

Introduction

Authenticity and Colonial Cosmology

People are living in the middle of their cosmology, down in amongst it; they are energetically manipulating it, evading its implications in their own lives if they can, but using it for hitting each other and forcing one another to conform to something they have in mind.¹

On 17 May 1999, the Makah Indians of Cape Flattery completed their first whale hunt in over seventy years. An 1855 treaty with Washington's territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, guaranteed the Makah the right to hunt whales, but with the near-extinction of the gray whale, they stopped whaling in the 1920s. By 1998, the gray whale was no longer on the endangered species list, and the Makah successfully applied to the International Whaling Commission for permission to reinstate their traditional and treaty rights. The Makah carried out the hunt using a combination of "traditional" and "modern" means. They harpooned the whale by hand from a canoe, then completed the kill with the use of speedboats and a 50-caliber high-powered rifle.

Public response was immediate, emotional, and violent. Within hours of the kill, the *Seattle Times* received almost 400 phone calls and e-mails; opinion was ten to one against the hunt. Schools on Indian reservations throughout Puget Sound received bomb threats; members of the Makah tribe received death threats. The slogan "Save a whale, harpoon a Makah" appeared on bumper stickers, an apparent call to return to the "Wild West" days of Indian killing.

Why did the whale hunt incite such outrage? According to the *Seattle Times*, "the most common reaction was disdain for a traditional hunt made with modern weaponry."² One man judged the hunt benign as long as all the Makah wanted was to "jump into leaky wooden canoes and row around, throwing sharpened sticks at passing whales." He changed his opinion when he learned of the technology the Makah planned to use: "If the Makahs intend to hunt whales in order to 'resurrect their cultural traditions and re-

build their community,' then they darn well better do it in the 'traditional' manner, sans elephant gun!"³ Some held that the Makah would better honor the true spirit of their tradition through a whale-*watching* rather than a whale-*hunting* operation. This alternative seemed self-evident, since, as one man pointed out, "most tribes pride themselves on being close to nature."⁴

Opponents believed that the Makah forfeited their claim to traditional rights by using guns and motorboats. Critics dismissed Makah explanations of whaling's traditional spiritual importance as disingenuous and superficial. They condemned the Makah as greedy, opportunistic, and arbitrary in their use of selected elements of tradition and modernity. "How can they have it both ways?" asked one man. "They want to retain or regain their heritage and yet they want to use the conveniences of modern science too? . . . This was just a money-making publicity ploy on their part and I am disgusted with it."⁵ A Seattle woman wrote: "if a people can pick and choose which old tradition to resume, does that mean descendants of white slave-holders should go out and capture themselves some slaves because they used to do that?"⁶ She was not alone in comparing the resumption of ceremonial whaling with the justification of terrible cruelty. Others asked whether they now had license to return to days of unfettered cannibalism, human sacrifice, wife beating, and Indian-scalping.⁷

Opponents to the hunt believed the Makah whalers were anachronistic as well as disingenuous. Letters to the editor charged the Makah with "living in the past," being "stuck in the past," retaining "outdated and useless practices of the past," returning to "the Stone Age," and "refusing to join the modern world."⁸ A Bremerton man asked: "How does any treaty written in the 19th century have any bearing in this day and age?"⁹ For these people Indian tradition was of the past; motorboats and rifles were evidence of its irreconcilability with the present. One man's question summarized this perspective: "Why can't these people move into the 20th century like civilized folk?"¹⁰

For the Makah whalers, however, the hunt was part of the twentieth century rather than an escape from it. The whale hunt revived a traditional practice in a decidedly and self-consciously contemporary context. Fundamentally presentist community concerns, including anxiety about assimilation and a desire to remain culturally distinct from the surrounding non-Aboriginal population, made this a hunt for identity as well as for whales.¹¹ The significance of the hunt for the Makah cannot be disentangled from the outrage it provoked. The outrage was historically specific

to the values of late-twentieth-century environmentalism, with its “save the whales” sloganeering. In this context, there was hardly a stronger assertion of difference from White society than whale hunting. This is not to say that the Makah were unanimous about asserting their difference in this fashion. Some embraced the self-presentation of Makah identity through the whale hunt, while others eschewed it.¹² The Makah engaged in their own struggle to define themselves. This struggle was poorly represented in the non-Aboriginal discussions of Indianness with which it only partially intersected.

As the Makah hunted for a twentieth-century identity, White opponents condemned them for trying to return to the nineteenth century. Both groups worked from assumptions whose roots lay buried in historically entrenched ideas about Indian authenticity. By the late twentieth century, these ideas had achieved a commonsense status that obscured their historical roots. This study excavates those roots by examining how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on the Northwest Coast used late-nineteenth-century colonial ideas about authenticity. Throughout the chapters that follow, the word “authenticity” should be read as shorthand for these historically specific notions of authenticity. In this book, authenticity is not a stable yardstick against which to measure “the real thing.” It is a powerful and shifting set of ideas that worked in a variety of ways toward a variety of ends.¹³ The work that authenticity did is the subject of this book.

Whites imagined what the authentic Indian was, and Aboriginal people engaged and shaped those imaginings in return. They were collaborators — albeit unequally — in authenticity. Non-Aboriginal people employed definitions of Indian culture that limited Aboriginal claims to resources, land, and sovereignty, at the same time as Aboriginal people utilized those same definitions to access the social, political, and economic means necessary for survival under colonialism. The non-Aboriginal opposition to the Makah whale hunt is just one example in the long history of this dynamic. Notions of authenticity were key elements of a colonial cosmology. In the evocative terms of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, people lived down among them, manipulated them, avoided their implications, and hit each other with them.¹⁴

In the following chapters, I use three separate episodes to consider some of these implications in historical perspective. The first episode is the story

of a group of Kwakwaka'wakw from northern Vancouver Island who performed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Clearly an example of cultural performance, their trip to the fair also stands as an example of modern wage labor and political protest. The Chicago World's Fair is an appropriate starting point because exhibits there galvanized the North American craze for Indian curios that plays a crucial role in subsequent episodes.¹⁵ Aboriginal migrant workers who picked hops in the fields of Puget Sound in the late nineteenth century are the focus of the second episode. Though other studies have examined Aboriginal involvement in fishing and canning—industries with clear parallels to pre-contact economies—none have examined Aboriginal people in the hop industry. The story of hops is in some ways a mirror image of the World's Fair. At first glance, the Chicago trip looks like the simple performance of traditional cultural forms, but it proves also to be an instance of modern labor and political expression. The hop industry initially appears to be a straightforward example of modern capitalist wage labor, but it is actually also closely bound to an array of indigenous priorities. The third episode moves from performance and labor to the law. It revolves around a 1906 legal proceeding brought by the Tlingit artist Rudolph Walton in an attempt to have his mixed-race stepchildren admitted to the White public school in Sitka, Alaska. Walton's story epitomizes the complex blend of practices and values that Aboriginal people achieved in this period. At the same time, the court's attempt to determine whether his children were civilized enough to attend the school is sobering evidence of the very real limits that colonial definitions imposed on Aboriginal lives. Though ubiquitous, such limits were nowhere more apparent than in the courtroom.

In presenting these episodes together, I draw connections between some wide-ranging circumstances. Players in these episodes may not have shared the same page since 1893, when a speaker addressing the Women's Congress at the Chicago World's Fair discussed Tlingit hop pickers in the Puget Sound hop fields.¹⁶ But if these episodes have not been told in the same breath before, the parallels revealed by so doing warrant such a telling. I use the commonalities of the episodes to challenge old generalizations, at the same time as I rely on their specificity to avoid the temptation to generalize anew. The people in these histories do not stand for "Aboriginal People of North America" or "Aboriginal People of the Northwest Coast," yet placed in a regional framework, their stories highlight broad strokes of common

circumstance that can be obscured in traditional monographs and ethnographies.¹⁷

The convergence of a number of cultural and political developments makes the late-nineteenth-century Northwest Coast a particularly apt time and place to focus a study such as this. Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska were incorporated into the nation-states of Canada and the United States at a moment when public interest in authentic Indians and pride in successful Indian policy were important components of both countries' sense of nationalism. Western North America was not the only place where anthropological and nationalist interests were linked, but their co-emergence on the Northwest Coast draws the connection into sharp relief.¹⁸

Anthropology—the study of authentic Indians—was a freshly minted discipline in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Motivated to preserve what they believed were remnants of dying Indian cultures, salvage anthropologists attempted to document old ways uncontaminated by White influence. In so doing, they erased the historical specificity of their own day and of their informants' lives. They transformed the most traumatic and turbulent period in the history of western North American Aboriginal people into the benchmark of timeless Aboriginal culture.¹⁹ Through fieldwork, publications, and museum displays, anthropologists filled the category of authenticity with attributes that still endure in popular understandings of Indianness. Anthropology's scientific status lent these concepts an aura of objectivity and legitimacy that was crucial to their persuasiveness.²⁰

The Northwest Coast was the focus of attention for some of this era's most influential producers of anthropological knowledge. The region was the site of an international "scramble" for Indian artifacts.²¹ It was where Edward S. Curtis, whose photographs became the visual epitome of vanishing Indian ideology, began his career. It was where Franz Boas, the foundational figure in professional anthropology in North America who made twelve trips between 1886 and 1930, conducted his fieldwork. And it was the destination of several prominent and well-funded scientific-ethnographic expeditions. The Jessup North Pacific Expedition, organized by Boas, ran from 1897 through 1903, and in 1899, the Harriman Expedition carried John Muir and Edward Curtis to Alaska. Such was the Northwest Coast's importance that one scholar has argued for its personification as an actor in the shaping of American anthropology.²²

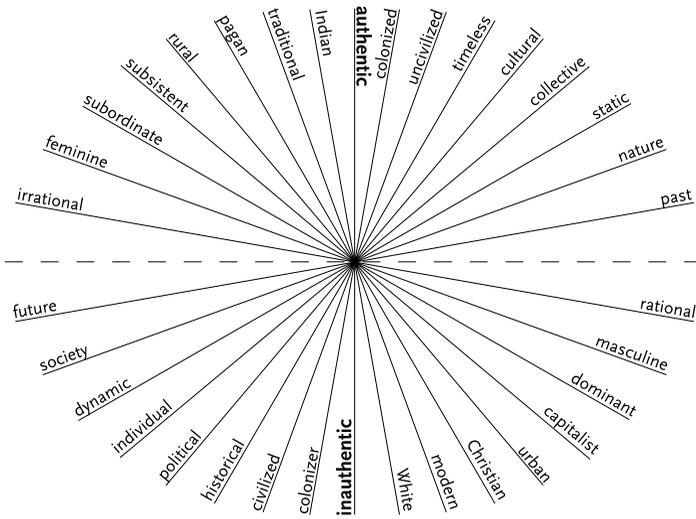
These individual and institutional attempts to capture vanishing In-

dianness resonated with contemporaneous cultural movements that highlighted concerns with authenticity. The so-called Great Divide between high (authentic) art and mass (inauthentic) culture gained prominence at the turn of the twentieth century. Emergent anthropology aligned itself with the former, and tourism did likewise with the latter.²³ These were also the early years of antimodernist sentiment in America. Antimodernists' quest for authentic experience fueled the growth of tourism and the Arts and Crafts movement. Both of these gave expression to the same sort of imperialist nostalgia that pervaded the myth of the vanishing Indian. Much like notions of authenticity, antimodernism reinvigorated elite dominance at the same time as it provided for expressions of alternative visions.²⁴

Indians were not the only people in whom antimodernists would seek and find authenticity. Moving into the early decades of the twentieth century, antimodernists grew fascinated with rural populations in places as diverse as Nova Scotia and Appalachia, transforming them from hard-working fishers, miners, and farmers into "folk." Dual processes of romanticization and commodification characterized the creation of these White "folk" as much as it did the manufacture of Indian authenticity.²⁵ Yet there were differences too. For White rural poor, excluded from most of modernity's comforts, folk designations could be "wages of whiteness" that rendered them worthy of outside assistance and attention.²⁶ For Aboriginal people, discussions of authenticity had a different racial tenor, marking them as separate rather than similar, even when absent of explicit racial references like blood quantum, halfbreed, and full blood.

These cultural values affected a broad swath of colonial society. Anthropologists, government officials, missionaries, reformers, boosters, settlers, and tourists were diverse, their aims and goals often contradictory. Some bore aggressive assimilationist, even exterminationist, intent, and others acted with gestures of human empathy and cultural curiosity. Tourists and anthropologists encouraged and rewarded Aboriginal people who presented their authentic selves even as government officials and missionaries deplored such displays. Yet officials and missionaries were concerned about potential income for their Aboriginal charges and so could hardly overlook the tourist market. Anthropologists and tourists also had their differences, as they competed with one another over scarce artifacts. These "tensions of empire" produced heated political and ideological battles. They also opened spaces for Aboriginal action and expression.²⁷

Whether they used definitions of Indianness in the context of policy,



1. Binaries of Authenticity. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, colonial society fashioned a powerful “either-or” notion of Indian authenticity that relied on a wide variety of associated binaries, a sampling of which are shown here.

religion, amusement, or science, colonizers shared an understanding of authenticity. They were collaborators in a binary framework that defined Indian authenticity in relation to its antithesis: inauthenticity. Parallel binaries followed. First among them was the distinction between Indian and White. Indians, by extension, were traditional, uncivilized, cultural, impoverished, feminine, static, part of nature and of the past. Whites, on the other hand, were modern, civilized, political, prosperous, masculine, dynamic, part of society and of the future.²⁸ Alignment between these oppositions was neither absolute nor without contradiction. Members of colonial society might value certain traits associated with Indians—like closeness to nature—positively or negatively. But non-Aboriginal people of all sorts set these traits in binary mortar, treating them as mutually exclusive and non-interchangeable. They agreed that real Indians could never be modern, and thus were (regrettably or thankfully, depending on the perspective) most certainly vanishing.²⁹

Notions of immutable Indianness espoused by “Indian haters” in the eighteenth century became widely shared by Indian haters and sympathizers alike in the nineteenth.³⁰ The precise language of difference—race, culture, blood, or nation—was less constant than the certainty of difference

itself.³¹ Binary understandings of cultural markers could work in a manner akin to the “one-drop” racial rule, whereby Anglo-Americans deemed black any individual with even “one drop” of African blood. The non-Aboriginal outcry over the Makah whale hunt offers one example of this. If the Makah were *authentic* Indians, the argument went, they would eschew modernity’s motorboats, high-powered rifles, and economic gains and embrace an exclusively spiritual hunt carried out with traditional equipment. Boats and rifles were both “drops” of modern technology and thus markers of inauthenticity. This binary logic concluded that the Makah were disingenuously posing to manipulate the situation to their best advantage. And the Makah were not the only ones. Self-identified Indians persisted throughout North America long after they gained English literacy, radios, guns, kettles, and casinos.

Although there has never been an official policy called “authenticity,” shared assumptions have functioned as such in many respects. Official policies could not have developed as they did without widespread agreement on these assumptions. Only a handful of people worked as policy makers, but everyone who engaged in colonial interactions participated in the manufacture and popularization of notions of authenticity. Widespread agreement on the binary definition effectively served a number of contradictory interests, including, as the art historian Ruth Phillips notes, “those of the romantic primitivists seeking an escape from industrial modernity, and those of the economic developers seeking hegemony over Indian lands and resources.”³² This binary construction could also serve the interests of Aboriginal people who sought income in the face of receding economic opportunities under colonialism. Many Aboriginal people made good use of stereotypes; they “played Indian” for White audiences by performing dances and selling curios.³³

This convergence of interests helps explain the aura of common sense that notions of authenticity quickly acquired. In the 1880s, Franz Boas complained of difficulty finding “real Indians,” and German audiences charged a group of touring Nuxalk with being “false Indians,” because they did not look the stereotypical part.³⁴ Through repeated enactment during literal and figurative performances, assumptions of authenticity became entrenched and increasingly invisible.³⁵ Ritual performance had long played a crucial role in Northwest Coast people’s lives, but under colonialism, Aboriginal people could not always control when they went onstage. They felt the colonial gaze not only when they performed intentionally but also

at home when Victorian tourists and ethnographers descended upon their villages and camps. Colonial viewers blurred the distinction between formally staged performances and the performance of everyday life. Whether at a world's fair, museum, curio-shop, or tourist destination, Aboriginal life was a spectacle for late-nineteenth-century North Americans.³⁶ Such interactions spawned assumptions that audiences could easily assimilate as natural truths. What could be more real, or more true, than something witnessed with one's own eyes?

Yet binary terms of authenticity constituted a powerful Catch-22 for Aboriginal people. The notion of a singular Aboriginal culture—a culture that could be preserved in the static representations of ethnographic texts, museum cases, or stylized performances—held Aboriginal people to impossible standards of ahistorical cultural purity. Aboriginal people inevitably deviated from their prescribed cultural set, because no culture conforms to an unchanging set of itemized traits, a fact that goes uncontested when the culture in question is the dominant one. But binary conceptions excluded those who adapted to non-Aboriginal culture from the narrow definition of traditional Indians. As Frank Ettawageshik of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians notes, policy makers consider “change in Indian culture as assimilation and ‘assimilation as obliteration.’”³⁷ The Puyallup of Puget Sound were thus legally obliterated in the mid-twentieth century when, based in part on the testimony of anthropologists, a judge ruled the tribe extinct because he deemed tribal members assimilated.³⁸ British Columbia First Nations were stung by similar reasoning in 1989, when Crown Counsel subjected witnesses to the so-called pizza test, implying that supposedly modern foods and conveniences undermined the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en land claim.³⁹ By this logic, modern Indians were not Indians at all, they were assimilated. Others were all too Indian; they belonged to a noble and tragic past but had no role in the future. Only the vanishing had legitimate claims to land and sovereignty; surviving modernity disqualified one from these claims. Either way, colonizers got the land. This double jeopardy resulted from dominant society's success at confining discussion of indigenous peoples to the parallel dichotomies of authentic versus inauthentic and traditional versus modern.⁴⁰

On the late-nineteenth-century Pacific Coast, ideas about authentic Indianness underwrote the actions of colonial newcomers in multifarious ways. Assured that real Indians, by definition, could not survive into the future, settlers, tourists, and capitalist-developers could believe that the si-

multaneous processes of capitalist growth and indigenous displacement were natural and inevitable. From the Chicago World's Fair, through the Puget Sound hop fields, to the first cruise ships up the Inside Passage, images of authentic Indians advertised the availability of land and resources. Developers used picturesque images of Indians to attract tourists, investors, and settlers. In many instances, the weekday capitalist-industrialist and the weekend sightseer were one and the same. Indian occupancy of the land might have posed a deterrent, yet it did not. Viewed through the lens of authenticity, these Indians were vanishing—more pathetic than powerful—and clearly unable to make proper use of the region's natural riches. These Indians could, however, labor for the benefit of capitalist-industrialists. The most straightforward labor occurred in agricultural fields and fish canneries. But providing entertainment—performing dances and selling Indian art, for example—was labor too. Non-Aboriginal people used the images generated by this latter form of labor as publicity for the region. Non-Aboriginal people reaped a double yield from Aboriginal workers: directly from those who sold their labor, and indirectly from images of those who labored.

Aboriginal people on the Pacific Northwest Coast faced a situation familiar to colonized populations elsewhere. From India to China to western North America, colonial regimes achieved hegemony when elites—native and newcomer alike—came to agree on the terms of reference and the forms of discourse.⁴¹ The nineteenth-century experiences of Northwest Coast Aboriginal people anticipated the situation of China's Miao minority a hundred years later. When they staked a claim to ethnic difference within modernity, they simultaneously helped preserve that difference in a cultural formaldehyde. As Louisa Schein writes, they thus reinforced the “hegemonic cultural system that stigmatized them.”⁴² This was the Catch-22 of colonialism that spanned the globe: engagement with colonial agents and categories—whether acquiescent, collaborative, or defiant—further entrenched colonial hegemony.⁴³

Aboriginal engagement with colonial notions of authenticity, such as their performances at world's fairs and in Wild West shows, involved self-representations that used and reinforced the colonial categories that framed them as “other.”⁴⁴ This begs the question why Aboriginal people participated in the commodification of their culture. In one sense, the answer is simple: they had no choice. As the political scientist James Scott notes, “for anything less than completely revolutionary ends the terrain of dominant discourse is the only plausible arena of struggle.”⁴⁵ This is true of subaltern

groups in general, be they peasants, slaves, or colonized subjects. None enjoy the power to determine the rules of engagement. For Aboriginal people on the late-nineteenth-century Northwest Coast, authenticity was a structure of power that enabled, even as it constrained, their interaction with the colonial world.⁴⁶

Participating in the manufacture of authenticity could bring economic, cultural, and political gains. In many instances playing Indian provided much-needed income. Images that conformed to dominant society's expectations were images that sold.⁴⁷ Such financial considerations were critical. Ethnographic performance and art belong to Aboriginal labor history, itself an underdeveloped area of study.⁴⁸ The episodes I discuss in the following pages would misrepresent the historical reality of Aboriginal life were they not labor histories as well as cultural histories.

Through self-representations that conformed to colonial expectations, Aboriginal people also gained access to an international public forum, where they could make dynamic assertions of identity, culture, and politics to White audiences.⁴⁹ For indigenous people, the very act of entering this international public sphere contradicted the colonial cast of them as "backward cultural conservators" and challenged their exclusion from modernity.⁵⁰

Aboriginal people were far less likely to gain access to this public sphere when they did not "play Indian." Contemporary Aboriginal people still find themselves subject to censure when they use nonindigenous forms to address political issues, or when, as with the Makah whale hunt, they play Indian in ways that offend the sensibilities of those who would believe in noble savages.⁵¹ The same does not hold true for those who couch their politics in forms that audiences perceive as traditional. Of course, audience members' tolerance results, in part, from their blindness to the political meanings of indigenous expression. In the late nineteenth century, as in the late twentieth, Aboriginal manipulations of authenticity were living contradictions of the "either-or" dichotomy, but non-Aboriginal audiences rarely noticed. They saw images that reinforced their preconceptions. Only those with "local cultural knowledge" understood the deeper meaning.⁵²

"Playing Indian" had complicated ramifications for the internal politics of Aboriginal communities.⁵³ Aboriginal people's engagements with authenticity were shaped by factors including status and ambition. Sometimes "playing Indian" brought elites the status or wealth necessary to perpetuate hereditary positions. As their ancestors a century earlier had done in the

maritime fur trade, late-nineteenth-century elites seized innovative ways to earn status and wealth, capitalizing on anthropologists' and tourists' preference for products and performances by those they deemed authentic. Hereditary elites did so even as ascendant *nouveaux riches* also found ways to benefit from playing Indian. Engagement with authenticity could transform hereditary status as much as it could reinforce it. Chance, too, played a role. Sitka Tlingit, for example, had little choice but to collaborate in authenticity more frequently than their relations in villages that did not become tourist meccas. Aboriginal people created myriad combinations as they fused new notions of colonial authenticity with older notions of hereditary status.⁵⁴

When the Aboriginal people I discuss in the following chapters engaged colonial categories, they invariably meant something different by them than did colonizers. Far from being smothered by a blanket of false consciousness, Aboriginal people twisted and transformed colonial concepts like authenticity in service of their own diverse and (for colonizers) unexpected ends.⁵⁵ It may thus be tempting to cast Aboriginal use of colonial categories as strategic essentialism. Yet, although significant strategic moments surely existed, reducing Aboriginal action to strategy alone misses some important truths. It overemphasizes the extent to which Aboriginal people lived in reaction to White society. It fails to account for the importance of notions of authenticity within Aboriginal communities. And it implies that Aboriginal engagements with authenticity were nothing more than fake simulation. Aboriginal people did not draw colonial authenticity around themselves like a curtain and continue on behind it with timeless "real" lives. There was no single, unified Aboriginal experience of true "authenticity." To suggest otherwise invokes an image of colonized populations so culture-bound by "the tyranny of custom" as to be devoid of human agency.⁵⁶ Aboriginal communities — like many others — crafted tradition and continuity through repeated and contested use. Emblems of cultural difference were broadly shared at the same time as they held varied meanings for different individuals.⁵⁷ Work, ritual, and personal relations are as much about politics as they are about culture.⁵⁸ Yet their political nature has often been obscured by the pathologizing of Aboriginal disagreements as "factionalism." Politics and diversity, after all, fall on the "White" side of authenticity's divide; the language of authenticity casts Indians as people of consensual culture rather than dissenting politics.⁵⁹ In fact, they were — and are — both. Aboriginal people were not subsumed by stereotypes, but nor did they entirely

eschew them. If we oscillate between these two inadequate possibilities, it is because the roots of authenticity's false dichotomy are still so deeply embedded in our own mental terrain. Such choices are the stuff of colonialism's Catch-22. They are the stuff of outrage against Makah who hunt whales in motorboats. Moments of Aboriginal self-essentialization, strategic or otherwise, are less instances of fake "put-on" culture than they are examples of how cultural representation works. As Gayatri Spivak points out, "it is not possible, within discourse to escape essentializing somewhere."⁶⁰ Representations of culture inevitably distort what we experience more as feelings than as objects. Always difficult, cultural representation becomes even more so because colonialism raises the stakes, and as Nicholas Dirks points out, transforms representation into "one of the most contested commodities."⁶¹ When representations become consumables, the value of an authentic stamp increases.

Aboriginal people on the late-nineteenth-century Northwest Coast confronted a dense thicket of options not of their own making. They pruned elements of "tradition" and "modernity" from this tangle and fashioned self-identities that were authentic on Aboriginal terms. This practice has not changed. Nor has the certainty of many non-Aboriginal people that these hybrid cuttings are inauthentic. Non-Aboriginal critics of the Makah whale hunt had no doubt that rifles and motorboats were aberrations of authentic Makah tradition. But, like Aboriginal people elsewhere, the Makah's tradition was one of change as well as continuity. The Makah who supported the hunt claimed legitimacy for their hybrid revival. They knew that, as twentieth-century Makah, they could use modern tools to honor their past and their ancestors without sacrificing their integrity or identity as Makah. This was itself a traditional act; countless generations of Makah had, in their own day, done likewise. The Makah created authentic meaning by reinventing old customs anew. As Dirks writes of another context, "the authenticity of the event was inscribed in its performance, not in some time- and custom-sanctioned version of the ritual."⁶² This, as another scholar writes, is tradition's true lifeline: the "heart and passion the dead once gave but can no longer."⁶³ Tradition is not the unwavering reproduction of the past so often called for; instead static replication is tradition's grave marker.⁶⁴

Today, the myth of the vanishing Indian is largely gone, as are government policies and public opinions that openly seek to eliminate Aboriginal

people. But the binary mindset that legitimated such policy and opinion remains widespread, deep-seated, and largely invisible. This part of the past is very much a part of the present.⁶⁵ Those who set the terms of colonial engagement captured elements of Aboriginal “authenticity” and arrayed them like pinned butterfly specimens, physical evidence of the righteousness of colonial rule. Those markers of authenticity still remain pinned and encased. It is yet to be seen whether twenty-first-century society will breathe some life into these dead forms.