retrace their steps between galleries (Planning Study 4). Surveys conducted in 1981 and 1982 indicate visitors were not always able to find the galleries in the three separate annexes or were left feeling that they did not see all the exhibits (Berck 1983:17). Despite the problems with the design of the facility, the Vancouver Museum has had a series of very successful exhibits (Danzig 1989; Panache 1990; Making a Living, Making a Life 1992).

36 Today the overall size of the Vancouver Museum’s collection is estimated to be about one million objects. Of those one million objects, approximately 75,000 are classified as artifacts, 7,000 are designated natural history specimens, and 750,000 are shells. The approximately 75,000 artifacts are further classified as archeological, ethnological, historical, and Asian art objects. The Vancouver Museum also has human remains in its collection. The human remains are locked away in the museum vault for now. Prior to the strike some work was being carried out to determine which communities were the rightful heirs of the human remains. Museum staff planned then to inform various communities of the location of their ancestors’ remains. Due to staff restructuring, the project is temporarily on hold (Vancouver Museum staff members, personal communication, 1992, 1995, 1996).

37 The library and restaurant have been closed temporarily.
Introductory Note

In 1994 the Vancouver Museum celebrated its 100th birthday. Unfortunately the celebration of one of the oldest operating cultural institutions in Vancouver, British Columbia was marred by a bitter labour dispute. The six month dispute was triggered by the dismissal of several unionized staff members, the cancellation of school programs, and the closure of the Anthropology Department. Visitors to the museum were greeted by a picket line comprised of disenchanted museum employees and volunteers. The Vancouver Museum’s governing board and chief executive officer attributed the restructuring plan to the financial crisis the museum was experiencing.

Although the strike was resolved and the Vancouver Museum opened its doors again on December 9, 1994, the animosity and uncertainty amongst all concerned parties remained. In 1995 the City of Vancouver, the museum’s primary source of revenue and legal proprietor of the museum’s collection, commissioned Sears and Russell Consultants Limited to review the situation at the Vancouver Museum. The consultant’s report, released in January 1996, concluded that the Vancouver Museum was “an institution in crisis” and major changes were necessary to save the facility (Sears and Russell Consultants 1996:7). My analysis of contemporary power relations at the Vancouver Museum requires an understanding of their historical formation.

Chronology of Key Events in the History of the Vancouver Museum

1889 Formation of the Vancouver Art Association
1894 Vancouver Art Association expanded to become the Art, Historical and Scientific Association. The Association’s

38 At the time of the labour dispute school programs were being delivered by 125 volunteer docents.
principal interests are natural history and the material and intellectual culture of Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia.

The Art, Historical and Scientific Association becomes the governing body of the Vancouver City Museum (currently named the Vancouver Museum). Vancouver City Museum is located in rented premises on Granville Street.

1894  Art, Historical and Scientific Association produces its first exhibition (Exhibition of Paintings and Curios).

1898  The civic government begins awarding the AHSA an annual grant of $100. In 1995 the Vancouver Museum received $637,000 from the civic government.

1903  The Art, Historical and Scientific Association and civic government establish a formal relationship. In the agreement, title to the museum collection passes to the city of Vancouver in return for the provision of premises for the storage and exhibition of the collection. The Association continues as the governing body, while the city, as owner of the collection, is the principal funder.

1905  The museum officially opens in its new location on the top floor of the new Carnegie Library building at Main and Hastings.

First paid staff member (H.J. deForest) is hired.

1957  Public Library moves and the Vancouver Museum takes over the two lower floors of Carnegie Building. It continues to occupy the entire building for another decade.

1959  Civic government supersedes the Association by creating a government-appointed Vancouver City Museum Board.

The civic government begins paying the full costs of the Vancouver Museum's operation.

1963  Between 1894 and 1963, the collection is entrusted to the care of amateur curators (deForest, Ferris, Menzies, and Ainsworth). In 1963, Robert J. Drake, a university-trained professional, is hired as chief curator.

1968 The Vancouver City Museum relocates to Vanier Park and assumes the name Vancouver Centennial Museum. The 1967 Confederation Centennial make available federal and provincial funds for the building.

Hiring of additional professionally trained staff.

1972 Civic government relinquishes operating authority of the Vancouver Museum. The museum is once again governed by trustees (Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association, the lineal descendent of the Art, Historical and Scientific Association).

1980 The name, the Vancouver Centennial Museum, loses some of its significance and the museum is re-named the Vancouver Museum.

1987 Trustees of the Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association vote to dissolve the Association and to create three separate entities. The Vancouver Museum is to be governed by the Vancouver Museum Association.

1994 Six month labour dispute closes the Vancouver Museum.

1995 City of Vancouver hires Sears and Russell Consultants to review the management and operation of the Vancouver Museum.

1996 Sears and Russell Consultants release their report, and suggest a city-appointed commission replace the trustees (Vancouver Museum Association) as the Vancouver Museum’s governing body.
Historical Roots of Power Relations—Art, Historical and Scientific Association

The Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver was founded April 17, 1894. It was in many respects the city's premier cultural organization before the First World War. As the name suggests, it represented the interests of three often overlapping constituencies, or bodies of supporters whose interests coalesced around the popular concept of "culture" (Hunt 1987:39, emphasis added).  

In the spring of 1894, Gertrude Mellon organized a meeting for the purposes of expanding the scope of the Art Association (1889-1892) in Vancouver, British Columbia. Among the "leading citizens" in attendance at this historic meeting were Mrs. Clements, Miss Dafoe, H. J. deForest, Captain Henry Mellon, Gertrude Mellon, T.R. Hardiman, Mrs. J.C. McLagan, and Rev. Norman Tucker. Mellon's desire to form the Art, Historical and Scientific Association (hereafter 'the AHSA') was in part inspired by her British cousin Hyde Clark. Clarke, a well known international journalist, author, editor of The Economist (England), linguist, and scientist, had previously told Mellon that:

It would be well, if, with the pride of a youthful and growing people, your citizens would look to their history, and record the many great names concerned with it (Clarke in Walter 1944).  

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39 Historian Robert McDonald (1996:274) maintains that Alfred Ian Hunt's (1987) work (Mutual Enlightenment in Early Vancouver 1886-1916) is the only comprehensive analysis of high culture in early Vancouver.

40 The Art, Historical and Scientific Association inherited the finances, property and members of its predecessor, the Art Association (Hunt 1987:44).

41 This is the manner in which the founding members are referred to in the historical record (AHSA Papers). (The Art, Historical and Scientific Association Papers are documented as Vancouver Art, Historical and Scientific Association and located in the Vancouver City Archives, MSS 336).

42 In the early historical references the first names of women were often excluded or if they were married they would be referred to by their husband's first and surname (e.g., Mrs. Alfred Green).

43 The city of Vancouver was incorporated in 1886.
In response, founding members set objectives that were all encompassing. AHSA members sought

1) to collect works of art; 2) to form a “Museum of Antiquities, especially of the remains of Indian Life in British Columbia and America;” 3) to create a natural history collection and; 4) to establish a library (AHSA Papers 1894-1908, emphasis added).

The AHSA began in part through planning, and in part haphazardly, to quickly amass a very diverse collection. Writing of the formation of the AHSA, art historian William Wylie Thom (1969:11-12) suggests that initially the growth of collection must have been mainly due to donations, because prior to 1898 the Association’s sole source of income was from membership fees and receipts from concerts, exhibitions, and lectures.44

Many of the AHSA’s members had diverse interests, were well connected socially, and traveled extensively. However, museum donations were not limited to the prominent citizens who controlled the museum. The AHSA’s location in a port city ensured a steady stream of objects from throughout the world. Bones, stones, and cultural objects from around the globe made their way into the AHSA’s collection (Watt 1981, Vancouver Museum 1981 (Cabinets of Curiosities: Collections of the Vancouver Museum 1894-1981), A Hundred Years, A Million Stories 1994 45).

Membership

All persons interested in the objects of the Association shall be eligible for membership and shall become members on the payment of the annual fee of $1.00 (AHSA Papers 1894-1908).46

44In 1898 the city of Vancouver made its first grant of $100 towards the maintenance of the Association’s collection.
45A Hundred Years, A Million Stories (1994), curated by Al Bowen, was a commemorative exhibition of the first hundred years of the Vancouver Museum’s history.
46Archival documents suggest that as late as 1959 membership within the AHSA was controlled. In regard to membership within the Association, trustee Dr. Williams (AHSA
The first meeting of the general committee of the AHSA was held in the anteroom of Christ Church on April 24, 1894. At that meeting

Reverend L. Norman Tucker was appointed chairman, [Gertrude Mellon, Vice-President], and Mr. H. J. deForest, Secretary, while on the Board of Directors a number of leading citizens were enrolled... (AHSA Papers 1894b).

Reverend Tucker, a highly educated Englishman, was the Rector of Vancouver’s Christ Church. Gertrude Mellon, the daughter of an English ‘gentleman’ had immigrated to Ontario, Canada, from London, England, at the age of six. She moved to Vancouver in 1886 with her husband Captain Henry Mellon. DeForest, the Association’s first secretary, and Lee Rogers, the first treasurer, were both prominent artists who painted and exhibited in Vancouver in the 1890’s (Hunt 1987; Thom 1969). Historian Robert McDonald (1996:168) observes that “[i]n early Vancouver the ability to paint or to show an understanding of art provided an important benchmark of cultural competence.” Amongst the other leading citizens serving as officers or members of the governing body were a number of individuals who had, or whose parents had, prominent roles in the civic and political life of Vancouver (The Elite Directory of Vancouver 1908; Hunt 1987; AHSA Papers).

In addition to the election of officers, a list of Honourary President and Vice-Presidents was compiled. The Lieutenant-Governor E. Dewdney was recommended as Honourary President. Honourary Vice-Presidents included Mr. and Mrs. H. Abbot, he being the manager, West Division, of the Canadian Pacific Railway; Mayor and Mrs. R.A. Anderson; Mr. C.E. Corbould, M.P.; Mrs. E. Dewdney, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor; Mrs. Hamersley, wife of a prominent

Papers 1959c), states that “it was a mistake to take into the association anyone merely because they had made an application. By so doing, there was always the danger of pressure groups exerting an influence; on the other hand, during an election there could be an unwarranted displacement of Directors because of lack of understanding.” Trustee Mr. Harrison agreed, and stated “that the membership should be increased only by means of careful selection.”
city barrister; ex-Mayor D. Oppenheimer, publisher of the \textit{Daily New-Advertiser}; Reverend E.D. McLaren, (Presbyterian minister); Right Reverend Bishop Perrin (Anglican); Right Reverend Bishop Sillitoe (Anglican); and Mrs. Webster, artist and founder of the Art Association, and wife of Captain Webster, agent for the Oceanic S.S. Company (Hunt 1987:46; AHSA Papers 1894-1908). Historian Alfred Hunt (1987:46) proposes that the “list of local dignitaries was the closest Vancouver could claim to aristocracy, the city itself being under eight years old.” He (1987:46) concludes that the AHSA’s careful selection of prominent officers served to “lend credibility and status, and to dispose the Association to success and to longevity.”

On the basis of available archival documents, \textit{The Elite Directory of Vancouver} (1908),\footnote{The names of a significant number of the AHSA’s members, officers, and honorary officers appear in \textit{The Elite Directory of Vancouver} (1908).} and the scholarly works of Hunt (1987) and McDonald (1996), it is fair to state that membership was composed of the more prominent members of late nineteenth century Vancouver society. Those individuals who established the Vancouver Museum a century ago did so either because of professional status, business interests, or social connections. Many of the AHSA members were born in the United Kingdom, some had merchant marine or Indian Army experience, and others of Canadian origin had United Empire Loyalist backgrounds. McDonald (1996:234) states that “[a]s early as the 1870s a British background carried prestige” in Vancouver. A significant proportion of the members could also be classified as pioneers, having arrived in the region prior to the founding of the AHSA. This gave them a local distinction (Hunt 1987:47, 115).

Of the relationship between the AHSA and Aboriginal Peoples, Hunt (1987:45) suggests that the
goal of saving North-west Coast Indian artifacts was seen as most pressing. The popularity of such anthropologists as Franz Boas, combined with the philanthropic vigor of many American and European (especially German) capitalists anxious to establish the reputation of themselves, their museums, and their cities, served rapidly to rob the area of its most treasured anthropological artifacts and native peoples of their heritage. The AHSA also aimed at this high objective.

Although the Association had a mandate to collect the material of Aboriginal Peoples, they were not included amongst the membership nor did they hold executive positions. This exclusion and silencing of Aboriginal Peoples in different areas of social life was characteristic of the period (Barman 1991; McDonald 1996; Tennant 1990). McDonald (1996:235) observes that:

In the new city of Vancouver, [...] to be of Native heritage or from a non-British background was to be marginalized, to be cast outside the mainstream.

A number of years after the formation of the AHSA Amy Campbell-Johnson,48 an artist of high standing, an Association member, and a principal collector of Aboriginal Peoples’ material, suggested “making an Indian of North Vancouver a member, with a view of getting Indians to loan their relics” (AHSA Papers 1915). It is not clear whether the gesture was made and rejected or whether the membership decided such a move would not be prudent.

**British Culture Disseminated as Regional Identity**

In regard to the aims of the AHSA’s members, Hunt (1987:41) writes that they

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48 Amy Campbell-Johnson was recognized as “one of the leading authorities on British Columbia Indian lore” (News clipping 1472, Vancouver City Archives). She was born in Wales. Her father owned H.H. Vivian Smelting Company (News clipping 1472, Vancouver City Archives).
felt confronted by massive immigration and economic and social upheaval. They saw themselves as major factors in the cause and mission of advancing the best of British civilization and culture. They wanted to build up Vancouver’s reputation, and to carry out the *disinterested* cultural mission of saving and preserving the province’s own past (emphasis added).49

Members of the AHSA were living in a politically redefined region, British Columbia becoming a province within Canada in 1871, and the city of Vancouver being incorporated in 1886. The museum in its ability to stabilize meaning50 and to shape the way in which members of a region imagine51 their jurisdiction served as a tool for the members of the AHSA.

Concerning the changes that were occurring in the region and the response of the members of the AHSA to those changes, Gertrude Mellon (1909) writes “if no restraining hand was put forth, eventually a harvest of corruption, with foetid and unhealthy surroundings, would result.” Initially, this small group hoped that art would serve to ‘civilize’ the region’s inhabitants but it “was too slow and insipid for practical purposes at so early a stage” (Mellon 1909). Consequently, “[s]cience was brought in to help in developing the vast natural resources, and to appeal still further, history was added” (Mellon 1909). Mellon adds that

> [t]he experience of the world proves that it is absolutely necessary in building up a nation to instill vitality by creating a history of those who have taken part in its discovery and growth.

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49 A growing literature (Coombes 1988; Duncan 1995; Harris 1990; Stocking 1985) on the history of western museums illustrates that they followed a similar pattern to that of the Vancouver Museum.

50 The works of Benedict Anderson (1991), Carol Duncan (1995), and Richard Handler (1985, 1991) have facilitated my understanding of the usefulness of museums to those who already hold positions of power in institutions outside of museums, and of the relationship between nationalism and museums.

51 I recognize that personal and community identities are constructed and experienced in various settings other than museums. Still, museums are significant locations within which identities are shaped.
It was obviously a very select group of individuals who gave themselves the task of creating a history for the region. The creation of the region’s culture and history was filtered through their own values and beliefs. In regard to the motives of the AHSA members, Hunt (1987:60) suggests that “they hoped to create a national history or mythology to ensure political stability and the advance of British civilization.” He adds, that there was likely a third motive, that of “personal aggrandisement.”

Of the opinion that they were culturally and intellectually superior to the masses whose time was consumed with the business of daily existence, members of the AHSA sought

to cultivate a taste for the beauties and refinements of life; to pursue studies that raise the mind above the materialising struggle for existence; to surround our community with the works of taste and beauty; to inspire our minds with the great deeds of our fellow-men [...] in one word, to appeal to our higher instincts and to develop our higher powers (AHSA Papers 1894a).

This dissemination of British ideology was complicated by the incorporation of the intellectual and material culture of the region into the exhibits and lectures produced and delivered by AHSA members. They had two contrary objectives, the construction of a distinct regional history on the one hand, and the recovery of the higher elements of British culture on the other.

*Imperialist Nostalgia*

The construction of a distinct regional identity was to a degree contingent upon the appropriation of the intellectual and material culture of the Aboriginal Peoples of the region. This appropriation of Aboriginal cultural property was possible in part because AHSA and subsequent museum were conceived at a time (1894) when British Columbia was being colonized and the prevailing belief was that Aboriginal Peoples were vanishing.
When significant numbers of non-Aboriginal Peoples began arriving in the region in the 1850s they brought with them devastating diseases and disruptive changes. As a result, post-contact epidemics had a significant role in decimating Aboriginal populations (Tennant 1990). Further, in legislating the Indian Act of 1876, the Canadian government sought "to encourage the gradual disappearance of Indians as Indians" (McMillan 1995:313). With the passage of the Indian Act (1876) the federal government assumed control over every major aspect of Aboriginal Peoples' lives. One of the best known provisions of the Indian Act were the potlatch laws. In 1884 the potlatch,\textsuperscript{52} "considered by its participants to be an integral part of their societies," (Corrigan 1992:149) became illegal under the Indian Act. These potlatch laws\textsuperscript{53} were yet another attempt by the Canadian government "to attempt to erase numerous elements of Aboriginal belief and practice" (Corrigan 1992:149). By the late 1880s these factors served to foster the perception provincially that "the surviving Indians were merely remnants of an irrelevant past with neither the right nor the means to influence their own unhappy future" (Tennant 1990:52). It was within this intellectual and political climate that the material and intellectual culture of Aboriginal Peoples was appropriated by non-Aboriginal Peoples, and used in the creation of a regional history and perpetuation of the values and beliefs of founding members.

\textsuperscript{52} At the turn of the century the "potlatch was a complex series of actions which involved the giving of material goods, often European in nature, and extremely valuable non-material goods, such as names and rights of various kinds, to other people within one's own society. It was a widely recognized and followed practice which signified important changes of social status, such as marriage and death" (Corrigan 1992:149). Potlatches continue to be a significant focus of Aboriginal Peoples on the Northwest Coast (Seguin Anderson 1995:556).

\textsuperscript{53} Prohibitions against the potlatch remained in effect until the Indian Act was revised in 1951.
Historical documents contain the rhetoric used to justify the collection of Aboriginal Peoples’ material culture by members of the AHSA. Consider the following passages:

Discussion ensued as to appointing a committee for obtaining the fast disappearing Indian relics and as to the wisdom of getting the Indians at Point Grey to exhibit objects in the museum if they would not sell them... (AHSA Papers 1913, emphasis added).

...some steps should be taken to obtain more of the fast disappearing Native relics and particularly Mr. Campbell-Johnson’s suggestion that an Indian village [currently at Cumshaw] be obtained and moved to Stanley Park (AHSA Papers 1916, emphasis added).54

[Amy Campbell-Johnson] ...stated that if the Indians were debarred from their age old rites they would destroy their totem poles and other valuable relics (AHSA Papers 1920).

Addressing the discourse of collecting in the late nineteenth century, museologist Moira McLoughlin (1993:367) states that “[t]he rhetoric employed to validate colonial collecting argued the necessity of protecting and conserving a culture facing inevitable extinction or assimilation.” What is noteworthy is that the same sector of society that was asserting sovereignty over almost every aspect of Aboriginal life was also lamenting the loss of a way of being that they themselves were responsible for changing.

54The AHSA’s idea to recreate a Kwakwaka’wakw village on what was formerly a Squamish Village was opposed by the Squamish People. Due to lack of funding and the opposition by the Squamish People, members of the AHSA eventually abandoned the idea (AHSA Papers). It is interesting to note that the idea for the village was opposed at approximately the same time (1922) that William Halliday, the Indian Agent at Alert Bay, charged forty-five people for violating potlatch laws (between 1884 and 1951 the potlatch became illegal under the Indian Act). Halliday struck a bargain with the individuals who were charged, in which they could surrender their coppers, masks, rattles and other potlatch regalia in exchange for their freedom from jail. The potlatch objects were sent to Ottawa and divided between the Victoria Memorial Museum (later, the National Museum of and Man and now the Canadian Museum of Civilization) and the Royal Ontario Museum. Thirty-three objects were purchased by George Heye, an American collector, and given to the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation (Webster (Cranmer) 1992).
Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo has labeled these conflicting emotions of the colonizers towards the colonized as 'imperialist nostalgia.' He (1989:107-108) proposes “that agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed.” Furthermore, what were perceived as ‘static societies’ became “a stable reference point for defining (the felicitous progress) of civilized identity” (1989:108). Aboriginal Peoples served as a foil against which non-Aboriginal Peoples came to define themselves. Further, a fabricated theory of the inferiority of Aboriginal Peoples "provided the rationale for the unilateral assumption of control over ... [Aboriginal] lands, resources, communities and ways of life" (Dyck 1991:25).

**Dissemination of Knowledge — The First Exhibition**

Soon after the AHSA was established it produced its first exhibition, entitled *Exhibition of Paintings and Curios* (1894). Held in rented premises, the exhibit opened on the upper floor of the Alderman Dunn building on Granville Street. Lord Aberdeen, the Governor-General of Canada, and his wife Lady Aberdeen, founder of the Victorian Order of Nurses of Canada, were invited to open the exhibit. In his address to the gathering, Lord Aberdeen (AHSA Papers 1894-1908) praised the efforts of the members of Association and spoke of the “value of such a Society [...] especially in a comparatively young country.” The evening concluded with a musical programme of classical music delivered by local singers and musicians.55

Although there is little information regarding the AHSA's first exhibition, we do know the exhibition contained paintings by local artists, chinaware, and Aboriginal Peoples' material culture (News clipping 1944-9, City of Vancouver Archives; Vancouver Museum 1981 (*Cabinets of Curiosities: Collections of the public meetings of the AHSA and lectures usually ended with similar musical programmes* (AHSA Papers, 1894-1908).
Vancouver Museum 1894-1981. The exhibit was open for one week. William Ferris, an artist and founding member of the Association, was in charge of the art exhibits. Amateur anthropologist Charles Hill-Tout was responsible for the archaeological section. The exhibit was well received by both the public and the press.

Civic Government Within the Vancouver Museum’s System of Authority

In 1898 the civic government first recognized the utility of the AHSA’s efforts when it awarded the AHSA an annual operating grant of $100.56 Hunt (1987:49) proposes that the small grants provided by city council were “part of their campaign to attract business and prospective migrants.” That grant has continued to increase annually, in response to escalating operation costs. In 1995 the civic government’s operating grant to the Vancouver Museum was $637,000. The total operating budget of the Vancouver Museum in 1995 was $1,090,052. This dependence on the civic government as such a major source of revenue makes the museum vulnerable to the power plays of civic politicians.

Although the civic government began providing funds to the AHSA in 1898, it was not until 1903 that the two established their first formal relationship. At that time the AHSA’s collection was turned over to the city on the condition that the city provide appropriate accommodation. Under the agreement members of the AHSA would remain custodians and guardians of the collection.

The relationship between the AHSA and the civic government remained relatively unchanged until the late 1950s. That is, the civic government provided some financial support for the AHSA’s endeavours but it was the AHSA that was in control of the museum. In the 1950s the civic government began to take a

56Hunt (1987:49) suggests that because Vancouver “was far too young to have produced its own class of wealthy industrial philanthropists” the AHSA was forced to turn to the civic government for annual financial and museum-space grants.
greater interest in the operation of the AHSA and their museum. Most notably, in 1959 the civic government superseded the AHSA by creating an entity known as the Vancouver City Museum Board. The change in governance was significant because the power to appoint staff and to determine museum policy shifted from the AHSA to the government-appointed Vancouver City Museum Board.

Interestingly, the civic government began to express a greater regard for the Vancouver Museum at approximately the same time that the province celebrated its Centennial in 1958. A former president of the AHSA describes the relationship between the civic government and the museum prior to 1959 as follows:

Founded by pioneers at a time when Vancouver was little more than a struggling backwoods lumbering town with limited cultural pretensions, the Association, often against great odds of public apathy and civic indifference, has kept alive the concept, and the actuality of a Civic Museum. [...] 1959 was a year of awakened interest in Museums in Vancouver (AHSA Papers 1960).

Understandably, the sudden interest in the museum and the civic government’s proposal to create an entity that would disempower the AHSA was greeted with suspicion, resentment and resistance. In 1958 trustees called a special meeting to address the takeover by the civic government. At that meeting a trustee, Dr. A.F. Dangerfield, stated that unless the relationship between the AHSA and civic government was clearly defined and agreed upon there was the danger that the AHSA Board might find itself with little or no means of control (AHSA Papers 1958d, emphasis added).

After being ignored for years by the civic government, members of the AHSA were being asked to share power with a government-appointed entity. Certain

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57 In 1858 the Mainland was made a colony by the British and named British Columbia. Vancouver Island and the Mainland were united into the one colony of British Columbia in 1866 (Tennant 1990:17).

58 I explored the relationship between museums and nationalism in chapter two and earlier in this chapter. I further develop the association between centennials and museums in chapter six.
members (McTaggart Cowan) found it “difficult to understand why control of the Museum should be relinquished to a Body, admittedly inexperienced in Museum Administration on the basis of pure policy” (AHSA Papers 1959a). A number of stormy meetings ensued.

In the end the AHSA agreed to the terms proposed by the civic government on the condition that it be allowed to appoint two members to the Vancouver City Museum Board. In addition, AHSA members were to be consulted before key appointments, such as director or curator, were made, and before major policy changes were initiated. The major incentive for the sharing of power was a promise by the civic government to provide more money for the museum’s operation (AHSA Papers 1959b, d, f).

**Recently Acquired Power Exercised—An Illustration**

Soon after the shift in authority from the trustees to the civic government, civic officials began to exercise their power. The following excerpt, regarding the hiring of the Vancouver Museum’s first professional chief curator in 1963, serves an example of elected officials’ power within the Vancouver Museum’s system of authority:

Vancouver had a new curator for its Main and Hastings museum [Vancouver Museum] Tuesday for about 5 hours. Shortly before noon council approved the hiring of Robert J. Drake for the position, [...] Shortly before 5 p.m. it unhired him. It had nothing to do with Drake or his qualifications. It resulted from a noon-hour trip that Alderman Hugh Bird made to the Maritime Museum. Bird came back to council and announced that the Maritime Museum has a curator but doesn’t need one (City of Vancouver Archives 1963a).

Alderman Bird suggested that the Maritime Museum’s curator be transferred to the Vancouver Museum. Bird’s proposal was disregarded and Drake was soon rehired in an eight-to-three vote. Drake’s areas of specialization were archaeology, geochronology, land mollusks, and research methodology. He resigned after
holding the curator’s job at the Vancouver Museum for four years. At the time of his resignation Drake claimed that after a “burst of interest in museum affairs” municipal administrators had become “lethargic and apathetic” towards the museum enterprise (City of Vancouver Archives 1967a).

Prior to resigning as curator, Drake applied for the position of manager/director at the re-structured Vancouver Museum. The stated qualifications for the job, as outlined in a newspaper advertisement, were:

...preferably university graduation in subjects relative to administration and organization. Considerable administrative experience at the senior level including reports for budgeting, communication and staff organization. Curatorial or administrative experience in a museum or a demonstrated interest in the development of a museum program, or an equivalent combination of training and experience (City of Vancouver Archives 1967b).

Drake was not hired by the civic government for the position of chief executive officer. Instead, the government selected an insider, the city’s deputy planning officer Harry Pickstone. The chairperson of the civic government’s museum committee termed Drake’s resignation from his curatorial position as a “case of sour grapes.” He stated that “Drake’s qualifications as a scientist did not fit the bill for the type of public relations-oriented director the city wanted” (City of Vancouver Archives 1967a, emphasis added).

A Return of Power and Revoking of Authority

A year after his appointment, Pickstone went on record to state that the “Vancouver Museum shouldn’t be directly under the control of city council” (City of Vancouver Archives 1968, emphasis added). Nevertheless, this uneasy arrangement between the Association and the civic government remained intact until 1972. At that time the civic government relinquished some of its control within the museum and returned it to trustees selected by the museum’s membership. The trustees once again assumed the authority to govern the
Vancouver Museum. In her analysis of the Vancouver Museum Patricia Wilkinson (1993:4-5) points out that this return of control in the early 1970s to the trustees “coincided with the establishment of the federal government’s ‘democratization and decentralization’ policy for museum funding.”

With the re-structuring of the network of power relations, the Vancouver Museum Association (formerly Art Historical and Scientific Association) was renamed the Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association. The Vancouver Museum became one of three institutions operated by the Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association, a provincially chartered nonprofit organization governed by an elected board of trustees. The other two institutions under the umbrella association were the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium and the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Fiscal and legal responsibility lay with the governing board of the Association. The civic government would continue to financially support the Vancouver Museum.

The governing of three entities with distinct histories and mandates proved to be cumbersome and extremely divisive (former trustees, personal communication, 1992). In 1987, the trustees of the Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association voted to dissolve the Association and sought to create three separate societies. These societies would be responsible for the operation of the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Maritime Museum, and the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium. The proposed benefits of the devolution were “more rapid decision making and implementation of policy, easier recruitment of Trustees, and increased private sector support for programmes derived from more focused fund-raising efforts” (Watt 1987:16). Most importantly, there would be fewer individuals struggling for authority.

59 The Vancouver Maritime Museum is located just northwest of the Vancouver Museum. The Vancouver Museum and H.R. MacMillan Planetarium share the same building.
On May 18, 1995 Vancouver city council, acting upon a request from Vancouver Museum staff and trustees, commissioned a review of the management and operation of the Vancouver Museum. Sears and Russell Consultants Limited, a Toronto based consulting firm, was hired for the task. They released their report in January, 1996.

The consultants recommended that the civic government become, once again, directly involved in the operation of the city-owned facility. In response to the consultant’s recommendations city council concluded that the “long-troubled Vancouver Museum would best be run by a five-person commission appointed by city council” (Appelbe 1996). This commission would assume responsibility for the governance, management, and operation of the museum. The shift in power from the Vancouver Museum Association, an elected body of trustees, to the Vancouver Museum Commission Society, occurred on Sept. 30, 1996. The Vancouver Museum Association now serves as a support group.

The most recent transfer of power is substantial. As a major source of revenue for the Vancouver Museum the civic government’s role within the museum’s system of organization was significant prior to the shift in power. The inclusion of a city-appointed commission responsible for the governance of the Vancouver Museum further enhances the civic government’s authority in the network of power relations in the sense that they personally select the governing body of the Vancouver Museum. The governing body is also accountable to the mayor and council.

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60The review of the Vancouver Museum was related to the 1994 labour dispute, a non confidence vote of the board, tension between trustees, and general displeasure by certain staff and trustees with the management and governance of the museum.
61The shift in power was somewhat slow because the civic government had difficulty finding willing and appropriate individuals to serve on the commission. This reluctance was largely due to the controversy that had recently shrouded the museum.
Trustees: Governing Elites

The power of trustees in the Vancouver Museum’s system of authority has varied throughout its hundred year history. When the museum was first conceived in 1894 the trustees were its sole authorities. However, control is subject to challenge and as the museum’s collection and services expanded, the trustees increasingly had to share power with individuals and organizations outside their small circle. In 1959 economic problems forced the trustees to surrender control of the museum to the civic government. With the restructuring of museum practices nationally and internationally in the 1960s, trustees also had to begin sharing decision-making power with professional employees. In the present intellectual and socio-political environment trustees are expected to share control of the museum with various communities, in particular with Aboriginal Peoples.

In this section I explore the most recent (1980-1993) trustees’ sources of authority. Focusing on the production of the exhibit Panache (December 1990-August 1991) I then illustrate what I consider to be an abuse of governing authority.

Sources of Trustees’ Power

Power structure researchers [...] believe that [...] [nonprofit] organizations tend to have a class or corporation bias in their values and policies due to their histories, current funding, and present leadership (Domhoff and Dye 1987:13).

In my description of the formation of the AHSA and subsequent Vancouver Museum I have demonstrated that those who exercise power within a museum derive their power from institutions outside the museum. Using founding

Borrowing from Caputo and Yount (1993), Domhoff and Dye (1987), Foucault (1983), and Ostrander (1987), I define elites as those individuals or groups who hold positions of power in institutions. More specifically, those individuals or groups who occupy positions of authority in museums derive their power from institutions (family, businesses, professional associations, universities) outside of museums.
members' business interests, occupations, and social origins, along with the scholarly works of Hunt (1987) and McDonald (1996) I highlighted their source of power. Here I use interviews with present and former Vancouver Museum trustees and my own observations to illustrate the present sources of Vancouver Museum’s governing board’s power. This discussion is primarily set within the last fifteen years of the museum’s history.

In his profile of AHSA’s members at the turn of century Hunt (1987:119) described them to be “consistently representative of the higher reaches of Vancouver society.” Hunt’s survey indicates that the employed members were predominantly drawn from the professional community and secondarily from the business community. Those members who were not employed outside the home, women and retired men, also fit this profile. Candid Vancouver museum trustees and staff maintain that the governance of the Vancouver Museum continues to be inextricably interwoven with the more prominent members of Vancouver society. The difference is that between the early 1980s and 1995, due in large part to economics, trustees have attempted to recruit more individuals from the business community.

As operating costs escalate and government funds decrease, all museums are increasingly having to reach out to the corporate sector for revenue. Consequently, in recent years a potential trustee’s ability to raise funds has been regarded as highly desirable. Consider the following excerpts from the minutes of meetings of the Vancouver Museum Board regarding qualities sought in potential trustees:

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63 My understanding of the association between cultural, economic, and political capital has been informed by the works of various scholars, most notably by French cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu (1984), art historian Carol Duncan (1995), cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1980, 1981), and sociologist Janet Wolff (1981, 1983).
There was some discussion about the need to increase the Museum Board’s size, the type of people needed and the roles they would play. Mrs. Molnar thought sights had been set too low in fund-raising and energy wasted with too labour-intensive projects; she felt more people with a high profile and connections should be invited to join the Board (Vancouver Museum files, 1983, emphasis added).  

Mr. Hanson suggested consideration be given to recruiting additional Trustees from amongst the senior members of Vancouver’s business community (Vancouver Museum files, 1985).

Mr. Ward noted that the [Vancouver] Museum must appoint a Trustee to the V.M.P.A. [Vancouver Museums and Planetarium Association] Nominations Committee, decide on a Vice-Chairman for its own Board, and bring people on to the Board who will be representative of banking, industry, technology, etc. He noted that thought also should be given as to whether representatives of academic disciplines should be included (Vancouver Museum files, 1985, emphasis added).

More recently, a former Vancouver Museum trustee expressed that to become a board member “[y]ou had to be able to give money, get money, or get off the Board” (personal communication, 1992). This same trustee claimed that while she served as a trustee in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the board recruited members who were either with a large corporation, had connections to a large corporation, or were part of an elite social network.

During my discussions with Vancouver Museum trustees, I regularly asked what recent attempts had been made to create a governing board that was representative of the diverse community in which it was located. I was told that the museum’s nominating committee will seek out individuals from within their social circle, business associates, professional colleagues, and former classmates. Former Vancouver Museum trustees, as well as a former acting director, stated that when the trustees “reach into the ‘ethnic community’ for possible candidates, once

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64 The material extracted from the Vancouver Museum files is unclassified and located at the Vancouver Museum.
again, the representatives are drawn from the more prominent sectors of Vancouver society.” It is very difficult for an outsider to penetrate that exclusive circle.

The election of certain individuals from the Aboriginal community or the Asian community were then presented as examples of the trustees’ recent attempts at creating a more representative governing body. However, those individuals who had been selected as representatives of marginalized communities were themselves in positions of power outside of the museum. For example, one of the trustees was a prominent artist, the other a successful architect. While discussing the issue of an inclusive system of governance with the latter, he reminded me that the poor do not have a representative on the Vancouver Museum’s board of trustees. The diversity of the Vancouver Museum’s visitors is not reflected in the museum’s governing body.

People of Affluence and Consequently Influence

Previously we had some trustees with pet programs, telling the curators what to do, driving the curators out of their minds, although these trustees really devoted a lot of their time [...] the director was not able to control all this .... It was a mess for a period of time.... (former trustee, personal communication, 1992).

In theory museum trustees are responsible for setting institutional policy and fund raising. Those are the traditional roles of governing boards (Dickenson 1991:298). Certain power struggles at the Vancouver Museum have stemmed from the fact that trustees have assumed some of the chief executive officer’s and professional staffs’ roles (former trustees, staff, personal communication, 1992).

In the Vancouver Museum’s very recent history, the board was ruled by a controlling president who became involved in the daily operation of the museum. The governing body was very much a ‘chair-dominated’ board. 65 The president was a charismatic individual, well connected in the community, and one who

65I borrow this term from Murray, Bradshaw and Wolpin (1992:45).
reinforced his power on the board by recruiting individuals who shared his vision. Following the lead of their president, certain trustees were said to have exercised their power in what was considered the professionals' area of expertise. Such an abuse of power by the trustees created difficulties for staff.

In the oral history of the Vancouver Museum and in local media, the *Panache* (1990) exhibit is often cited as an example of a powerful board of trustees clashing with professional staff. The exhibit itself examined changes in Western women's fashion from 1770 to 1990. *Panache* was driven by the particular passion of the curator of history. Unfortunately for the curator, the director, and staff, the exhibit was also passionately embraced by a number of trustees. In a sense this passion was useful because these enthusiastic trustees were very successful in raising funds for the exhibit's production. They held numerous events, often at their own expense, to raise money for the exhibit. They also donated their own money to finance the exhibit. However, when the trustees' passion caused them to want to be involved in the production of the exhibition, conflicts between the professionals and trustees arose (former curator, former trustees, staff, volunteers, personal communication, 1992, 1996).

Those most intimately involved in the production of the *Panache* exhibit provided the following examples of trustees' excessive involvement in the exhibit. For example, at the insistence of the trustees, the designer was regularly put in the awkward position of having to consult with the chair of the board and a trustee in regard to the design of the galleries rather than with the curator of the exhibit. On another occasion when staff altered a portion of the exhibit to comply with fire regulations, a trustee who had raised a great deal of money for the exhibit became very angry because she had not been consulted. However, it seems that the major issue in the controversy was the trustees' failure to recognize the contributions of curatorial volunteers and donors of objects. More specifically, trustees refused to
invite these volunteers and donors to the opening of the exhibit because they "didn't want to share the spotlight" (former curator, former trustees, staff, volunteers, personal communication, 1996). Instead, the trustees chose to invite those who they considered to be "socially and financially desirable." The curator's request that curatorial volunteers and artifact donors be honoured was largely ignored by the trustees. The trustees' position in regard to the curatorial volunteers and donors of objects eventually led to the curator's resignation (Ivan Sayer, personal communication, 1996).

Understandably the trustees' desire to be involved in the actual production of the exhibit was met with a great deal of resistance by professional museum staff. Museum professionals, as do all professionals, expect a certain level of authority and autonomy in regard to their work. This authority is jealously guarded and interference by trustees was not well received. The story of the Panache fracas lives on in the Vancouver Museum's oral history.

Power of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Within the Hierarchy

Making staff decisions trivializes the board's job, disempowers and interferes with staff investment, and reduces the degree to which the CEO can be held accountable for outcomes (Carver 1990:127).

Since the inception of the VMA [Vancouver Museum Association] in 1987, the Board has failed to provide stable leadership in the retention and monitoring of its CEO's (Sears and Russell Consultants Limited 1996:3).

Trustees' involvement in the production of Panache undermined the curator of the exhibit, but perhaps more importantly, it weakened the authority of the chief executive officer. Within an institution like the Vancouver Museum, the trustees hire the chief executive officer. I was told by a former Vancouver Museum trustee

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66 My comprehension of the expectations of professionals in general has been facilitated by the work of Freidson (1986, 1994).
67 John Carver is a respected organizational theorist.
(personal communication, 1992) that the authority to hire and dismiss a chief executive officer also gives the trustees the power to determine the chief executive officer's level of control, and the level of power they themselves will wield. For example, "if the trustees want to exercise an inordinate degree of control in the museum then they would hire a weak chief executive officer" (former trustee, personal communication, 1992). On the other hand, if "trustees want to fulfill their role as custodians and then after setting the course, allow the captain to drive the ship, they should find a stronger director" (former trustee, personal communication, 1992).

Since 1968 the Vancouver Museum has been managed by ten chief executive officers. They include:

1968-1970  Harry Pickstone
1970-1973  David A. Roger
1973-1975  Jack D. Herbert
1975-1976  Dr. Gordon Shrum
1976-1979  Clifford Tosdevin
1979-1988  Robert D. Watt
1988-1991  Dr. H. David Hemphill
1991-1992  Dr. Frits Pannekoek
1992-1993  Patricia Kluckner, Acting Chief Executive Officer
1993-1996  Wilma Wood
1996  Hendrik Slegtenhorst, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Recently, the relationship between the various chief executive officers and Vancouver Museum trustees can be best characterized as contentious. In the last six years there have been a series of directors and acting directors. Trustees and staff informed me that some of the former chief executive officers were "unable to earn the respect of the staff, others were unable to earn the respect of the large, cumbersome board, and some were unable to gain the respect of either." The last chief executive officer quit after being in power for only two years. The board
accepted her resignation just one day prior to the release of the highly critical Sears and Russell Consultant’s report. Although she departed in a cloud of controversy she was awarded an $80,000 severance package.

Prior to Wood’s appointment in 1993, the Vancouver Museum was managed by an acting director (Kluckner) because the chief executive officer (Pannekoek) who preceded Wood quit after being in control for only one year. According to staff and trustees Pannekoek had been hired “because he was perceived as a builder, as someone who had an uncanny way of obtaining funding, and someone who would not tolerate trustees’ interference” (former trustees, staff, personal communication, 1992, 1993). Apparently at the time of his appointment trustees promised to adopt a more arm's length approach. Despite these promises by the trustees, the chief executive officer in question departed anyway, citing amongst many concerns his difficulty working with such a large board. Since the latest chief executive officer hastily departed, an acting director has been appointed to replace her. Some insiders now wonder who would apply for a prominent position in an institution that has recently been mired in so much controversy.

Professionals — ’Agents of Knowledge’

Between 1894 and 1963, the Vancouver Museum’s collection has largely been ordered by ‘amateurs,’ that is by individuals without university degrees. Here I discuss the backgrounds and contributions of the four chief curators who

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68 At the time there were 31 trustees on the governing board.
69 I borrow this notion from Freidson (1986).
70 In her doctoral dissertation, historian Eileen Mak (1996) explores the professionalization of museum work in Canada in detail. She (1996:283) suggests that by the “1950s, most museum directors and curatorial staff were professionals in the sense that they held university degrees in their chosen subjects.” This was followed by a movement to “turn directors and curators not just into professional scientists, but into ‘professional’ museum workers trained in museum methods” (Mak 1996:283).
preceded the entry of professionals into the museum’s system of authority. Then I explore the highly contested shift in power from the amateurs to the professionals.

After the collection was burglarized a number of times, city council agreed to provide funds for a full-time curator. In 1905 H.J. deForest, a prominent artist and collector who had donated extensively to the museum, was hired for the position. While curator, deForest spent a great deal of time encouraging other collectors to match his donation. In 1911, when City Council proposed that payment for janitorial duties come out of deForest’s salary, he resigned and was replaced by William Ferris (AHSA Papers 1912).

Ferris, also possessing an art background, served as curator from 1912 to 1925. Prior to his arrival in Vancouver, Ferris practiced law in London, England, for twenty years. While at the museum, Ferris concerned himself with classifying, arranging, and cataloguing the museum’s continuously expanding collection. However, a concerted effort to catalogue and index the entire collection was not undertaken until 1952. Ferris in turn was replaced by T.P.O. Menzies (Vancouver Museum files).

Menzies, a former apprentice seaman, stevedore, and private detective assumed the position of chief curator at the Vancouver Museum in 1925. He held the position for twenty-nine years. He was born in London, England, to a father who was affiliated with an old shipbuilding firm. His mother was of the old Oxenham and Dyer families of Devon. Prior to settling in Vancouver, Menzies lived in Australia, India, New Zealand, and South Africa.

71 McDonald (1996:168) observes that in early Vancouver competence in the ‘high arts’ was a significant standard of cultural expertise.
72 Dorothy A. Mariner (1972:20) states that formerly, museum occupations were drawn from the same social stratum as trustees. This was certainly the case with the appointment of deForest, Ferris, and Menzies. Now, she states (1972) museum occupations are more open to recruitment from the lower social stratum. Unfortunately, I do not have enough information on the social backgrounds of recent Vancouver Museum staff to further develop Mariner’s thesis.
Menzies is remembered for securing many major collections for the museum. His eyesight failing, Menzies resigned in 1953, to be replaced by his loyal assistant Thomas Ainsworth. By the time Menzies left, a rift was beginning to develop in the Association between the amateur curators and the professional trustees. His parting words to members of the AHSA were that the curator’s position should be filled by “an experienced man rather than an anthropologist or archaeologist, for what would an anthropologist know of a Chantilly lace shawl” (Vancouver Museum files 1953).

Interestingly, in the latter years of Menzies appointment, anthropologist Erna c. von Engel-Baiersdorf, was sent by the Natural History Museum, Pecs, Hungary, to “undertake Scientific Anthropological Research work, amongst West Coast Indian Tribes” (AHSA Papers 1946). She was affiliated with the Vancouver Museum for four years (1949-1953) and while there she served as curator of the Anthropological and Paleontological Department. After four years the question of her assuming a permanent staff position arose. At a meeting of the governing board, Menzies (AHSA Papers 1953) stated that he was “against Mrs. Baiersdorf becoming a member of permanent staff because of incompatibility with other staff.”

Menzies' experiences with Baiersdorf coupled with a questioning of his own qualifications by certain trustees, may have prompted him to insist that he not be replaced by a scientist. The trustees heeded Menzies’ advice and T.H. Ainsworth, who was born in Devon, England, was appointed principal curator. Having previously worked for the civic government as a city planner, Ainsworth was coveted by the museum’s governing body for his knowledge of civic politics and

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73 In their review of the Canadian museum movement Carl and Grace Guthe (1958:26) state that in the 1950s “the occasional need for a trained museum person [was] met by enticing a staff member away from another museum in Canada, the United States or Europe.”
the possibility that he could help secure more funds for the burgeoning museum. He was instrumental in integrating the Vancouver Museum into the region’s education system. Despite his lack of formal training he also began cataloguing the museum’s expanding collection (Vancouver Museum files). Ainsworth would be the last amateur the Vancouver Museum would employ as chief curator.

**Eclectic Curator—End of an Era**

Although the professionals did not displace the amateurs until 1963, the movement for the inclusion of professionals within the network of power relations began at least a decade earlier. Throughout the 1950s there was increasing pressure from trustees with university degrees in specialized areas (e.g., anthropologists, geologists) to professionalize the museum by employing ‘experts.’

Consider the following excerpts from minutes of meetings of the board of trustees:

> ...the time had come when it [the Vancouver Museum] should no longer be run by amateurs in a spectacular fashion. A scientific approach was necessary at this juncture.... (AHSA Papers 1958b (M.Y. Williams), emphasis added).

> Vancouver, being the third city of Canada, we should accordingly set our sights high. Dr. Williams [geologist] stated that he had long advocated the inclusion of scientists in any planning of the Museum; trained men who would supervise the respective departments which form a museum (AHSA Papers 1958c (M.Y. Williams), emphasis added).

Here I expand upon the conflicts that accompanied the integration of professionals into the Vancouver Museum’s system of authority.

In 1953 when T.P.O. Menzies resigned as curator of the city museum he warned Vancouver Museum trustees that “[e]xperience is what counts in a museum” (AHSA Papers 1953). Menzies was understandably concerned that he

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74 James Garner, an anthropologist, was hired in 1960 to begin cataloguing the anthropology collection. He quit in 1963. His (Vancouver City Archives 1963b) parting words were that “the trouble with the museum is that everybody runs it but the curator.”
would be replaced by a scientist and that many valuable items would not catch "the fancy" of a scientist. After engaging in many stormy debates the trustees eventually hired Menzies’ assistant, Ainsworth.

Ainsworth’s appointment proved to be very divisive. For example, in 1956 at a meeting of the governing body, concern was raised regarding how much discretion the curator was to be allowed in regard to the purchase of objects. Archaeologist Dr. Charles Borden (AHSA Papers 1956) expressed doubt as to the curator’s ability “to choose suitable material, adding that fakes were often offered for such a quick sale.” Borden then asked the curator if “he were an experienced archaeologist or anthropologist.” Ainsworth (AHSA Papers 1956) replied that he “didn’t claim to be either in a professional sense, but could not see how this could affect my selection of Indian material.”

Five years after Ainsworth’s appointment the professionals used a different strategy in their attempt to begin to displace the amateurs. At a meeting of the Vancouver Museum’s governing body, geologist M.Y. Williams (AHSA Papers 1958a) proposed that:

an Advisory Committee be appointed of suitable men to assist the Curator in matters of Anthropology and Archaeology and would name Dr. Charles Borden and Dr. Wayne Suttles in that connection (emphasis added).

An emotional debate ensued. One of the arguments against such an advisory committee was that the museum’s collection was “expansive and beyond the scope of the esteemed doctors Borden and Suttles.” Of the perception that his authority was being undermined, the curator, Ainsworth (AHSA Papers 1958a), retorted that

[i]t had always been and would continue to be his policy to seek help from those judged to be competent to give such help, in the best interest of the museum and the Association. He deplored the use of carping criticism where remedial action had not been forthcoming.

At the time, Williams’ resolution did not pass.
However, Williams was persistent and when two vacancies on the board arose he was quick to nominate anthropologist Wayne Suttles and geologist J.E. Armstrong. Other members of the governing body did not embrace the nominations. The president argued that “while the two prospective appointees would be helpful in a scientific sense, they lacked the executive ability that was needed at that particular stage in the Association’s development.” He went on to add that what the governing body did need were “individuals who could bring in new members and raise funds.” The matter was unresolved at the April (1959) meeting of the museum’s governing body (AHSA Papers 1959d).

When the governing body met a month later, Williams once again raised the matter of the two vacancies. Three trustees maintained that as summer was fast approaching the matter of the vacancies ought to be tabled. The three also argued that it was in the “Association’s best interest to seek out individuals who had skills in areas other than the scientific realm.” Williams, a scientist, was not influenced by the their arguments or deterred by their resistance. Instead he continued to plead his case. First Williams stated that he had been asked personally, “who is the anthropologist [at the Vancouver Museum], the inference being that the Indian section was in need of professional supervision.” Then he went on to add that “the display of fossils is deplorable while in the mineral display there is much room for improvement.” Despite Williams’ attack on the operation of the museum and the exhibits, the governing body refused to act on his motion to fill the two vacancies with scientists. When the trustees failed to respond to his proposal Williams threatened to resign. In desperation he reminded the trustees that if they wanted to ensure that the control of their Association remained in their hands versus the civic government’s, the presence of two scientists could do much to strengthen their position. Sharing power with two scientists was less threatening than sharing power with bureaucrats at city hall—Williams got his wish (AHSA Papers 1959e).
To reinforce this transfer of power from the amateurs to the professionals the Vancouver Museum hired its first professional curator in 1963. Robert J. Drake was “brought in to put the museum on professional footing” (staff, personal communication, 1996). Drake, a formally trained scientist, served as curator from 1963 to 1967. He established an insurance inventory and effected an almost complete reference catalogue of museum material. Power struggles with members of the civic government, as well as their failure to promote him to the position of chief executive officer, led to his resignation.

In the 1960s it was individuals with university degrees in anthropology, geology, zoology, and so on, who were in control of various museum departments. To a certain extent disciplinary training versus specific museological training is still emphasized at the Vancouver Museum, and museum workers are hired for their specialized knowledge in the arts or sciences rather than museum methodology.75 For example, the three present curators have disciplinary training versus museological degrees or diplomas. More specifically, the curator of history has an undergraduate degree in history and a graduate degree in geography,76 the curator of Asian Arts has a masters degree in Asian studies, and the curator of anthropology, waiting for the anthropology section to re-open, has a masters degree in anthropology. The conservator, who was hired in the early 1990s, has a masters in conservation.77

Included in this network are individuals trained in museum methods. This is particularly the case in collections management, registration, and preparatory work.

75Eileen Mak’s (1996:317) dissertation on museum professionalization substantiates my findings at the Vancouver Museum. She (1996:317) suggests that this trend demonstrates “that museum work has not been professionalized in the manner of occupations such as engineering, law, or architecture.”

76The previous curator had an undergraduate degree in classical studies.

77Her predecessor had practical knowledge, but did not have a university degree in conservation.
Individuals who work in these areas have had previous training in museum methods or they receive training by taking courses while fulfilling duties at the museum.

I suggest that it does not matter whether one labels these individuals as professionals or museum professionals, the more important point is that their entry into the Vancouver Museum’s network of power relations created another group of elites to share authority with the chief executive officer, civic government, and trustees in the production of knowledge. Museologist Peter Jenkinson (1989:142) writes that

> [p]rofessionalization has served to create a relatively autonomous institutional core of salaried museum workers, generally educated to degree level at least and middle-or-upper middle-class in origin, who, operating as experts, specialists, connoisseurs and policers of style and taste, act as the gatekeepers, often quite literally, to the knowledge within their exclusive ownership. [...] This gatekeeping function that we all perform with varying degrees of rigour aligns museums unmistakably with the forces of high culture....

**Aboriginal Peoples and the Vancouver Museum—A Century Old Relationship Challenged?**

The Vancouver Museum has, since it was first established in 1894, had an ongoing relationship with the Aboriginal Peoples of the region. In fact, one of the founding members' first objectives was to "form a "Museum of Antiquities, especially of the remains of Indian Life in British Columbia..." (AHSA Papers 1894-1908). The assumption at the time (1894) was that Aboriginal Peoples would either vanish or gradually assimilate into the larger society (Dyck 1991; Tennant 1990). Measures such as the imposition of residential schools upon Aboriginal children and prohibition of ceremonies like the potlatch sought to eliminate Aboriginal identity. The extinction of Aboriginal ways of life seemingly inevitable, the founders of the Vancouver Museum sought to collect the last
vestiges of Aboriginal material culture. One hundred years later it is apparent that Aboriginal Peoples have managed to maintain their communities despite relentless pressures to assimilate.

Throughout the century the relationship between the Vancouver Museum and the Aboriginal Peoples of the region have undergone many changes. Since the 1970s trustees have tried to include Aboriginal representatives on the governing board. There have also been some attempts to recruit Aboriginal representatives to serve as volunteers. Artworks created by individuals of Aboriginal ancestry have been marketed by the museum giftshop. Still, Aboriginal Peoples are invisible within the museum's hierarchy.

Because constant internal conflicts have, since 1994, consumed much of the time and energy of Vancouver Museum's staff and trustees, the recommendations of the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples (1992) have essentially been tabled. Therefore, I focus on the initiatives of museum staff prior to 1994, the production of three exhibits: Making a Living, Making a Life (1992), Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel (1993) and Art of Dempsey Bob, Myth Maker and Transformer (1993). These exhibits focused on the lives and/or works of individuals of Aboriginal ancestry. All three are instances of active collaboration and shared control between museum staff and Aboriginal representatives. Further, the three exhibits show how Aboriginal representatives can use western, primarily elitist institutions to communicate their desires. Drawing upon discussions with staff, active observation, and direct participation in Dempsey Bob's exhibit, I describe the manner in which each of these exhibits evolved, identify key

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78I adopt the notion of active collaboration from Clifford (1997:210). He distinguishes active collaboration from consultation and sensitivity. Clifford (1997:211) notes that "it is one thing to call on one's 'native informant' and quite another to work with a co-curator."
individuals involved in the production, and discuss the significance of the three events.

Making a Living, Making a Life (1992)

Making a Living, Making a Life (1992), curated by Joan Seidl, the Vancouver Museum’s present curator of history, was in my opinion a highlight in the history of the Vancouver Museum. Seidl successfully worked in consultation with various groups including Leona Sparrow, a representative appointed by the Musqueam Nation.

Organized chronologically, Making a Living, Making a Life was divided into four content sections. Each section was introduced with a reference panel that emphasized and explained significant dates “in the history of Canadian immigration policy, race relations, and industrial development” (Seidl 1993:80). The first section (1900-1909) emphasized that the region within which the museum is located had been culturally diverse for a long time. Section two (1910-1929) explored the influence of various cultural groups upon the resource-based industries of the area. Section three (1930-1949) “considered the matter of work and ethnicity through the experiences of seven individuals” (Seidl 1993:79). The fourth area (1950-1992) addressed ongoing issues related to work and cultural background. Accompanying the four sections was a space set aside for cultural groups and individuals to create their own small scale exhibits. The concept proved to be extremely popular (Joan Seidl, personal communication, 1992).

Of particular interest to me was the portion of the exhibit that focused on the working lives of Ed and Rose Sparrow of Musqueam. This portion of the larger exhibit evolved in the following manner. In the process of conducting research for the exhibit Seidl located their granddaughter Leona Sparrow’s master’s thesis in anthropology (University of British Columbia). The thesis, entitled The Work History of a Coast Salish Couple, focused on the working lives of Ed and Rose Sparrow.
Sparrow. Seidl sought Leona Sparrow's and Ed Sparrow's permission (Rose is deceased) to allow the Vancouver Museum to use information from the thesis. Seidl also offered to share power with Leona Sparrow and her grandfather in the production of the exhibit. The only constraints that Seidl imposed were the exhibition's budget and timetable (Joan Seidl, personal communication, 1992).

After an extensive consultation process Leona Sparrow and her grandfather agreed to permit the museum to quote from the interviews, reproduce family photographs, and borrow family objects. However, they retained the right to revoke their permission whenever they chose. In regard to the production of the exhibit, Ed and Leona Sparrow had final approval of the text, selection of objects and photographs, and accompanying educational resource kit (Seidl 1993:79-80; Seidl, personal communication 1992, 1996).

Essentially Leona and Ed Sparrow had complete authority over the manner in which Ed and Rose Sparrow were represented. A portion of the larger exhibit (The Working Lives of a Musqueam Couple) later traveled to Musqueam and to the First Nations House of Learning (University of British Columbia).

*Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel (March-Sept., 1993)*

David Neel’s exhibit entitled *Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel*, opened March 15, 1993. David Neel is a Kwakwaka'wakw artist who produced the twenty provocative masks in the show, entered the Vancouver Museum on his own (negotiated) terms, and acted as guest curator.

In this case the entire exhibit and exhibit opening was organized at Neel’s initiative. His masks were a critical view of Canadian history from an Aboriginal perspective. He approached Lynne Maranda, curator of anthropology, at the Vancouver Museum. Neel helped construct the grant applications and received $10,000 from the Canada Council and $1,000 from the Hamber Foundation. Recognizing that curators have a great deal of power in shaping the way the
audience responds to artworks featured in an exhibition, Neel proposed to curate his own show. Neel was involved in every aspect of the exhibit’s production. He selected the artworks, produced the exhibit texts, was regularly consulted on matters regarding design and marketing, and orchestrated the opening. At the exhibit opening Neel and members of his family danced and sang. At the conclusion of the ceremonies Neel addressed those in attendance. He spoke about the significance of an exhibit featuring the work of a contemporary Kwakwaka’wakw artist, one which the artist himself curated. This exhibit was not about Aboriginal Peoples, but about how the world is and looks from a Kwakwaka’wakw perspective. This was extraordinary.

**Art of Dempsey Bob, Myth Maker and Transformer (June-Sept. 1993)**

Dempsey Bob’s exhibit, *Art of Dempsey Bob, Myth Maker and Transformer*, opened three months later. The exhibit featured thirty pieces of the Tahltan-Tlingit artist’s work.

This particular exhibit followed a different format than that of Neel’s. First, it was Bob’s agent who approached the curator of anthropology regarding the production of an exhibit rather than the artist himself. Second, Bob did not curate the exhibit nor was he as intimately involved in the design of the exhibit as Neel. Third, Bob did not directly produce the text for his exhibit. Instead, the Vancouver Museum hired me to spend four days with Bob in Prince Rupert, watch him work, and have him speak about his work in general and to the particular pieces in the exhibit. Upon my return to Vancouver, I constructed an opening statement and produced labels based on our interviews to accompany each of his works. Bob then met with me and we discussed the labels and opening text. Changes were made and the final draft was given to the design team. Although Bob did not construct the labels, he did approve them.
As one would expect minor conflicts and disappointments arose during the production of this particular exhibit. For one, the title of the exhibit became a contentious issue. The public relations person was of the opinion that the exhibit ought to be entitled *Dempsey Bob: Myth Maker and Transformer*. She believed that particular title would create “an aura of magic and mysticism and would consequently be a great drawing card.” However, during my interviews Bob made it apparent that he wanted to convey that his work is fine art and that his people (Tahltan-Tlingit) knew as much about sculpture as did any other peoples (Dempsey Bob, personal communication, March 1993). Bob was consulted and he did indeed feel uncomfortable with the title’s wording and insisted it be changed to *Art of Dempsey Bob, Myth Maker and Transformer*. If one traces relations between Aboriginal Peoples and museums historically, this small victory becomes significant.

Second, the exhibit was produced at a time when staff were particularly over-extended. Other projects took precedence. In comparison to Neel’s exhibit Bob’s did not get the same commitment and consideration. Because Bob’s exhibit was not a priority its opening date was postponed a number of times, the design team was not able to devote as much time to designing Bob’s exhibit as they were Neel’s, and the actual opening was a very small and quiet affair.

Third, Bob’s exhibit was put together on a very meager budget. According to museum sources neither the trustees nor the former Manager of Marketing and Development were particularly interested in fund raising for this exhibit (or for Neel’s for that matter). Lack of funds influenced what museum staff could do in regard to design, marketing, and the festivities surrounding the exhibit’s opening.

Nevertheless, reflecting upon the circumstances surrounding the three exhibits I suggest that they are all cause for optimism. Still, it is apparent that because of the present structure of museums those who have traditionally wielded
power continue to do so. This was particularly evident in the production of Bob’s exhibit. For one thing, the trustees did not embrace the exhibit as they had *Panache*, for example, an exhibit featuring high fashion, and where trustees were responsible for fund raising. On the other hand Neel took matters into his own hands and helped arrange for exhibit funding himself. Second, staff at times chose, at other times were asked, to make other museum productions a priority, and Bob’s exhibit became secondary. I noted that Neel was very effective in ensuring that his exhibit was always a priority. Having previously been involved in the production of an exhibit (*Our Chiefs and Elders: Photographs by David Neel, Kwagiutl 1990*) featuring his work at the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology, may have made him aware that constant vigilance is required. Leona Sparrow, who holds degrees in anthropology and law, was also cognizant that vigilance is required. To that end she involved herself in every aspect of the exhibit’s production.

The Sears and Russell Consultant’s report indicates that in the future Aboriginal Peoples may play a greater role in shaping the Vancouver Museum. In terms of the argument I am developing here, such a suggestion seems timely. However, it is not exactly evident how Sears and Russell’s recommendation that the civic government become involved in the Vancouver Museum’s governance, management, and operation will facilitate such a shift in power. In fact, the inclusion of such a powerful body as the civic government in the network of power relations may simply serve to create another barrier Aboriginal representatives will have to penetrate. Nevertheless, I am encouraged by the staff’s ability to share authority with Aboriginal representatives and produce three exemplary exhibits.

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79 They recommended that a ‘First Nations Advisory Committee’ be established to guarantee the involvement of Aboriginal Peoples in the operation of the Vancouver Museum.
Conclusion

By exploring the production and dissemination of museum knowledge from a Foucauldian perspective I revealed that the production of knowledge at the Vancouver Museum is emergent from relations of power and domination. For the last century the Vancouver Museum has served as a site from which relations of power have been constituted, contested, and transformed.

By tracing the development of the network of power relations that characterizes the Vancouver Museum, four elements emerge. First, the power to control the Vancouver Museum has been highly coveted and never relinquished without a struggle. Second, in order for a restructuring of the Vancouver Museum's power base to occur, the most recent incumbents in the network of power relations must derive their power from sources outside the museum's structure. For example, as Aboriginal Peoples have gained greater power in the larger context of Canadian society they have been able to mobilize Vancouver Museum representatives to share authority, as was evident in the three exhibits described in this chapter. Third, different groups have used various strategies to penetrate the network of power relations within which knowledge is produced. The civic government used money as leverage to create a restructuring of the Vancouver Museum's power base. Professionals used their possession of specialized knowledge to begin to exercise their authority in museum. Fourth, the Vancouver Museum and its collection has served as a useful instrument for the social elites, professionals, and both the civic and federal governments. Most recently, Aboriginal representatives (Dempsey Bob, David Neel, and Leona Sparrow) have used the museum to convey their aspirations and to challenge traditional exclusionary boundaries.

From this chapter it should apparent that an examination of the circumstances surrounding the production and circulation of knowledge at
Canadian museums is crucial if museum representatives are to respond to the aspirations, and in some instances demands of Aboriginal Peoples. The next chapter will attempt to provide further insights by continuing to examine the systems of authority within which knowledge is produced and circulated in museums, this time at the MacBride Museum, a smaller, younger, northern, regional museum.

Addendum

Since 1994 the Vancouver Museum has experienced several significant organizational changes. I have, while reconstructing the social history of this institution, attempted to keep informed of the changes. In the following passages I discuss the most recent shift in power and briefly review the events that led to the reorganization of the museum’s present system of authority.

In June 1994 the Vancouver Museum’s centennial celebration was marred by an acrimonious labour dispute. The strike was triggered by the dismissal of nine full-time and four part-time employees, the reduction of hours for four other positions, the cancellation of school programs, and the closure of the Anthropology Department. The highly unpopular decisions were made by the Vancouver Museum’s governing body and chief executive officer. At the time the museum’s governing body was the Vancouver Museum Association. Trustees stated that the staff reductions were made to meet the immediate financial crisis faced by the museum.

Soon after the labour dispute began, a group known as the Committee of Very Concerned Members of the Vancouver Museum Association was formed (hereafter ‘the Very Concerned Members’). The group was predominantly composed of former docents. They were extremely vocal in their disapproval of the trustees’ and of the chief executive officer’s tactics. In November 1994 this group rallied the membership to attend a special general meeting of the Vancouver
Museum Association. There were 280 members present when a motion of non-confidence in the board of trustees was made by the co-chair of the Very Concerned Members. The results of the vote were 143 votes in favour of the motion of non-confidence in the board and 133 votes against the motion of non-confidence. A 3/4 vote was required to pass such a special resolution. The Very Concerned Members demanded that half of the board resign immediately so that new members could be appointed. The trustees refused to resign, and even if they had agreed, an election was outside the scope of the meeting. The Very Concerned Members relented, temporarily, and asked the trustees to address a number of issues. One of those issues was re-opening the Vancouver Museum.

On December 9, 1994, six months after the labour dispute began, the Vancouver Museum opened its doors. However, the uncertainty and anger remained. The trustees and chief executive officer remained unpopular with certain staff members as well as with a significant portion of the membership. The strike had also further polarized staff.

The Very Concerned Members continued to work to bring about changes that they considered necessary for the survival of the institution. They were of the opinion that the governing body, composed primarily of business people with little understanding of museum practices, was a significant part of the problem. Therefore, in February 1995 the Very Concerned Members established their own nominating committee as required by the Museum Constitution. Soon after, they recruited a number of candidates as potential trustees. At the annual general meeting in April 1995 the concerned members were successful in rallying the membership to attend the meeting and ensure that their candidates were elected as trustees. Those successful candidates were primarily former Vancouver Museum docents. Two academics were also elected.
The election changed the dynamics on the governing body and created even more tension in the organizational structure. Soon after, certain trustees and staff complained to the civic government regarding the management and operation of the Vancouver Museum. In response the civic government hired Sears And Russell Consultants Limited to review the situation at the Vancouver Museum. The consultant’s report, released in January 1996, was highly critical of the manner in which the institution was being managed and operated and they suggested that major changes were necessary to ensure the survival of the facility. One of their recommendations was that, once again, the Vancouver Museum’s governing body, the Vancouver Museum Association, be replaced by a commission appointed by the civic government.

On September 30, 1996 the Vancouver Museum Commission Society (hereafter ‘the Commission’) replaced the Vancouver Museum Association as the governing body of the Vancouver Museum. The Vancouver Museum Association now serves as a support group.

The Commission, established on August 14, 1996, is composed of seven individuals appointed by the mayor and council and accountable to them. The civic government has promised to provide an additional $200,000 annually for three years to help the Vancouver Museum become a viable, reputable institution.

It is not exactly clear how the commissioners were selected. As is characteristic of government bureaucracies secrecy surrounds the selection process. Based on the information that has been made available to me I do know that the Commission is composed of three men and four women. These individuals are primarily drawn from the corporate sector and their average age is said to be sixty. The selection of commissioners from the corporate sector indicates fund raising will be a significant aspect of their duties.
For now the first priority of the Commission is to select a chief executive officer. They will be seeking a museum professional with a high profile in the museum community. This person will be offered a three year contract, will report to the Commission, and be accountable to them.

Obviously some sort of organizational changes had to be made at the Vancouver Museum. The situation had become intolerable and destructive for management, staff, and trustees. However, I am not sure if recreating a structure that did not work thirty years ago is the answer.
CHAPTER IV — MACBRIDE MUSEUM: THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE WITHIN A REGIONAL MUSEUM

Profile

Classification: Regional Museum, directed by MacBride Museum Society, nonprofit organization.


Hours of Operation: 10 am to 6 pm, Daily (May-Sept) By appointment (Oct.-April)

Governing Body: Board of Trustees; 12 elected.

Staff: 3 permanent employees; 7 summer staff.

Operating Revenues: $200,000 (some variation annually)

Location: Whitehorse, Yukon.

Introduction

Established in 1951, the MacBride Museum is young in comparison to the century old Vancouver Museum. This regional museum also differs dramatically from the Vancouver Museum in its proportion of staff, operating budget, and size of collection. The MacBride Museum’s location in Northern Canada, a sparsely populated area of the country, further distinguishes it from the metropolitan Vancouver Museum.

Both museums share significant similarities as well. For one, both were established in centres that were experiencing substantial growth and change. Second, both are directed by a nonprofit organization, governed by a board of

80 Museums are constantly being reshaped and redefined. While I was constructing this dissertation, the MacBride Museum has also undergone changes. Although I have attempted to keep informed of changes, I have not always been able to, certainly not to the extent that was possible with the Vancouver Museum.
elected trustees. Like the Vancouver Museum, the MacBride Museum has been historically predisposed to conflict and negotiation for control. Third, as institutions that are dependent on outside sources of revenue, (principally various levels of government), both are vulnerable to government intervention. Fourth, at both museums knowledge is produced and circulated within an intricate system of authority, a system that is dominated by a select group of Whitehorse residents. Fifth, both are located in regions with substantial Aboriginal populations. However, Aboriginal Peoples have not been a significant constituency of either institution, instead they have served as suppliers of intellectual and material culture. But both institutions have in the recent past attempted to rework their historical relationships with Aboriginal Peoples of the region.

I use this museum to further expand my understanding of the circumstances under which knowledge is produced and manipulated in museums as well as to continue my exploration of the relationship between knowledge and power. As was the case with the Vancouver Museum, the intent is to help me understand why museums can become sites of contestation and mediation, to understand how both dominant and oppressed peoples use museums to express their aspirations, to begin to comprehend the relationship between Aboriginal land claims and museum objects, and to begin to explain why anthropologists and museologists alike are experiencing a crisis of authority and knowledge.

I begin this investigation of the MacBride Museum’s past by asking who proposed the Whitehorse Museum, what was their source of power, and what were their reasons for establishing this cultural institution. Because the MacBride Museum is very dependent upon three levels of government for economic capital, I examine how the civic, federal, and territorial governments exercise their authority in the museum. Recent additions to the MacBride Museum’s power base are professional staff. The entry of professionals into the network in 1985 was
opposed by trustees. I discuss this particular struggle and explore its significance.

Reconstructing an effective history of this museum allows for an exploration of how authority is constituted, challenged, negotiated and transformed between various individuals and groups in the process of constructing knowledge.

Although the MacBride Museum's collection is comprised of objects created by Aboriginal Peoples, Aboriginal individuals are not well represented in the museum's power base. This is characteristic of Canadian museums in general because "[t]raditionally, Canadian museums have been very comfortable in this interpretive role of Aboriginal cultures as part of Canadian ‘heritage’ until they have been shaken by protest, controversy or crisis (Doxtator 1994:20). 81 However, in the present socio-political and intellectual climate, those who control the MacBride Museum are expected to create a legitimate place for Aboriginal representatives in the museum’s power base. Since the early 1980s, in line with several other Canadian museums, attempts were made to elect individuals of Aboriginal ancestry to the MacBride Museum’s governing body. These attempts at inclusion were largely unsuccessful.

However, those in control at the MacBride Museum have been involved in undertakings that illustrate it is feasible, under certain conditions, for this museum to form different associations with regional Aboriginal representatives, ones that allow for a broader range of historical experiences and political agendas. Those in positions of authority have had to accept and act upon the reality that the collections belong to others, in particular Aboriginal Peoples, as well as to the museum. This descriptive analysis of the MacBride Museum thus concludes by examining three events that hint at the possible transformation of traditional power relations between MacBride Museum and Aboriginal representatives: the exhibit

81The tabling of Canada’s first comprehensive land claim by the Yukon Native Brotherhood, which I will discuss later, is said to have sensitized non-Aboriginal Peoples in the community to the concerns of Aboriginal Peoples (Coates 1991:241).
Kwádāy Kwádān (Long Ago People) (1981), the return of Jim Boss’s regalia to George Dawson, hereditary chief of the Ta’an Kwach’an people (late 1980s), and the work of Tlingit scholar Ingrid Johnson at the MacBride Museum (1993).

Materiality of the MacBride Museum

The MacBride Museum is physically well positioned in Whitehorse, Yukon’s capital. The downtown site incorporates five city lots, extending along First Avenue from Steele Street to Wood Street. The Yukon River flows in front of this unique structure.

The MacBride Museum, constructed in two stages, is an H-shaped building with external walls constructed of peeled logs, saddle notched at external corners. The exterior log walls and traditional sod roof distinguish it from other Canadian museums.

In the vestibule of the MacBride Museum one finds the gift shop and admissions desk. From the foyer, one passes through a second set of doors and enters the first phase of the MacBride Museum building. The interior log walls, which often cause problems for curators and designers, add charm to the facility for visitors. To the left is a meeting room/photograph gallery. Immediately beside the meeting room is an Information/Reference Centre.

The main floor of the original MacBride Museum also contains exhibit spaces, a geological display, and washrooms. At the time of my research (summer and autumn of 1992) the principal exhibit focused on the impact of the construction of the Alaska Highway (1942) on the Yukon. The exhibit, which opened in 1992 as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, was entitled Ribbon of Change – An Historical Exhibit of Whitehorse and Environs. It incorporated artifacts, audio/

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82 The original building was constructed as a Centennial project in 1967. The Cowan Wing was added in 1975 with support from the Museums Assistance Programme (Government of Canada).
visual media, maps, photographs, and texts. In keeping with museum exhibit standards of the 1990s, it is more interactive than older exhibits found at the museum.

In the basement of the original building, an essentially windowless space, are the staff offices, a lunch room, a photocopy centre, and a photographic reproduction area. Crammed into this area is the balance of the museum’s collection.

Attached to the main building is the Cowan Wing. Also constructed of logs and covered with a sod roof, the Cowan Wing was added in 1975. On the main floor of the Cowan Wing is an exhibit focusing on Yukon's natural history. In 1992 the exhibit was an array of stuffed specimens of Yukon's wildlife. With its celebration of humans' triumph over nature this exhibit proved to be somewhat controversial with some visitors, although staff did admit that there were also many visitors who were fascinated with the display. Within the last three years the exhibit has slowly been updated to reflect contemporary intellectual currents. For example, when the new exhibit is completed, the preserved animals will be incorporated into an exhibit that will explore the effect of the natural environment upon the people of the Yukon. The inclusion of historical and contemporary perspectives which address the relationship between people and the natural environment, will provide a context for a discussion about current environmental issues. An attempt will be made to include Aboriginal Peoples’ voices and to make connections to living communities (Midnight Arts in association with Nature Services North 1993).

The lower Cowan gallery initially was intended for traveling exhibits. Despite two subsequent upgrading grants, the Society was never able to acquire

83 I spoke with two Aboriginal representatives who found the exhibit to be contrary to their value system. They were of the opinion that animals ought to be treated with more dignity.
National Exhibition Centre status. Therefore, the lower gallery usually served as a meeting room, with the exception of two traveling exhibits, *Kwáday Kwádän (Long Ago People)* (1981) and *Cedar the Great Provider* (1987) that once were mounted here. Since 1988, a permanent exhibit which focuses on Yukon history occupies this room: *Yukon, The Land and the People*. This exhibit deals with the last part of the ice age, Aboriginal Peoples’ early history, and the arrival of missionaries, fur traders, and prospectors. It also examines land use by the various peoples of the area, the political development of Yukon, along with the construction of the Alaska Highway.

*Yukon, The Land and the People*, opened in 1988, reflects present intellectual currents. For one, the knowledge of scientists is presented alongside that of Aboriginal Peoples. For another, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history is incorporated within the same physical space. This is significant because although the impact of the missionaries, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (hereafter ‘the RCMP’), and other groups upon the lives of Aboriginal Peoples is not directly addressed in the exhibit, visitors might begin to at least consider the relationship. Last, through the use of objects and words the exhibit connects living Aboriginal Peoples with objects of the past.

This gallery is currently being reorganized. The Yukon gold rush, as well as the relationship between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the gold rush, will receive more emphasis. Eventually, the Yukon Aboriginal Peoples' material will be exhibited at the entrance to the building (Clifford Evans, personal communication 1996).

In the outdoor exhibit one finds two historic buildings, the Telegraph Office (1900) and Sam McGee’s cabin (1906), as well as numerous other artifacts. From 1952 until 1967, the Telegraph Office served as a repository and exhibit space for
artifacts and archival materials collected by the Society. Other items one finds, include mining and transportation equipment.

It is fitting that the discussion of the materiality of the MacBride Museum conclude with the imposing copper slab on the corner of Steele Street and First Avenue. It was the museum's founding member's (William MacBride) dream to secure the mass of copper from the Minister of Northern Affairs, bring it to the museum site, and erect it as a monument to the early explorers. Transferred to the museum site from White River, the almost pure copper block weighs three tons, measures eight feet long, three feet wide, and averages six inches in diameter. (Yukon Historical Society Papers, 1951-72). The next section, which explores the formation of the Yukon Historical Society, highlights yet another dream of William MacBride's, the formation of a historical society and museum in Whitehorse.

Historical Roots of Power Relations—Yukon Historical Society

MacBride [Museum] has always had the pillars of the community, either involved as members or on the board... (former trustee, personal communication, 1992, emphasis added).

In examining the files of the Yukon Historical Society I find that the organization itself, being a restrictive one, does not enhance itself for the benefit of the Yukon as a whole (Chamberlist 1973, emphasis added).

On December 7, 1950 Fred Arnot "mailed letters to 18 prominent citizens of Whitehorse asking them to attend a meeting at the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway office" (Arnot, 1978:2, emphasis added). The main item on the agenda of the December 20, 1950 meeting84 was the formation of a historical society and subsequent museum in Whitehorse. That meeting gave rise to the Yukon Historical Society, a nonprofit organization currently recognized as the MacBride

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84The society was officially formed in 1951.
Museum Society. For a small sector of Whitehorse society, "[a] 20-year dream came true" when the Yukon Historical Society and subsequent museum were established (William MacBride Papers, 1955b).

By the time Arnot called the meeting much of the groundwork for forming a historical society had already been laid by William MacBride, a long time resident of the Yukon. MacBride had previously approached various powerful individuals and organizations, including the Yukon Commissioner, National Parks Bureau officials, the Whitehorse Board of Trade, and the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway, regarding the formation of a historical society (Faulkner Papers 1966). In recognition of his efforts, MacBride was elected to a prominent position on the Yukon Historical Society's governing body. He served as the Society's first secretary treasurer as well as the museum's first amateur curator. MacBride, who came to the Yukon in 1914 to work as public relations officer for the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway, was an influential individual in the community, particularly in terms of the tourist industry. Over the years his executive positions at the Yukon Fish and Game Association, Tourist Committee, the Whitehorse Board of Trade, and Yukon Historical Society enabled him to exercise his authority within several significant organizations in Whitehorse.

Fred Arnot, a Canadian Immigration Service employee, was selected by the members as the Society's first president. His influences upon the museum were not as extensive as those of MacBride, for he served as president for only two years; when he left the Yukon in 1953, William MacBride succeeded him. MacBride retained his leadership role within the Society, in addition to his various other roles with the museum until 1961, at which time he too moved from the community (Cyr 1972).

Some of the other prominent members of the Yukon Historical Society in the 1950s included a reverend (H.G. Bird), a mining recorder (Wm. Emery), an artist
and teacher (Lilias Farley), a judge (J.E. Gibben), a game director (Them Kjar), a lawyer and a member of parliament (Eric Nielson), and a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Inspector (H.J. Spanton).

To add prominence to the fledgling association, the membership appointed George Black and Martha Louise Black as Patron and Patroness of the Yukon Historical Society. The couple was regarded as 'Mr. and Mrs. Yukon' by most people in the Yukon. George Black was a retired lawyer, former territorial commissioner, as well as former member of Parliament. Martha Louise Black was equally distinguished, having served as Yukon's first, and Canada's second female member of Parliament.

Both George and Martha Black were long time celebrated residents of the Yukon. Martha (Purdy) Black, the daughter of a prominent Chicago, Illinois family, came to the Yukon in 1898, shortly after news of the Klondike discovery broke in 1896. George Black, of an old New Brunswick family, arrived in the Yukon in 1897. They lived out their lives in the Yukon (Backhouse 1995; Black 1976).

Regarding the relationship between the MacBride Museum and Aboriginal Peoples of the region, it is fair to state that it was similar to other Canadian museums in the sense that non-Aboriginal Peoples assumed responsibility for the collection, classification, and exhibition of Aboriginal Peoples' objects. As was also typical of other museums, Aboriginal Peoples remained on the peripheries in regard to decision-making within the society. In fact, the exclusion of Aboriginal Peoples from various facets of Whitehorse society was typical in the 1950s.85 In regard to the relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society, historian Ken Coates (1991:220) observes that "Indians remained a subclass within

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85 The same could be said of all of Yukon society, as well as the rest of Canada for that matter.
Whitehorse society, continually perceived in stereotypic terms." Coates goes on to note that although there was some contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, it was rarely on an equal basis. He (1991:220-221) uses the following example to illustrate the racial issue in Whitehorse:

The opening of a new civic centre in Whitehorse in 1950 brought the racial issue into sharp relief. As the facility was being erected, the local newspaper contained considerable commentary on the appropriateness of allowing Native children to use it. Several observers suggested that permitting Natives into the facility would harm fundraising efforts. ...Natives were ultimately permitted into the facility, but the fact that there had been a debate said a great deal about community attitudes.

Given the community attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples in Whitehorse in the early 1950s, it is not surprising that Aboriginal Peoples were excluded from the Yukon Historical Society. Marginalized and excluded in larger Yukon society, Aboriginal Peoples also remained on the peripheries of the Yukon Historical Society.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the Yukon Historical Society were typical:

The collection and preservation of all items and historical documents, photographs, etc. of cultural and educational value pertaining to the Yukon Territory, and display of the same in a museum for the information of the general public (Yukon Historical Society Papers 1951-72).

Within a short time the Society came to possess a substantial collection, one that could best be described as regionally encyclopedic.\(^{86}\) What connects the various objects in the museum is that they are intimately linked to the Yukon,

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\(^{86}\)Very generally, the MacBride Museum's present collection includes the following: agricultural equipment, archaeological materials, a mineral collection, material from the Klondike Gold Rush, material culture of Aboriginal Peoples, pioneer household articles, transportation equipment, and Yukon flora and fauna. Within the museum are also a number of objects that have not traditionally been labeled or valued as art, including beaded works and carvings produced by Kitty Smith, a woman of Tagish and Tlingit ancestry.

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either having been produced or used in the region, or collected by individuals who once resided there.

Many objects in the collection were donated by members of the Society. For example, Martha Louise Black and her husband George contributed many "valuable historical items in their possession, notably the Speaker's Costume, House of Commons" (MacBride 1954). William MacBride, himself an avid collector, also donated several archives, photos, and other items of significance (MacBride 1952). As is evident from the following excerpt, his status within the community enabled him to secure numerous objects:

Through the Courtesy of Yukon Elec. Co. Mr. and Mrs. Scott took Mrs. MacBride and I to old Kluane City on Sunday. I had secured permission [...] to look over the junk in the old buildings and to take anything of historical interest. We spent a couple of hours pawing thru [sic] the buildings... (MacBride 1954).

Though the region's prominent citizens controlled the museum and donated many objects, the practice of collecting was not limited to this small sector of society. Acquisition records indicate that various residents and their families willingly donated objects. Some of those objects were family heirlooms. Others, as the following excerpt illustrates, were objects that had been collected from Aboriginal Peoples:

I [...] hereby sell to the Yukon Historical Society for the MacBride Museum five articles of clothing belonging to Indian War Chiefs of Telegraph Creek—Tahltan—which are over one hundred years old (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1964).

It is with great pleasure that we thank you and Gordon and Jack Needham for donating Skookum Jim's world famous gold watch chain to the MacBride Museum (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1973).
Skookum Jim's watch was of historical significance because his discovery of gold in 1896 set off the Klondike gold rush, a discovery that "coincided with a world depression and gave hope to thousands of unemployed men and women" (Cruikshank 1996:439).

Finally, in a document outlining the history of the Society, founding member Arnot attributes some of the Yukon Historical Society's early success in securing artifacts to the members of the RCMP. Arnot (1978:2), writes that the RCMP "reported where items of interest were and encouraged the people of the North, especially the members of Indian bands, to donate items of interest."

Various sectors of Yukon society were involved in producing the MacBride Museum's collection. However, certain individuals and groups, (e.g., MacBride and the RCMP) were the most strategically positioned to acquire objects and thus shape and define both the museum and the region's history and identity.

**Impulses for the Formation of a Museum**

Reminiscing about the formation of Yukon Historical Society, MacBride and Arnot, the Society's two principal founding members, expressed the following sentiments:

I just wanted to see the wonderful relics of the sourdough prospectors and trappers and the Indians gathered together before they got scattered by time and tourists all over the continent (MacBride 1955).

Since I was in the Canadian Immigration Service and closely related, therefore, with Canada Customs I was continually made aware of the nature and number of historical relics and Native artifacts which were being taken from the Yukon (Arnot 1978).

From Arnot and MacBride we hear concern that the region's cultural property would be appropriated by outsiders and with it the region's culture and heritage.

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87Skookum Jim (his real name was Keish) was of Tagish and Tlingit ancestry (Cruikshank 1996:440, 442).
Discussions with founding members, archival research, and works by Coates (1991) and Coates and Morrison (1992, 1994), suggest that in the years just prior to, and during the formation of the Yukon Historical Society and subsequent museum, the region and its residents were experiencing considerable social upheaval. The construction of the two major wartime projects, Alaska Highway and Canol pipeline, as well as additional roads and new airfields made the region increasingly accessible to individuals outside the region. These links, in the words of Coates (1991:189), "tore the region from its pre-war isolation and ensured that it would become an integral part of what Canadian promoters enthusiastically labeled the ‘New North’" (Coates 1991:189). The region’s prominent residents, as the following words of William MacBride illustrate, were concerned that outsiders would remove objects of relevance and place them in museums and homes outside of the territory:

We are trying to save for the Yukon some of our old relics and archives before they all evaporate to the National Museum in Ottawa, or to other places all over North America (MacBride 1952).

Second, by the end of World War II it became increasingly apparent that the Yukon's capital would be moved from Dawson City to Whitehorse. Coates and Morrison observe that for more than forty years the old gold rush town (Dawson City) had been an important centre in Northwestern Canada. The effects of the Northwest defense projects (Alaska Highway and Canol pipeline) were devastating to Dawson City. The Alaska Highway bypassed it "and when the U.S. Army chose Whitehorse as its regional headquarters, Dawson City's fate was sealed" (Coates and Morrison 1992:179). Whitehorse was regarded as the urban centre of the future. Whitehorse was transformed further when in 1953 the federal government officially designated Whitehorse as Yukon’s new capital. At the time the population of Whitehorse was 2,594, 29% of the territory’s population.

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Establishing Whitehorse as Yukon's capital had numerous repercussions for the town. Federal money began to pour into Whitehorse, a new federal building was constructed, and, as additional personnel began to arrive, the community grew (Coates and Morrison 1994:28-31).

Confronted by an unprecedented movement of people in and out of the region, economic and social changes resulting from the wartime projects, as well as shifts brought about by the designation of Whitehorse as the territorial capital, a select group of Whitehorse citizens responded. They sought to save and preserve the territory's own past. One can read in the founding members actions, their desire to have the Whitehorse Museum express their sense of identity to the citizens of Whitehorse as well as to outsiders.

**Something Eternal: The founder memorial**

I [Arnot] might say that it was decided at that meeting, though Mr. MacBride made no mention of it, that the proposed Museum should not be named after any individual but would be named the Whitehorse Museum (Arnot 1978, emphasis added).

Despite Arnot's recollection of an early discussion against naming the museum after an individual the Whitehorse Museum's name eventually was changed to the W.D MacBride Museum. Although the Yukon Historical Society approved the name change, the actual impetus for the change came from the Whitehorse Board of Trade. After MacBride retired as chairman of the tourist bureau and executive of the Board of Trade, his contributions to the community were recognized by designating the museum to bear his name. It was, at that time, the only public building in Whitehorse to bear an individual's name (William MacBride Papers 1955a, 1956).

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88I borrow this concept from Carol Duncan (1995:72-101).
In Whitehorse the museum became something lasting to which MacBride could affix his name. It could be argued that MacBride’s membership in the ‘higher reaches’ of Whitehorse society, as well as in the MacBride Museum’s system of power relations, ensured that he achieved a type of eternal life.

**Association Between Canada’s Centennial (1967) and the MacBride Museum**

Initially the Telegraph Office, which currently sits on the MacBride Museum site, served as a storehouse and exhibit space for the objects collected by the Society. By the early 1960s the collections, exhibits, and operation had expanded beyond the Telegraph Office. A new facility for the Yukon Historical Society's collection became a possibility when the federal government, with the City of Whitehorse's approval, provided the Society with a Centennial Grant of $75,000. Total cost of construction was $81,600. The civic and territorial governments provided the remainder of the funds. (Faulkner 1966; Thurber 1966; Yukon Historical Society Papers). A new building to house the MacBride Museum’s collection was constructed in time to celebrate Canada’s Centennial. It has been argued that the 1967 Centennial of Confederation had a widespread impact on museum development throughout Canada, including communities far removed from the nation's capital (Teather 1992).

In regard to the ceremonies surrounding the opening of the new museum, H.R.H. Princess Alexandra, accompanied by Honourable Angus Ogilvy, officially opened the MacBride Centennial Museum on May 29, 1967. In addition to these two well-known persons, Aboriginal leaders were in attendance. Yukon Aboriginal leaders and their wives (individuals names are not provided in the archival documents) were invited to appear in ceremonial dress at the opening of the new facility. Given that Aboriginal Peoples were regarded as wards of the

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89I borrow this phrase from historian Alfred Ian Hunt (1987:119).
state, the necessary arrangements for this event were made through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1967).

Transformation of the Network of Power Relations

It was easy to become a member of the Yukon Historical Society but difficult to do much more than that... (former trustee, personal communication, 1992).

A few non-Aboriginal individuals started the MacBride Museum and operated it as their own fiefdom. There have been revolutions over the years—certain people moved out and others moved in (former trustee, personal communication, 1992).

Between 1951 and approximately 1973 the governance, management, and operation of the MacBride Museum was controlled by a very small body of established members. William MacBride in particular exercised a great deal of authority at the museum, and when he left the Yukon and the Yukon Historical Society in 1961, he was replaced as society president by an equally ardent and resolute individual.

Archival records and interviews indicate that in the mid-1970s the museum’s system of administration was disrupted by the entry of new members who demanded positions of power within the museum. Throughout this dissertation I have stressed that control within museums is highly desired and never relinquished without a struggle. In the following passages I probe the restructuring of the network of power relations at the MacBride Museum between 1973 and 1985. I examine the different tactics that new members used to seize control from the established member, an invincible individual, who was empowered by the support of other established members within the Society.

The 'old guard' might best be characterized as members of more traditional status professions (art teachers, judges, and lawyers) and those individuals who had
either been born in the Yukon or had spent the greater part of their lives there. The new members of the museums included individuals who belonged to relatively new specialized professions (archaeologists and archivists) and were as a rule recent residents of the Yukon.⁹⁰ That is, most of these new members had arrived in Whitehorse several years after the Society was established.

New members employed a range of resistance strategies to challenge established members’ power within the museum. For one, they elected individuals from within their own circle to executive positions. Second, they attempted to replace the pervasive and powerful president of the society. Unable to gain control from the established president, a small group created their own heritage association in 1976. That new association came to be known as the Yukon Historical and Museums Association (hereafter ‘the YHMA’). YHMA would serve as an umbrella organization for all Yukon museums, including the MacBride Museum, and a number of historical societies. The YHMA has over the years proved to be a real force in the territory.

Interestingly, the creation of YHMA initiated a restructuring of the Yukon Historical Society, the body responsible for the administration and governance of the MacBride Museum. For one, following the creation of YHMA, the Yukon Historical Society changed its name to the MacBride Museum Society. Second, the MacBride Museum Society changed its by-laws and constitution. Third, and perhaps most importantly, a short time limit of two consecutive years was set for the position of president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1976). Previously there were no limitations in regard to terms of office and power had remained in the hands of a select few for extended periods of time, in particular the position of president. Consider the following

⁹⁰My understanding of the distinction between traditional status professions and specialized professions is informed by the work of Freidson (1986).
musings of the former, long reigning president in regard to attempts to dispense
with him (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1977, Laurent Cyr, personal
communication, 1992):

They tried to kick me out one time [in 1977]. I refused to step down. A
couple of people resigned instead.

I was bitterly disappointed this year when after putting in many hours of
volunteer work in this MacBride Museum there were some members who
signed a petition that apparently stated I was not running the show correctly.
[...] I have given very much thought to running again [as President] after the
things that have happened.

The two-year time limit eventually did ensure that power did circulate.

*The Power to Preserve Objects of Significance*

The change in name, by-laws, and constitution served to empower the new
members who remained, but did not completely eliminate battles for control of the
museum. The founding members, with minimal corporate or government support,
had administered and governed the MacBride Museum for over two decades. In
return they retained complete authority over every aspect of the museum’s
operation. Having suddenly to share decision-making power with more recent
members was a troublesome transition for some. I use the proposed auction of a
portion of the MacBride Museum’s collection as an example.91

In 1985 the MacBride Museum Society’s governing body voted to hold an
“auction of non-essential museum materials” (Hunston 1985) as well as items that
were donated specifically for the proposed auction. After several impassioned
debates, the majority of the governing body concluded that there were items in the
collection that were of no significance to Yukon history. An auction would free up
space for more relevant objects and would also generate much needed revenue.

91 I decided to use this incident because it had previously appeared in the media and
would likely create fewer tensions in the community than other similar examples of
contestation.
Despite the numerous debates, at least one founding member remained unconvinced that such an auction was prudent. Unable to exercise power over his colleagues, this opposing member used the press to express his displeasure and garner the community’s support for his position. What follows is an exchange regarding the auction between the opposing board member (a founding member and former president) and the then president of the MacBride Museum (a new member and specialized professional):

A life-time member of the MacBride Museum says a planned auction Monday at the museum is “asinine” and he’ll pull out all the artifacts he’s donated in the last 20 years if it goes ahead (Van SICKLE 1985).

Despite this responsible and reasonable attempt by the auction committee to meet any legitimate concerns over sale items, the Board Member [founding member and former president] proceeded with a course of obstruction by creating a “climate of fear” about the event through various media channels, using mis-information (Hunston 1985).

The proposed auction was eventually canceled.

Discussion

The differences in opinion regarding which objects were of historical significance and which were expendable serves as a reminder of what Handler (1992:21) says: collections are “historically contingent assemblages of value and meaning” (Handler 1992:21). Second, the controversy surrounding the proposed auction supports my argument that museums are sites of contestation and social arenas in which objects are made meaningful outside their original contexts.

Integration of Salaried Museum Professionals into the Network of Power Relations

From 1951 until 1985 a very small core of the membership controlled the MacBride Museum. In 1985, the trustees chose to share authority in the museum
and hired the MacBride Museum’s first salaried professional director/curator. The salary for this position was and continues to be supplemented by the Yukon Territorial Government, Heritage Branch (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1985a). Interestingly, the creation of the position provided a point of entry for both museum professionals and the territorial government into the MacBride Museum’s system of authority relations.

Understandably some trustees opposed the entry of a professional into the established power base. However, after a long debate the reluctant members of the board yielded to pressure and in 1985, a candidate was selected: Jack Schick. He remained in the position for less than two years and was replaced in 1986 by Joanne Meehan. After nine years Meehan resigned from her position in 1995, to be replaced by Clifford Evans.

Currently the MacBride Museum is staffed with three permanent employees. They include a director/curator, a heritage program coordinator, and a business manager who is employed on a half-time basis. In addition, the museum employs eight summer staff members and fifteen to twenty five project-based employees (Meehan, telephone interview, Jan. 11/94). With so few human resources the staff must be very flexible and able to engage in many different tasks.

92 The decision to hire the museum’s first salaried director/curator was in part influenced by the John E. Kyte report (Museums in Yukon, A Profile and Training Report) released in 1980. Within his report Kyte (1980:10) urges the trustees to select a “qualified Museum Director to operate the museum” and thereby “alleviate many existing problems and advance its acceptability as a Regional Institution.” Five years later Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord made a similar recommendation.

93 Prior to taking on the role of director/curator at the MacBride Museum, Schick was the mayor of Haines Junction, Yukon. As regards his work experience in a museum context, Schick worked as Assistant Curator of Birds and Mammals at the British Columbia’s provincial museum, he was Chief Park Naturalist in Elk Island National Park, and Chief Park Interpreter at Kluane.

94 Meehan worked as a volunteer at the museum prior to being selected chief executive officer. Meehan’s background is in fine arts.

95 Given tight budget constraints and limited number of staff, the duties of the MacBride Museum’s director/curator are extensive. Some of the duties include caring for the

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Power of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Within the Hierarchy

Since the appointment of the chief executive officer into the organization, the museum has had continuous and stable leadership. This contrasts with the Vancouver Museum even though that museum's chief executive officer's salary is more substantial (approximately $100,000), than the MacBride Museum’s chief executive officer’s salary (approximately $33,000). If money is not an issue what is? I suggest that one of the reasons the MacBride Museum has had stable leadership is because a legitimate place has been created and maintained for the chief executive officer. The MacBride Museum’s governing body is comprised of twelve elected trustees. In comparison, the Vancouver Museum’s governing body includes thirty-four trustees (twenty-one elected, one member of city council, and twelve trustee appointments). Former chief executive officers at the Vancouver Museum have indicated that having to share power and work with such a large governing body is very difficult. Furthermore, all "[p]rofessionals have notions, formed in part by their training, of how work should be performed and of what work is interesting and worthy of their training” (Freidson 1986:170). If those expectations are not met and if chief executive officers, most of whom are professionals, are not given a relative degree of autonomy, tensions between them and their employers arise and can result in unstable leadership.

Stable leadership at the MacBride Museum does not, however, mean that the relationship between the trustees and chief executive officer is uncomplicated. I include the following excerpt to illustrate the complexity of the relationship between trustees and chief executive officer within this nonprofit organization:

collection, human resource management, marketing, networking in Whitehorse and in the Canadian museum community, planning and developing exhibits, and maintenance and housekeeping. To maintain some degree of legitimacy within the community of Whitehorse, as well as the larger Canadian museum community, the director/curator also regularly attends training workshops outside of Yukon (Meehan, personal communication, 1992).
As trustees we are supposed to be responsible for what the director and the employees do but it doesn't seem like we are. [...] If the director wasn't there to give the feedback, we couldn’t do anything. We don’t know what is going on in the day to day operation of the museum.... (trustee, personal communication, 1992).

Writing of nonprofit organizations in general, organizational theorists Michael O’Neill and Dennis R. Young (1988:8) maintain that the “management of nonprofit boards is often so problematic because these boards are so organizationally important.” At the MacBride Museum this is especially true because the museum employs so few staff.

**Discussion**

Within the literature on nonprofit organizations one encounters a "traditional view of nonprofit organizations with the board at the top" (Herman and Heimovics 1991:129). Scholars Herman and Heimovics (1991) and Middleton (1987) observe that the relationship between the board and top executives of nonprofit organizations is dynamic. My own study of MacBride Museum affirms this, for although the MacBride Museum's trustees are the legal and hierarchical superiors they are nevertheless dependent upon the director for information and expertise. The chief executive officer has much better access to information on funding sources and the intricacies of the museum's program delivery. Middleton (1987:149) describes the relationship between trustees and chief executive officers of nonprofit organizations as one of “strange loops and tangled hierarchies.” The same can be said of the relationship between the MacBride Museum’s trustees and chief executive officer.
Relationship Between Economic Capital and Knowledge

...cultural or human capital has no intrinsic resources, so professions are dependent on economic capital as well as political power for their survival... (Freidson 1994:41).

As a nonprofit organization the MacBride Museum is particularly dependent upon corporations and government as sources of funding (trustees, former chief executive officer, personal communication, 1992). Such a dependence on external sources of revenue place staff in a somewhat vulnerable position. The museum’s dependence on outside funding sources often forces those who manage the institution to take reactive rather than proactive positions. For example, while the museum may need money for wages all that may be forthcoming from a particular agency is money for capital funding. The chief executive officer must often alter the museum’s needs to accommodate those of the funding agencies. To further illustrate the influence those who provide economic capital are able to exercise in the operation of the MacBride Museum, I highlight the steps involved in the hiring and financing of a professional position: heritage programmes coordinator.

The heritage programmes coordinator's position was initially advertised on October 10, 1990. It was to be the first of its kind in Yukon museums. Historically, Yukon’s two largest museums, Dawson City Museum and MacBride Museum, had been operated primarily for tourists seasonally rather than the community.96 In the mid-1980s the territorial government agreed to provide core funding for two director/curator positions at the two principal museums. Incorporating the positions into the network enabled these museums to begin

96 In 1980 museum consultant John E. Kyte found that few Canadian community museums were as closely linked to the tourist industry as Yukon museums. Five years later museum consultants Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord ascertained that only 4% of MacBride Museum's visitors were Yukoners.
developing year round programming (Jeff Hunston, personal communication, 1992; Meehan 1990).

In 1986 trustees, prompted by the chief executive officer, decided that hiring a programmer would help to make the museum more relevant to Yukoners. Because of MacBride Museum's financial situation, most of the funding for the programmer's position would have to be secured from external sources. Attempts to obtain funds for the position proved to be difficult in part because the museum was not able to shake its forty year old image as primarily a tourist attraction.

The MacBride Museum's first heritage programs coordinator was hired in November 1990. Short term funding for the position was provided by the City of Whitehorse Recreation Board and Yukon Lotteries. Ultimately, the chief executive officer and trustees wanted to convince city council to establish a line item for MacBride Museum in the City of Whitehorse's budget. That would provide consistent funding and would allow the professionals, rather than the funding agencies, to determine the conditions and goals of their work (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1990; MacBride Museum Society Papers 1991a).

Convincing city council of the validity of their request required an investigation of the level of funding being provided to similar museums in other Canadian municipalities. In Sept. 1991, on the basis of their research, MacBride Museum's trustees and chief executive officer asked the civic government for $92,000 to cover the programmer's salary as well as operation and maintenance costs. Members of the civic government agreed to assist with taxes and utilities but wanted a more formal submission (Meehan, personal communication, 1992; MacBride Museum Society Papers 1991b, c).

Six months later a sum of $62,000 was requested. The petition was tabled. Instead, the civic government proposed that the trustees approach the City of Whitehorse Recreation Program. Acting on the advice of civic government, the
MacBride Museum Society sought and obtained $19,656 from the City of Whitehorse Recreation Program for a part time programmer. A part time programmer was hired in the autumn of 1992. However, there was no guarantee of funding beyond the autumn of 1992. Finally in 1993, after numerous meetings and luncheons funded by the museums and/or museum trustees, the civic government agreed to cover the costs of a significant portion of the heritage programmer's salary.

I offer this example for the following reasons. First, it outlines the present relationship between the civic government and the MacBride Museum. It is one in which the civic government has been reluctant to enter into a relationship with the museum. One could suggest that until now the civic government has not recognized the MacBride Museum's ability to articulate power and identity. Second, in this example one can begin to see the degree to which professionals can be dependent on economic capital and thus vulnerable to the whims of politicians.

**MacBride Museum and Aboriginal Peoples—Renegotiation of Boundaries**

Despite its geographic location in Northern Canada, far removed from major metropolitan museums in the south, the MacBride Museum is, in many respects, still a traditional museum. This is to say that, the object is central, control of the collection and the museum is maintained by a very small sector of society, Aboriginal Peoples remain on the peripheries in regard to the museum’s power base, and non-Aboriginal Peoples continue to represent Aboriginal Peoples and define their identity.

Still, for approximately the last two decades the relationship between the museum and Aboriginal representatives has been transforming. In part influenced by changing attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples in society at large, museum representatives have tried to reflect societal changes within the museum's network of authority. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to three events at MacBride
Museum that are cause for optimism: an exhibit *Kwādāy Kwādān (Long Ago People)* (1981); the repatriation of Jim Boss' s regalia; and the incorporation of a wider range of historical experiences and political agendas into the interpretation of museum collections (Tlingit scholar Ingrid Johnson's work with elder/beadworkers). But first I begin by providing a socio-political context for the redefined power relations between MacBride Museum and Aboriginal representatives.

**Land Claims**

On February 14, 1973, Elijah Smith and the Yukon Native Brotherhood tabled Canada's first comprehensive land claim, in a document entitled *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. The Yukon Native Brotherhood, which was formed in 1968, negotiated the settlement with the Federal Government in conjunction with various Yukon Bands.

In *Best Left as Indians*, historian Ken Coates (1991:231) proposes that “[t]he Indians’ sweeping demands [in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*] sent shock waves through the territory.” The first portion of the Brotherhood's document was devoted to a critical appraisal of the role non-Aboriginal Peoples (fur traders, gold seekers, American soldiers, missionaries, government officials) historically have played in lives of Aboriginal Peoples. According to Coates (1991:231) this censorious assessment dispelled the myth for many non-Native Yukoners “that the Indians had accepted the developments of the past, and had developed a respect for the triumvirate of western civilization: religion, education, and government.”

Of particular relevance to the present discussion is what the Yukon Native Brotherhood envisioned for the future. They demanded more authority in areas that concerned their lives (community development, economic development,
In regard to the issue of cultural identity the Native Brotherhood stated that Aboriginal Peoples

...must re-discover the values of our Indian Religion, our Indian philosophy, our Indian Way of Life. We must write our history the way it happened to us. Our language must become a part of our lives. [...] the older people must be encouraged to teach our children the Indian way in their “own communities” (Yukon Native Brotherhood 1973:34).

Coates (1991:241) maintains that the greatest effort to respond to the concerns raised by the Yukon Native Brotherhood came from the ‘cultural front.’ More specifically, there has been an expansion of language training and story-telling in the Yukon, and traditional knowledge has been given a higher profile. The story-telling festival established in Whitehorse in the late 1980s has continued to grow annually, and now attracts people from around the world. Conferences organized by YHMA incorporate both traditional and academic knowledge.

One has to wonder if perhaps those in power at the MacBride Museum were also influenced by this document? I speculate on the significance of the document because prior to the late 1970s, few attempts were made to create positions of power for Aboriginal Peoples within the MacBride Museum’s system of governance and operation. However, my interviews with trustees past and present as well archival research suggest that since the 1980s, some of those in power were sensitized to the concerns raised by Aboriginal Peoples in regard to the control non-Aboriginal Peoples have exercised over the former’s history and identity. In response attempts were made to appoint and/or elect individuals of Aboriginal ancestry to the MacBride Museum’s governing body. The intention was to create a voice for individuals of Aboriginal ancestry within the MacBride Museum’s power base. However, most attempts at inclusion failed. 97

97A historical association that has had more success than the MacBride Museum in involving Aboriginal Peoples is the YHMA. It was formed in the late 1970s, in a very different political and intellectual climate than the MacBride Museum, and has from the
Prior to my research at the MacBride Museum I assumed that if individuals of Aboriginal ancestry were invited to become members of museums' governing boards they would willingly do so. I asked a number of individuals of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry why MacBride Museum trustees and staff have been unable to establish a more inclusive governing board, and they revealed a number of different theories. Barb Fred (personal communication, 1992) told me that she “attended a couple of meetings of the governing board but as an Aboriginal person I felt very much alone.” Another individual of Aboriginal ancestry, Norma Shorty (personal communication, 1992) told me that “Aboriginal Peoples had to heal themselves before they could help heal non-Aboriginal Peoples.” In those failures I wondered if perhaps penetrating the MacBride Museum's governing board did not seem strategic to Aboriginal representatives. Therefore, I decided to focus on two events where Aboriginal representatives were willing to enter this western institution and collaborate in contextualizing the museum's collections, as well as an event where an Aboriginal representative challenged traditional notions of ownership and control of collections.

**Examples of Active Collaboration and Sharing Authority**

*Kwádáy Kwádán (Long Ago People) (1981)*

In 1981, ten years prior to the release of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992), the MacBride Museum hosted the exhibit *Kwádáy Kwádán (Long Ago People)*. By all accounts *Kwádáy Kwádán (Long Ago People)* was an enormous success. This exhibit is an example of an active collaborative

very beginning attempted to be more inclusive. Some attribute the YHMA’s success in involving Aboriginal Peoples to one of its founders, Linda Johnson. This woman’s persistence and hard-work at building relationships with certain individuals of Aboriginal ancestry are said to be one of the reasons why they have been represented on YHMA’s governing board.
enterprise, involving individuals associated with the YHMA, the MacBride Museum, the Council for Yukon Indians, and the National Museums of Canada.

The exhibit focused on the material culture of the Athapaskan people. The core of the exhibit included objects from a larger exhibit entitled *The Athapaskans: Strangers of the North*. *Strangers of the North* had been produced by Annette MacFadden Clark at the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of Civilization). Initially, when the exhibit traveled throughout North America, the Yukon was not one of its venues. Linda Johnson, one of the exhibit co-ordinators, viewed *Kwādəy Kwādən* (*Long Ago People*), as an opportunity to "bring the objects and the people together again." *Kwādəy Kwādən* (*Long Ago People*) contained objects from the National Museum collection and from Yukon museums, as well as materials loaned by individual families (Linda Johnson, personal communication, 1992).

Accompanying the exhibit at the MacBride Museum in 1981 was a three day conference. As was the case with the exhibit, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples were involved in planning the conference, individuals of Aboriginal ancestry spoke at the conference, and Aboriginal Peoples were in attendance. Johnson (personal communication, 1992) maintains "[i]t was the first conference to focus on Yukon Indian lifestyles and it very much set the elders there as the experts of their own culture and drew in the academic expertise as a supporting cast." The conference was well attended by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples. YHMA hosted subsequent conferences based on a similar collaborative model but never on the same scale.

In addition to the exhibit and conference, staff members from the Council of Yukon Indians, Curriculum Development Branch organized school tours funded by the Yukon Territorial Government, Department of Education. This funding enabled students from all over the territory to attend the exhibit. Mrs. Antonia
Jack, a Tlingit elder, with the assistance of a number of other Aboriginal women guided school children through the exhibit, and Mrs. Jack recounted stories about the objects she had used as a child (Johnson, personal communication, 1992).

**Repatriation: Jim Boss' Regalia**

It is a basic premise of the Task Force report that relationships between First Peoples and museums should be guided by moral and ethical principles rather than strictly legal concerns. This is particularly true with regard to issues surrounding repatriation (Hill and Nicks 1992:83).

In Canada, unlike the United States, there is no legislation for museum personnel to draw upon when addressing the repatriation of Aboriginal Peoples' material culture. In the United States lawyers and courts rather than museum personnel decide who owns the past. Canadian museum personnel must rely upon their own ethical and moral principles. Here each case is addressed individually and it is the responsibility of Canadian museum staff, working together with Aboriginal communities, families or individuals to address issues of cultural property. The problem with the Canadian system, argues Doxtator (1994:23), is that "moral ownership, of which the museum also claims a kind, (the responsibility to the public) is not as powerful as "legal" ownership in the Museum world." Here I trace the repatriation of Jim Boss's regalia, highlighting the difficulties of cross-culturally establishing legal ownership and addressing the fluctuating definition of moral ownership.

Both written documents and oral accounts indicate that demands for repatriation of cultural property are not a recent phenomenon in Yukon museums.

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98 I draw upon archival materials and my interviews with staff and former trustees to reconstruct the repatriation of Jim Boss' regalia.  
99 In the United States repatriation will be handled through legislation. There are two statutes that apply: The 1989 National Museum of the American Indian Act and the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
To illustrate I draw upon the following account by a former MacBride Museum president. He (MacBride Museum Society Papers 1985b) writes:

Bill MacBride told me many times he bought this costume [Jim Boss’s regalia] from one of Jim Boss’s sons long before he left the country (1961). A few seasons ago the oldest son, Fred Boss, was willing to sign a letter that this was the property of the Museum and was not to leave or to be given out to anyone. George Dawson [Jim Boss' nephew] had been after him [MacBride] at that time as he was after us [MacBride Museum Society] also to wear this costume. [...] This costume has not been used for about fifty years and there is no doubt the stitching would not stand for much movement and most certainly not on any person.

The property in question, which had been in the museum’s possession since the 1950s, was the regalia of Jim Boss (MacBride 1955). Soon after the museum acquired the regalia George Dawson, hereditary chief of the Ta'an Kwach'an people, and Jim Boss’s nephew, asked that the regalia be returned to him and his family. He maintained that the regalia was wrongfully purchased by the MacBride Museum. Dawson's society is matrilineal and in matrilineal societies descent is traced through the mother’s line. Each clan owns its own territory, material culture (masks, war helmets, houses screens), as well as intellectual property. As dictated by the principles of matrilineal society, transfers of tangible and intangible property are made through the mother’s line. This is significant because according to Ta'an Kwach'an law, Jim Boss's son Fred was not the rightful heir to his father's property and therefore not in a position to sell his father's regalia to William MacBride. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s all requests for the return of the regalia were denied.

Dawson refused to be deterred. In the mid-1980s, with a change in the power base at the MacBride Museum and with the hiring of a professional director/curator, George Dawson tried, once again, to claim his family’s regalia. Initially Dawson requested permission to simply wear the regalia for a photograph. At a later date he asked that the regalia be returned to him and his family.
The initial and subsequent requests generated a great deal of discussion amongst the trustees and chief executive officer of the MacBride Museum. One of the former trustees recounts the debates that ensued:

It seems to me that at one point the board was completely against it [Dawson's request] because—my goodness you can't have that kind of artifact out there getting potentially ruined—to saying this absolutely has to go out there (former trustees, personal communication, 1992).

Dawson was eventually able to wear his ancestor's regalia but not before many questions were raised and concerns addressed. For one, because the museum lacked written documentation trustees asked whether or not the museum had a legal right to the regalia. Second, trustees wrestled with the question of public trust. Of the understanding that the objects in the collection belonged to all the people of the Yukon, the trustees assumed they did not have the power to remove the regalia from the public domain. Third, returning Boss' regalia could be an opportunity to begin building a relationship of trust with certain Aboriginal groups.

Lacking proper documentation to prove that the museum had legally purchased the regalia, and in an attempt to begin to build bridges with the Aboriginal communities, the trustees decided to return the regalia to George Dawson. Having been forced to wait for many years, Dawson was finally able to have his photograph taken wearing his uncle's regalia. All the people in the area knew he had gained this right.

After Dawson acquired the regalia he was a frequent visitor to the MacBride Museum. In the summer he would sit in the museum and talk to the visitors. Eventually Dawson returned the regalia piece by piece to the museum. When he returned the last of the regalia he signed a document to confirm that he was doing so willingly.

Aboriginal scholar Richard Atleo (1991:56) proposes the following regarding the repatriation of cultural property:
Where cultural property was acquired under conditions of unfairness to First Nations people, and where First Nations people make a reasonable verifiable claim for repatriation, the onus of proof shall rest with the museum that the claim is conclusively invalid. Where the museum is unable to conclusively prove invalidity, the cultural property shall be repatriated under conditions which are fair according to the economic position of the First Nations claimants.

He adds that such a policy would not elicit unreasonable demands from Aboriginal Peoples and in fact the return of Boss’ regalia to Dawson did not start a flood of requests. The situation demonstrates that with a bit of good will and trust it is possible harmoniously to resolve issues of cultural property. Whether or not the MacBride Museum was legally obliged to turn over the regalia to Dawson is debatable. I suggest that in the end it was the trustees’ sense of moral obligation that prompted them to make the decision they did. Their good faith was matched by that of George Dawson, when he eventually turned the objects over to the museum.

An Authoritative Place From Within Which to Construct Knowledge

The second of seven principles outlined in the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples (1992) states:

An equal partnership involves mutual appreciation of the conceptual knowledge and approaches characteristic of First Peoples, and the empirical knowledge and approaches of academically trained workers.

After Ingrid Johnson, who comes from the Inland Tlingit community of Teslin, Yukon, completed her B.A. in anthropology she prepared “a proposal to conduct research on beadwork collections in the MacBride Museum” (Johnson 1995:28). The proposal was accepted and Johnson began her research in 1993. Partial funding for the project was provided by the Northern Research Institute.

Johnson outlined her personal objectives as follows:

100 Johnson completed a Masters degree in Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in 1996.
101 Partial funding for the project was provided by the Northern Research Institute.
Of course, I hoped to learn about the individual artifacts, but I also wanted to learn about artistic traditions in this region and to construct a history of beadwork in the context of historical changes that have occurred in the southern Yukon. My ultimate goal was to connect artifacts with people (1995:29).

According to Johnson the project developed as follows. After she selected a group of artifacts, the articles were photographed, and eleven were chosen for travel. She then consulted written documents to learn as much as she could about the objects themselves, about similar objects outside her sample, as well as about the women who produced beaded works. She then went on to conduct interviews with five elders/beadworkers. Taking the eleven artifacts with her, Johnson traveled to some of the beadworkers’ homes to conduct a series of interviews. A couple of the beadworkers came to the museum to speak with her.

When Johnson first began the project she assumed she would be learning a great deal about each object in the study collection. Instead she found her discussions with elders revolved around a number of general themes: comments regarding the quality of the work, discussions about the identity of the creators of the objects, narratives about topics other than beadwork, and songs (Johnson 1995:29-33).

The beadwork project is significant for several reasons. For one, it is a melding of conceptual knowledge of a range of people from varied backgrounds (Johnson 1995:28-33). Because professionals’ major source of power is their command over a body of knowledge (Freidson 1994:40) they often jealously guard their authority. Therefore, the sharing of power in the construction of knowledge,
as is the case in this project, is significant. Second, the project challenges the position of privilege that objects have in traditional museums. Johnson's work illustrates that from the elders' perspective the objects were not primarily art or artifacts but rather records inseparable from the stories and songs. More specifically, the physical objects were decentred in favour of narratives and history. Third, the project allows for completing histories and version of reality (Johnson 1995:28-33).

Conclusion

Having examined yet another museum, the relationship between power and knowledge becomes ever more clear. In the Yukon the MacBride Museum serves as one site from within which power is both established and enacted as well as resisted. The MacBride Museum is a space from within which social relations of power are also negotiated and transformed. At stake in the negotiation and transformation of authority relations is the power to use the MacBride Museum to articulate regional identity, to narrate history, and to reproduce and reinforce power relations in and outside of the MacBride Museum.

In chapter one I wrote that Clifford (1997) approaches museums as contact zones in which geographically and historically separated peoples establish ongoing associations. Adopting the notion of the museums as contact zones enabled me to first understand how Aboriginal Peoples, a group marginalized in other aspects of Whitehorse society in 1951 enter into a relationship with the founding members of the MacBride Museum, a privileged, prominent, non-Aboriginal group. Founding members collected, preserved, and interpreted the material culture of the region's Aboriginal Peoples and thus began the association. The notion of contact zones suggests fluidity rather than permanence and therefore the possibility for changing social relations of power.
As I quickly reflect upon what examining both the Vancouver and MacBride Museums has revealed to me I become more certain of the need for a study such as this. It is becoming increasingly clear that the power of museums to articulate identity and to create and reinforce power structures should not be underestimated. In the next chapter, I investigate the PWNHC’s role in the structuring of social relations of power in the NWT.
CHAPTER V—PRINCE OF WALES NORTHERN HERITAGE CENTRE'S NETWORK OF AUTHORITY

Profile

Classification: Territorial Museum

Established: Opened in 1979, defunct Museum of the North formed the basis for Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

Hours of Operation: 10:30 am to 5 pm, Daily (June-Sept.);
10:30 am to 5:30 pm, Tues to Fri.; 12:00 to 5:00 pm, Sat. Sun.; Closed Monday (Sept.-May).


Staff: 24 permanent employees, 9 causal employees (the number of casual employees fluctuates).

Operating Revenues: $2,480,000 annually (approximate).

Location: Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Introduction

The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is located in Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories (hereafter ‘the NWT’). Opened in 1979, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (hereafter ‘the PWNHC’) was designed to serve as a central facility for all of the communities dispersed throughout the NWT. Serving as a central facility for a region that encompasses 3,376,689

103 While I was constructing this dissertation, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre underwent changes. Although I have attempted to keep informed of changes, I have not always been able to, certainly not to the degree that was possible with the Vancouver Museum.

104 Like the Yukon, the NWT “has its own legislative assembly and government bureaucracy, which is attempting to assume more and more provincial-type responsibility over its own affairs” (MacLachlan 1992:1)

105 The PWNHC was not the first museum to be established in Yellowknife, NWT. The Museum of the North opened in 1963. After being open for a mere ten years it ran into
square kilometres and three time zones is a challenging objective. The 60,000 residents of the NWT live in and around 64 dispersed communities, many of which can only be reached year round by aircraft, ice roads during the winter, or boats during the short summer months. Transportation to and communication with people in the communities is logistically difficult because it is very costly to fly anywhere in the NWT and telephone calls, faxes, and letters are not nearly as effective as personal visits.

More than half of the population of the NWT is of Aboriginal ancestry. Approximately two-thirds of the Aboriginal population is Inuit, the remaining is Dene ("The People"), and Metis. There are nine officially recognized languages in the NWT, a reality that has to be taken into consideration at the PWNHC in regard to programme development and exhibit texts.

The PWNHC’s age, geographic location, population base, programmes, and system of administration both connect it to, and distinguish it from, the other two institutions in this study. I use this institution to further enhance my understanding of the conditions under which knowledge is produced in museums and to continue my exploration of the relationship between power and knowledge. Again, the intent is to help me establish why museums are sites of conflict and negotiation, to understand how both dominant and marginalized peoples use museums to express their aspirations, to comprehend the relationship between Aboriginal land claims and museum objects, and to explain why anthropologists and museologists are experiencing a crisis of authority and knowledge.

As always I begin an investigation of the PWNHC’s past by asking who proposed it, what were their motives for doing so, and what were their sources of power. Because the PWNHC is administered by, and dependent upon, the insurmountable financial difficulties and was forced to close in 1974. Its collection would form the basis of the PWNHC.

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Government of the NWT for its revenue, I examine how the government exercises influence within this institution. Equally important in the network of authority are the professional staff. I explore their place in the structure and the processes by which they exercise their power.

Although the PWNHC serves as the territorial museum to a region that is primarily populated by individuals of either Dene, Inuit or Metis ancestry that fact is not reflected in its composition of professional staff, although individuals of Aboriginal ancestry are well-represented in the Government of the NWT, the institution's governing body. Like the two other museums in this study, staff at the PWNHC are aware that in the present socio-political and intellectual climate more of an effort must be made at inclusion. I conclude my description and analysis of this northern museum by focusing on three projects that staff have undertaken in collaboration with Aboriginal representatives, in an attempt to create an institution that reflects the needs of the Aboriginal Peoples who live in the NWT.

**Materiality of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre**

*Site*

Located at the edge of the Yellowknife Green Stone Belt, the PWNHC outcrops along the edge of Frame Lake. At first glance the building seems to intrude upon the birch, spruce, and moss covered rocks that encircle it. However, as one steps back and contemplates the building, one notices that the architecture of the PWNHC actually reflects the physiography of the Canadian Shield upon which it stands. Curved undulating surfaces represent the worn rocks of the Shield. Numerous windows mirror the endless lakes that dot the surrounding land. The vegetation around the building looks untamed.
Inside the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

Upon entering the building one is confronted by an enormous stuffed polar bear. To one's left is a grizzly bear and her cub. The bear and her offspring were put down because she had become too dependent on camp food and was endangering people working in the area. The exhibit is designed to convey a 'do not feed the wildlife' message. The two species of bears are also representative of the two climatic regions that the institution serves.

There are two levels to the PWNHC. From the main entrance area ramps lead to all parts of the building, following the incline of the underlying rock. Turning right at the entrance, visitors pass by the education/extension staff offices and the administrative area. Further up the ramp are the Northwest Territories Archives on the left and the secured doors leading to the exhibition department, collections, and conservation area on the right. Along the ramp are smaller temporary exhibits. These exhibits range from contemporary Inuit sculptures to materials from the archival collection. The Inuit carvings are part of the Inuit Cultural Institute Collection and are being held in trust until community facilities are developed for their storage and display. An imposing painting of the current Prince of Wales, Charles, is prominently displayed above the array of Inuit carvings.

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106 The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre's collection includes approximately 5,100 artworks, 6,600 ethnology artifacts, 5,700 history artifacts, 50,000 archaeology artifacts, and approximately 2,000 natural history specimens which include geological, paleontological and faunal specimens (PWNHC, brochure, n.d.). It is important to recognize that the distinctions between artworks and ethnological artifacts are arbitrary. For example, the museum has beadworks, embroidery, quillwork, and tufting that are included within the ethnology collection. Although the Heritage Centre has not yet implemented a tiered collection they have set aside 1300 pieces for educational purposes. The Curator of Education and Extension Services manages the large collection, which includes objects people can handle. Objects in the collection can also be loaned to school groups and community heritage organizations (Cameron, personal communication, June 1992).

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The design of the building draws visitors up the ramp to the Orientation Gallery. This gallery, situated within the barrel vault on the west side of the building, offers a preview of exhibits in the two main interpretive galleries (North Gallery, South Gallery). An introduction to the people, languages, and geography of the NWT is also provided.

On either side of the Orientation Gallery are the North and South Galleries. The intention of the South Gallery is to portray life in the North prior to the arrival of Euro-Canadians. What is apparent is the influence of Euro-Canadians in the production of the gallery. It is the scientists who speak to the visitors, informing them about geology, the Ice Age, the peopling of the area, and the role of archaeology in interpreting the past. Exhibited together with the natural history of the region are objects that relate to the lives of the Dene and Inuit.

Across the hall from the South Gallery one finds the North Gallery. Interestingly, the Metis are separated from the Dene and Inuit and represented in the North Gallery. Regarding the North Gallery, a former PWNHC curator told me:

The North Gallery was very historical in its approach rather than anthropological. We the conquering heroes came to the North and this is how we saved everything. A section on the police, a section on the church [...] —all this is done in a very positive mode.

The focus of the gallery is the cultural history of the NWT since the arrival of Euro-Canadians and Europeans. Its themes include the City of Yellowknife, then and now; European exploration in the NWT; the fur trade with a focus on the interaction of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Peoples; Metis; mining; missionaries; natural history; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and whaling. The exhibit addresses contemporary issues such as land claims, ecology, and the increasing economic development in the NWT. However, the North Gallery is still very
much a celebration of the Euro-Canadian influence upon the NWT and a glossing over of the problems that arose as a result of the arrival of these newcomers.

A variety of exhibit techniques and materials are used in the two galleries. These include glass cases, graphics, panels, photographs, and three-dimensional objects ranging from small artifacts to a full size Inuit igloo and a full size Dene tent. In the North Gallery visitors are able to touch specially mounted furs.

In reviewing the two galleries, what is immediately striking is the separation of Euro-Canadians' and Aboriginal Peoples’ histories. Another noticeable difference between the two galleries is that in the North Gallery there are often names attached to the written passages. In the South Gallery an anonymous, unified 'we' is more prevalent. Following are two examples of presentation style in the South Gallery:

We are Inuit [...] Outside of Canada we are best known as the Eskimo. We live in the Arctic from Siberia to Greenland. [...] Our traditional way of life as preserved in travelers' accounts from the last three centuries is gone forever. This exhibition is an attempt to recreate a small portion of that way of life (South Gallery, PWNHC, 1992).

We [the Dene] took resources of the land to make beautiful clothing. [...] When trade goods were introduced, we experimented with new styles and new materials (South Gallery, PWNHC, 1992).

In regard to the anonymous, authoritative voice that pervades the South Gallery, I might add that the creators of some of the articles of clothing are identified even though the speakers are not.107

Beyond the Orientation Gallery and overlooking Frame Lake is the Aviation Gallery. The Aviation Gallery is separated by full length glass doors and windows. This exhibit space, examining over 60 years of northern aviation history, features a

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107 It should be noted that prior to the mounting of the exhibits in the South Gallery the scripts were sent to the Dene Nation, Metis Association, and Inuit Cultural Institute for comments and suggestions.
15-minute video on the history of aviation along with an imitation cockpit. In the centre of the gallery is a DeHaviland Fox Moth, a specialized bush plane used in the NWT approximately forty years ago. Private industry funded the construction of this gallery.

Compelled to continue forward by the design of the ramps, one ascends to the second level and the Mezzanine Gallery. This gallery is devoted to temporary, traveling exhibits. As one makes one's way to the Mezzanine Gallery one passes by the secured doors of the staff archaeologists' work area.

Further along the ramp on the second level, is the Feature Gallery. Here rests a 13-metre boat made of mooseskins and spruce. Drawing upon traditional knowledge and skills, Mountain Dene built the boat in 1981. In that sense it was a project that attempted to link the past and present in the production of an object that would be meaningful to Mountain Dene in the future. This was a cooperative project involving the PWNHC, the Native Communications Society of the NWT, the Territorial Department of Information, the National Film Board of Canada, and most importantly a group of elders from Fort Norman and Fort Franklin (Robert Janes, personal communication, 1993; Jewison 1987). A video recording of the boat's construction, activities in the camps, and the boat's journey from the headwaters of the Keele River to Fort Norman is available for viewing. The remaining space in this gallery is used for temporary exhibits, usually featuring the institution's collection.

From the Feature Gallery one typically moves into a barrel-vaulted room on the top level of museum. Here one finds a lounge and concession. In the summer of 1992 a caterer was hired to operate the concession, making the PWNHC a popular luncheon location for residents and visitors alike. Immediately beside the lounge is a space that serves as staff lunchroom and meeting facility.
Returning to the first level, either down a set of stairs or tracing one's way back down the series of ramps, one may visit the *Discovery Gallery*. This gallery opened in 1987 and is used primarily for school groups, allowing students to take part in hands-on activities. In the *Discovery Gallery*, visitors are allowed to interact with objects found there. Next to the *Discovery Gallery* is a large auditorium that is used by staff and the public. Public groups are allowed free access to the auditorium on the condition they use it for cultural purposes.

**Museum of the North—Predecessor of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre**

The PWNHC was not the first museum in Yellowknife, NWT. The Museum of the North, was officially opened by Commissioner R. G. Robertson on July 6, 1963. The Museum of the North developed through the efforts of local residents, the financial and material assistance of private corporations, and the economic assistance of the federal and territorial governments. The museum was created because there was concern that due to the transient nature of Yellowknife's population much of the region's historical material would leave the NWT. Yellowknife's population at the time was largely comprised of individuals who had come north to work in the newly discovered gold mines (NWT Archives 1964).

After less than a decade the museum ran into major financial difficulties. Following the Yellowknife Museum Society's collapse in 1970, the Government of the NWT, headed by Commissioner Stuart Hodgson, acquired the museum and its capital assets. This change in ownership of the region’s cultural property unofficially marked the beginning of the Territorial Museum Programme. Between 1970 and 1974 the museum was operated by the Government of the NWT through

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108 The Museum of the North's collection formed the basis for the PWNHC.
the office of the Secretary of the NWT Historical Advisory Board (NWT Archives 1971a; NWT Archives 1971b).

The Museum of the North closed its doors to the public in 1974. Museum objects and displays were packed away and temporarily stored in the less than secure Yellowknife City Garage and formed the basis for the PWNHC. With a few modifications, the Museum of the North became the Yellowknife City Library Building. Today the Arctic Art Gallery is located in what was once Yellowknife's first museum.

**Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre—Chronology of Development**

1972 Approval of Territorial Museum Program.

1974 Approval of funding from both territorial and federal governments for the construction of a central museum facility in Yellowknife. Construction of the PWNHC halted in Oct. 1974 due to rising costs and fiscal restraint.


1975 Museum program entrusted to the Government of the NWT, Department of Natural and Cultural Affairs.

1976 Dr. Robert Janes hired as chief executive officer of the PWNHC.


**Historical Roots of Power Relations**

*Stuart Hodgson*

He [Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson] said, 'I've decided to appoint you Commissioner. I want you to go North and build a government.' I said 'Mr. Pearson, I don't know anything about government.' He said, 'I know, that's why I'm sending you.' He wanted a new approach (Hodgson, personal communication, 1995).

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109 This information was obtained from the PWNHC’s information package.
During Canada's Centennial (1967), Yellowknife was designated the capital of the NWT. At the same time the Government of the Northwest Territories was moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife and began taking initiatives to free itself of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Lester B. Pearson named Stuart Hodgson to engineer the transition. Prior to 1967, decisions regarding the NWT and the people of the NWT had been made from "afar by senior policemen or faceless bureaucrats" (Hamilton 1994:105). Although the commissioner would still be responsible to the federal minister of DIAND, the change was perceived as an opportunity for the territorial government to initiate policies free of Ottawa's domination (Dickerson 1992:88).

Relinquishing control over the NWT did not come easily to those in Ottawa. Political scientist Mark O. Dickerson (1992:111), suggests that "[t]here was inertia in the administrative apparatus, and it took some fancy maneuvering and badgering to pry power from DIAND." There was the assumption on the part of some bureaucrats within DIAND that Hodgson was merely to be a symbolic figure and that they, rather than he, would control the region's affairs. However Hodgson, formerly an official within the labour movement, refused to remain a symbolic figure for long. He circumvented rather than followed government rules and regulations that dictated decision-making, and which required the involvement and approval of civil servants within DIAND. In time Hodgson gained control of his own body of civil servants. In regard to his governing style, he suggests that his approach was different because of his roots in the labour movement. He goes on to say:

110Constitutionally, the territorial government is an extension of the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Nevertheless, its currently elected officials "define themselves as members of a government that represents and serves its northern constituents (Dacks 1988:223-224). In 1967 some government representatives were elected, others were appointed by the federal government.
I was bold enough and brash enough to go against the grain. It didn't bother me a bit because I organized more strikes than you can shake a stick at (Hodgson, personal communication, 1995).

Hodgson eventually left the NWT in 1979. During his twelve year presence there, Hodgson had been able to "wrestle governing responsibilities away from the DIAND administration in Ottawa (an administration that had its way in the North for almost fifty years)" (Dickerson 1992:114).

The transfer of power from Ottawa to Yellowknife involved many individuals other than Hodgson. However, I focus on Hodgson because according to Dickerson (1992:114) it was Hodgson's style, which was "one of executive dominance," that was consequential in the transfer of control. I also focus on Hodgson because according to Robert Janes (personal communication, 1993), the PWNHC's first chief executive officer, Hodgson's intense personal commitment was largely responsible for the creation of the territorial museum.

Hodgson was in office when the Museum of the North collapsed. He attributed the dissolution of the museum to the lack of consistent government assistance. Using the failed museum as an example, he pushed for a NWT museum policy, fought for the construction of a centralized museum in Yellowknife, maneuvered and schemed to obtain funding for the project, and secured the museum's financial future by incorporating it into the responsibilities of the territorial government. Since the PWNHC's formation the territorial government has provided consistent support for operation and maintenance of the facility, along with revenue for capital projects. In exchange elected government officials and bureaucrats play a major role in decision-making within the museum's network of authority.
Bureaucratic Channels

Even as late as the mid-70s [...], the NWT archaeological site regulations required that any archaeological specimens, ethnological specimens, or archival documents that were found in the North should go to Ottawa to be taken care of because the NWT was territory and not a province. The Northwest Territories did not have any rights over its own cultural property. [...] We had to develop a critical mass of expertise that would demonstrate to Ottawa bureaucrats and everyone else, that we were fully committed and able to take care of this material (Janes, personal communication, 1993).

Once the transfer of political power from Ottawa to Yellowknife was complete, steps were taken to ensure that the NWT would also attain control over its own cultural property. As is characteristic of government process, a number of boards, committees, and councils were created to initiate the transfer of power from Ottawa to the recently created territorial capital.

The primary associations that were of consequence to the museum in this transfer of power included the NWT Historical Advisory Board, the Ad Hoc Committee on Museum Policy in the NWT, and the Museum Advisory Committee. I briefly discuss each entity for two reasons. First, to provide an understanding of the complex process involved in creating the PWNHC. Second, to facilitate an understanding of principles that define government bureaucracies. Such an understanding is necessary because unlike the other two museums in this study, the PWNHC is administered by a government bureaucracy.

NWT Historical Advisory Board

During the late 1960s, removal of objects from the NWT was occurring through the following channels: by researchers licensed under the Archaeological Site Regulations, whose specimens were deposited in the National Museum of Man (Ottawa); by departments of the federal government, in particular the

\[111\] The reason all archaeological objects found in the NWT had to be deposited in Ottawa with federal agencies was because 99 percent of the NWT was considered Federal
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development interested in establishing northern collections; and by individuals who were either traveling or working in the NWT. As one of the first responses to these concerns over the removal of objects of significance, Hodgson created the NWT Historical Advisory Board.

Hodgson personally selected the nine member board. The first members were all men and included one individual of Aboriginal ancestry (Chief Cazon, Fort Simpson). They represented different regions of the NWT and their role was to provide Commissioner Hodgson with advice on matters of historical importance, as well as to make recommendations for the establishment of a NWT museum policy (NWT Archives; Conliffe 1990:11).

**Ad Hoc Committee on Museum Policy in the NWT**

Unable at first to persuade the territorial council to build a central museum in Yellowknife, Hodgson appointed a separate body to focus on the development of NWT museum policy. Its task was to lay the groundwork for a museum policy that would facilitate both the establishment of a central museum and develop a programme to provide financial assistance for community and regional museums.

The committee was comprised of museum professionals from southern Canada (Mr. Lynton Martin, director, Museum of Nova Scotia; Dr. William Taylor, director, National Museum of Man; Ms. Barbara Tyler, chief curator, National Museum of Man), members of the NWT Historical Advisory Board, and

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112 Two women, Claire Barnabe (Norman Wells) and Suzie Huskey (Government of the NWT) were eventually appointed to fill vacancies on the board.

113 The matters of historical significance included the naming of geographical features along with preservation of sites, structures, and material relating to the history and prehistory of the NWT.

114 Prior to 1975 the territorial council included both elected and federally appointed members.
territorial government representatives. The committee proved to be controversial because of the appointment of professionals from outside the NWT. The complaint was that despite the shift in government from Ottawa to Yellowknife outsiders were still controlling the lives of NWT residents (Ad Hoc Committee on Museum Policy in the NWT 1971a; Clarkson 1973; Hodgson 1972; NWT Archives; Stevenson 1971).

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee reported their findings and recommendations directly to Hodgson, who would then present them to the territorial council. The committee’s proposal included an institution that would centralize the NWT's history and culture in Yellowknife. Initially, territorial council, led by Paul Kaeser of Great Slave South, refused to endorse the proposal. Understandably, local councilors wanted "a flat museum organization with money directed to each region" (Conliffe 1990:12). Hodgson persisted, imploring council to approve a "programme to preserve forever the culture, the history and the real tradition of this North" (Hodgson 1972). After an extensive negotiation process a two-level plan, proposed by Dr. Louis-Edmond Hamelin, Laval University, was adopted on January 28, 1972. His plan allowed for a central facility, which was to serve as a central agency for the NWT, but which also ensured the development of community and regional museums (Ad Hoc Committee on Museum Policy in the 1971a; NWT Archives; Stevenson 1971).

Despite territorial council’s endorsement of the two-level plan some NWT residents remained skeptical. Consider the following from Reg Clarke (1972), president of the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce, in regard to the proposed central museum:
The Federal Government prepared a white paper on Northern Development without consulting the Northern people. Now our own Territorial Government has, without consulting the people, decided to centralize the peoples' history and culture in Yellowknife. [...] Do the people of Sachs Harbour, Coppermine, Pelly Bay, Snowdrift, Fort Rae, Inuvik, Hay River, etc., want to have their historical valuables in Yellowknife, where the Commissioner and his gang can gloat over them while the communities receive nothing in return?

There was apprehension that a central museum would maximize benefits to one region, namely Yellowknife, while minimizing benefits to the majority. Established museums such as the Northern Life Museum, Fort Smith, were concerned that all available revenue would be poured into the central museum and none would remain for the development and operation of regional and community museums in the NWT. Leaders of community and regional museums argued that their facilities, if adequately funded, would allow a greater proportion of the population to experience the NWT's cultures and histories (Clarkson 1973; NWT Archives 1973). As is evident from the following exchange in the territorial legislature, some of that tension between the PWNHC and the regional facilities still exists:

On the larger scale, and most things of a larger scale seem to be located in Yellowknife, and operated out of Yellowknife, and I am talking about the museum [PWNHC], I am aware, through some dealings with them, that they are always short, [...] they are always having a problem with storage and maintaining the goods, or the artifacts that we have. [...] Through development of smaller community or regional museums, some of these problems of concentrating everything in one centre will be removed... (Koe 1992 Legislative Assembly, Hansard).

Returning to the 1970s, despite the objections by some, architects Keith-King and Freshie of Vancouver were selected by Hodgson to develop the museum's design (Hodgson, personal communication, 1995, NWT Archives 1972). Construction of the PWNHC began in 1974. However, after a few months construction came to a halt because of the cut-back in capital construction funding.
In 1976 the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development approved the additional funds necessary to complete the facility (NWT Archives 1976; Stevenson 1975).

**The British Royal Family**

Interviews with present and former PWNHC staff and with Hodgson himself, lead me to conclude that Hodgson was proficient at engineering his plan for a central museum despite constant opposition. He used his position of power as the Commissioner of the NWT to create advisory groups and committees that could devise the type of institution he envisioned and one that would be acceptable to the people of the NWT. He personally selected members and appointed them to these advisory groups and committees. When his plan for a central museum was approved by the people of the NWT he turned to the British Royal Family to help ensure that the federal government would provide the necessary funds to build the facility. In the following passages I establish the relationship between the British royal family and the PWNHC.

According to Hodgson he first met H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II in Ottawa in 1967 at one of the numerous events surrounding Canada’s Centennial. He met with her again when she and her family visited the NWT during its Centennial (1970). In 1973, after Hodgson encountered difficulties in convincing bureaucrats within the federal government to finance the construction of a central museum he decided to solicit the assistance of the Queen. That summer (1973), the Queen was invited to the Calgary Stampede. Hodgson arranged to be included in the ceremonies and when he again had an audience with Queen Elizabeth the following exchange is said to have taken place:

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115 In 1868, one year after Confederation, the Canadian government was authorized by the British Imperial Parliament to buy Rupert's land and the North-Western Territory. The lands were transferred to the Canadian Government in 1870 (Carney 1971; Dickerson 1992:11).

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I [Hodgson] said to the Queen, ‘I would like to build a museum in the North and I'd like to name it after you.’ She said, ‘How about the Prince of Wales?’ That's all I wanted (Hodgson, personal communication, 1995).

Hodgson freely admits that he did solicit the Queen’s help in securing additional funds for the construction of the facility. According to him he was aware that the bureaucrats in Ottawa would not know how to deal with such circumvention of rules and regulations (i.e., speaking directly to the Queen of such a matter as naming a facility after a member of her family). After his exchange with the Queen, Hodgson then approached her son the Prince of Wales, when he toured the NWT in 1975. According to Hodgson the Prince of Wales fully endorsed his proposal. Hodgson maintains that these exchanges with members of the British royal family were pivotal in his procurement of federal funding for the facility. Hodgson’s position in the NWT and his ability to cultivate powerful relationships ensured that the $5,000,000 (approximate) facility was built.

**The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre’s First Director**

In the critical matter of appointing a chief executive officer for the intended facility, Hodgson and his team were clear that they wanted

[a] capable, experienced museologist, fully aware of the background and current government aspirations for the museum [...] and the limitations he might experience because of tight budgets. Administrative ability would be a “must” — capable, too, of working with Native staff as well as professionals (Cook 1975, emphasis added).

Hodgson recounted (personal communication, 1995) that from the very beginning he had a specific vision of what the PWNHC would be and how it would operate. Once the money required to construct the physical facility was secured, a chief executive officer was sought. Hodgson, in consultation with members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Museum Policy in the NWT, selected Robert Janes, a Subarctic archaeologist and recent graduate of the University of Calgary, to administer the facility. Janes admits that when he was hired to manage the multi-million dollar
facility he had essentially no knowledge of museum administration and very little museological experience. However, he had spent time in the NWT living on the land, gathering material for his doctoral thesis, as well as participating in several other archaeological expeditions. Despite his lack of museological experience his assistance was immediately solicited for the planning and development of the final phases of the institution. Janes remained at the PWNHC for ten years (1976-1986).\textsuperscript{116}

\textit{Museum Advisory Committee}

In 1976 a decision was made to dissolve the NWT Historical Advisory Board and replace it with a system of advisory bodies under the parent organization, NWT Heritage Council. Given the NWT Historical Advisory Board's "somewhat limited terms of reference" and because the new museum would "require the guidance of a competent advisory board specifically concerned with the Museum," the board became dispensable (Stevenson 1976).

To assist with formulating policy and guiding principles for the evolving central museum the museum's chief executive officer proposed the formation of a separate museum advisory committee. The committee was to serve as museum staffs' "source of immediate public opinion" (NWT Heritage Council and Museum Advisory Committee 1979). More specifically, the committee was to suggest themes for the PWNHC's five galleries.

The Museum Advisory Committee comprised eight voting members and the museum's chief executive officer. The nine member committee included two representatives from the parent organization Heritage Council, one Dene

\textsuperscript{116}Robert Janes is presently the chief executive officer of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. Hodgson (personal communication, 1995), said that one of Janes' many attributes was that he did not simply operate the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre from behind his desk. He, like Hodgson himself, visited communities frequently in an attempt to ensure that their needs were being addressed by the central museum.
representative, one Inuit representative, one Metis representative, one museologist, one representative from the City of Yellowknife, and a representative from the NWT Department of Education. Barbara Tyler, chief curator of the National Museum of Man, and Raymond Harrison, a consultant from Edmonton, were invited as non-voting members.

The Museum Advisory Committee functioned for approximately three years, dissolving when the PWNHC opened in 1979. Once the immediate goals and purposes of the committee had been accomplished with the opening of the museum, the committee became expendable. Furthermore, when dealing with an area as large as the NWT, the costs associated with having a committee that represented the various regions and groups became prohibitive (Arnold, personal communication, 1992/93; Janes 1976, 1983; NWT Heritage Council and Museum Advisory Committee 1979; Stevenson 1976).

**Something Eternal—A Monarch’s Monument**

Because of the period during which the institution was constructed and the region of the country within which it is located the incongruity of the name of the PWNHC deserves some discussion. First, the institution is located in a region where a major proportion of the population is of Aboriginal ancestry. Second, the museum was constructed in the late 1970s, a period in Canada when Aboriginal Peoples were becoming organized politically. One of the effects of this was an increased awareness on the part of some members of the non-Aboriginal population of the control they historically had exercised over the lives of Aboriginal Peoples. Despite these two factors the institution still bears a British monarch’s name.

Archival records and interviews indicate that several individuals in the network of authority responsible for the creation of the PWNHC questioned the appropriateness of the name. The following excerpt, from the minutes of the
Museum Advisory Committee’s meeting (1977) hints of the debates surrounding the naming of the institution:

...considering the fact that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories has indicated that 'Prince of Wales' must be retained in the name, this Committee [Museum Advisory Committee] recommends to the Heritage Council that the name of the museum be the 'Prince of Wales Museum and Northern Heritage Centre.'

The Museum Advisory Committee, which functioned as the most immediate source of public opinion, eventually relented. Recognizing that Hodgson had almost single-handedly raised the millions of dollars to have the facility constructed, they bowed to pressure.

When I asked Hodgson (personal communication, 1995) why the institution bears a British monarch’s name he replied:

I had to keep the faith with the royal family. After all, they were a great help to me. How else could I get the money? We had to be innovative and I realized those three figures, the Prime Minister, the Governor General, and the Royal family [...] [mention their names and] the bureaucrats become unstuck.

In summary, the words ‘Prince of Wales’ served to acknowledge the British monarch’s contribution to the facility, the word ‘Northern’ refers to the region of Canada in which it is located, and the words ‘Heritage Centre’ define the broad mandate of the institution (Hodgson, personal communication 1993; Janes, personal communication, 1995).

The PWNHC officially was opened by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on April 3, 1979. Commissioner Hodgson invited all of the residents of the NWT to attend the unveiling and to tour the facility. Aboriginal drummers, fiddlers, and others performed in the institution’s auditorium, and northern craftspersons were on hand to demonstrate their skills.
The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre’s Mandate

While filling conventional museum functions such as artefact collection, interpretation and display, which are important in furthering the appreciation and understanding of the different northern lifeways and cultures, the Heritage Centre also runs a host of other heritage-related programmes (Atamanenko, Cameron and Moir 1994:21).

Because the PWNHC serves as the territorial museum its mandate has, since its inception, been very broad. Like most traditional museums the institution’s mission has been to collect, classify, preserve, and display the region’s material culture. To meet the needs of the numerous communities dispersed throughout the NWT and to remain faithful to the two-tiered plan a number of additional programmes are offered by the PWNHC. The six major programme areas include the Central Museum Programmes, the NWT Government’s Archaeology Programme, the Education and Extension Programme, the Geographic Names Programme, the Heritage Advisory Programme, and the Northwest Territories Archives. Responsible for the delivery of the programmes are twenty-four permanent employees and a fluctuating number of casual employees. In the following passages I discuss the four programmes that distinguish the PWNHC from the two other museums in this study.

For one, the PWNHC has been responsible for the territorial government’s archaeology since 1982. Today the archaeology department is staffed by an Arctic archaeologist, a Subarctic archaeologist, a NOGAP archaeologist, and an archaeology clerk. As of 1994 there were no individuals of Aboriginal ancestry on permanent staff in the archaeology division.

The archaeologists, perhaps more than any of the other staff members, work closely with the various communities. They go out ‘in the field’ for extended

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117 This individual is presently involved in a Heritage Resources Training Programme funded by the Northern Oil and Gas Action Plan (NOGAP).
periods of time to engage in research and/or to run training programmes. The visits of other staff members tend to be less frequent and of shorter duration.

Second, unlike most archives in Canada, the NWT Archives is operationally and physically integrated into the PWNHC. In 1982 an Archives Ordinance was enacted, establishing the Northwest Territories Archives and providing for the appointment of a territorial archivist. Currently, the archives is staffed by eight individuals, including one person of Aboriginal ancestry. She is employed as an archival sound room technician/cataloguer.

Third, staff involved in the Geographic Names Programme carry out research on traditional geographic place names in order to ensure that they are officially recognized. Information on traditional, current, and historic names is gathered through a combination of archival, field, and library research methods. For now the emphasis in the programme is on collecting before the information is lost rather than disseminating the information to communities. There are three individuals employed in this division, including one person of Aboriginal ancestry. He functions as a geographic names researcher.

Fourth, within the PWNHC is a Heritage Advisory Office. The office, staffed by one person, is “responsible for providing financial support to community museums and heritage organizations throughout the NWT, and also for coordinating technical and professional backup services” (Atamanenko, Cameron and Moir 1994:23). In addition to serving as a liaison between the PWNHC and the three regional museums, numerous historical societies, and heritage groups, the heritage advisor serves as a link between the Heritage Centre and larger national and international museum community. As travel budgets shrink, a great deal of consultation with communities both inside and outside the NWT has to be conducted by telephone, fax, or mail. Having a clear understanding of what a community far removed from the central museum may need without being able to
spend time in the community makes decision-making in regard to funding or
delivery of programs a challenge.

**Influence of Elected Officials Within the Network of Power Relations**

One of the principal differences between the PWNHC and the two other
museums in this study is that it is governed by elected government officials and
bureaucrats rather than elected trustees. The museum, a division of the territorial
government, is the responsibility of a government department. Currently it is
administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Each
department is headed by a minister, an elected member of the Legislative
Assembly. Eight of the twenty-four elected MLA’s are selected by the Legislative
Assembly and form the cabinet of the Government of the NWT. Currently, an
unwritten quota system dictates that four cabinet ministers must come from the
eastern portion of the NWT and four from the western region (Dickerson 1992;
Hamilton 1994). Although the PWNHC is in the western region, the minister
responsible for it could quite as easily come from the Eastern Arctic.

The ministers who are in control of the various departments each have their
own agendas and priorities. For some it may be the environment, for others it may
be resource management. Ensuring that the PWNHC has the financial resources to
fulfill its various objectives may not be paramount.

A staff member (personal communication, 1993) at the PWNHC suggested
that "[p]olitics are very important in the NWT and are very different from the

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118 Since its inception the PWNHC has been under the successive jurisdiction of four
departments, each with its own initiatives and priorities. Those four departments include
the Department of Natural and Cultural Affairs, the Department of Justice and Public
Services, the Department of Culture and Communication, and presently the Department
of Education, Culture and Employment.

119 Prior to the amendment of the NWT Act in 1975 some of the members of the
Legislative Assembly or Territorial Council as it was previously designated, were elected
and some were federally appointed. In 1951 there were three elected council positions,
South. Community pressure to do things is very strong. The reality is that in order to ensure re-election government ministers "must take care of their constituents" (Dickerson 1992:122) and it may be that a minister's constituents do not regard the PWNHC as a priority. For example, should the minister in control of the museum represent the people of Baffin Island in the Eastern Arctic, projects within the PWNHC may not be particularly relevant. To support my assertion I draw upon Dickerson (1992:99), who states that “[t]he Eastern Arctic people feel alienated from Yellowknife, almost two thousand miles away, and often [...] [have] to travel first to Montreal, Ottawa, or Toronto to get there.” These factors may influence the allocation of funds to the PWNHC and thus the conditions under which museum staff work.

The Authority of Museum Professionals Within the Bureaucracy—Inherent Tensions and Contradictions

Staff at the PWNHC are government employees who are members of a larger bureaucracy as well as members of a profession. Understandably, there is a certain level of dissonance between bureaucratic administration and professionalism. For one, as professionals, personnel are required to display a certain degree of loyalty to their peers and their professions. As government employees, they also owe allegiance to the organization. Second, as museum professionals, staff expect a certain degree of autonomy in regard to setting the terms and conditions of their work. As government employees they must accept orders from bureaucratic superiors who may have very little knowledge of museum practices, as well as abide by government rules and regulations. In the following passages I discuss the parameters within which museum professionals at the

120 My comprehension of the conflicts that can arise between bureaucratic authority and professionalism has been enhanced by the work of Davies (1983), Freidson (1994), and Mills and Simmons (1995).
PWNHC are able to exercise their authority and elaborate upon the inherent contradictions of being government employees on the one hand and professionals on the other.

The following sketch outlines the flow of information within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment:

Minister
Deputy Minister
Assistant Deputy Minister
Chief Executive Officer (PWNHC)
Staff

First, as is characteristic of most government bureaucracies there exists within the territorial government, and thus the PWNHC, a network of control which flows down from the top. I use the flow of information from staff to the minister of the department and back again to illustrate my point. At the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre it is inappropriate for the curator of collections, the Subarctic archaeologist, or any employee to speak directly to the minister in control of the museum about the operation of the facility. All concerns and information regarding the museum must be channeled through the museum’s chief executive officer. From the chief executive officer the information flows to the assistant deputy minister, who then speaks with the deputy minister, who in turn conveys the information to the minister. Inevitably, within such a system the flow of information, orders, and requests tends to be slow. Furthermore, within such a network of authority, the two senior bureaucrats (assistant deputy minister and deputy minister) wield a great deal of power and can either facilitate or obstruct the flow of information between the museum’s chief executive officer and the minister of the department.
Speaking generally on the issue of professionals’ control over their own work, Freidson (1994:71) suggests that

[the crucial issue for the evaluation of any kind of work is its outcome in quantity and quality. For professional workers the issue is whether they are able to exercise control over their work and its outcome....]

Due to the structure of the system within which they work, professional staff at the PWNHC must share authority with their superiors, in regard to both their work and its outcome. Certain staff members, both former and present, conveyed to me an occasional sense of loss of ownership because at each juncture in the hierarchy there is always the potential to have information, orders, and requests modified.

Second, the PWNHC’s professional staff are directed by a multitude of government rules and regulations. The rules and regulations which serve to ensure that elaborate hierarchies of authority are constantly reproduced, can be a source of frustration for some staff members. They also tend to make the PWNHC’s system of operation somewhat inflexible. In regard to the consequences of such a system one employee stated the following:

We are government and are so bureaucratic that we don’t have the right process for working with community groups. [...] I know we have to be accountable as a government [...] but it is a process and sometimes it gets in the way (staff, personal communication 1992).

According to organizational theorists Albert Mills and Tony Simmons (1995:43-44), bureaucracies are more efficient at processing typical rather than atypical cases. This is also true of the government that administers the PWNHC, and when professional staff have to deal with unusual situations the system may prove to be unyielding and inefficient. Given the composition of the NWT’s population, the western derived policies that govern the facility may prevent staff from addressing the unique needs of individuals in the communities. Staff inability to exercise a greater degree of autonomy can be a source of conflict because professionals
expect to be able to use their discretion and judgment rather than have to rely upon bureaucratic rules when making decisions.

Third, and expanding upon my previous points, I discuss the influence of officially recognized policy and legislation upon museum professionals' ability to exercise authority. In 1991, following an audit of the PWNHC, a decision was made to hire a policy officer to create numerous detailed written policies relating to heritage issues. The policy officer was to address the various programmes offered by the PWNHC, to assist staff in the development of procedures, as well as to work on two pieces of legislation (the Historical Resources Act and the NWT Archives Act). In the process of constructing the various policies the policy officer would consult with staff, as well as read the policies and procedures of other cultural institutions or organizations. Once the policy was crafted it would be approved by the Executive Council, and effectively commit the government and in turn the PWNHC to a particular course of action (staff, personal communication, 1992, 1993).121

During my two visits to the PWNHC endless discussions ensued concerning the relevance of policies and procedures manuals and legislation. Various staff members provided different reasons for the need of such documents. In regard to the relevance of written policy for professional staff I was told that the policies once approved by territorial government officials would serve to insulate staff from the government that administers them (staff, personal communication, 1992, 1993).

Apparently one of the drawbacks of being a division within the government is that there can be a great deal of political interference. For example, the PWNHC currently has in its possession a collection of weapons that do not fit the museum's

121 Some policy regarding heritage issues was written by the PWNHC's first director in the late 1970s. However, because the policy he constructed was not approved by government it did not have the same authority as the policy created in the 1990s (staff member, personal communication, 1992, 1993).
mandate. Oral histories reveal that the weapons were accepted simply because a top official in the government insisted that the curator accept his friend’s collection. In return, the individual who made the donation was provided with a substantial tax receipt. Similar situations can arise when constituents pressure a minister into providing money for a particular program or preserving a particular historical site. The minister, in the interest of his or her own political future, may insist that professional staff make decisions based on political motives rather than professional discretion. The written policy is designed to prevent these types of situations arising and to authorize staff to exercise their authority with fewer repercussions (staff, personal communication, 1992, 1993).

Fourth, at the PWNHC the chief executive officer is a professional rather than a manager or administrator. Formally trained as an archaeologist, he is cognizant of the expectations that professional staff at the museum have in regard to the terms and conditions of their work. The chief executive officer is not able to eliminate the control that bureaucrats exercise over the professionals, but he is able ensure a more authoritative and autonomous space for his professional staff within the PWNHC’s network of authority. Within the institution he has adopted a linear style of management rather than a hierarchical one, with senior staff in control of the major sections reporting to him. This is in contrast to the territorial government’s network of authority where control flows from the top downward. Unlike the situation with the territorial government where staff are not allowed to communicate directly with the minister, at the PWNHC various staff members are allowed to directly approach the chief executive officer. This style of management further enables other professional staff at the facility to exercise more autonomy and to draw upon their knowledge to make decisions.
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and Aboriginal Peoples

Having explored the power of two significant groups (members of the Legislative Assembly and museum professionals) within the PWNHC's network of authority I now want to examine the place of Aboriginal Peoples in the system. Because the institution is located in a region where individuals of Aboriginal ancestry are in the majority and because the facility has only been in existence since 1979, one would expect them to have a significant place within the museum's network of power relations. I discuss the power that Aboriginal Peoples were able to exercise in the NWT in the 1970s, the period within which the PWNHC was conceived. This is followed by an exploration of the possible consequences the creation of Nunavut and other land claims agreements may have upon the museum. Returning to the PWNHC I describe the number of individuals of Aboriginal ancestry employed by the PWNHC as well as their visibility in the territorial government. I conclude on a positive note, focusing on three projects that staff at the PWNHC have undertaken to ensure that the museum reflects the changing socio-political world within which it is located.

Ascent of Aboriginal Organizations—Implications for the Museum

Earlier in this chapter I explored the relationship between the changing political process in the NWT and the establishment of the PWNHC. Dickerson (1992:100) states that “[e]merging alongside [...] the development of formal-legal constitutional organizations in the NWT were informal Native political organizations.” A common objective of the political organizations formed by the Dene, Inuit, Inuvialuit, and Metis was that of self-government (Dickerson 1992:114) and a desire to “protect their collective interests in the lands and resources they had used for centuries past” (MacLachlan 1992:1). The ascent of

122 In 1999 a Nunavut Territory and Government will be created alongside the settlement of the Inuit land claim. Nunavut Territory will be carved out of the NWT.
these Aboriginal organizations have been and continue to be of consequence to the operation of the PWNHC.

By the early 1970s, four Aboriginal associations were functioning in the political process. They included the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Metis Association, and the NWT Indian Brotherhood. Dickerson (1992:100-101) proposes that three major factors served as catalysts for the creation of these political organizations in the NWT. These were the White Paper issued by the Trudeau government in 1969; increased oil and gas exploration in the Beaufort Sea, the High Arctic, and the MacKenzie Valley; and core funding offered by DIAND.

One of the first Aboriginal political organizations to be established was the NWT Indian Brotherhood (1969), later re-named the Dene Nation (1978). It represented "status" or "treaty" Dene, that is, descendants of those who entered into a treaty agreement with the federal government by signing Treaty 8 (1899) and Treaty 11 (1921). The Dene maintained that the treaties were merely peace treaties and not land cessation treaties. In 1975 the Indian Brotherhood asserted its position on land claims and political rights, through the "Dene Declaration." The following year they presented the federal government with a land claim (Dickerson 1992:101; MacLachlan 1992:2).

\[123\] Within the White Paper was a proposal for the "abolition of Native status under the Indian Act, with the federal government divesting itself of responsibility for Native affairs" (Dickerson 1992:100). Aboriginal Peoples opposed the proposal because the Indian Act "symbolized some degree of special status that Aboriginal peoples sought within the Canadian mosaic" (Dickerson 1992:100). The White Paper was later withdrawn.

\[124\] Treaty 8, which covers northeastern British Columbia, northern Alberta, northwestern Saskatchewan and north as far as Great Slave Lake, was signed following the increased movement by non-Aboriginal Peoples into the North (McMillan 1995:251).

\[125\] Treaty No. 11, the last of the historic federal treaties with Canadian Aboriginal Peoples, was signed following increased development in the region and the discovery of oil in the MacKenzie valley. The treaty covers the land from Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean, including the entire MacKenzie valley (McMillan 1995:251).
Meanwhile, the Metis established their own association in 1972 and delivered their land claim to the federal government in 1977. By 1981 the Metis had joined with the Dene and “proposed the formation of a province-like Denendeh in the Western Arctic” (Dickerson 1992:104). In 1988 both parties (federal government, Dene-Metis Association) arrived at an ‘agreement in principle.’ However, many Dene disagreed with the arrangement and in 1990 the Dene decided to negotiate land claims region by region (Delta, Sahtu, North Slave, South Slave, and Deh Cho) (Dickerson 1992:101-104; Hamilton 1994:133-134).

In 1970, concurrent with the organization of Dene and Metis politically, the Inuvialuit of the MacKenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea formed the Committee for Original Peoples’ Entitlement (hereafter ‘COPE’). In 1977, the Inuvialuit entered into land claims negotiations with the federal government. Their claim, which was ratified in 1984, was the first comprehensive land claim settlement in the NWT (Dickerson 1992:102-103).

Because COPE only represented Inuit residing in the Western Arctic, in 1971 the Inuit of Labrador, the NWT, and Quebec organized the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), an umbrella organization for all Canadian Inuit and the national political voice of Inuit people. COPE later became an affiliate of ITC. In 1979 the ITC presented its proposal for the creation of Nunavut, a new territory to be carved out of the Northwest Territories. As the relationship between the Inuit and Ottawa became more complex, the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) was established to deal with negotiating the land claim. The claim was the largest in Canada, involving 16,000 Inuit and a massive land area (MacLachlan 1992:4). In 1993 the Parliament of Canada passed two pieces of legislation, one ratifying the Inuit land claim and the other dividing the NWT and establishing Nunavut

126 The Inuit have never entered any treaty or land cessation agreements with the Canadian government or any other government (Dickerson 1992:164; MacLachlan 1992:2).
Dickerson (1992:160-161) suggests that the creation of Nunavut is fostered by the notion that such a division of the NWT “would enable local citizens to have greater control over public decisions influencing their lives.” A number of public government institutions would be established to “administer and manage resource use and conservation throughout the entire area” (MacLachlan 1992:4). Based on what I have read and heard, it is fair to assume that the citizens of Nunavut may also want to exercise greater control over objects originating in their region.

Rosemarie Kuptana, ITC president, spoke in Vancouver in 1995 about Nunavut. At the end of her presentation I asked her what would become of the PWNHC in 1999. Her response was that “obviously the physical building would not be moved but it was likely some changes would ensue.” To foreshadow the implications of the Nunavut Land Claim Settlement I outline some specific provisions in the agreement regarding ethnographic objects and archaeological materials:

33.8.1 The Designated Agency shall endeavor at all times to dispose of a maximum number of specimens to institutions in the Nunavut Settlement Area....

34.1.1 Any ethnological programmes in the Nunavut Settlement Area that are administered by Government shall conform, at a minimum, to the employment and training provisions set out in Article 23. 128

The Canadian Museum of Civilization and any territorial government ethnographic agency [PWNHC] shall endeavour at all times to lend a maximum number of ethnographic objects to institutions in the Nunavut Settlement Area... (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1993:225-234).

127 The Inuit population of Nunavut is approximately 80% of the total population of Eastern Arctic (Nunavut Implementation Commission).
128 Article 23 stipulates that the level of Inuit employment within government reflect the ratio of Inuit to the total population in the Nunavut Settlement Region (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1993:191).
The PWNHC was established to enable the NWT to gain control over its own cultural property. It may very well be that steps are taken to enable Nunavut Territory to do the same.

The settlement of the various outstanding land claims in the NWT will bring more changes to the PWNHC. Consider the following excerpt from the Gwich’in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1992), for it demonstrates that Aboriginal Peoples of the various regions are asking for more control over their cultural property:

The Gwich’in shall have preference in being hired at public sites, museums, heritage resource projects, archaeological works and similar public facilities and projects in the settlement area related to Gwich’in heritage resources....

Although each of the proposed land claim agreements differ somewhat in regard to the issue of cultural property, all agreements indicate that Aboriginal Peoples want more authority over every aspect of their lives including their history and culture.

*Staff—Visibility of Aboriginal Peoples*

In the process of creating the facility successful attempts were made to include individuals of Aboriginal ancestry in decision-making, and yet when the facility opened in 1979 non-Aboriginal professionals were empowered to objectify Aboriginal Peoples in the institution. The situation at the PWNHC has not changed much since the late 1970s. Aboriginal Peoples still do not have positions of power within the institution. In 1993 the PWNHC employed thirty-seven people. Only six of the thirty-seven employees were of Aboriginal ancestry and only one Aboriginal person held a senior staff position. This is particularly puzzling given that Aboriginal Peoples make up such a significant portion of the NWT’s population.

Janes (1987:36), in an article entitled *Museum Ideology and Practice in Canada’s Third World*, addressed the under-representation of Aboriginal Peoples
in the PWNHC's network of authority. Janes acknowledged that in the late 1980s "[t]he majority of the Heritage Centre's staff are well-educated people from white, middle-class backgrounds who have moved north from southern Canada." He observes that"

[t]his situation can be traced to the very beginning of the institution, when the urgency attached to its development and opening precluded a long-term training plan and ultimate takeover by indigenous peoples. Such an approach would have been unorthodox in the mid-1970s.

I do not doubt that in order to establish credibility in the larger museum community and to ensure that control over the NWT's cultural property be transferred from Ottawa to Yellowknife, founders of the institution believed they had to hire professionals. Because they could not find professionals of Aboriginal ancestry they empowered, without question, individuals of non-Aboriginal ancestry with the authority to represent Aboriginal Peoples of the NWT. Although the many objects produced by individuals of Aboriginal ancestry would, after 1979, be located in Yellowknife rather than Ottawa, Aboriginal Peoples were still not in a position to exercise authority in regard to the manner in which those objects were put to use.

When I discussed the under-representation of the Aboriginal Peoples within the PWNHC, certain staff members would remind me that Aboriginal Peoples have over the last decade dominated the Legislative Assembly. The implication was that a minister, an elected member of the Legislative Assembly, is the ultimate authority within the network of power relations. In that sense, Aboriginal representatives do exercise power. Still, one should not underestimate the authority of non-Aboriginal museum professionals in the network of power relations.
The End of Practices of Exclusion?

The negotiation of land claims in the NWT, the proposed Nunavut Territory, the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992), economic restraints, changes in government leadership—all these factors influence present museum practices at the PWNHC. Currently, PWNHC staff are having to rethink their practice and understanding of what a museum ought to be in order to become more relevant to the people of the NWT and to reflect larger societal changes.

Just prior to my arrival at the PWNHC museum staff were in the process of completing an exhibit for the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. I briefly outline the production of this small exhibit because it reflects the contemporary times within which staff function and serves as an example of a collaborative venture.

The exhibit unfolded in the following manner. When the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation decided they were going to host the Inuit Circumpolar Conference they asked the PWNHC to produce an exhibit (*Inuvialuit, Then and Now*) that would convey to visitors from the Circumpolar world a sense of Inuvialuit culture and history. Laura Etagiak, a woman of Inuvialuit ancestry, produced the storyline. Museum staff then “tempered it to make it more workable in terms of a storyline for a museum exhibit.” After museum staff modified the storyline it was forwarded to Inuvik, NWT, where Inuvialuit elders read it and made comments and suggestions. Following the elders’ approval museum staff produced *Inuvialuit, Then and Now* (1992) (Charles Arnold, personal communication, 1992/93).

In the following passages I have selected three additional initiatives that staff at the PWNHC have undertaken in an attempt to be more inclusive and to create a legitimate place for Aboriginal Peoples in the network of authority. The initiatives include the production of the Natural History Gallery, NWT Heritage Training Needs Analysis, and the Archaeology Programmes.
Natural History Gallery

During my field research (1992/93) the PWNHC was in the process of designing a natural history gallery. The permanent exhibit would be produced in consultation with individuals outside the PWNHC, in particular with Aboriginal Peoples. Based on my conversations with Terry Pamplin, the project manager (PWNHC), Jamie Bastedo, the project facilitator, and minutes of a planning workshop, I reconstruct the production of the gallery's storyline and exhibit plan.

Although the initial idea for the exhibit originated inside the museum, staff recognized that in the current intellectual and political climate, an exhibit that explored the natural history of the region must include some form of consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal Peoples. After conferring with other staff members Pamplin decided input should be sought in the early stages of the process.

To assist in the coordination of the project Pamplin hired Jamie Bastedo, an environmental consultant. Bastedo was hired for two primary reasons. For one, as an individual who both resided in the NWT, and had previously worked there, he had some understanding of the politics of collaboration. Second, he had experience in organizing projects that required that input of several different individuals and groups.

Bastedo's task was to bring together as representative a group as possible, incorporate their input, and construct a storyline and exhibit plan that was acceptable to everyone involved. Because the NWT is vast and is populated by a number of cultural groups, Bastedo had to draw upon a number of resources and use various approaches. A limited budget prevented Bastedo from travelling to communities to speak with individuals regarding the gallery. Therefore, he endeavoured to consult with individuals who resided in or around Yellowknife. He also drew upon the knowledge of Aboriginal Peoples employed in the various
government departments (Education, Economic Development and Tourism, and Renewable Resources).

During my conversations with Bastedo I was also informed that the consultation process required an understanding of NWT politics and an observance of protocol in regard to whose knowledge one ought to seek. In some instances it was appropriate to speak directly to particular individuals and seek their input. George Blondin, a respected Dene elder, was personally approached and invited to the workshop. In other instances it was more appropriate to ask a particular political organization (Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, NWT Metis Association) or cultural organization (Dene Cultural Institute, Inuit Cultural Institute) to recommend a representative. Bastedo also contacted band offices to solicit their input in selecting an appropriate representative.

The second significant event in the production of the exhibit’s storyline and exhibit plan was a planning workshop, chaired by Bastedo and Pamplin. The workshop was an afternoon event that brought together Bastedo, biologists, elders, geologists, interdepartmental government staff, Pamplin, PWNHC’s staff, and representatives from various Aboriginal cultural and political organizations. The participants’ task was to help refine the exhibit’s storyline and exhibit plan.

Prior to the commencement of the workshop Bastedo, in consultation with government employees, had constructed a statement of purpose for the gallery and made it available to the nineteen participants, five of whom were PWNHC staff. The statement read:

The main purpose of this gallery will be to portray key aspects of the Northwest Territories' many natural landscapes. It will likely include selected animals, plants, habitats, and geological features and be presented in an educational yet entertaining format. Although the focus of the display will be on the "land" (including lakes and marine areas), it will be important to capture the spirit of the land as reflected in the way northerners perceive and use its many gifts (Bastedo 1993).
At that time the participants were also informed that during the initial planning meetings a decision had been made to use caribou as the main integrating concept in the gallery. Based on that information the participants were divided into four groups and began their discussions. At the end of the brainstorming sessions participants were asked to share their insights. Input from the workshop was used by Bastedo and Pamplin to develop a more detailed storyline and exhibit plan.

One could argue that nineteen participants, five of which were PWNHC staff, cannot possibly represent the values and beliefs of the 60,000 residents of the NWT. Still, this was an attempt to create a more inclusive exhibit and there appeared to be a willingness to try to accommodate various perspectives including those of Aboriginal Peoples.

_NWT Heritage Training Needs Analysis Study (1993)_

The PWNHC, despite its northern location and Aboriginal population base, subscribes to traditional western notions of what a museum ought to be. The object continues to be privileged and this has influenced the types of services and support offered by the PWNHC to the communities, many of which are primarily populated by individuals of Aboriginal ancestry. A recent _Heritage Training Needs Analysis Study (1993)_ commissioned by the PWNHC indicates that in communities like Cape Dorset, Fort Franklin, Fort Simpson, and Igloolik, people define heritage differently than do professional staff at the PWNHC. Museums and museum objects do not have the same significance that they do at the central museum in Yellowknife. In the following passages I reconstruct the _Heritage_

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129 As is evident from the minutes of the workshop, not everyone completely embraced the idea of the caribou as the central figure in the exhibit:

...caribou may be too restrictive (Group 3). ...caribou is provider, but so are fish, fish fill in on other periods when caribou are scarce (Group 4).

Following the discussion the storyline had to be revised to ensure that participants felt empowered by the process.
Training Needs Analysis Study's process of production and findings to highlight one of the ways in which the PWNHC has attempted to be more cognizant of communities' values and to respond to communities' needs. This reconstruction is based on my discussions with PWNHC staff members, a meeting that I was able to attend, Heath Consultants' report, and the documentation provided by the PWNHC heritage advisor.

The PWNHC was approved and built on the condition that the development of community and regional museums would not suffer. Consequently, one of the organizational features that makes the facility distinct from the other Canadian museums is its advisory services section. A heritage advisor heads the section and serves as a liaison between the central museum and the communities. This person is responsible for providing financial support to territorial community museums and coordinating technical and logistical support to community-based heritage projects and organizations. Although the heritage advisor does travel, financial and logistical restrictions prevent her/him from completely understanding and being in a position to respond to each community's needs.

Therefore, in 1990 the heritage advisor (Margaret Jean (M.J.) Patterson) proposed a method for evaluating the existing heritage training programme and consulting with communities about future heritage training needs. A steering committee was formed and an application was made to MAP (Museums Assistance Programme of Communications Canada) and the Government of the NWT to conduct a study. The study was organized in two phases.

The first phase consisted of a questionnaire designed by museum staff and administered by local bilingual surveyors. Surveyors were instructed to obtain a cross-section of responses (elders, representatives of organizations and agencies concerned with heritage issues, and individuals in the communities). Answers of elders would later be compared with the responses of all respondents. In the
questionnaire people in the communities were asked to define what heritage meant to them and to convey their perceived heritage training needs. I have selected responses to one question to illustrate how differently people define heritage. The question was:

Heritage means different things to different people, what do you feel is important? Please prioritise.

( ) historic buildings, ( ) oral history, ( ) festivals and events, ( ) historic sites, ( ) museums, ( ) objects and artifacts, ( ) language, ( ) traditional skills, ( ) landscape, ( ) stories, ( ) photographs, ( ) other ________

Most respondents indicated that language was most important, followed by traditional skills, and oral history. Elders indicated that oral history was most important followed by language and objects/artifacts.130

During the administration of the questionnaires respondents were also invited to provide additional comments. I had the opportunity to review all the comments from nineteen communities. Not one person in the nineteen communities surveyed, made reference to museums or objects/artifacts. However, one of the communities (Pangnirtung) did suggest that artworks were significant.

The second phase of the study was called 'The Gathering'. Community representatives as well as other participants (representatives of Aboriginal organizations and representatives from other government departments) met in Yellowknife to further explore issues raised in the questionnaire. Participants in 'The Gathering' emphasized the importance of traditional knowledge and values, and asked that people in the communities regain control over their culture and heritage (Heath Consultants 1993:v).

Heath Consultants were hired to compile the results of the study and to produce a final report. In their report (1993:vii) they recommended:

130My source is the PWNHC staff's compilations of the survey.
that [training] programs be developed in a comprehensive manner and independent of training programs in the South. [...] Furthermore, any heritage training program that is developed must recognize that the heritage training needs of each Northern community are unique.

Based on the results of the survey and 'The Gathering' it is fair to state that the people in the communities want to be in a position to define what is relevant to them. In their emphasis on language, traditional knowledge and values, respondents indicate a desire to create a system where elders and other members of the community are also empowered to disseminate this knowledge. I draw upon Doxtator to expand upon the findings of the report. Doxtator (1994:21) writes that “[i]nstead of preserving in an Euro-Canadian way the object produced by the activity of culture, Aboriginal peoples wish to access, communicate and preserve the process and living of culture.”

The study can be regarded as one of the first steps in recreating a system that may, in the future, incorporate both the values of people in the communities along with those of museum professionals. Heath Consultants (1993:15-16) concluded that

although [...] “museums” and “objects” are not the primary focus of people undertaking cultural heritage preservation at the community level, the importance of collections cannot be discounted. Recent initiatives, such as the Inuit Cultural Institute’s acquisition of the art collection of the Department of Indian and Northern Development and the repatriation provisions under the land claims agreements, for example, point to the need for collections management knowledge, appropriate facilities and equipment and trained staff.

However, museum professionals will still have to respond to rather than dictate the needs of people in the communities.
Archaeologists and Communities

Given the nature of the archaeologists’ projects, they are in a position either to spend extended periods of time in the various NWT communities or work with community residents at specific heritage sites. Yellowknife and the central museum are a long distance from most of the communities. One of the primary ways people in the communities come to know of the facility and all that it might have to offer, is through the work of archaeological staff. Here I want to discuss the projects of two individuals in the archaeological division of the PWNHC.

During my first visit to the PWNHC (June 1992), Tom Andrews, the Subarctic archaeologist, was engaged in a project with the Dene. The project involved conducting a survey along a traditional Dogrib trail. More specifically, the intention was to carry out a detailed analysis of the Dogrib landscape along the trail and to illustrate that these sites are a part of a Dogrib oral tradition with great antiquity.

The impetus for the project actually came ten years earlier. Andrews, while working for the Dene Nation as a land use researcher, made a presentation on the Dene Mapping Project to the Dogrib Tribal Council. Following the presentation Harry Simpson, a Dene elder, rose and said “thank you very much but now you need to learn the stories and the place names.” The survey of the traditional Dogrib trail was an attempt to do just that.

Although the initiative for the project came from Andrews, he sought and obtained the support of the Rae Lakes community prior to embarking upon it. The project evolved in the following manner. Andrews went back to Harry Simpson and had him pick one trail, out of the multitude of trails, to survey. That first summer Andrews worked with an elder, a translator, and a Slavey woman who had

131The following description is based on interviews with Tom Andrews (1992, 1993) and Elisa Hart (1993).
previously participated in several archaeological field schools. At the community's request Andrews and his crew would visit and perform rituals at the sacred sites along the river. In the winter certain museum staff traveled to the community and talked to the elders, taped stories and place names, worked with maps, and recorded material at the community's request.

The second year the community decided that the Camsell/Marion River Heritage Survey project should incorporate a training programme and include more of the elders because the Dene elders in the valley were concerned that traditional knowledge was being lost. Elders who are fluent in their first language are often unable to pass on this knowledge to their grandchildren because of the language gap. To ensure that this knowledge was not lost the Dene elders asked Andrews to record the narratives that elements along the trail evoked. In addition, arrangements were made to include two young people and two elders on the project.

I highlight some of the events of the second summer to illustrate how the community's input shaped the archaeological research. For one, the group that worked on the project had a unique way of dealing with objects found along the trail. Andrews did some testing at every site at which the group stopped. Unearthed lithics were deposited at the PWNHC. The fate of all other objects was decided by every member of the project. For example, when the group visited an old ruined cabin along the trail they came across an Oblate leaded cross (approximately 100 years old) with a wood inlay. A decision was made to take the cross back to the community and have the elders decide what to do with it. The elders decided that the oldest woman in the community should have it and she would make the cross available to the entire community. At present the elder has the Oblate cross in her home. She intends to donate it eventually to the community's church so that everyone can have access to the cross.
Second, when Dogrib people travel they stop along the trails to perform the appropriate rituals at sacred sites and fix up the graves of people who are buried there. According to Andrews the graves have picket fences. Out of respect for Dene traditions Andrews and the group would fix the fences, extract weeds, and leave some tobacco for the people who were buried there. Every evening the elders in the group were on the radio reporting to everyone in the Dogrib region the events of the day.

Given the significance of the oral tradition component of the project, a community cultural institution (Rae-Edzo Friendship Centre) applied for money from the Oral Tradition Programme (NWT government) to translate the tapes that Andrews had collected. The intention is eventually to produce a book that will include photographs of the elders as well as both Dogrib and English versions of all the stories. There are also plans to produce an exhibit that will summarize the research and work on the trail. The exhibit would be produced in triplicate, a copy would be made available for the community's school, the Rae-Edzo Friendship Centre, and one to travel throughout the NWT.

Elisa Hart, another archaeologist on staff, is involved in a Heritage Resources Training Programme funded by the Northern Oil and Gas Action Plan (NOGAP). The programme is designed to provide people in the communities with the skills to document knowledge on heritage sites that could be disturbed by the construction of gas or oil pipelines.

Hart (personal communication, 1993) observed that during the process she has come to recognize that there is quite a disparity between what professionals consider significant heritage, worthy of preservation, and what people in the communities regard as relevant. For example, in some of the communities, having the archaeological sites slowly swallowed by the sea is perceived as part of the

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132Rae-Edzo is a Dene community just outside Yellowknife.
natural order of things. The preservation of these sites is not the usual course of action taken. With some of the sites there is also a spiritual dimension, one that precludes disturbing the sites. Hart realizes that the goals of the communities and the PWNHC are often very different and hopes that one result of the project will be better understanding on the part of PWNHC staff of what heritage means to the people of the region.

Conclusion

To review, the PWNHC was included in this study for two primary reasons. First, unlike the MacBride Museum or the Vancouver Museum it is located in a region where individuals of Aboriginal ancestry comprise over half of the population. Because the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and museums is currently a contentious issue in the museum community it was my opinion that examining the network of authority within which knowledge is produced at the PWNHC would provide a clearer understanding of the debates surrounding such issues as representation and repatriation. In this regard I found that despite its location in a region where individuals of either Dene, Inuit, or Metis ancestry are predominant, non-Aboriginal museum professionals continue to control resources, access to communication, and decision-making about information which is used to represent Aboriginal Peoples. The *Heritage Training Needs Analysis Study* (1993) carried out by the staff at the PWNHC indicates that such a situation can be problematic. The results of the study verify that the museum professionals’ sense of what constitutes heritage differs from that of people in the communities. Based on that study I suggest that to ensure that the PWNHC continues to survive, an even more inclusive system for the creation of knowledge is necessary.133

133 Consultation with various Aboriginal organizations does occur in regard to exhibit production. Even as early as 1979, Aboriginal organizations were asked to approve the storyline of the *North, South,* and *Orientation* galleries.
However, staff at the PWNHC are cognizant of whom they ought to be serving and the political and intellectual climate within which they work. Every professional staff member at the PWNHC was aware of the contents of the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (1992) and of the need to respond to its recommendations. Furthermore, certain staff members have, over the last few years, worked hard to establish intimate working relationships with individuals of Aboriginal ancestry and to engage in active collaboration. Andrews' work with the Dene being an example of inclusion.

Second, I included the PWNHC in the study because it was created by the territorial government and is currently governed and funded by it. The relationship between the PWNHC and the state is significant. Staff struggle with the inherent contradictions of being government employees on the one hand and professionals on the other. Furthermore, an elected member of the Legislative Assembly is the PWNHC's ultimate governing authority. For the past decade Aboriginal Peoples have dominated the Legislative Assembly; incidentally this is the only jurisdiction in Canada where this is the case (Dickerson 1992:94). Still, Aboriginal Peoples are under-represented amongst the professional staff at the PWNHC and this is of consequence in regard to the knowledge that is produced there. However, certain staff members are attempting to compensate for the lack of Aboriginal representatives amongst professional staff by undertaking projects that allow for a broader range of cultural knowledge and political agendas.
CHAPTER VI—SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Introductory Note

In chapter one I stated that currently, museum professionals are grappling with issues such as cross-cultural translations, cultural appropriation, ethnographic authority, representation, cultural ‘otherness,’ and the particularly problematic matter of repatriation. Increasingly, museum professionals "reckon with the fact that the objects and interpretations they display 'belong' to others as well as to the museum" (Clifford 1997:209). In the current intellectual and political climate, communities which historically have been marginalized in museums' power structures can "effectively constrain the display and interpretation of objects representing their cultures" (Clifford 1997:209). The Lubicon Cree's call for a boycott of the exhibit *The Spirit Sings* (1988) and their successful mobilization of supporters, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is one recent, much publicized example. My research at the Vancouver Museum revealed that during the production process of the significant exhibit *Making a Living, Making a Life* (1992), there were specific limits regarding how the exhibit's curator could represent the working lives of an Aboriginal couple (Ed and Rose Sparrow) from Musqueam. Two Musqueam representatives (Ed, and his granddaughter Leona Sparrow) held the curator accountable throughout the process, by retaining the power to withdraw their permission at any time. In regard to the exhibits *Spirit of the Earth: Masks by David Neel* (1993) and *Art of Dempsey Body, Myth Maker and Transformer* (1993), again at the Vancouver Museum, the two Aboriginal artists whose work was featured, entered the museum on their own negotiated terms. These are but a few examples of instances of Aboriginal representatives pushing the boundaries.
Constraints and conditions from donors, government funding agencies, and trustees have always been an element of museum practice that professional staff have had to contend with. What is different today is that Aboriginal Peoples, who are culturally, economically, and politically marginalized in the larger context of Canadian society, are introducing yet another set of limitations. As a result museum professionals find themselves working with increasingly entangled and unfamiliar networks of authority.

Scholars such as Clifford 1988, 1997; Dominguez 1986, 1987; Harris 1990; and Hooper-Greenhill 1989; 1992 suggest that at this historical juncture museum professionals as well as their university colleagues are experiencing a crisis of authority and knowledge. Certainly in Canada the controversy surrounding the exhibits *The Spirit Sings* (1988) and *Into the Heart of Africa* (1989) captured the entire nation's attention. I recognize that there are museum professionals and university professors who will argue that my use of the term crisis, specifically about authority and knowledge, is extreme. Based on my research I would argue that, at the very least, museum professionals are experiencing a degree of uneasiness. Museum professionals alone cannot remake power structures within museums, but as key players in institutional hierarchies their actions are certainly of consequence. Understanding political tensions, institutional hierarchies, and personal and group conflicts that shape the production, manipulation, and dissemination of knowledge at three museums is possibly the first step in responding to the new demands from Aboriginal Peoples, for example.

The circumstances surrounding the construction and circulation of museum knowledge, as this dissertation reveals, is a highly complex process. The complexity of the process can serve to mask the constructed nature of museum knowledge and therefore the connection between power and knowledge, if the totality of social relations is not taken into account, or if museums are approached
as storehouses for objects. Handler's (1993) notion of museums as "social arenas" coupled with that of Clifford's (1997) approach to museums as "contact zones" enabled me to begin explaining why museums are sites of contestation and negotiation.

Throughout the dissertation I have shown that museums, and therefore knowledge(s), are emergent from relations of power and domination and also play a significant role in the social organization of relations of power. In reconstructing the social history of museums in the western world (Chapter two) I wrote that dating back to the Renaissance in Europe, museums have been embedded in the social life of the elite and have historically validated and exhibited the values and beliefs of the dominant cultures (Clifford 1997; Duncan 1995; Findlen 1994; Handler 1993; Harris 1990; Hooper-Greenhill 1992). When I reconstructed the social history of the three museums by tracing the formation of each museum, identifying key founding members, and situating these individuals within the larger society, each museum's past also revealed its elitist affiliations.

**Museums and the Elite—Historical Roots of Power Relations**

Now to illustrate my first point, the relationship between museums and the elite. The individuals who formed the Art, Historical and Scientific Association (hereafter ‘the AHSA’) and the Vancouver Museum (1894) are said to have “represented something of the ‘cream’ of Vancouver society” (Hunt 1987:107). Using members’ education, national origin, and social and occupational position as indicators, historian Alfred Ian Hunt (1987:119) proposes “that Association members were consistently representative of the higher reaches of Vancouver society.” Occupationally, members of the AHSA were distinguished by their

134 Janet Wolff (1981:55) writes: “[i]t can be shown that the economically and politically dominant sections of society generally dominate ideologically too.” She adds that “ideological forms are not only ideas, cultural values, and religious beliefs, but also their embodiment in cultural institutions [...], and in cultural artifacts.”
connection to either the professional or business community, as opposed to a blue-collar background. A significant proportion of the membership could be classified as pioneers, having arrived in British Columbia before the AHSA was established in 1894. Overall, founding members were said to be well connected to the young city’s elite (Hunt 1987:106-123).

On the basis of archival data and personal interviews I suggest that the individuals who established the Yukon Historical Society and the MacBride Museum (1951) were also drawn from the upper stratum of Whitehorse society. MacBride Museum founding member Fred Arnot clearly states that he invited “18 prominent citizens of Whitehorse” to a meeting regarding the formation of a historical society and museum. In addition to Arnot’s declaration, I used members' social and occupational positions to ascertain their status within the community. I determined that the majority of early founding members were either employed as professionals (J.E. Gibben, judge), connected to the business community (William MacBride, public relations officer for the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway), or could claim a certain regional or national distinction (Martha Louise Black, Canada’s second female member of Parliament). As in the case of the Vancouver Museum, a significant portion of the membership had arrived in the Yukon prior to the founding of the Society (1951) and could thus be classified as pioneers. As a whole, founding members were influential figures in the young city.

Because the circumstances surrounding the founding of the PWNHC in Yellowknife differ from the two other museums in this study so does the profile of

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135Hunt’s study reveals that 65% of the employed members were professionals, the other employed members were drawn from the business community (1987:120). He (1987:120) adds that women, (I am assuming he means women who did not work outside the home), and retired men were distributed somewhat differently from the employed members. All, with the exception of two women who were married to lawyers, were related to individuals with substantial business interests. The point is that they were all well positioned socially.
the individuals who established it. Soon after the devolution of political power from Ottawa to Yellowknife in 1967, Commissioner Hodgson and members of the territorial council resolved to seek control over the NWT’s cultural property and sense of history. To ensure that cultural gatekeepers in Ottawa would empower the NWT to control its own cultural property, narrate its own histories, and construct its own identity, Hodgson presumed that Yellowknife needed a facility equaling those in Ottawa. He established a number of boards and committees to first convince the territorial council and the region’s residents to construct a central museum in Yellowknife, and then to develop a plan for the facility. Hodgson drew upon prominent members of the professional museum community outside the NWT (Dr. William Taylor, director of the National Museum of Man)\textsuperscript{136} and upon prominent members within the NWT (Chief Cazon, Fort Simpson) to direct the numerous boards and committees. Furthermore, Hodgson indirectly used his position as Commissioner of the NWT to solicit the British Royal family’s assistance in ensuring that the federal government provided the necessary funds to build the institution. Therefore, unlike the MacBride Museum or the Vancouver Museum, reputable outsiders (Dr. William Taylor of the National Museum of Man) and prominent newcomers (Commissioner Hodgson) possessed the more important roles in the formation of the PWNHC. Furthermore, the facility in Yellowknife was named after an eminent outsider—the Prince of Wales. On the other hand the MacBride Museum was named in honour of a long-time Yukon resident. It seems MacBride and Vancouver Museum founding members also looked to established institutions outside of their region, but neither allowed outsiders to influence their museums to the same degree as was true of the PWNHC.

\textsuperscript{136}As stated previously, the museum was later renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
The role played by the social elite in the formation of the three museums should not be that surprising given the aristocratic roots of museum practices. Still, identifying the mobility of museum practices from European metropolitan centres to the peripheries, Vancouver, British Columbia, and in the case of the MacBride Museum and the PWNHC from metropolitan centres in southern Canada to the peripheries, Whitehorse, Yukon and Yellowknife, NWT, does provoke a number of crucial question. What role do museums perform in the social organization of power relations? This fundamental question leads to other queries: What purposes do museums serve and for whom? How can museums and their products be instrumental to both dominant and increasingly, marginal groups? What is at stake in the struggles for control in, and of museums?

Earlier, I discussed Clifford's (1997:217) ideas regarding the mobility and productivity of museum practices in different places. He maintains that "[t]he ability to articulate identity, power, and tradition is critical, linking the institution's aristocratic origins with its modern nationalist and 'culturalist' disseminations." In describing what I perceived as the two primary incentives individuals and groups had for the formation of the three museums in this study, the capacities of museums to articulate identity, power, and tradition were revealed. Here I discuss what I regard as two fundamental reasons each region's prominent citizens had for the formation of the MacBride Museum, the PWNHC, and the Vancouver Museum. These two closely linked yet contradictory incentives include the construction of what was represented as a distinct regional identity on the one hand, and the dissemination of elitist values on the other. What I am doing here is presenting two dimensions of the ideology of museums, each masked by the other.

*Transmission of Elitist Values*

In his study of 'high culture' in Vancouver, B.C. (1886-1916) Hunt (1987:40) suggests that members of the AHSA
aimed to transmit, into Vancouver, the higher elements of British civilization and culture. [...] As a "devoted few," they were essentially elitist. They distinguished between themselves (the "sophisticated" and "refined") and the rest of the population.

In their scholarly lectures\(^{137}\) and discussions, musical programmes, and exhibits, AHSA members sought to incorporate regional interests and issues, all the while seeking to forward what they regarded as the higher elements of British culture. Founding members also looked to established museums in Britain, in particular the British Museum, as their models.

Though the MacBride Museum was founded almost half a century later than the Vancouver Museum it followed a similar pattern of development. The founders of the MacBride were also amongst the more prominent citizens of Whitehorse society as it was forming. And again, although the founders incorporated regional beliefs and values, inevitably the museum was operated according to the interests and values of this very select group. Much like the founders of the Vancouver Museum, members of the MacBride Museum also solicited advice from museums in metropolitan centres (Yukon Territorial Archives, 82/486, folder 2). They sought to produce a distinct museum in a unique region of North America, but still looked to powerful traditional museums as their models. This may in part explain why these three separate museums are more similar than they are different.

The individuals who instituted the PWNHC endeavoured, from the very beginning, to create a facility that would equal major museums in southern Canada in expertise, facilities, and programming. Commissioner Hodgson ensured that prominent museum professionals from outside the NWT were involved in planning the facility. The result was the production of a traditional western museum in a

\(^{137}\)Among the first addresses delivered at AHSA gatherings were presentations by artist Will Ferris (Art), geologist G.F. Monckton (The Geology of Burrard Inlet), and anthropologist Charles Hill-Tout (A Unique Skull).
region where individuals of Aboriginal ancestry form the majority of the population. A PWNHC staff member (personal communication, 1992) admitted that the PWNHC "was conceived and set up to be the museum for the North but would function along the southern traditional concept of what a museum is...." The recent *NWT Heritage Training Needs Analysis Study* (1993) clearly indicates that this traditional institution (PWNHC) which privileges material culture over intellectual property (language, traditional knowledge) is not meeting the needs of the various communities in the NWT. Because the PWNHC has always been and continues to be staffed by museum professionals who were born and educated in institutions in southern Canada, traditional western museum practices continue to be perpetuated. These practices can be traced back to centres in Europe, in Ottawa, Canada, and Washington, D.C.

**Imagined Political Boundaries, Distinct Identities, and Museums**

Regarding the capacity of museums to articulate identity, authority, and tradition, Clifford (1997:218) observes: "[f]rom their emergence as public institutions in the nineteenth century Europe, museums have been useful for polities gathering and valuing an 'us'." He (1997:214-215) adds that "[i]n the twentieth century, museums have been central to the production and consumption of 'heritage' in a dizzying range of local, national, and transnational contexts..., integral in expansive tourist industries..." The three museums in this study were established in regions where new political boundaries and entities were being created, the number of people both moving into and visiting the area increased, and each region and centre had, through various processes, acquired greater political power within Canada. I propose those who established these museums did so in the belief that the survival of a nation or community is contingent upon its possession

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138 For more details regarding the role of museums in nineteenth century Europe please refer to chapter two.
of a distinct culture and identity and, conversely, that a sense of a distinct culture and identity would serve to unify the people of a region. Consider the following from the Ad Hoc Committee Policy Report (1971b) regarding the objective of the PWNHC:

Because it [PWNHC] will be a first cultural agency in an expanding frontier setting, because it is devoted to the heritage, history, identity and unity of northern Canadians this museum, more than many, must guard, in its policies and operations, a high standard to earn pride and a vitality to retain popular support (emphasis added).

Following Benedict Anderson (1991:6), who writes of nationalism in general, I understand that political divisions are arbitrary, and that a distinct community, nation, or region exists only when a significant number of people regard themselves as members of it. The museum is one institution of power with the capacity to significantly fashion the way in which members of a region imagine their jurisdiction. The complicated relationship between museums and the objects that they hold, versus the construction of a regional or national identity, requires further explication.

Handler (1985, 1991) suggests a compelling reason for the association between museums and nationalism. He (1991:64) points out that there exists in the western world a contradictory assumption that an individual is “self-sufficient and self-contained” but also “defined by the property he or she possesses.” This logic of possessive individualism is extended to groups and acted upon. That is, groups

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139Anderson (1991:163-164) proposes that the census, the map, and the museum “profundely shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.” He adds, “[t]o the forming of this imagining, the census’s abstract quantification/serialization of persons, the map’s eventual logoization of political space, and the museum’s ‘ecumenical,’ profane genealogizing made interlinked contributions.”

140I recognize that personal and community identities are constructed and experienced in various settings. Nevertheless, museums are significant “places for defining who people are and how they should act and as places for challenging those definitions” (Karp 1992:19-20).
or nations are imagined to be separate and self-contained but defined by the property they control (Handler 1985:192-217, 1991:63-74). A nation’s or group’s honour and reputation are inextricably interwoven with their power to accumulate and display objects. According to Clifford (1997:218), "[t]he message of identity is directed differently to members and to outsiders—the former invited to share in the symbolic wealth, the latter maintained as onlookers, or partially integrated, whether connoisseurs or tourists." Handler states that the relationship between objects and identity, and the notion of cultural property, must be interpreted in terms of what C.B. Macpherson referred to as “possessive individualism.” In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962), Macpherson “traces the seventeenth-century emergence of self as owner” (Clifford 1985:237).

The available archival documents and scholarly literature (Anderson 1991; Clifford 1997; Duncan 1995; Handler 1985, 1991; Kaplan 1994) lead me to conclude that the three museums provided their founders with one venue from within which to create the discrete culture and identity they sought for themselves and/or people like themselves. However, museums present a very selective past and a selective identity, determined by those who control them. I suggest that one of the ways in which the three museums were useful to the socially powerful and prominent is that they disseminated elitist culture but portrayed it as representative of the diverse region within which each museum was located.

Writing of museums in general, anthropologist Flora Kaplan (1994:3) proposes that “[e]lite world views underlie the collection and display of objects and

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141 This is strikingly reminiscent of Findlen’s (1994) analysis of museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early modern Italy. She suggests that during the Renaissance princes and urban elites used collections to satisfy that period’s social demands of status and exhibition” (Findlen 1994:49). Her thesis is further developed in Chapter two.

142 Anthropologist Flora E.S. Kaplan has recently edited an entire volume devoted to the role of objects and museums in the construction of national identity. The text is entitled *Museums and the Making of “Ourselves”: The Role of Objects in National Identity* (1994).
symbols of wealth, knowledge and power in society.” Art historian Carol Duncan [1995:8] observes further that "[w]hat we see and do not see in [...] museums — and on what terms and by whose authority we do or do not see it — is closely linked to the larger question about who constitutes the community and who defines its identity." My research indicates that only a small sector of society has been in control of the three museums at any given time. This small group has determined which items from the vast material world ought to be saved, how objects might be used, and which stories ought to be told.

Aboriginal Peoples of each region also had a significant role in the construction of regional identities, however, one that differed greatly from that of founding members. I suggest that although Aboriginal Peoples provided many of the objects used by each region's elite to convey a message of identity and power, they themselves were excluded from positions of power within the institutional hierarchies. This was particularly true at the MacBride Museum and Vancouver Museum. At the PWNHC Aboriginal Peoples were a slightly more noticeable presence in the actual formation of the facility. This can be attributed to the fact that Aboriginal Peoples outnumbered (and continue to) non-Aboriginal Peoples in the NWT as well as the socio-political climate at the time of the institution's formation in the 1970s. However, when the PWNHC opened in 1979 Aboriginal People were not at all represented among the professional staff.

Related to the previous issue, the three museums have, since the time of their formation, served as 'contact zones' in which each region's Aboriginal Peoples, historically and geographically separated from each region's social elite, enter into ongoing, though not necessarily equal relations of power. Archival material and conversations with founding members reveal that it was the movement of

143Anthropologist Igor Kopytoff's (1986:64-91) approach to material culture, namely the production of the cultural biographies of things, facilitates an exploration of the manner in which appropriated objects are culturally redefined and put to use.
Aboriginal Peoples' objects from the peripheries into the museums located in regional centres (Vancouver, B.C., Whitehorse, Yukon, and Yellowknife, NWT), that constituted a significant portion of each museum's collection and thus defined the relationship between the two groups. As stated earlier, Clifford's notion of museums as contact zones suggests fluidity and dispenses with notions of permanence in regard to museum collections. Just as objects from Aboriginal communities once moved into these centres, I have to ask why is it so difficult for museum trustees and professionals to accept the repatriation of these objects back once again to the original owners and their descendants?

**Power of the State**

Studying the historical development of these three museums revealed the relationship between museums and the social elite, suggested the reasons for the mobility and desirability of museums as articulation of power and identity, and outlined the processes by which groups that are socially distant from one another establish power relations within museums. In tracing the development of the MacBride Museum, the PWNHC, and the Vancouver Museum an intricate network of power relations began to emerge. Because the three museums are so dependent upon external sources of funding, in particular that of various levels of government, I discerned that government representatives are influential though not particularly visible members of these systems of authority within which museum knowledge is constructed. This is especially true of both non-profit organizations. The other more obvious agents (to be discussed later) within each museum's networks of power are the governing bodies, professional staff, and increasingly and relatively recently, Aboriginal representatives.

Since 1959 the Vancouver city council, which is the Vancouver Museum's major source of revenue, has been a significant force within the Vancouver Museum’s power network. The entry of the government into the MacBride
Museum’s network of authority is a more recent phenomenon. In fact it is only within the last decade, and following the hiring of two museum professionals, that the civic and territorial government assumed greater control within the museum. Unlike either the MacBride Museum or the Vancouver Museum, the PWNHC has from its very inception been financed and governed by the territorial government. Appointed and elected officials, as well as government bureaucrats, established the facility. Today, elected officials and bureaucrats still figure prominently in the PWNHC’s system of authority.

To understand the relationship between the federal government and the museums discussed in this study it is necessary to extend the comparison to a national level. The growth of the Canadian museum sector is said to have “followed the development pattern of cultural activities in general” (Brice 1979:9). Prior to the release of the recommendations of the Massey-Lévesque Commission in the early fifties, and the centennial celebrations in 1967, cultural affairs were left to the elite (Brice 1979:9; Dorais 1992:48).

To review, the release of the Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1951) stressed that “‘cultural defenses’ deserved as much attention as military defenses to secure our [Canadian] borders” (Dorais 1992:52).144 Using as indicators both the legislation of cultural policies that support the growth of museums, and an increase in government funding to museums, it is fair to state that the issue of cultural unity gained more attention in the years surrounding Canada’s centennial.

The buildings that currently house the collections of the MacBride Museum and the Vancouver Museum were constructed as Centennial projects. In that sense

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144 Writing of an earlier time, in a different region of the western world, Hooper-Greenhill observes that following the French Revolution “material things, [...] were deployed in the same way as other strategic commodities. Modeled on the military deployment of resources, museums were established across Europe.”
both of these Canadian museums benefited indirectly from the strong nationalist sentiments engendered in the years just prior to and following the 1967 celebrations. An increase in federal funding to the two museums induced both civic and provincial/territorial governments to make similar financial contributions.\textsuperscript{145}

The association between the federal government and the PWNHC differs somewhat from that of both the MacBride Museum and the Vancouver Museum. The PWNHC was not a Centennial project but it did benefit from the various cultural policies and programmes generated by the excitement surrounding that year. Initial construction of the PWNHC (1974) began two years after the implementation of the National Museum Policy (1972) and an expressed commitment by government to support museums (Dorais 1992:48). Unfortunately for Hodgson and the other founders of the PWNHC, there was a decline in government funding to museums just prior to the facility’s completion. Nevertheless, Commissioner Hodgson was still able, with the help of the British Royal family, to obtain sufficient federal funds to complete construction of the multi-million dollar facility.

At this juncture I want to stress two details. For one, even though I have not dealt with economic theory in this dissertation, the importance of economic capital in the production of knowledge must at least be acknowledged. While I recognize that society is structured by various relations of inequality, I am aware that the old adage ‘money is power’ applies.\textsuperscript{146} My research confirms that the relationship


\textsuperscript{146} These are some of the scholars who have enhanced my understanding of various relations of inequality and the processes through which hierarchies are reproduced: Atleo (1991), Bennett (1994, 1995), Clifford (1988, 1997), Dominguez (1987), Doxtator
between economic capital and the power to control a museum is important in each museum's system of organization. Given that the three museums are so dependent upon various levels of government for revenue, these different levels of governments are able to wield a significant degree of power.

Second, in the process of reconstructing the social histories of the three museums I found an association between nationalism, museums, and the state. In her discussion of the functions of museums following the French Revolution, museologist Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (1992:168) writes:

The public museum emerged as one of the campaigns of the state to direct the population into activities which would, without people being aware of it, transform the population into a useful resource for the state.

More recently, the contents of the *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (1951:271) referred to the usefulness of arts and letters (museums are included in these categories) to the Canadian government for establishing the "foundations of national unity."

Museums, as discussed previously, are one of the means through which individuals and communities or nations fashion their identities. The possible relationship between Canadian cultural institutions, national unity, and the state was first highlighted in the *Report* (1951) referred to above, in which the following comparison was made between cultural identity and military defense:

The most striking items in governmental budgets today are related to defense. [...] If we as a nation are concerned with the problem of defense, what, we may ask ourselves, are we defending? We are defending civilization, our share of it, our contribution to it. The thing with which an inquiry deals are the elements which give a civilization its character and its meaning. It would be paradoxical to defend something which we are unwilling to strengthen and enrich, and which we even allow to decline (1951:274).

Vincent Massey, the Commission's chair, and Georges-Henri Lévesque, its vice-chair, proposed that "federal action was essential at the time, and on all fronts, to make Canada a great and united country" (Schafer and Fortier 1989:7-8).

Museologist Merridy Cox (1978:8) observes that approximately a decade later,

'the coming of the Canadian Centennial brought a huge wave of cultural excitement and pride. Canada had a new feeling of national destiny and how better to express it than to build a museum as a permanent record? Federal, provincial, and municipal governments supported the development of community centres, art galleries, and museums across Canada.

By November 1, 1966 over $23 million had been approved for museum-related projects (Anonymous 1967:6). When, following the Centennial, the federal government legislated the National Museum Policy the intention was to make the products of cultural activity accessible to all Canadians not an exclusive group as had been the case historically and to ensure that individuals dispersed throughout the country were exposed to Canadian cultural symbols (Dorais 1992:48).

Today, museums in general are not securing the same level of financial support from the federal government that they did in the years surrounding Canada's Centennial. With globalization museums "are being reevaluated and redefined according to their worth in the new order of things" (Tyler and Trudel 1992:2). The increased flow of capital and of populations makes it difficult to define and maintain national boundaries. Further, because of government deficits, along with the availability of new information technologies, museums have been down-graded as a spending priority. It begs the question, does the federal government no longer regard museums as significant sites from within which identity and power are articulated? Still, as significant sources of funds for Canadian museums, various levels of government continue to engage in subtle
operations of powers and should not be overlooked in a critical analysis of museums.

As various levels of government choose to make funds for museums less available, museums increasingly are having to turn to the private sector to cover operation and maintenance costs as well as to cover the costs of programmes and exhibits. In non-profit organizations such as the MacBride and Vancouver Museums, trustees, usually drawn from amongst the more prominent members of a community, appear to be key in securing funds from the private sector or in providing those funds themselves. The next section examines the authority that governing bodies exercise within each museum. That authority is constantly negotiated with another significant component of each museum's system of governance, museum professionals.

**Governing Bodies and Museum Professionals—Constraints, Conflicts, Partnerships**

Both the MacBride Museum and the Vancouver Museum are governed by a board of elected trustees. Sociologist Susan Ostrander (1987:86) maintains that because the objectives are less clearly proscribed in nonprofit associations than in for profit associations, they are subject to greater struggles for control. In reviewing historical documents I found conflicts and negotiations between the trustees themselves, and between staff and trustees, to be common to both museums.

The Vancouver Museum is ruled by a cumbersome governing board comprised of twenty-one elected trustees, one designated member of city council, and twelve members appointed by the Vancouver Museum Association trustees.

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147 The Vancouver Museum’s governing body (Vancouver Museum Association) was displaced (Sept. 30, 1996) by a seven-person commission appointed by the civic government.
Like the individuals who founded the museum in 1894, recent and present trustees continue to be drawn from the business and professional community. A candid trustee reminded me that those whose lives are more fully concerned with daily subsistence do not have a representative on the Vancouver Museum's governing body. Because of the role that trustees have in generating revenue they continue to exercise considerable power at the Vancouver Museum.

The significant degree of power that trustees exercise at the Vancouver Museum has been a source of conflict between them and the museum's chief executive officer. This may explain why over the last six years the museum has been managed by a series of six directors and acting directors. In reviewing my interviews with trustees (past and present), staff, and volunteers two possible reasons for those power struggles were revealed. For one, influential trustees have been reluctant to empower the chief executive officer. Organizational theorist John Carver (1990:110) observes that nonprofit organizations “have chronic problems with the CEO function,” resulting from the position being vested with either too much or too little power. Former Vancouver Museum trustees told me that since the 1980s the CEO position at the Vancouver Museum has been characterized as having too little authority. In particular, certain trustees have assumed some of the responsibilities of the chief executive officer. This may explain in part why the Vancouver Museum has been without consistent and stable leadership. Second, former chief executive officers and trustees alike attribute some of the conflicts to the size of the governing body, which has been described as being cumbersome and factional.

Compared to that of the Vancouver Museum, the governing body of the MacBride Museum is small (twelve elected trustees). These individuals are also primarily drawn from Whitehorse's professional and business community, and exercise substantial power. Like the Vancouver Museum trustees, they are
responsible for hiring and evaluating the work of the chief executive officer, setting policy, and fund raising. Yet unlike trustees at the Vancouver Museum, they have been able to work in relative harmony with the chief executive officer and other staff. I suggest that one of the reasons this museum has had stable leadership is because trustees have empowered their chief executive officer, allowing this individual to exercise a certain level of autonomy and authority. In the following passages I elaborate further concerning the influence of institutional structures and governing bodies upon the level of authority and autonomy museum professionals are able to achieve within the three museums.

Writing of the relationship between professionals and trustees in general, museologist Dorothy A. Mariner (1972:15) notes that “[j]urisdiction over the museum and the practices of the museum worker is shared by the professionals with members of the lay board.” She (1972:15, emphasis added) observes that “[n]either authority, control, nor decision-making is left to the exclusive jurisdiction of professional workers.” Conflicts arise when trustees deny museum professionals their due authority and autonomy.\(^{148}\)

Not only does the Vancouver Museum chief executive officer enjoy less autonomy than does MacBride's CEO, the same holds true for Vancouver Museum staff. This may in part be related to the fact that from the time of its creation in 1894 until 1963, the Vancouver Museum’s collection was managed by amateur curators who were drawn from the same social stratum as the trustees. Archival documents indicate that the move to supplant the amateurs with museum professionals began in the 1950s, and was a highly contested issue amongst the museum’s governing body.

\(^{148}\)My understanding of the expectations of professionals is enhanced by the work of Freidson (1986, 1994).
Regarding the constraints imposed upon newly emerging museum professionals by others, Dorothy A. Mariner (1972:16) writes:

What most occupations in the throes of professionalization disregard is the fact that the granting of professional status is a social process involving the recognition of its legitimacy by others. Significant others with power must ratify such claims....

The historical record indicates that Vancouver Museum trustees were late in recognizing the legitimacy of professionals. By the time that museum’s first professional curator was hired in 1963 and its first chief executive officer in 1967, a particular system of museum governance was well entrenched. The trustees had, to this point, shared power only with the civic government and with amateur curators. It may be that the trustees regarded museum professionals as a threat because they, unlike the amateur curators, were empowered by the possession of specialized knowledge.¹⁴⁹

At the Vancouver Museum, the tension between the trustees and the museum professionals still exists.¹⁵¹ To illustrate, in chapter three I wrote about the controversy surrounding the production of the Panache (1990) exhibit. Certain

¹⁴⁹Harry Pickstone, the city’s deputy planning officer, was hired as the museum’s chief executive officer. Because of his lack of experience and training in museums he cannot be classified as a museum professional. However, I include him because he was the first chief executive officer in the museum’s network of power relations and therefore is pertinent to this discussion.

¹⁵⁰My supposition is shaped by historical documents, the theoretical literature on professionalism (Freidson 1986, 1994; Jenkinson 1989), and the literature on nonprofit organizations (Carver 1990; DiMaggio 1988; DiMaggio and Anheier 1990; Herman and Heimovics 1991; Middleton 1990; and O’Neill and Young 1988).

¹⁵¹Mariner suggests that one of the reasons for conflict between trustees and museum professionals is a differentiation in class. According to Mariner (1972: 16) board members are “self-selected by the primary criteria of high status and upper social class.” On the other hand “[m]useum occupations are now more open to recruitment from lower social statuses than formerly” (Mariner 1972:20, emphasis added). She (1972:20) concludes that “current concern of the staff for the legitimation of professional status can be understood as a ploy to equalize power and prestige within the organization between the two disparate class factions.” Unfortunately I do not have the data either to substantiate or discount Mariner’s thesis.
Vancouver Museum trustees overstepped their role and became directly involved in the production of the exhibit. The actions of the trustees challenged the authority and autonomy of both the chief executive officer and professional staff, and are said eventually to have led to the resignation of the exhibit's curator.

More recently (1994), trustees and the chief executive officer, citing financial difficulties, dismissed several unionized professional staff (anthropology curator, education co-ordinator, and head of design), canceled popular school programs, and closed the Anthropology Department. Professional staff were not involved in this decision and, following the announcement of the cutbacks and cancellations, went on strike. During and after the strike, staff and volunteers harboured a great deal of resentment towards the governing body and their course of action. Consider the thoughts of a former staff member as expressed to a local journalist during the labour dispute:

"They're [the trustees] pretty much business people. There aren't any people from the various ethnic communities, there's nobody from the staff, there's nobody representing the school boards, there's nobody representing any sort of community interest groups. And they seem to have single-handedly decided to make this a for-profit museum (Stephen Topfer, July 18, 1994:C2)."

Approximately four months after the labour dispute was settled, I attended the Vancouver Museum's annual general meeting in April 1995. In the course of the meeting various Vancouver Museum members, most of whom were volunteers or former staff, spoke. The animosity of various speakers toward the trustees and chief executive officer was still very much apparent.

The MacBride Museum on the other hand is younger, having been established in 1951, and although for three decades trustees were responsible for the governance, management, and operation of the museum, as early as the 1970s there was discussion about the inclusion of professionals. Still, the decision to hire
the museum's first professional was a contested one. However, unlike the situation at the Vancouver Museum, the curator, who was also the chief executive officer, was immediately provided with a legitimate place in the network of power relations. This may in part explain why the relationship between the MacBride Museum's governing body and its staff has generally been more agreeable. Furthermore, given that there are only three permanent staff members at the museum, each individual is able to be more intimately involved in the decision-making process than are staff at the much larger Vancouver Museum. This provides the MacBride Museum's employees with a sense of authority within the institution.

Unlike either the MacBride Museum or the Vancouver Museum, professionals have been a part of the PWNHC's system of authority from the very beginning. In fact, the museum's first chief executive officer, an archaeologist, was hired three years prior to the actual opening of the facility and was involved in the planning and development of the final stages of the PWNHC. Because museum professionals have always been significant members in the power system they have not had to struggle to create an authoritative place for themselves in the Centre's administration.

Instead, PWNHC professionals are faced with different constraints. Because they are government employees on the one hand, and members of a profession on the other, the manner in which they exercise authority differs from the two other museums. First, as employees of the territorial government, they owe allegiance to the state. Second, as professionals, trained to uphold the standards of their discipline, they may expect some discretion in regard to setting the terms and conditions of their work. As government employees they typically must accept

152 At the MacBride Museum the director/curator is responsible for the management and operation of the facility. The trustees set policy and are responsible for fund raising.
orders from bureaucratic superiors who often have little formal knowledge of the museum enterprise; abide by government rules and regulations which sometimes are in conflict with professional standards;153 and also work within a sometimes ponderous administrative structure that precludes innovation.

Four elements emerge in the examination of the authority of museum professionals in three separate networks of power relations. For one, the level of authority and autonomy that professional staff are able to exercise within museums is in part determined by governing bodies. Second, the structure of the institutions within which museum professionals practice influences the degree of authority and autonomy that they are able to attain. At smaller institutions like the MacBride Museum, staff suggest that they can exercise more authority than would be possible at much larger facilities. My research indicates that working within a museum that is part of a government department imposes a different set of constraints upon PWNHC staff than those experienced by staff at the two nonprofit organizations. Third, despite the constraints imposed by governing bodies and funding agencies museum professionals are "powerful and influential individuals" (Kaeppler 1994:21). Anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler (1994:21) notes that it is museum workers "who decide what stories are told or not told. It is their vision that is disseminated to the museum goer." Museum workers' primary source of power in museums is the specialized knowledge they possess, and this may explain why some professionals are threatened by agents of other forms of knowledge (such as culturally specific knowledge, or traditional knowledge). Fourth, and expanding upon my previous point, Canadian museum professionals serve as significant barrier that Aboriginal representatives who are largely still excluded from the production of museum knowledge must penetrate. While no museum

153 My understanding of the authority of museum professionals at the PWNHC has been facilitated by Freidson (1994), who writes on professionalism, and Mills and Simmons (1995) who write about bureaucracies.
professional is willing to be completely disempowered, (nor should they be), he or she should, for both moral and practical reasons, relinquish some control in order to create a legitimate space for all those who remain on the peripheries. On this issue I am of the same mind as Clifford (1997:209) who argues: "To evade this reality—resisting 'outside' pressures in the name of aesthetic quality or scientific neutrality, raising the specter of "censorship"—is self-serving as well as historically uninformed." Sharing control with a previously marginalized people may in fact assure the survival of museum professionals in a political and intellectual climate that is particularly hostile towards all experts.

In Canada, as Aboriginal Peoples become more organized politically, they are beginning to challenge all forms of authority, including that of museum professionals. No longer interested in serving as the providers of the objects used to maintain imagined communities and/or celebrate the deeds of dominant groups, Aboriginal Peoples are currently using these museums to articulate their own aspirations. I end where I began, with the issues currently confronting the Canadian museum community, that of inclusion, the limitations of cross-cultural translations, repatriation and representation. Underlying these issues is the notion of control. Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are in various ways (organizing their own exhibits, imposing constraints on how their cultures are exhibited, land claims, repatriation requests, boycotts) challenging their historic relationships with museums. They are insisting on creating new relationships with those whom culturally and historically have controlled them.

Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Museums

It is important to return to the polemical exhibit The Spirit Sings (1988) because although the controversy surrounding the exhibit was not the first instance of tension between Canadian museums and Aboriginal Peoples, it was the first to receive national and even international attention (Nicks 1992:88). To review the
case, the Lubicon Cree initiated a boycott of *The Spirit Sings*. The Assembly of First Nations, an organization which represents approximately half of the Aboriginal population of Canada, supported the Lubicon Cree’s request for a boycott. At the time, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations was George Erasmus. In the autumn of 1988 he met with representatives of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Andrea Laforet), Glenbow Museum (Julia Harrison) and the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia (Michael Ames) to explore ways of avoiding a boycott when *The Spirit Sings* opened at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Ottawa). Erasmus proposed that if something positive for Aboriginal Peoples could be accomplished before the Ottawa opening he would ask the Lubicon Cree to cancel the boycott. All those concerned agreed that a national conference to discuss the relations between museums and Aboriginal Peoples would be beneficial. The three museum representatives (Ames, Harrison and Laforet) then asked the Canadian Museums Association to collaborate with the Assembly of First Nations to sponsor a conference which would address outstanding issues between Aboriginal Peoples and museums. The three-day symposium, *Preserving Our Heritage: A Working Conference Between Museums and First Peoples*, was held in Ottawa, Canada, November 1988. Approximately 150 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates from across Canada attended and expressed their concerns. That conference gave rise to the Canadian Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (Ames, personal communication, 1996; Nicks 1992:88).

George Erasmus expressed the following sentiment in his opening address at the symposium (1988):

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We [the Aboriginal peoples] are well aware that many people have dedicated their time, careers and their lives to showing what they believe is the accurate picture of indigenous peoples. We thank you for that, but we want to turn the page....

I take his words to mean that it was time that museum professionals relinquish the power they historically have exercised in the objectification of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. I expand and intensify this discussion by referring again to Seneca scholar Deborah Doxtator’s article entitled *The Implications of Canadian Nationalism on Aboriginal Cultural Autonomy* (1994). Regarding the historical relationship between Canadian museums and Aboriginal Peoples, Doxtator (1994:19) maintains that "[t]he present museological management of Aboriginal collections by non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been heavily influenced by the changing processes of Canadian nationalism." She points out that the processes of nation-building and creating distinct regional identities “involved asserting a nation literally over top of the Native cultures.” Doxtator (1994:19) observes that not only was Canada imposing “sovereignty over Aboriginal lands,” but also “over Native peoples’ separate identities and culture.” Based on my own research as well as the writings of Aboriginal scholars (Atleo 1991; Crosby 1991; Doxtator 1988, 1994; McMaster 1993, 1995; Young Man 1992a, b), Aboriginal artists (Hamilton 1991, Neel 1991, Todd 1990) and land claims agreements (*Gwich’in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* 1992; *Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada* 1993; *Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* 1993; *Nisga’a Treaty Negotiations: Agreement-In-Principle* 1996), there is every

154 His speech was later reproduced in the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples*.

155 Gerald McMaster (1995:80), Plains Cree artist, curator, and scholar, writes “[t]he struggle for land by (Native) Canadians is a struggle to create and expand space: claiming land, claiming space. A land claim is an attempt to ‘reterritorialize,’ to create in law new borders and divisions, and to mark off rights, privileges and obligations.”

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indication that Aboriginal Peoples want to control the expression of their own cultures and identities.

As previously stated, the power to classify and define people and societies is an exercise of control over their lives. We certainly know that this occurred with the passage of the Indian Act. Very briefly, in Canada, at the federal level, there exists "an exceptionally complex and oppressive structure of legal and quasi-legal terminologies which determine many Native peoples' rights and affiliations" (Sawchuk 1992:7). These various categories, which include the terms Status Indians, non-Status Indians, and Metis are largely defined by the federal government rather than by Aboriginal Peoples themselves. Such legalistic distinctions are of economic, emotional, and political consequence.

Aboriginal Peoples recognize that Canadian museums and those who produce and disseminate knowledge from within them have also since the late nineteenth century exercised similar power over them. Plains Cree artist and scholar Alfred Young Man (1992a), communicating through his alter ego Many White Horses, muses that:

He had been told all his life by educators, anthropologists, historians, politicians, and Hollywood that his identity was not his own but was given to him gratis by Indian Affairs, anthropology, television, the movies, and the Christian clergy.

...This lack of identity was the single most important reason many of his Indian brothers and sisters lost themselves to alcoholism. In many cases this emasculation was so complete that suicide was the only way out, the final bureaucratic kick, the ultimate shutout.

As he continues reflecting upon Aboriginal art, culture, and the role of the Aboriginal curator, Many White Horses (1992a) has this to say about The Spirit Sings,
[t]his controversial $1.7 million extravaganza of historically important Native art and artifacts may have been anthropology’s last hurrah in shows of this kind which deliberately and unconscientiously exploited Native culture if only to prove that they are still top dog. As a textbook case of pure unadulterated ethnographic manipulation by oil companies, city, provincial, and federal politicians there is no better example.

*The Spirit Sings* was indeed a turning point in the relationship between Canadian museums and Aboriginal Peoples.

Prior to visiting the three museums I was aware of the rhetoric that had been generated following the controversial exhibit *The Spirit Sings*, and understood that staff and governing bodies at the three museums in question had also been influenced by the debates surrounding Aboriginal Peoples’ politics, land claims, the *Task Force Report* (1992), and a changing intellectual climate. When I began research at the three museums I was interested in assessing how recent events had influenced museum representatives' relationships with Aboriginal Peoples.

I begin with the PWNHC. Because the PWNHC is located in a region primarily populated by individuals of Aboriginal ancestry, I expected that Aboriginal Peoples would exercise more authority within the institution than they do at the two other museums. Instead, I found that Aboriginal Peoples are under-represented amongst the professional staff. The permanent exhibits (*North Gallery*, *South Gallery*) are still very traditional in their approach. What is most striking is the separation of Euro-Canadians' and Aboriginal Peoples’ histories. The Metis are placed with the Euro-Canadians. What is the implication here? Are the Metis not Aboriginal? Do most people visiting the exhibit know that prior to the passage of the Constitution Act (1982), the Metis had their Aboriginal rights denied? Should the PWNHC be held accountable for its role in denying the Metis their Aboriginal rights? In the *North Gallery*, where Euro-Canadians are represented, there are often names attached to the written passages while in the *South Gallery*, where Aboriginal Peoples are represented, an anonymous,
traditional, unified 'we' is more prevalent. As is also characteristic of traditional western museums, the object is still privileged at the PWNHC, and this is reflected both in the museum’s exhibits and in the programmes delivered to the communities. The recent *Training Needs Analysis Study* (1993) indicates that people in the communities define heritage differently than do professionals at the PWNHC. In the communities language is considered most important, followed by traditional skills, and oral history.

In defense of the PWNHC (although the institution certainly does not need my endorsement), I must note that in the course of conducting this study, I was encouraged to hear that staff have been increasingly involved in projects that require active collaboration with Aboriginal representatives. In instances where museum representatives have shared power and thus accepted a broader range of historical points of view and political agendas, the results have been promising. Again, the work of Andrews, the resident PWNHC subarctic archaeologist with the Dene, serves as an excellent example.

At the MacBride Museum, Aboriginal Peoples also remain on the peripheries of the museum’s power base, and continue to be defined, in terms of identity and representation, by non-Aboriginal Peoples. Since the early 1980s attempts have been made to invite Aboriginal representatives to help govern the MacBride Museum. Almost all attempts at inclusion have failed. Eventually, I redirected my gaze from the MacBride Museum’s governing body to three events that are cause for optimism. The case of the repatriation of Jim Boss's regalia to his nephew George Dawson was particularly heartening because repatriation is currently a contentious issue in museums. Clifford (1997:212) observes that the "[m]ovement of collections in and out of the world of museums is still quite difficult for curators and boards of directors to accept, given the traditional economy and mission of Western museums. It would require breaking with strong
traditions of conservatism.” And yet, the MacBride Museum trustees and chief executive officer/curator broke with these 'strong traditions of conservatism' and honoured Dawson's request. Skeptics might argue that the museum returned only one item from a rather extensive collection. However, the regalia was regarded as integral to the collection. The regalia was eventually returned to the museum by Dawson himself.

In Vancouver, as was the case in Whitehorse, individuals of Aboriginal ancestry are not represented on the Vancouver Museum’s governing board or among the professional staff. Furthermore, for approximately two years (1994-1996) key members of the museum’s system of authority have been engaged in internal power struggles, allowing little time for consideration of such issues as cross-cultural translation, inclusion, and repatriation. In regard to the museum’s relationship with Aboriginal Peoples, I chose to focus on three exhibits that preceded the 1994 labour dispute. What I found to be recurrent in the museum projects that I focused upon, was an attempt on the part of museum professionals to share authority and to redefine the boundaries that characterize museums. Equally significant was that in two recent exhibits Aboriginal artists (Dempsey Bob and David Neel) appeared to use the museum as a venue from which to tell their own stories.

I am aware that the sharing of power between museum professionals and Aboriginal Peoples may not be enough for some, as is evident from Metis film producer Loretta Todd’s discussion of the issues of appropriation and cultural autonomy. Todd (1990:24) writes:

Cultural autonomy signifies a right to cultural specificity, a right to one’s origins and histories as told from within the culture and not as mediated from without. [...] Appropriation [...] occurs when someone else becomes the expert on your experience and is deemed more knowledgeable about who you are than yourself.
Still, the gradual changes that are occurring at all three museums make me hopeful. David Neel curating his own exhibit at the Vancouver Museum, Dene elders and various other members of the Rae Lakes community shaping archaeological projects at the PWNHC, and those in power at the MacBride Museum accepting that George Dawson, hereditary chief of the Ta’an Kwach’an people, should determine the destiny of his uncle’s regalia, are strong examples of power-sharing between Aboriginal representatives, museum professionals, and governing bodies. Furthermore, the NWT Training Needs Analysis Study (1993) was an attempt by the PWNHC to re-think the museum enterprise by acknowledging NWT Aboriginal Peoples’ perceptions of culture and history. Historically, the PWNHC has emphasized an idea of culture based on objects. The results of the study indicate that Aboriginal Peoples regard ‘words’ and to a lesser degree ‘things’ as important articulations of culture and history. Staff at the PWNHC now have an opportunity to respond. At the MacBride Museum Tlingit scholar Ingrid Johnson has, in her project on beadwork, been able to incorporate both ‘words’ and ‘things.’ After compiling a number of beaded pieces from the MacBride Museum’s collection, Johnson interviewed five elders regarding the objects. Johnson (1995:29) writes that

> [t]he elders’ contributions did indeed become the most revealing part of the study. [...] The results, however, were not what I expected! I had anticipated learning a lot of information about each individual object. Instead, elders’ responses centred around a number of general themes.

156 I borrow this turn-of-phrase from the work of Julie Cruikshank, Oral tradition and material culture: Multiplying meanings of ‘words’ and ‘things’ (1992). In both the aforementioned article and in Imperfect Translations: Rethinking Objects of Ethnographic Collection (1995), Cruikshank discusses the importance of both ‘words’ and ‘things’ in the lives of various Aboriginal groups in the Yukon.
Johnson's work from within the MacBride Museum created an opportunity for the elders to exercise control over the type of culturally specific information they wished to be recovered and sustained.

Anthropologists, including those who work in museums, are aware that different people think about the same thing in different ways. Anthropologists are said to have an appreciation of cultural difference. However, when they return from the field to the institutions (museums and universities) that support them, too many still revert to a westernized perspective that privileges their specialized forms of knowledge. Young Man (1992b:81) maintains that "[b]efore an individual can understand and appreciate North American Indian art—practice and theory—[...] it is essential to become familiar with the North American Indian Native perspective." He (1992b:95), Young Man's emphasis) goes on to say that

[t]he Native perspective requires that the dominant point of view—the Westernized parochial, provincial, linear perspective—be re-thought from the view points of how North American Indians perceive important questions of their culture, history, politics, religion, language, music, art and so forth.

His sentiments apply to museum practice in general. Clifford (1989, 1997) and anthropologist Julie Cruikshank (1995) both have addressed the subtlety and complexity of cross-cultural translations and the displacement of western-informed master narratives with local ones. Regarding cross-cultural translation, which often occurs in museums, Clifford (1997:39) reminds us "that all translation terms used in global comparisons—terms like 'culture,' 'art,' 'society,' 'peasant,' 'mode of production,' 'man,' 'woman,' 'modernity,' 'ethnography'—get us some distance and fall apart." He (1997:182) adds that "[c]ross-cultural translation is never entirely neutral; it is enmeshed in relations of power." It is these relations of power, in and through which knowledge has been constructed and manipulated, that Aboriginal representatives are currently working to transform.
I draw upon anthropologist, curator, and art critic Charlotte Townsend-Gault (1992) to further advance the complexity of the process of cultural translation. Townsend-Gault was one of the contributors to the accompanying catalogue for the exhibit *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (1992). Her article regarding the various works that appear in the exhibit is aptly entitled *Kinds of Knowing* (1992). In it she writes:

Many of the works in *Land, Spirit, Power* could be thought of as forms of translation reaching across cultures on many different levels. They also show that this is a complex and subtle operation, and not a relatively simple matter of translation from language A to language B. It is more a matter of transforming knowledge—ontological mysteries and body language, historical representations and story-telling—in ways that are controlled by those who hold it. Knowledge is willingly being shared, but a point is reached where translation stops. This point should mark the beginning of a more broadly encompassing, necessarily humbling, appreciation of the knowledge of other cultures—of cultural difference (1992:99).

Stepping aside and creating situations where Aboriginal individuals and groups, if they so choose, can reclaim, recover and sustain “control of cultural specific knowledge” (Townsend-Gault 1992:76), is perhaps the first step that those in power in museums ought to take if they are sincere in wanting to change museums and museum practices and to expand the range of activity that can take place in museums. This would indeed mark the beginning of a genuine respect for the knowledge(s) of various Aboriginal groups.

**End Note**

As I reflect upon the material immediately before me I ponder the range of possibilities if museum professionals and anthropologists working in universities were to view the recent actions of Aboriginal Peoples as opportunities rather than constraints. Having just discussed the complexity and subtlety of cross-cultural translation I see a great benefit to the notion of museum professionals and Aboriginal representatives engaging in active collaboration in the production of
exhibits and programmes, for example. However, such active collaboration means that those currently in positions of authority will have to relinquish some control. It remains to be seen the degree to which they will be willing to do so.

In that regard, this dissertation is primarily directed at both museum professionals and anthropologists located in universities. Both practice from within institutions that fit Clifford's description of contact zones, engage in imperfect cross-cultural translations, speak and write from positions of power, work in complicated systems of authority, and both must now respond to previously marginalized groups.

My work is significant because it reveals the constructed nature of museum knowledge and thus that museum knowledge is emergent from relations of power. I have shown how museums and museum knowledge(s) can play a vital role in structuring social and political relationships in disparate communities. By approaching museums as social arenas or contact zones this dissertation exposes power struggles in museums and dislodges a whole set of assumptions about what museums are and how they work. Museums are sites of contestation and negotiation in part because of their capacity to articulate identity, power, and tradition or customs.

Focusing first on the invention of museums in Europe and then upon three separate Canadian museums I have illustrated the mobility and productivity of museum practices. The museums in this study, despite their different ages and locations, are more similar than they are different. Furthermore, the 'capacities' of these three museums coupled with their connection to the elite make them strikingly similar to their aristocratic European predecessors. It begs the question, is it possible to restructure museums, "those symbols of elitism and staid immobility" (Clifford 1997:219), to create more inclusive and representative institutions? I am an optimist who views the present predicament of museums as
an occasion for embracing cultural difference. My research at these museums revealed that despite the complicated and exclusive networks of authority within which museum knowledge is currently constructed, it is still possible for marginalized communities to use these elitist European inventions known as museums to articulate their aspirations. Clifford (1997:213) asks "What would be different if major regional or national museums loosened their sense of centrality and saw themselves as specific places of transit, inter cultural borders, contexts of struggle and communication between discrepant communities?" Accepting that while "[t]here may be no such thing as pure and disinterested reason, [...] there is no reason why competing interests cannot compete fairly" (Caputo 1987:234).

As I stated earlier, although museum anthropologists comprise only one part of the complex networks of authority within museums, they nevertheless represent a significant component. This makes their actions consequential. If museum professionals were to accept that the objects and interpretations they exhibit belong to cultural 'others' as well as to the museum, perceive "collections and displays as unfinished historical processes of travel" (Clifford 1997:213), and approach museums as contact zones rather than institutions of authority they may be liberated. In the process museum professionals would release museums from their elitist origins and expand the range of possibilities within them.

Museums, as I have shown many times throughout this dissertation, historically have served as sites from which the dominant sectors of society fulfill their aspirations. Increasingly, and relatively recently, Aboriginal Peoples have begun using museums to articulate their own aspirations—the exhibit The Spirit Sings (1988) being one powerful example. According to Clifford, museums serve as contact zones in which geographically and historically separated groups establish ongoing, though not necessarily equal, relationships. Therefore, museums perform a consequential role in the organization of social relations of
power between disparate groups. I specifically selected three museums in close geographical proximity to large communities of Aboriginal Peoples so that I could examine the changing relationship between museums and Aboriginal communities. In that sense this was also an exploration of the changing relationship between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Peoples of the region.

I was asked by one of my examiners whether and how my dissertation could be used by Aboriginal representatives. Possibly it could be used by various Aboriginal representatives to gain a clearer understanding of the complex processes by which museums function. Understanding how these systems work could be of use should Aboriginal representatives decide to penetrate such networks and gain a legitimate space from within which to act. On the other hand, it could also be that certain Aboriginal individuals and communities would, after reading this document, decide they want remain on the peripheries of such institutions. It may also be that the examples I have provided of Aboriginal representatives using museums to articulate their own aspirations might be empowering to some. Those articulations manifest themselves in various ways (boycotts, protests, exhibits, repatriation requests). Museums, as I have shown, can indeed be useful to both dominant and marginalized groups. Overall, I anticipate this work being used as a tool by various Aboriginal groups, if they choose to use it at all. To say more in regard to the usefulness of this dissertation for Aboriginal Peoples would simply be a reproduction of entrenched power structures.
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