

SPECTACULAR NATIVE PERFORMANCES

SPECTACULAR NATIVE PERFORMANCES:
FROM THE WILD WEST TO THE TOURIST SITE,
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation engages with anthropological debates of the representation of Native peoples in performance through a series of comparative case studies that examine Native North American participation in Wild West shows. Using multi-sited ethnographic and ethnohistorical approaches, it investigates the experiences of some Native performers with the top Wild West shows historically (1885-1930), of three Mohawk families who performed in a variety of spectacles (early 1900s), and of contemporary performers in Wild West show re-creations at EuroDisney (France) and Buffalo Bill Days (Sheridan, Wyoming, U.S.A).

This research focuses on Native performers' perspectives and experiences in order to complicate the picture of exploitation and commercialization in this context. In this dissertation, rather than focusing solely on the production of stereotypes, I trace the extent and various forms of Native agency and expressions of identity through a series of encounters that occur in a Wild West show "contact zone." Drawing on the concept of transculturation, I argue that Native performers adopted and used contact zone encounters as a space to express their opinions or to maintain, express, and/or contest Native identity. I thus elucidate the various forms of agency that Native performers have wielded, whether expressive, communicative, performative, or agency of cultural projects. A "cultural projects" approach to agency considers Native performers own goals and social relationships in addition to the socio-political constraints and power relations that structure their lives. Native performers had their own cultural projects; they actively pursued the opportunities and benefits of working in Wild West shows. I argue that narratives of opportunity, success, and pride found in the employment encounter, in oral histories of Mohawk performers' experiences, and in interviews with contemporary performers, represent agency of cultural projects. Oral histories from Mohawk performers' descendants and their interpretations of the archival record were crucial for revealing and substantiating these alternative perspectives of Native experiences in Wild West shows and spectacles.

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Imagine wild buffalo, Indians and cowboys together in an arena right before your eyes! With stagecoach attacks, gunfight showdowns, shooting demonstrations, horse-riding displays...this will be a night to remember.¹

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show Program²

- The Cowboys -

Auguste Durand-Ruel, the famous French impresario, welcomes the troop of Western riders - the cowboys! - as they race in on their horses.

- Buffalo Bill's Entrance -

Buffalo Bill welcomes the cowboys who carry the colours of the four ranches.

- Presentation of Annie Oakley -

The legendary rider and crack shot

- Presentation of Sitting Bull and of American Indians -

Buffalo Bill introduces the man who beat Colonel Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn, the great chief of the Sioux nation and members of his tribe.

- The Herd -

Image of the cowboys' daily life, as they drove their herds from the Texas plains to the cities of the North. We can see with what skill the cowboys capture the cattle...

- Buffalo Hunting -

Dances and rituals - on the theme of the visionary quest - that helped them hunt the legendary animals. A real buffalo chase...authentic Indian dances and songs

- Annie Oakley -

Returns to the arena and overwhelms the public with her shooting demonstrations

- Rodeo Games -

Teams of cowboys and Indians compete

- The Deadwood Stagecoach -

arrives, but just as it is crossing the arena, something unexpected happens!

- The Final Review -

Auguste presents the whole team for a last farewell to the public...Buffalo Bill pays a last tribute to the American West.

INTRODUCTION

THE WILD WEST LIVES ON

The preceding program for a Wild West show, a form of spectacular exhibition that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, could describe a Wild West show from the late 1800s. In fact, it is a program for the 2005 EuroDisney reproduction Wild West show in France. Why has North America's Wild West continued to fascinate audiences for over a century? And, more important in terms of this thesis, why would Native people wish to perform in a Wild West show, a genre of spectacle that, scholars have convincingly argued, has contributed to the production and dissemination of stereotypes and images of an "Imaginary Indian"?³

The more I investigated the popularity of Wild West shows, the more shows I found, not only throughout North America but in Europe as well. Contemporary spectacular travelling productions such as the Great American Wild West Show from Branson, Montana, promise "action, history and thrills" for audiences all over the world. Montie Montana Jr., based in Springville, California, states that "the tradition continues" with his one and only Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, touted as the best re-enactment show around. People all across the United States imagine their history through Wild West shows in Greenbush, Wisconsin; Pawnee, Oklahoma; and Cody and Sheridan, Wyoming. Or they may attend a re-enactment of Buffalo Bill's funeral at the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave in Golden, Colorado. Canadian equivalents include a Native Wild West at Pat Provost's Wild Horse Show and Buffalo Chase in Brocket, Alberta, and the Indian Village at the Calgary Stampede.⁴ First Nations from British Columbia perform at a Wild West theme park and re-enact traditional life at a living history site in Sweden.⁵ There are rodeos, teepees, and mining camps at Pullman City theme park in southern Germany.⁶ The Buffalo Bill Wild West Show reincarnation at EuroDisney is certainly the most spectacular re-creation, aimed to please even the most demanding spectator.

International fascination with "Indians" today is a continuation of historical discourses and processes. Contemporary Wild West shows emerged from a historical trajectory of the display of exotic Others. In the nineteenth century, displays and live performances featuring Native people were an established part of world's fairs, exhibitions, pageants, and a variety of Wild West shows.⁷ In these contexts, Natives were represented as the bottom of the savage-civilization scale, a position that naturalized and justified the evolutionary views and nationalistic aspirations of Europeans and Americans at the time. These contexts also promoted the image of an exotic "Imaginary Indian" that is still widely reproduced around the world today. Scholars have examined these essentialized, stereotypical representations and performances of "Natives" as an extension of the colonial project (e.g., Bank 2002; Jasen 1993-94; Mathur 2000;

Nash 1989; Parezo and Troutman 2001). These studies generally focus on examining processes of nationalism and colonialism and illuminate the socio-political context of dominant society. In this thesis I also consider how Native participants have viewed Wild West shows and how they have created their own meanings within this context.

A vast literature deals specifically with Colonel William F. Cody (also known as Buffalo Bill) and his famous Wild West show, which existed from 1883 to 1913. Comprehensive biographies on Cody (Blackstone 1986; Wilson and Martin 1998) and thorough histories (Kasson 2000; Moses 1996; Russell 1970; Warren 2005) provide insight on Wild West shows as an American phenomenon or as “America’s national entertainment.” These studies focus on the American experience: Cody’s life, his American tours, the frontier myth, and the making of American nationalism and identity as situated within a particular social, cultural, and political context. Russell’s seminal work (1970) was one of the first studies to outline the scope of Wild West shows systematically, whereas Blackstone’s work (1986) investigates Cody’s show as a business venture. Slotkin (1992, 1981) and White (1994) examine Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show (BBWW) in relation to the frontier myth.⁸ Warren’s recent book examines in more detail the historical context of the BBWW show in terms of the development of theatre, the rise of industrialization, and the growth of the upper class and an ethnically diverse settler culture in America (2005, xi). He interprets the meaning of the show’s content in terms of “domestication” (the settlement and urbanization of America) and racial tensions.⁹ Kasson’s study considers the performance aspect of Wild West shows, analyzing the show content and performances in terms of myth-making and “memory showmanship.” She focuses on the link between “Americans’ understanding of their history and their consumption of spectacularized versions of it,” illuminating the connections between performance, memory, and national identity (Kasson 2000, 8).

Reddin (1999), Shirley (1993), and Wallis (1999) explore other contemporaries of the BBWW show, with similar attention to the entrepreneurs and their Wild West shows. Shirley’s popular book about Pawnee Bill (1993) describes his life and adventures, including his Wild West show, while Collings (1971) and Wallis (1999) tell the story of the Miller family, including the history of their 101 Ranch and Wild West show. Reddin investigates the “Wild West show phenomenon” over a hundred years, from Catlin’s tour of his “Indian Gallery” of paintings, which was animated by Native performers in the 1830s to ’40s, to the BBWW show and the Miller Brothers show, and concluding with Tom Mix, a star of Wild West shows and movies in the 1930s. His book thus explores the evolution of the phenomenon and the “changing perceptions of the Plains and its people” through time (Reddin 1999, xvi), and he also provides details on European tours and audience reception. Gallop looks more closely at Cody’s tours in Britain, which showcased America’s West and achievements (2001, v, x). With the exception of brief discussions from Baillargeon and Tepper (1998), Bara (1996), Lounsberry (2000), and Skidmore (2003), there is a lack of

detailed and in-depth studies on American Wild West tours in Canada and Canadian Wild West show counterparts. Some researchers investigate more generally Native travels abroad, examining the cross-cultural encounters in a variety of performance spaces as well as their performances for a white audience (e.g., Calloway et al. 2002; Feest 1999; Foreman 1943; *Ethnohistory* 2003, vol. 50, no. 3).

But what about Native performers and their point of view? Scholars from various disciplines have begun to address some of the gaps in research by providing a more detailed analysis focused on Native performers in Wild West shows. Deloria (1981) describes Cody's relationship with Native people during his early career as a scout and buffalo hunter, and later as an entrepreneur, as one of general mutual respect. Moses (1996) examines the tensions between the images of Native people created in Wild West shows and those promoted by Indian agencies, and the struggle of one image to prevail over the other — the traditional, uncivilized Indian versus the civilized, educated Indian, respectively. Blanchard's synopsis (1984) of Mohawk showmen, Nicks's overview (n.d.) of Algonquian and Iroquois performers, and Smith's brief account (1976) of Maungwudaus's travels abroad also focus on Native experiences in performance. The fact that Native people organized *their own* performance troupes has received little attention in the literature (with the exception of Beauvais 1985; Blanchard 1983, 1984; Nicks 1999, n.d.; Nicks and Phillips 2007). In this thesis I propose that Native people's initiatives and experiences in Wild West shows is a site for the investigation of agency and of the negotiation of social meanings and representations of Nateness.

Representations of the Other

Focusing on the representation of Native peoples has been a productive way for scholars to examine the hegemonic production of stereotypes of the Other.¹⁰ Numerous edited books centring on the representation of Native people have provided valuable analyses of the production of cultural myths and images of the "Indian" (Bird 1996; Francis 1992; Doxtator 1992); the commercialization and appropriation of Native culture (Meyer and Royer 2001); the variety of images produced through time and who controls these images (Bataille 2001); and the representation and misrepresentation of Native people in history, literature, and film (Lischke and McNab 2005). Sites of cultural representation are complex and dynamic spaces for the construction of histories and identities (cf. Deloria 1998). Extensive scholarship exists on the representation of indigenous peoples and the construction of social meaning in various spaces of public display and performance, such as museums (Karp and Levine 1991; Phillips 2004a), world's fairs and exhibitions (Parezo and Troutman 2001; Raibmon 2000; Rydell 1984), film (Germunden 2002; Lischke and McNab 2005a), and tourism (Johnson and Underiner 2001; Nicks 1999; Stanley 1998). These analyses have been central to

our understanding of the history of colonial relationships as well as the contested nature and ideological and political uses of these representations.

Cultural representations in various spaces and media forms are both “cultural product and social process” as well as an arena for political struggle over social meaning (Mahon 2000, 468). The examination of representations of Native people, therefore, intersects with larger anthropological questions about the construction of cultural difference and Otherness. It also illuminates social processes of interest to anthropologists, such as the negotiation of power as productive and restrictive (e.g., Bourdieu 1990; Foucault 1980; Gramsci 1971), questions of agency (e.g., Ahearn 2001; Asad 2003; Ortner 1994, 2006), and the circulation of cultural images in a global world (e.g., Appadurai 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Mahon 2000, 467–68). Issues important to this thesis that are central to the debates on representation of Native people in relation to larger questions of power and agency include questions of indigenous “voice,” who controls representations, the performance of identity, the perpetuation of stereotypes, and the construction and negotiation of social meanings, histories, and identities.

Building on these studies, the goal of this thesis is to elucidate what insight may be gleaned about the Wild West show experience and performing in spectacle from Native performers’ perspectives and experiences in this context. This thesis considers the experiences of some Native performers with the top three historic Wild West shows, of three Mohawk families who performed in a variety of performance spaces in the early twentieth century, and two case studies of Native performers in contemporary Wild West shows. My investigation of Native participation in Wild West shows from the 1880s to the 1930s and their continuing participation in contemporary re-creations has three objectives. First, this thesis seeks to problematize and qualify the extent and form of Native participation in Wild West shows. Second, it investigates Native performers’ agency in terms of their experiences, performances, and representations of Nativeness in the context of Wild West shows and other spectacles. Third, it addresses the question of how Native identity is expressed, experienced, represented, and negotiated in this context. To this end I use a multi-sited, multi-method approach that includes fieldwork at tourist sites, interviews with Native performers and show producers or organizers, and oral histories from descendants of performers of the early twentieth century, in addition to archival research at the major depositories of Wild West material, mainly in the U.S.A.

This thesis contributes to the literature on Wild West shows and anthropological studies on the representation of Native peoples by forefronting Native perspectives and experiences in Wild West shows — past and present — in order to complicate the picture of the exploitation of Native participants and the commodification of Nativeness in this context. Anthropological studies on the representation of the Other offer valuable analyses of issues of power and hegemony, highlighting the impact of the colonial project on Native people and the legacy of Wild West shows in terms of perpetuating stereotypes, but these

studies often focus heavily on the constraints of socio-cultural or political structures while downplaying the possibility of agency. Drawing on a practice-theory approach to agency, I augment these studies by investigating how Native performers themselves have negotiated this context. In order to provide a nuanced analysis of the negotiation of representations and meaning in this complex space, I also follow scholars (e.g., Buddle 2004; Bunn-Marcuse 2005; Ginsburg 2002; Hendry 2005; Myers 1994; Turner 2002) who have recently studied indigenous self-representation in various media to examine how indigenous peoples are modifying, negotiating, and employing representations and images.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the theoretical approach of this thesis, starting with the idea of a Wild West show “contact zone.” This theoretical framework draws attention to questions of agency and identity, including pan-Indian identity. Within this framework, I also consider the notion of spectacle and related questions of simulacrum and authenticity as related to the Wild West show contact zone.

The Wild West Show as “Contact Zone”

In her book on the history of imperial meaning-making in and through travel writing, Pratt employs the concept of a “contact zone” to refer to “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (1992, 6). This definition highlights asymmetrical power relationships but does not preclude the possibility of resistance or agency. Pratt writes:

By using the term “contact,” I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination. A “contact” perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. (1992, 6)

She further explains this interactive contact zone as a space where transculturation occurs. First coined by Ortiz as an alternative to the notion of acculturation, *transculturation* describes a process whereby marginal groups selectively incorporate dominant culture to varying degrees for their own use (Pratt 1992, 6, 228). Other scholars have similarly noted how transculturation occurs in spaces of intense cultural contact, maintaining that it involves a two-way process of co-production (cf. Phillips 1998; Nicks 1999).

Clifford extends Pratt’s concept to examine museums as contact zones, as spaces of interaction between communities (1997, 204); he also argues that

contact zones involve negotiations of power and agency. Clifford asserts that museums are borderlands of “hybrid possibility and political negotiations” (1997, 212). Interactions in this space may be unstable and contentious, as was the case with the “Into the Heart of Africa” exhibit that was on display from November 1989 to August 1990 at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Clifford 1997, 206–7). He concludes that “the staging of cultural spectacles can thus be a complex contact process with different scripts negotiated by the impresarios, intermediaries, and actors” (1997, 199). Contact zones, therefore, are (post)colonial spaces of dialogical interaction and negotiation by various participants involving unequal power relationships.

The present study is concerned with how representation and performance of history, culture, and identity are negotiated in the Wild West show contact zone. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, sites of cultural display and performance such as Wild West shows, exhibitions, pageants, and other performances were one of the few spaces of contact in which non-Natives could see Native people and culture (cf. Buddle 2004; Herle 1994; Maddox 2002; Patterson 2002). Wild West shows thus may be conceptualized as a space where normally separated groups come together to see and be seen. These are not neutral spaces of display; rather, they are spaces where representations and meanings are actively constructed. Maddox draws attention to the fact that these performance contexts were also spaces for Native *self*-representation (2002, 9). But have Wild West shows provided spaces for alternative narratives, meanings, and experiences of Nateness?

Studies on performances of culture at fairs and powwows, for example, consider these performance contact zones as spaces for unity, agency, including but not limited to socio-political action (cf. Buddle 2004; Ellis 1999; Ellis et al., eds. 2005; Herle 1994; Lerch 1992). Powwows, for instance, encourage Native participants to imagine themselves as part of a larger community based on their shared history and experiences — poverty, discrimination, alienation (Herle 1994, 79). They are also spaces for construction and reflection of expressive cultural forms, including Native identity in the contemporary world (Blundell 1993, 5). Buddle similarly conceptualizes powwows as sites of face-to-face interactions where Natives make connections, advance political claims, and assert their own (re)conceptualization of indigeneity (2004, 31). Her examination of Native fairs suggests that Native participants have “reframed or indigenized the zone of contact” (Buddle 2004, 40). Have Native performers similarly “reframed or indigenized” the Wild West show contact zone or their expressions of identity in this context, and to what extent?

In short, the Wild West show contact zone is a performance space where Natives and non-Natives meet, interact, and create meaning. Pratt’s notion of the contact zone is a productive theoretical framework for this thesis because it considers the negotiation of both power and agency, highlighting processes of transculturation, or the “reframing or indigenization” of encounters and representations. I utilize the concept of contact zone as a framework for this thesis

to analyze the complex multiple encounters between non-Native people and Native performers in Wild West shows, as well as the negotiations of representation, performances, and social meanings that occur.

Like the colonial encounter that Pratt described as being characterized by coercion and inequality, the Wild West contact zone has involved control, exploitation, appropriation, and commodification of Native people and culture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, entrepreneurs recruited Native performers for a variety of shows and exhibitions. Reports of ill-treatment and complaints from Native performers, as well as the performance of social meanings such as progress and the superiority of white society in shows, reflect the unequal power relationships among the multiple players in Wild West shows. Contemporary Wild West shows continue to be motivated by market demands for the exotic Indian and the profits to be made by selling Nativeness. Although the Wild West contact zone has produced hegemonic discourses and stereotypical representations and power relationships have been unequal, there is evidence that Native performers have found ways to negotiate discourses and meanings, and, to a lesser extent, the representations themselves. In this thesis I seek to qualify the varying degrees and forms of agency that Native performers exert in diverse performance contexts through time.

Agency

It is outside the scope of this thesis to engage with all the debates about the usage and theoretical conceptions of agency. While I am aware of critiques of the anthropological use of the notion of agency, I find that some theoretical approaches to agency open up ways to think about, analyze, and explain Native performers' experiences. Specifically, I take a practice theory approach to agency that considers the dialogical relationships between socio-cultural structures and human action (Ortner 2006, 1994). Practice theory applies to this thesis because it attempts to "restore the actor to the social processes without losing sight of the larger structures that constrain," and it is based on examining cultural processes such as discourse and representation with social actors on the ground, opening up a space for questions of power and agency (Ortner 2006, 3).

I start with Ahearn's provisional definition of agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act," in which social action is mediated in both its production and interpretation (2001, 112). This definition leaves open some questions about intentionality, power, and forms of agency that scholars have critiqued and differ in their position on. First, scholars vary on the centrality of intention. Ortner takes a hard view of intentionality as differentiating "agency from routine practices," cautioning against the "denial of the intentional subject" while still recognizing the importance of unintended consequences (2006, 132, 136). Conversely, Asad critiques anthropologists' overemphasis of conscious intention (2003, 69, f.n. 6). Asad's critique is related to anthropologists' concern over the tendency to discuss agency in terms of free will or "responsibility"

(Ahearn 2001, 114). While agency “calls to mind the autonomous, individualistic, Western actor” (Ortner 2006, 130), I do not consider agency as solely the exertion of free will or individualistic experience. My view is similar to that of Ortner, who maintains that social agents are embedded in “the multiplicity of social relations in which they are enmeshed,” including power relationships (2006, 130–31). Asad similarly writes that agency emerges within networks that define and make possible relating to people, things, and oneself (2003, 78).

Second, scholars also differ in terms of the weight they give to power as cultural and institutional order (i.e., structure) and as social relationship (Ortner 2006, 5). Bourdieu (1977), like Foucault, focuses on the structural power that shapes people’s action and reproduces structure, as with his notion of habitus (Ortner 2006, 5). I take a more middle-of-the-road position, after Gramsci (1971), that power is never total, which allows the possibility of agency for social actors. Sewell contends that while structure consists of asymmetrical power relations, “agency [is] not opposed to, but . . . constituent of, structure” (1992, 20). He argues that social agents have knowledge of cultural schemata and access to resources (which are controlled by all members of society) and can be empowered by this access to resources; therefore, social agents are able to exert “some degree of control over the social relations in which [they] are enmeshed” (1992, 20). However, power differentials and the socio-cultural milieu affect social actors’ capacity for agency, which differs in kind and extent (Sewell 1992, 20). That is, agency is culturally and historically constructed; the form it takes varies in different times, places, and contexts (Ortner 2006, 136). In this thesis I explore how “agency is differentially shaped, and also nourished or stunted, under different regimes of power” (Ortner 2006, 137) — that is, different socio-political and economic structures consisting of power relationships ranging from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Schools to Wild West show entrepreneurs and contemporary heritage and tourism sites.

Third, scholars consider the form of agency: what does agency look like? An important question for this thesis is how to identify agency in the Wild West show contact zone. Ortner approaches defining agency by sorting out its components: whether agency involves intention, the cultural construction of agency, and the relationship between agency and power (2006, 134). Following Ortner, I view agency in terms of (i) power negotiations and (ii) intentions — what she calls “cultural projects.” She writes that agency as power “is organized around the axis of domination and resistance, and thus defined to a great extent by the terms of the dominant party, while [agency as the pursuit of projects] is defined by local logics of the good and the desirable and how to pursue them” (Ortner 2006, 145). The relationship between power and agency is inexorably linked, and while power is often thought of in terms of a domination/resistance axis, agency is not necessarily equated with resistance. I heed Abu-Lughood’s caution (1990) against the “romance of resistance.” As Ahearn points out, oppositional agency is only one form of agency; as Ortner concludes, domination and resistance are not irrelevant, but “questions of agency within relations of

power and inequality are always complex and contradictory” (Ahearn 2001, 115–16; Ortner 2006, 137; cf. Asad 2003). Throughout this thesis I trace agency as resistance to power *and* as intentions (cultural projects), and identify specific forms of agency that Native performers exert, always situated within the cultural, political, economic, and performative structures that constrain them. I refer to different forms of agency — cultural projects, communicative, expressive, performative — to specify the ways in which agency exists rather than claiming a large-scale, all-encompassing form of agency. That is, I trace agency in its specific and limited forms and degrees.

Constructing a Native Identity

The idea that identity is fragmented, multiple, and malleable is useful for understanding representations and performances of Nateness in Wild West shows through time. Hall writes that identity is unbounded and fragmented, consisting of multiple, and at times contradictory, subject positions (1992, 277, 279). As such, the postmodern subject connects with various identity positions at different times.¹¹ Hall further maintains that identity is never complete; it is always unfinished and under construction (1993, 360). This view of identity underscores the tension between essentialist perspectives of identity as a state of being and postmodern views of identity as a process of becoming (Hall 1996, 4).

But what constitutes Native identity? Scholars have debated the possibility of defining who is Native or indigenous and the implications of such definitions (e.g., Dombrowski 2002; Garrouette 2003; Kenrick and Lewis 2004; Kuper 2003; Weaver 2001). Some have examined how Native identity is constructed through externally imposed categories such as blood quantum, legal criteria, or the maintenance of traditional practices (e.g., Garrouette 2003; Lawrence 2004). Weaver (2001) identifies three facets of defining, measuring, and experiencing Native identity: self-identification, community identity, and external identification. She additionally considers Native identity to be a complex experience that is multiple, simultaneously an expression of individualism and collective or tribal, intertribal, and pan-Indian identity. Hanson similarly argues that ethnic identity is hierarchical in that there are different “levels of action” and levels of identity — local, tribal, and pan-Indian — that may operate simultaneously (1997, 203). Like Hall, these scholars emphasize the multiplicity and changeability of identity.

In this thesis, I maintain that Native identity is multi-faceted, an interplay among self-identification, tribal identification, and pan-Indian expressions. An examination of how “identity markers” are evoked in this study reveals how multiple representations and experiences of Nateness exist simultaneously and how Native performers negotiate meanings of Nateness. Considering who represents identity, and how, also illuminates processes of power and agency. I posit that agency may become visible by tracing Native performers’ ability to

negotiate the representations and social meanings of Native identity performed in Wild West shows.

Identity is also not solely an individual expression, but constructed in relationship to others; that is, identity is often based on difference in opposition to some Other (cf. Weaver 2001). Scholars (e.g. Francis 1992; Hanson 1997; Levy 2006; Mackey 1999; Said 1979) have considered how the dominant society defines Others in nation-building projects, where identity is based on symbols and representations and established through discourse (Hall 1992, 292–93). In her book on national identity in Canada, for instance, Mackey argues that power relationships influence how identity is shaped and how difference is perceived. She suggests that difference is not erased in national discourses but, rather, managed and restricted by a “flexible Western project” that is multiculturalism (Mackey 1999, 17, 163). It is still the dominant Euro-Canadian society that determines how much difference is acceptable and within what limits (Mackey 1999, 70). Hanson also considers identity to be a negotiation of difference, but highlights the adaptive and dialectic nature of ethnic identity (1997, 202). Identity is a dialectic process, he maintains, involving an interplay between self and Other “where the components of identity are historical outcomes of reflexive stereotypes between two or more groups” (1997, 195).¹² Hall’s argument (1992, 293) that narratives of national identity are told through the retelling of national histories, media, and popular culture applies to Wild West shows, which are prime sites for the construction of American identity. These studies provide guidance for my investigation in chapters 6 and 7 of how Nativeness is also constructed in terms of difference, that is, in opposition to American identity or Westernness, and is either recognized or erased in contemporary Wild West shows and re-enactments.

In addition, identity changes through time and is influenced by cultural, economic, and/or political factors. In the face of discrimination, for example, Native identity is denied, while in the face of assimilation Native identity is asserted (Weaver 2001, 244). In a similar vein, Castile notes for the U.S.A. that processes such as colonialism have created a “system of identity” that leads to a “system of valuation” (1996, 743).¹³ Castile discusses how this system of identity is commodified and how “Indian identity” changes in value, from the treaty era and the Dawes Act of 1887 to the counterculture and civil rights movements in the 1960s and ’70s to current environmental movements and tribal “corporate” politics of self-determination.¹⁴ Native identity is thus historically and culturally situated, and how Nativeness is defined and valued changes through time.

I follow these and other scholars who argue that Native identity is in part defined by others and influenced by socio-political forces. Socioeconomic and political influences on Wild West shows include BIA policies on employment, the reservation era and Indian schools, and the increasing popularity (and economic possibilities) of variety entertainments. As an influence on the construction of Nativeness, Wild West shows have played a real role in the formation, solidification, and perpetuation of social meanings of Nativeness. However, as I will show, the production and performance of Nativeness for public consumption

does not necessarily lessen the meaning of performances or experiences for Native performers.

Pan-Indian Identity

The concept of pan-Indianism is useful for an analysis of performances and experiences of Nativeness in Wild West shows because it addresses questions of cultural exchange, identity, and authenticity. However, pan-Indianism as a concept requires reconsideration because it is often associated with notions of a “generic” or homogeneous and less “authentic” Indian identity. Early scholarly studies from the 1950s and ’60s theorized pan-Indianism as an acculturating or assimilating process and tended to explain culture change among Native Americans in terms of cultural loss (e.g., Howard 1955; Kurath 1957). Howard offers one of the first definitions of pan-Indianism, as “the process by which sociocultural entities . . . are losing their tribal distinctiveness and in its place are developing a non-tribal ‘Indian’ culture” (1955, 215). This definition is problematic because it assumes an old evolutionary view of culture as a static and bounded entity and emphasizes the disintegration of some authentic, original, traditional culture. It also presumes that local distinctiveness will inevitably be engulfed by a new “non-tribal” entity that is no longer quite Indian.

In the late 1960s and ’70s, scholars continued to examine changes in cultural expressions (art, music, and dance) but focused on pan-Indianism as a form of revitalization rather than loss, reflecting the socio-political activism of the time; these studies also highlight the complexities of pan-Indian identity and how pan-Indian movements affect contemporary Native life (e.g., Ellis 1990; Fiske 1977; Hertzberg 1971; Lurie 1971). Fiske investigates the degree to which Natives actually engage in pan-Indian institutions or remain “tribal enclaves,” concluding that participation in pan-Indianism depends on their need to assert or reaffirm Indian identity (1977, 361).¹⁵ Lurie maintains that pan-Indian identity consists of local traits, traits of white origin reinterpreted in unique ways that become part of Native culture, and traits diffused from tribe to tribe (1971, 419). She argues that pan-Indianism may be viewed as pluralistic, based on “articulatory movement” of multiple identities by which Native people attempt to reach the public and win support for their goals by utilizing this “general Indian identity” (1971, 418). In other words, pan-Indian identity unites people ideologically to “provide structures for action” (Lurie 1971, 443). These studies underscore the multiplicity of Native identities, the complex interactions among and between Native groups and the public, and the potential use of Native identity as a form of solidarity and social action.

Because pan-Indian theories grew out of acculturation studies and focused on assimilation and later revitalization, the concept fell out of favour.¹⁶ In particular, the notion that pan-Indian expressions lead to a generic Indian identity is problematic, given the persistence of tribal variation (Ellis et al. 2005, x, xii; Powers 1990, 108). Jackson and Levine opine that pan-Indianism presupposes a

“primordial boundedness” of Nativeness and assumes that participation in intertribal social gatherings results in a loss of cultural distinctiveness (2002, 301–2). Notwithstanding these critiques, pan-Indianism has resurfaced in the literature after a brief hiatus.¹⁷ Recent studies consider pan-Indianism in the context of Native urban experiences (e.g., Jackson 2002; Proulx 2003), political activism, and indigenous media such as film, television, the Internet, music, and cultural performance (e.g., Buddle 2004), which have led to a reconsideration of the notion of a broader “indigenous” identity. The powwow literature also offers a productive critique on pan-Indianism and pan-Indian identity (e.g., Browner 2002; Ellis 1999; Ellis et al. 2005; Herle 1994).¹⁸ These studies offer new perspectives on the construction of Nativeness in various contexts, drawing attention to the multiple meanings and uses of pan-Indian identity.

In terms of examining pan-Indian expressions in Wild West shows, my view is similar to that of Weaver, who is critical of models of identification that suggest that attachment to one culture means detachment from another (2001, 249). Attempts to define and measure indigeness by “external others,” she argues, creates linear scales of cultural identity that form a continuum from tradition to bicultural to assimilated (2001, 248–49). Instead of viewing pan-Indianism as strictly a homogenizing process, I define pan-Indian identity as an intertribal expression that exists in tandem with other local or tribal expressions of identity, and consider pan-Indianism as a process of intertribal exchange and inter-national (with other nations and with the public) contact.¹⁹ Pan-Indian identity is another form of group identification, often for specific contexts. Therefore, I propose that it would be useful to consider how pan-Indian identity may be employed to *contest* and/or *assert* and reclaim multiple expressions of Nativeness, as is the case at EuroDisney and Sheridan’s Buffalo Bill Days. I further suggest that pan-Indianism may be theorized as an active form of agency rather than assimilation. As I will show in chapter 7, some Native performers use pan-Indian identity strategically to negotiate Native–non-Native encounters and to contest stereotypical representations of Nativeness.

By examining how some Native performers reflect on and employ Native identity within a complex field of cultural production and performance, I highlight how Native performers negotiate representations, experiences, and meanings of Nativeness as well as their agency in the context of Wild West shows. Note that some scholars favour the term *intertribal* over *pan-Indian*. Powwow participants, for example, rightly prefer to call these gatherings intertribal (cf. Browner 2002; Ellis et al. 2005). However, I prefer the term pan-Indian when referring to Wild West shows because it recognizes the Native–public contact zone as well as intertribal relationships, and draws attention to external (i.e., non-Native) influences on the construction of Native identity more so than the term intertribal.

Performance: Spectacle, Simulation, and Authenticity

With the exception of Kasson (2000) and Whissel (2002), the centrality of performance in Wild West shows — past and present — has generally been overlooked and requires further consideration. In chapters 3 and 6, I draw on the concepts of spectacle, simulacrum, and hyperreality to demonstrate how Nativeness is constructed, negotiated, and disseminated via Wild West shows by multiple social actors. These concepts also bring to the forefront questions about reproduction and authenticity.

In this thesis, *performance* refers to a dramatic and cultural presentation that is “an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience” (Bauman 1992, 41). As dramatic productions, Wild West shows may be further distinguished as spectacles.²⁰ *Spectacle* comes from the Latin word *spectare*, which means to look at (MacAloon 1984, 243; Manning 1992, 293). Spectacles are large-scale performances that give primacy to “visual imagery and dramatic action” (Manning 1992, 291). They are often viewed negatively, being associated with “tastelessness, gigantism, moral disorder” and considered “mere entertainment” (MacAloon 1984, 265). In his essay on the Olympic Games, however, MacAloon asserts that spectacles offer insight into contemporary social and cultural life (1984, 265). He argues that spectacles are “public forms of condensing, displaying, and thinking it out” (1984, 247, 272), and further suggests that the Olympics are a space in which “categories and stereotypes are condensed, exaggerated, and dramatized, rescued from the ‘taken for granted’ and made the objects of explicit and lively awareness” (MacAloon 1984, 274–75). Spectacles provide opportunities to “enact and communicate values, beliefs, concerns” (Manning 1992, 291).

MacAloon maintains that performances reflect something about social life and cultural structures. But performances do not only mirror or reflect society; they are also emergent forms and forms of discourse (MacAloon 1984, 10). This means that they are also *reflexive*. MacAloon concisely articulates the potentially reflexive nature of performance:

Cultural performances are more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasions in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others. (1984, 1)

In terms of MacAloon’s work on spectacle and cultural performance, Wild West shows are spectacles that tell stories about America, not merely forms of entertainment. They reflect *and* form notions of Westernness and Nativeness, as I will illustrate.

The processes of reproduction and re-enactment in spectacle create and communicate a sense of reality, truth, and value (Manning 1984, 297). Yet these

performances are ambiguous and complex. Performance, Diamond argues, “embeds features of previous performances” that are now absent, creating this elusive quality of the *re*: performances thus “reembody, reinscribe, reconfigure, resignify” (1996, 1, 2). Performance, then, is a dynamic form of expression and re-expression. New performances are not simply exact reproductions; rather, re-enactments have the possibility to produce new and/or other meanings. While performances at contemporary Wild West shows suggest links to past performances through re-enactment, they also produce other meanings, re-evaluating, reconstructing, and re-inscribing Nativeness in new ways.

Debord (1983) takes another view of spectacle, using it as a metaphor to describe social life as a whole. He argues that “all of modern life is a spectacle, a pathological condition that preempts valid social discourse” (Manning 1984, 296). For Debord, “spectacle is not a set of images, but social relations mediated by images. Spectacle in this view is a metaphor of modernity, not a performance genre that is nurtured by modernity and that, in turn, interprets it” (Manning 1984, 296). Drawing on Debord, Schwartz (1998) also suggests that spectacle is a quality of modernity. In her book *Spectacular Realities*, she examines the spectacularization of Paris city life in the nineteenth century and its relationship to the emergence of mass culture (Schwartz 1998, 2). Spectacularization refers to the transformation of something ordinary into a spectacle to be viewed by the public. She investigates how a diverse Parisian public became a “crowd of spectators” in a variety of spaces such as the boulevard, the Paris Morgue, and wax museums, which all provided “visual representations of reality as spectacles” that, she argues, became interchangeable with reality (Schwartz 1998, 5, 6, 10). Although I do not draw directly on Debord in this thesis, I mention him here because his work has influenced Schwartz’s study of spectacle and Baudrillard’s work on simulation.

Spectacles of Hyperreality and Simulation

Scholars have examined the tensions between reality and image, original and reproduction, representation and simulation (e.g., Baudrillard 1983; Benjamin 1968; Debord 1983; Eco 1986). Postmodern studies have employed *simulacrum* as a representation that has become “split” from the original and has attained “real” status in itself (Fernandez 1995, 251, n4). Baudrillard argues that simulations are more than representations of the original; the simulation (or reproduction) becomes the original in itself (1983, 11–12). He theorizes a world of models and simulacra so powerful that they themselves become the reality, without reference to any original (in Fernandez 1995, 251 n4). In Baudrillard’s view, simulation is not a fake; it is “something in which appearance in itself is the actuality” (Schechner 2002, 118). He suggests that simulation can reach a point where the distinction between the simulation and real becomes obscured, as has been the case with Wild West shows, where the simulation (re-enactment) of history and identities becomes viewed as authentic representation.

Eco's concept (1986) of hyperreality offers another view of conceptions of reality and reproduction. Based on his observations of semiotics in the entertainment industry,²¹ Eco argues that America is "obsessed with realism":

American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake, where the boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehood is enjoyed in a situation of 'fullness,' of *horror vacui*.
(1986, 98)

This obsession with credible reconstructions, he suggests, creates a world of hyperreality, a world where reproductions are the norm. So real are these reproductions that they replace the original, or at least the need to see the original. On hyperreality at the Palace of Living Arts in Buena Park, for example, Eco writes: "The Palace's philosophy is not, 'We are giving you the reproduction so that you will want the original,' but rather, 'We are giving you the reproduction so you will no longer feel any need for the original'" (1986, 19). But these must be "authentic copies" or "signs" of the real thing, so much so that we forget that they are replicas. Eco argues: "the sign aims to be the thing, to abolish the distinction of the reference, the mechanism of replacement. Not the image of the thing, but its plaster cast, its double in other words" (1986, 7).

The concepts of simulacrum and hyperreality offer a starting point for understanding the reproduction and re-enactment of history, culture, and identity in Wild West shows, and are particularly relevant for my analysis in chapters 3 and 6. Historic Wild West shows reproduced the life and history of America's West, and in chapter 3 I take up Baudrillard's and Eco's question of simulation and show how re-enactments become viewed as authentic.

One site for the analysis of reproduction or re-presentation has been tourism. The Disney industry provides a prime example of the application of simulacrum and hyperreality. Eco postulates that "amusement cities" like Las Vegas and ghost towns reconstructed or preserved as Western cities are "message cities" made up of signs, but are not absolute fakes like Disneyland (1986, 40). Disneyland, on the other hand, plays a role in stimulating the need for hyperreality. Eco suggests that Disneyland presents its "reconstructions as masterpieces of falsification" (1986, 43). While this falsification may be transparent, Disneyland also attempts to produce mnemonic representations of America in a way that hides its constructed nature "backstage." Eco attempts to address this contradiction by stating that while Disneyland admits the fake, it must also "seem totally real," and does so by presenting authentic cuisine and décor, for example (1986, 43–44). Alternatively, Baudrillard suggests that Disneyland is a social microcosm of the "real America" and attracts the public because it offers a lens through which to view American life:

Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation. To begin with it is a play of illusions and phantasms: Pirates, the Frontier, Future World, etc. This imaginary world is supposed to be what makes the operation successful. But what draws the crowds is undoubtedly much more the social microcosm, the miniaturized and religious reveling in real America The objective profile of America, then, may be traced throughout Disneyland . . . All its values are exalted here, in miniature and comic strip form. (1983, 23–25)

In Baudrillard's and Eco's work, a blurry line exists between notions of the real, hyperreal, simulation, reproduction, image, and fiction. From a postmodern perspective, conceivably there is no line at all. Unlike Diamond's view of performance or MacAloon's study of spectacle, Baudrillard and Eco offer perhaps an extreme position that postulates the triumph of hyperreality and simulations, which eliminates the possibility of alternative or new meanings to emerge in re-enactments. For this reason, Bruner criticizes concepts such as simulacrum, arguing that "all performances are 'new' in that context" (2005a, 5). Still, theoretical conceptions of spectacle as simulation and hyperreality provide a productive approach for examining performances in Wild West shows, because they intersect with the notion of authenticity. Questions about the constructed nature of social reality by these scholars and others have led to a critique of the essentialization and reification of analytical categories such as culture and identity. At the centre of those debates are theories of authenticity and the "invention of culture."

Authenticity

Anthropologists and other scholars have debated the concept of authenticity at length (cf. Clifford 1997; Bruner 2001; Eco 1986; Feinberg 2006; Handler 1986; Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983; Jolly 1992; Linnekin 1991; Mauze 1997). At the centre of these debates is the link between authenticity and anthropological and popular ideas about culture or tradition. The notion of authenticity often leads to the reification, essentialization, and objectification of culture and tradition, as was the case at some Maori tourist sites described by Taylor (2001). When tourist sites or exhibits claim authenticity, they usually "reify and value a specific moment" (Clifford 1997, 161). Essentialized notions of culture or tradition frequently consist of dichotomies such as authentic or inauthentic, traditional or modern (Jolly 1992, 49). In the work of Eco and Baudrillard, for example, authenticity depends on the notion of originals and fakes, genuine and spurious (see also Handler and Linnekin 1984). This essentialist language is also problematic because it implies that some better "true original" exists (Bruner 2005c, 163); scholars agree that the idea of an authentic pristine tradition or unchanging culture is invalid. Thus the concept of authenticity

has been critiqued because it leads to essentialized views of culture or tradition and it implies that some pre-existing, pristine, original culture exists.

Because authenticity as an analytical concept has proven to be problematic, some anthropologists have abandoned it altogether. Other scholars have suggested alternative theoretical conceptions of culture in terms of “invented tradition” (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983) and “hybridity” (Clifford 1997). Postmodern and constructionist approaches theorize culture as fluid, constructed, and constantly negotiated; authenticity is thus redundant.²² For example, Clifford proposes that we think about culture in terms of hybridity rather than authenticity, which conveys historic change, tensions, and relational processes as well as those “shadowy edges” and contact zones (1997, 161, 183). The concept of transculturation similarly highlights relational cultural processes, as already discussed. In the edited book *Present Is Past*, the authors re-conceptualize authenticity and tradition, arguing that anthropologists should think of tradition as dynamic, encompassing both continuity and change (Mauze 1997, 7).

Theoretical conceptions about the “invention of tradition” and its implications similarly became the centre of much debate (Linnekin 1991, 446). The idea that tradition is invented, or hybrid for that matter, is perceived as still being predicated on the idea that some traditions are invented while others are not (Tilley 1997, 83). Furthermore, theories that highlight culture as constructed or invented may be problematic when indigenous peoples themselves employ discourses of authenticity. Notions such as “hybridity” and “invented” may jeopardize indigenous claims to rights and resources as well as their statements of identity and culture, which often depend on discourses of authenticity (cf. Clifford 1997; Dombrowski 2002; Hodgson 2002; Levy 2006; Linnekin 1991). Therefore, anthropologists must also recognize strategic claims of authenticity as sites of resistance and empowerment, that is, agency (Clifford 1997, 183).

These debates highlight the complexities and paradoxes of the notion of authenticity. Because of these implications and the persistent use of authenticity by the people anthropologists study, discourses of authenticity remain an important site for analysis in this thesis. As Clifford suggests of hybridity, it is important to consider how authenticity is embedded in specific historical and political contexts (1997, 161). In this thesis I think about authenticity as a discourse and “social process” that involves competing interests and interpretations (Bruner 2005c, 163). I posit that attention to discourses of authenticity at tourist sites reveals important details for analyses in terms of the negotiation of power, knowledge, and performances of culture and identity.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The organization of the individual chapters of this thesis requires some explanation. Chapters 2 through 7 are organized into two main parts. The first part of each chapter sets the context of Native participation in Wild West shows, which consists primarily of the views of dominant Euro-American society. It

deconstructs the context and presents an analysis of the power structures shaped by dominant society based on the archival materials and popular media that I have examined. The second part of each chapter builds on this analysis with the aim of complicating our understanding of Native participation in Wild West shows and other spectacles. Drawing on archival sources, interviews with Native performers, and oral histories, this section brings forward Native performers' perspectives and experiences. It points to additional ways of thinking about and analyzing what we know about Native participation in Wild West shows. Chapter 5 is the exception to this format; it is organized biographically by family and focuses predominately on Native perspectives, aided by oral histories and archival sources from Kahnawake, Quebec.

The next chapter, "Methodology," explains my multi-sited, multi-method research approach. The first section outlines my process of establishing and organizing multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork as well as the nature of the data produced in the course of conducting research. Fieldwork observations and analysis of popular media were useful, but interviews with Native performers provided vital data for my analysis by offering insight on Native perspectives. The second section explains the various sources of data generated by ethnohistorical research, including written and visual archival sources and oral histories, and outlines the potential biases and strengths of these sources for this project. My multi-method approach provides a diachronic perspective on Native experiences in Wild West shows, and the dialogue between various sources also led to Native interpretations of the archival record and of Native performers' experiences.

Chapter 1, "Where the Wild West Show Began: Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, and the Miller Brothers," provides background on the Wild West show phenomenon from the 1880s to the 1930s and establishes the context of Native experiences and representations of Nateness in Wild West shows. It outlines the origin, content, and format of the top three Wild West shows in which Natives participated: Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show, and Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show.

The next three chapters, 2 to 4, examine historic Wild West shows in terms of a series of "contact zone" encounters. Although "working," "performing," and "touring" with Wild West shows have been separated into three chapters, they should be read as one contact zone consisting of a series of overlapping, interconnected encounters. These chapters focus on Native performers from reservations in the U.S.A. and the American context, and are based mainly on archival materials from the United States. Chapter 2, "Working in Wild West Shows," explores Native performers' experiences as employees of Wild West shows as a colonial contact zone characterized by unequal relationships among multiple actors: the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian School officials, show entrepreneurs, and Native performers. The focus of this employment encounter is on the hiring and recruitment of Native people for Wild West shows. While it is a story of exploitation and commercialization, I also draw attention to the fact that Native performers reframed this encounter as one of

opportunity. Drawing on Ortner's (2006) view of agency as cultural projects, I show that Native performers actively pursued the opportunities and benefits of working in Wild West shows, including the chance to travel freely and procure much-needed income while at the same time maintaining traditional activities and the family unit.

Chapter 3, "Performing in the Wild West Show," focuses on performance encounters as part of the Wild West contact zone. I examine how Wild West shows utilize performance strategies such as "spectator position" and "pictorial realism" to establish the authenticity of representations of history and identity. Performances perpetuated myths of the frontier and American progress as they invoked tropes of exotic warrior savages. Wild West shows produced stereotypical images of exotic noble savages, but Native performers also constructed social meaning in this performance encounter. As a space where transculturation occurs, I argue that Native performers adopted and modified the performance encounter. They constructed and experienced Nateness through their expression of warrior identity and through maintaining traditional dance and dress, demonstrating expressive agency.

Chapter 4, "Touring with the Wild West Show," examines the social meanings produced by newspaper reports generated by Native performers' tourist encounters. I suggest that newspaper reports disclosed tensions between Natives and white settler society, but that those reports also advanced a "foe-to-friend" narrative in an attempt to resolve those tensions and white society's ambiguous relationship with Native people. While Native performers also spoke diplomatically about friendship, I maintain that they also used their status as performers to express their opinions about Indian conditions and entitlements, which illustrates communicative agency on their part.

Chapter 5, "Not the Only Show in Town: A Case Study of Mohawk Performers," is based on the rich history available in archives and oral histories from Kahnawake (Mohawk territory in Quebec, Canada). It provides a case-study analysis of Mohawk performers who participated in Wild West shows and a variety of exhibitions, commemorative events, pageants, and vaudeville from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Many of these performance contexts share a Wild West theme and/or depend on images of a noble savage. However, oral histories from the descendants of Native performers offer additional interpretations of the archival record and thus of Native performers' experiences and performances. Statements of identity, pride, and success imbue these oral histories, and these statements are evidence of their cultural projects. This chapter illustrates how an investigation of archival materials that incorporate oral histories and Native interpretations may bring us closer to understanding Native perspectives of this experience. This chapter also lends support to my conclusions about the historic American context.

The last two chapters of this thesis move ahead into the twenty-first century to investigate contemporary reproductions of Wild West shows in France and in the United States. Chapter 6, "An Encore Presentation: EuroDisney's

Spectacular Wild West,” examines how the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show at EuroDisney, France, constructs Westernness and Nativeness in an international performance contact zone. Theories of hyperreality and simulacrum provide a useful lens for deconstructing “Disneyfied” histories and identities, but do not offer much insight into Native experiences. An analysis of discourses of authenticity, however, demonstrates the negotiation of power and knowledge production, drawing attention to the compromises between managers and Native performers. Interviews with Native performers illuminate questions of stereotypical representations, identity, and agency. Through this interview data, I elucidate how performance of Nativeness in this spectacular encounter creates a space for evaluation and expression of Native identity, which is a multiple expression of external, personal, experiential, tribal, and pan-Indian identities. While the chance for Native performers to challenge representations of the show itself is limited, I suggest that the opportunities working at EuroDisney provides and the pride they feel as a result of their professional accomplishments represent their agency of cultural projects.

Chapter 7, “Commemorating the Wild West in America: Western History, Native Identity,” considers Native participation and the (non-)recognition of Nativeness at American Wild West shows, in particular at Buffalo Bill Days in Sheridan, Wyoming. I illustrate how “heritage-making” at Buffalo Bill Days involves a complex process of inclusion and exclusion in which selected histories and identities are commemorated. While Buffalo Bill Days generates official discourses of Westernness, Native performers offer alternative narratives of Nativeness through their performances of contemporary pan-Indian identity based on powwow music, dance, and dress. I maintain that this is an example of performative agency in that they use these performances of identity to negotiate interactions, contest stereotypes, and make statements of cultural continuity. I also suggest that their performative agency is strengthened by their approach, which is didactic and focuses on their skills and traditional knowledge to contest spectacular versions of Nativeness found in Wild West show re-enactments. The Pawnee Bill Wild West Show in Pawnee, Oklahoma, provides another example of an American Wild West show re-enactment at a heritage site and museums that similarly struggles with the inclusion of Native participation and representations.

The concluding chapter brings to light how a multi-sited, multi-method research approach that draws on theoretical lenses of transculturation and agency of cultural projects enriches our understanding of Native experiences in shows, through a synthesis of my findings, revisiting the three main objectives of the thesis: to qualify Native participation in Wild West shows; to identify the form and extent of Native performers’ agency; and to illuminate the negotiation of Native identity in this context. This chapter highlights how a different theoretical approach and a focus on Native perspectives and interpretations provide additional readings of Native experiences and performances in shows. This thesis reveals narratives of opportunity, success, pride, skill, and identity as it demonstrates the negotiation of representations and social meanings.

A Note on Terminology

I originally wanted to use the term *Aboriginal* to refer to the indigenous people of North America; however, I found that performers at EuroDisney did not recognize or associate themselves with this term. I have chosen to use *Native* as opposed to more politically correct terms such as *First Nations* or *Native American* because it is more inclusive of both First Nations from Canada and Native North Americans from the U.S.A. I occasionally use *Indian* in reference to historical contexts and contemporary theoretical usage, as well as when employed by the people I interviewed. When known, I include tribal and nation and/or band affiliations. Because I use the term *Native*, I use *Nativeness* as opposed to *Indianness* — used in the literature — for consistency. More recently, *indigeneity* has been used by scholars, but I have chosen not to introduce yet another term into this thesis. *Westernness* is shorthand for Western culture, history, and identity — a complex that defines what is “Western.” Some may disagree with this usage and suggest that “Western heritage” may be a more appropriate term. However, I find that the term *Westernness* more closely parallels my usage of the term *Nativeness*. The other dilemma was what to call non-Natives. I use *non-Native* and *white* interchangeably. When applicable, I use more specific terms such as *European*, *Euro-American*, and *white settler*.

METHODOLOGY

My research on Native participation in Wild West shows utilized a multi-sited, multi-method approach reflective of the changing nature of relationships and methodologies found in some contemporary ethnographic research. As Gusterson (1997) perceptively describes, this type of ethnographic research relies less on participant observation and more on *polymorphous engagement*:

Polymorphous engagement means interacting with informants across a number of dispersed sites, not just in local communities, and sometimes in virtual form; and it means collecting data electronically from a disparate array of sources in many different ways. [It also involves] an eclectic mix of other research techniques: formal interviews of the kind often done by journalists and political scientists, extensive reading of newspapers and official documents, and careful attention to popular culture, for example. (1997, 116)

Hannerz similarly suggests that multi-sited research depends more on interviews and informants than on participant observation and also must combine various kinds of sources such as interviews, emails, newspapers, popular literature, and multimedia (2003, 211). Between June 2004 and August 2005, my “polymorphous engagement” included ethnographic and ethnohistorical research across Canada, the United States, and France. This generated a vast range of sources and data, including observations, interviews with Native performers and producers/organizers of Wild West shows, analysis of various media sources, oral histories, and archival sources.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND SOURCES

Multi-sited Fieldwork

My research pathway is an experience, a story even — of Native participation in Wild West shows — that cuts across different locations and Native groups.¹ It is also a process of construction, performance, and circulation of Nateness via Wild West shows. Thus, in my research I refocused the classic anthropological “object” and “site” of study, as has been increasingly necessary in anthropology and other disciplines because of changing and problematized notions of place, culture, and nation (e.g., Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Kearney 2004). Scholars have recognized the changing nature of the field in response to an increasingly global, mobile, transnational world (e.g., Amit 2000, Appadurai 1990; Hannerz 2003, 2002; Hendry 2003; Marcus 1995). Marcus identifies a new mode of ethnographic research that

moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. (1995, 96)

He elaborates by stating that multi-sited fieldwork consists of “mapping strategies” or pathways where connections are formed that traverse localities: following the people, the object, the metaphor, the story, the biography, or the conflict (Marcus 1995, 95, 105).² Appadurai (1990) similarly suggests that we study these pathways or “flows” as a series of “-scapes” in which people, technology, capital, media, and ideas circulate. In this study I follow the story of Native performers’ experiences through archival material and oral histories up to the voices of present-day performers whose narratives are grounded in this history.

My field-site selection was guided by my interest in examining the negotiation of representations of Nativeness in contemporary Wild West shows. First, I must say that I was surprised to discover that Wild West shows still exist, and, of all places, at EuroDisney in France. I wished to know why Native people would want to perform at these sites and what their experiences were like. Once I had received approval from EuroDisney, my selection of additional contemporary Wild West shows and re-enactments was based on the opportunity for comparison and access to historical materials.³ As Hannerz notes, the selection of sites depends on the research design and questions, as well as opportunities for comparison (2003, 207). Budget, distance, and time constraints limited the number of sites I could visit; I had planned to include several other shows in my project that ultimately did not make it into this study.⁴ My two main sites, EuroDisney and Buffalo Bill Days in Wyoming, provide an interesting comparison between European and American productions of the representation and performance of Nativeness. I do not purport to have a comprehensive grasp of the entire field of Wild West shows. Indeed, Hannerz admits that multi-sited research cannot have an “ethnographic grasp of the entire field” for each linked locality; rather, it permits the examination of processes that traverse localities (2003, 207). My two case studies resulted in cross-analysis of the nature of the performances where the form and degree of Native agency varied, revealing the variation of Native experiences.

Building Relationships: Contacts and Networks

Multi-sited fieldwork requires much travelling and organization. I wondered how I would be able to establish contacts and conduct interviews during my short visits to widely separated locations. During my research I established relationships and became immersed in a network of people who were distant geographically yet connected by their experience and participation in Wild

West shows and spectacles. Hannerz writes that in multi-sited research the ethnographer is placed in a “translocal network of relationships” rather than developing relationships at a single locality (2003, 209).

The changing nature of relationships in the field reflects the globalized nature of our world, the mobile nature of informants, and how networks and experiences connect people. For example, employees of the Oklahoma Historical Society have performed in Pawnee Bill’s Wild West Show and other re-enactments. During the course of my research, I met performers in France from my home province of Alberta, one of whom had also participated in a Wild West show there. I also interviewed the Native recruiter for EuroDisney, who lives in Hobbema, Alberta. The director of the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Steve Friesen, had assisted with the research for EuroDisney’s BBWW Show exhibit. I met a Native performer from Sheridan, Wyoming’s Buffalo Bill Days (BBD) at the Calgary Stampede Indian Village powwow.⁵ Performers from EuroDisney and Sheridan also worked in other Wild West shows, such as the Great American Wild West Show, which incidentally produced the show in Sheridan in 2003. I became situated within this network that revealed itself in the process of conducting multi-sited research. Multi-sited research is flexible enough to accommodate dispersed and fluid forms of relationships that are nonetheless connected by their “experience,” facilitating the building of networks through space. Such relationships developed over the span of my fieldwork year, independent of how long I was at a specific location.

In addition to face-to-face relationships developed on site, “virtual” relationships were formed before I even arrived at (and after I left) my research sites. Prior to visiting each site, I conducted “fieldwork” by phone, email, and regular mail and on the Web. Not only did this virtual fieldwork serve to establish contacts in advance, but the informal conversations and communications that ensued also became additional data for my ethnography. Throughout the research period I maintained these relationships as much as possible via such technologies and in part through the feedback process. I gave interview transcripts to all participants and invited them to correct or comment on them. The degree of feedback varied with the individual; in general, informants did not offer additional data during this process, but the opportunity was there for those who wished to. However, return visits to EuroDisney and Kahnawake provided opportunities to conduct follow-up interviews and update participants on my research. In these ways the relationships have been ongoing, though not always face to face.

Data Collection: Observations, Interviews, and Multimedia Sources

While I agree with Hannerz (2003, 211) that participant observation is abbreviated in multi-sited research, the opportunity for observation still occurs. In my own project, I engaged in a condensed form of participant observation while establishing contacts and attending various events. I observed the Wild West show at EuroDisney on two separate visits, in September 2004 and August 2005.

EuroDisney presents its ninety-minute Wild West dinner show twice a day, five times a week during the winter months, and every day during the summer tourist season. I was welcome to watch as many performances as I chose to, and seeing that I was there for only one week on each visit, I went to the show often. I have seen the show at least six times, and also recorded observations and impressions of the show in my field notes and, since the management permitted photography and video, recorded digital images of the show for research purposes. I amassed these observations and used these data to establish the context of Native performers' experiences. More important, before, between, and after the 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. shows, I spent time backstage and spoke informally with the performers. Sometimes I skipped the show in favour of conversing with the performers, which proved to be important for identifying potential informants and arranging interviews. Through these informal conversations I also acquired useful data about the performers' experiences and their opinions about performing in this context.

In Sheridan, Wyoming, I accompanied Edre Maier, executive director of the Sheridan Heritage Center Inc. (SHC), as she prepared for the Buffalo Bill Days (BBD) celebrations. She and I ran errands together, decorated the arena, and talked about the planning and purpose of the show. Not only did Edre take me under her wing (and take me to a Rotary Club luncheon), but many people from the town of Sheridan also welcomed me; I became part of the community even though I was there for only five days. Chairman of the SHC and former mayor Della Herbst gave me a tour and explained the history of the Sheridan Inn; Deanna, a volunteer at the Sheridan Inn, gave me a tour of Fort Fetterman, site of one of the battles re-enacted in the BBWW Show.⁶ All these activities were part of an orientation period but may also be considered a form of participant observation that resulted in data. Specifically, I was able to interview Edre and Della about the Sheridan Inn and BBD during this time, which greatly aided my analysis. More direct participant observation occurred when I attended the BBD events, including the historical ball, parade, Pony Express re-enactment, and birthday celebrations, and of course the Wild West show, all of which I documented with field notes, photographs, and video.⁷ I met the Native performers at the parade and arranged to interview them at the Wild West shows.

Observational data was of value to this project in that it provided evidence about the performance context for my analysis of Native performers' experiences as well as leading to arrangement of interviews. Recording observations through additional means such as photography and video was important because of the short time frame and ephemeral nature of the sites. As Hannerz observes, multi-sited fields tend to be temporary spaces such as meetings, festivals, and exhibits (2003, 210). This spatial and temporal ephemerality characterizes multi-sited research (Kurotani 2004, 207), and certainly this project. While EuroDisney's show continues year-round, other sites of Wild West re-enactments occur only annually. Digital data (photography and video) served as visual records that I could recall at a later date for analysis.

Other contemporary sites of cultural display related to Wild West shows that inform my study were museum exhibits, such as the Buffalo Bill exhibit at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (BBHC) in Cody, Wyoming; the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave (BBMG) in Golden, Colorado; the Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum (PBRM) in Pawnee, Oklahoma; the new BBWW Show exhibit on site at EuroDisney; and, to a lesser extent, the National Cowboy and Western History Museum in Oklahoma City and the Kings Museum in Sheridan. The content of the first three exhibits provided some basic background information about the BBWW and Pawnee Bill's Wild West (PBWW) shows and their entrepreneurs.

The BBMG and the PBRM are also sites of Wild West events and performances. The PBRM produces a Wild West show every year, and the BBMG holds annual events to memorialize Buffalo Bill: a birthday celebration in February and a re-enactment of his burial on Western Heritage Day in June. I attended the burial re-enactment in 2005 but was not able to attend the PBRM show because of a schedule conflict. I recorded observational data of the burial re-enactment through field notes, photography, and video. While these data contributed to the analysis of Native representations at "Wild West" sites of display and performance, without interviews from Native performers these data were not as useful for my thesis.

Although ethnographic research included observational field notes, it did depend on interviews more than participant observation. Since the goal of this project was to gain insight into Native performers' experiences and highlight their stories and voices, I was interested in quality in-depth interviews with a few key informants rather than quantity. I conducted semi-structured and open interviews with Native performers from the United States and Canada at two main sites: Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show at Disneyland Resorts Paris (also known as EuroDisney), Marne-la-Vallée, France, and Buffalo Bill Days in Sheridan, Wyoming. I had also planned to interview past EuroDisney performers in Alberta. At first my contact in Alberta said that it would be no problem and that he would provide names, but though I returned several times to Edmonton, the interviews never materialized. Because participation was voluntary, the interviews varied in length, frequency, and substance; in general, most ranged from thirty to sixty minutes and addressed my interview list of questions in their entirety. These interviews generated crucial data on Native performers' views of the shows' representations and performances, of their experiences of identity in this context, and their experiences as performers; these interviews form the basis of my analyses and interpretations in chapters 6 and 7. I also arranged interviews with producers and organizers at EuroDisney, Sheridan, and the other American Wild West historical re-enactments. In total, I conducted interviews with twenty-three people in the course of this project.⁸

I also consulted a variety of contemporary print and electronic media as sources of data for my analysis. Specifically, I evaluated the content and discourses of brochures, web pages, advertisements, and media releases from the contemporary tourist sites included in my study in terms of tropes of Nativeness

and Westernness. The media I examined were mainly marketing tools designed to inform the public and to sell the tourist site as a product. The inherent bias of such media as sources is that they are designed with a specific audience in mind, in the present case to encourage a non-Native audience to consume representations and performances of authentic Native culture or American Western heritage. Even though these sources do not offer insight into Native perspectives, they do provide important information on the production of Nateness for spectacle and the context of Native performers' experiences.

ETHNOHISTORICAL RESEARCH AND SOURCES: ARCHIVES/MUSEUMS AND ORAL HISTORIES

While Marcus (1995) and Appadurai (1990) do not consider ethnohistorical research in their vision of an extended research "field," Gusterson alludes to the value of "anthropologists' increasing engagement with archival research" (1997, 116). In this thesis I extend these scholars' conception of multi-sited and multi-method research to include ethnohistorical research. Ethnohistory offers the opportunity to conduct diachronic research and to gain access to emic perspectives of history (Brettell 1998, 514–15; Trigger 1986, 264). Ethnohistorical research in this study forefronts Native experiences through time and provides insight into their experiences and perspectives on their participation in Wild West shows and other spectacles.

All histories, whether written, visual, or oral, contain contradictions and discrepancies that reflect the different voices of history and the various perspectives of different actors (Morantz 2001, 55). Edwards writes that meanings of photographs, for example, are "stratified and multiple" as well as historically and culturally determined (1992, 12). Furthermore, both visual images and written histories sustain cultural myths of the Other and imperialism through the content they present (Edwards 1992, 6). Therefore, while I use archival sources of data, I am aware that they are imbued with multiple meanings because they are "social artifacts" with a complex relationship between producer, subject, and viewer (Scherer 1992, 32; see also Edwards 2005). The historical materials I inspected were authored (written or photographed) by non-Natives, and I examined them with their social, political, and cultural contexts of production in mind and knowledge of the use, intent, and style of the textual documents and visual images (Brettell 1998, 517–18). Historical sources are imbued with multiple meanings and therefore remain valuable sources because they also contain evidence of Native participation in Wild West shows and exhibitions.

Written Sources

The task of reading through the vast archival record in sixteen different depositories was challenging but rewarding.⁹ On average, I spent two to three weeks at each of the different locations. Many finds ignited my curiosity: passport

applications for Native performers to travel to Germany to work in the Sarrasani Circus; letters from Native people asking for jobs in shows; a sixty-four-page program for the BBWW show. I examined diverse textual sources from approximately 1883 to the 1930s, ranging from scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and correspondence to show programs and couriers.¹⁰

Newspaper clippings provide important background information on places, dates, and Wild West show performances and performers, as well as insight into the public's perspective on the shows and their Native performances and performers. The clippings I examined include show reviews and advertisements and articles about the shows and about Native performers and their travels. These data are used in chapters 2 through 5, but especially in chapters 4 and 5. Theatre and outdoor entertainments were a growing industry in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and the arrival of Wild West shows attracted journalists' attention. Because newspaper articles were written for literate white audiences, they focus on issues of interest for white society. Articles that discuss Native activities or concerns reflect Eurocentric biases of the time; this "white" focus is especially evident in some of the pompous and frankly racist language I encountered. Despite the abundance of stereotypes, newspaper articles provide valuable evidence for what Natives were doing, and at times even include Native performers' opinions. This was particularly the case when reporters visited Wild West show encampments and interviewed Native performers such as Sitting Bull, or when they conversed with performers such as Red Cloud when they were visiting city sites.

Scrapbooks from both the BBHC and the Denver Public Library (DPL) were valuable because they contain numerous newspaper clippings in one location, and on one event. I was thus able to compare what was written about a particular show, event, or Native visit in more than one article, gaining multiple perspectives on the event. The writer of the document and the process of collecting (who amassed the documents in a scrapbook) were important factors to consider when examining and analyzing these sources and assessing potential biases. For example, the Nate Salsbury scrapbooks at the DPL contain many reviews of the BBWW show. As the businessman behind the show, Salsbury clearly focused on good reviews; bad reviews do exist, but these have been preserved in other archival sources. The scrapbooks also include clippings about Native performers, which indicates the importance of these performers for the success of the show. Conversely, the "Photographic Project: Entertainment" and the Princess White Deer (PWD) collection of newspaper clippings, images, and regalia at Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa (KOR), the cultural centre in Kahnawake, were assembled by Native people mainly from Kahnawake. While the newspaper articles and images from KOR were created primarily by non-Natives, both collections represent significant events that Native people themselves wished to remember.

Correspondence between show entrepreneurs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian agents, and Native performers provided vital evidence for my

discussion in chapter 2 of the debates surrounding Native employment in Wild West shows and other exhibitions. In particular, the Indian Agency Files at the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) contain an abundance of letters with information about the demand for Native performers, the hiring of performers, and how the BIA and Indian agents responded to such requests. The Research Files at the BBMG contain valuable clippings from Indian school newsletters that spoke to their views on Native performers working in Wild West shows. The Western History Collection (WHC) at the University of Oklahoma in Norman also includes some interesting correspondence about wages and contracts. Additional correspondence found in other archival depositories was less useful for this thesis, as the documents focus on the business side of Wild West shows or contain personal letters; however, occasional correspondence by show entrepreneurs contains references to Native performers.

Show programs and couriers are excellent sources of details about show content and the identity of the performers. I examined many programs and couriers in great detail, and relied on this material in particular for my analysis in chapter 3, as well as the background in chapter 1. The great number of BBWW and PBWW programs from 1883 to 1913 preserved in archival collections at the BBHC and the DPL provided a basis for comparison that allowed me to trace changes in show representations and content.¹¹ Newspaper accounts of the shows correlate with descriptions in the programs, which suggests that what was advertised in programs and couriers accurately reflects the shows as performed. Programs and couriers were essentially promotional tools that were often distributed or sold to the public before the show arrived in town. They frequently contain romanticized vignettes of noble or savage Indians that read like a cross between an anthropological monograph and a dime novel about the Old West.¹² Most important to this thesis, show programs and couriers provide significant evidence about how Nativeness was constructed and what images were emphasized; I examine some of these tropes in chapter 3.

Visual Images of Wild West Shows and Performances

Visual images located in the course of this study, such as photographs, postcards, posters, newspaper sketches, and images in show programs, proved to be valuable sources for evaluating the construction of Nativeness in historical Wild West shows and other performance spaces. Following Becker (1998), I compared images in this large corpus of material to identify tropes and themes, which are discussed in chapters 3 and 5. In doing so, I kept in mind the socio-cultural context and intent and use of the images (Scherer 1992, 34–35). As Edwards notes of anthropological photography during the 1800s and 1900s, photographs frame our perception of the Other and political understandings of the expansion and maintenance of colonialism (1992, 5). Visual imagery of Wild West shows was produced within the context of colonialism and American

expansionism and supported narratives of savagery versus civilization and the conquest of the West.

Postcards and some photographs pose interpretive problems in that the photographers controlled the image, catering to non-Native tastes and stereotypes, and the photographs were often reproduced for sale as postcards (Blackman 1986, 152). For example, some images of warriors and Indian maidens in the KOR collection reinforce the notion of a noble savage. Photographs such as the ones found in the Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull series from the Notman collection at the McCord Museum (discussed in chapter 4) are posed studio portraits that portray “best-dressed” celebrities and suggest narratives of friendship. Other photographs from the DPL depict scenes from Wild West shows, parades, the encampment, cast portraits and group pictures, and Indian portraits. The collection of photographs at the BBHC consists more of “action shots” of Indian attacks, stagecoaches, and other Wild West scenes that appear to have been taken during the show. These images reveal a good deal about stereotypes and the production of Nativeness by white society, but also provide important data about the content of Wild West shows and the extent of Native participation.¹³

Photographs, stereoscope cards, and postcards were also essential sources of data for my case-study analysis of the experiences of Mohawk performers in chapter 5. Following Scherer (1992, 34–35), I examined the composition of images, including spatial relationships, regalia and costumes, pose, and use of props, to better understand the production and representation of Nativeness. The record is fraught with misinformation and/or lack of information such as provenance, photographer, date, names, and location. I clarified details using information from additional archival sources and with the aid of community members.

The use of multiple methods and sources characterizes this entire thesis, but Kahnawake provided an exceptional case where it was possible to link textual material, photographs, and oral histories. As Brettell notes, the dialogue between oral histories and archival data allows the researcher to “access different voices and different interpretations of the same historical experience” (1998, 528). Following recent studies that repatriate visual images to the community (e.g., Arid 2003; Brown and Peers 2006), I sought to incorporate Native people’s views of the documentary evidence at KOR, which led to alternative interpretations of the photographs. Brown and Peers write of their project, which sought to explore the different meanings, interests, and discourses of photographs taken by Beatrice Blackwood when examined by Kainai community members:¹⁴

At the theoretical level, we explore the differences and productive tensions between the interpretations assigned to photographs of First Nations people by non-Native scholars, and how these same images can be understood quite differently by First Nations peoples themselves. (2006, 5)

For example, community responses offered a “revisionist history” that focused on reclaiming Blackfoot names and on narratives of “disruption and loss” but also of pride, hard work, and survival (Brown and Peers 2006, 10). Similarly for my project, relatives of performers who viewed the images focused on different aspects of the photographs and told different stories.

Engagement with the photographs led to discussions about family histories and experiences. Photographs encompass more than who, what, and where. They are relational, “enmeshed in oral stories — personal, family and community histories” (Edwards 2005, 37). Brown and Peers observe that “photographs . . . can inspire the telling of community and cultural histories which are otherwise little documented and difficult to retrieve, submerged as they often are by mainstream historical analysis and by the processes of colonialism” (2006, 7). My analysis was guided by members of the Kahnawake community who offered an indigenous reading of the visual record and hence provided an alternative history of Native experiences in Wild West shows, one that included personal family experiences and histories.

Oral Histories

In this thesis, *oral history* refers to the personal stories and family histories that I recorded through an interview/discussion process (cf. Cruikshank 1994b, 404; Page 1986, 275). The documentation of oral histories from descendants of Native performers who participated in Wild West shows and other performance spaces in the late 1800s and early 1900s is a unique component of this research.¹⁵ KOR in Kahnawake played a central role in facilitating this portion of the research by providing me with contact information for the families I identified in photographs. In chapter 5 I document oral histories from three Mohawk families: Beauvais, Deer, and Williams-Kelly. The interviewees’ mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, great-grandmothers and -grandfathers, and even great-great-grandmothers and -grandfathers, were performers with Wild West shows and in other performance spaces. These oral histories provided valuable insight into how Native performers negotiated relationships, meanings, and identities in performance spaces.

I addressed concerns about subjectivity by selecting informants with direct knowledge of performers’ experiences, by conducting multiple and follow-up interviews, by cross-checking information, by using oral histories in tandem with other sources, and by embracing the subjectivity of oral histories, recognizing that they represent one perspective (see also Morantz 2001). Specific dates were not a high priority for interviewees, because oral histories can be as much about the present as the past (Cruikshank 1994b, 407); they also tend to be circular rather than linear chronologies (Morantz 2001, 45). I used other sources of data to clarify details and chronologies, and then discussed this information with the informants.

While I use oral histories as evidential data on performances, my goal is not to merge oral histories with archival data, neither is it to simply “fill in the gaps” or “write-in Native actors” (Morantz 2001, 49–50; Cruikshank 1994a, 147; 1994b, 414). Rather, oral histories provide insight on how Native people perceive and remember experiences; they offered another perspective, a different story. As Cruikshank argues in her study on Klondike gold rush narratives, the value of oral histories is not so much for “straightening out facts” as it is for “generating different kinds of social analysis, leading to different interpretations of a given event, one of which is included in official history while the other is relegated to collective memory” (1992, 22).

Oral histories are “told from the perspectives of people whose views inevitably differ depending on context, social position and level of involvement” (Cruikshank 1994b, 414). In my own research, the stories of Native performers’ experiences in historic Wild West shows and other performances varied because of these factors. Oral histories from the three families also differed in the amount and type of detail. As elders pass away and memories fade, not all stories are remembered. But then, those stories that are remembered and passed down are the stories that are significant for the families. Therefore, oral histories relate something about the significance and importance of experiences and events for them. The oral histories from the three Kahnawake families do not necessarily represent the community’s collective memory, though there appears to be a strong tradition of involvement in public entertainment that continues today.¹⁶ Kahnawake community’s collective memory of their participation in public performance spaces is at this time a partial history, waiting to be understood.

ANALYSIS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK AND ETHNOHISTORICAL DATA

In order to amass and analyze a large quantity and variety of data, I used a qualitative software called NVivo. I imported notes from archival sources, interview transcripts, and field notes into NVivo as documents and read through each of them as a “complete corpus” of material (cf. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2001, 241; Trigger 1982, 9; Wiedman 1986, xii).¹⁷ I then coded sections of the documents according to emergent and recurring themes, which became some of my initial analytical categories, what NVivo refers to as “nodes.” This was an inductive process; coding of the data was fluid and developed as I reviewed the material. I began with more than sixty individual codes such as *battle re-enactments*, *Indian re-enactments*, *education*, *authenticity*, *Indian–White relations*, *recruitment and pay*, *employment conditions*, *references to identity*, *Native experiences*, and *references to stereotypes*, to name a few. I then re-sorted these themes (nodes) into documents and reviewed each themed document as a new body of data for more focused coding, organization, and analysis; new themes emerged or collapsed throughout the process, and related themes were grouped together.¹⁸ Based on this more focused analysis and comparison of themes, I organized prevalent themes into a coherent narrative to form my thesis.

This coding process of data through software was a useful analytical tool because I was able to weave together narratives from various sources and an abundance of data. NVivo allowed me to organize my data conceptually, facilitating analysis and comparison across space and time without losing the context of the data. My research benefited from utilizing software to organize, code, recode, search, and compare data in multiple ways while still remaining close to the data and without losing the original context; however, the data are made meaningful through my reflection and analysis and organization into a narrative form (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2001, 266). This coding and recoding process is informed by theoretical perspectives; it is a reflexive and dialectic relationship between data and theory (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2001, 265).

ACCESS, PERMISSIONS, AND GATEKEEPERS: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One challenge of multi-sited research is logistical in nature — arranging and coordinating consents, permissions, and access. I contacted each community before entering the field and considered the range of protocols within each community. The most important step was to follow the local protocol; when appropriate and feasible, I obtained both individual and community consent.

The tension between community and individual consent was intensified in this project: while my focus is on individuals, they still belong to communities, and in this case my research involved interviews with individuals from various First Nations communities and Native American tribes. The university ethics board advised that I obtain approval through the local ethics board for two of the First Nations communities included in my original research proposal. The Six Nations of the Grand River, Brantford, Ontario, has a formal ethics review process through the band council, for which I presented my research plan and received approval.¹⁹ Kahnawake, a Mohawk community near Montreal, Quebec, does not have a formal review board for social science research.²⁰ Mindful of issues of representation, authority, ownership, and ethics, I sought out other local processes to review my research plan. Since I would be working through the community cultural centre at Kahnawake (KOR), I contacted the institution about access and permission. I submitted my research proposal, interview questions, consent form, and letter of information to the KOR board for permission and for evaluation of cultural sensitivity. After I received approval, KOR and I attempted to coordinate an informal open house at the centre where people from the community could come and meet me, learn about the project, and potentially contribute oral histories about their families. Ultimately, an open house was not possible on either visit because of staff shortages, a change in directorship at the centre, and the physical move of KOR itself.

The protocol developed for contacting community members in Kahnawake was simple. I identified possible informants through photographs and KOR provided me with the names and information. Kara (Kariwaiens) Dawne Zemel, the librarian at the time, made the initial contact, told potential informants

about my project, and arranged the first meeting; at other times I was told to call or visit them. After contact was established, I was left to my own devices to arrange subsequent meetings and interviews. Sometimes unexpected visitors would come to KOR; for example, when Frank Marquis returned from a hunting trip, he stopped by KOR one day and simply said, "I'm Frank Marquis. I hear you want to talk to me."

After almost a month in the area, when I felt more confident, I attempted to contact a potential informant on my own. I phoned a contact I had got from "Kay," whom I had spoken to about pictures of her family. I randomly choose "Laura," one of Kay's relatives from the list she provided.²¹ I identified myself, explained the project, and asked her if she knew anything about her grandmother's experiences that she would be willing to share. She said she did not remember much, and that I should try contacting her other relatives. The conversation then turned to the question of the ethics review. Laura challenged me about the approval process I had gone through and the supervision of my project. At first she did not seem satisfied with my explanation of the protocols that I had followed, suggesting that I should be under the supervision of an existing science research board in Kahnawake. But she later conceded that I did not fall within the realm of their projects. This was all very upsetting and frustrating because I felt that I had followed proper protocol. Not sure whether a return trip would be welcomed, I spoke with some of the staff at KOR for advice. One person wisely suggested that this confrontation was more about a power struggle than my research project; maybe "Laura" was feeling sensitive because she perceived me as "flying under the radar." After all was said and done, KOR welcomed my return, but confirmed that initial contacts should be made through them.

For my second visit, in October 2005, I asked Kara to compose a short information article about my research project for the local newspaper, inviting community members to come to KOR to meet me and engage in discussion. Lance Delisle, from the local radio station K103, interviewed me about my research. After the confrontation with "Laura," I had realized that it was important to inform the community at large about my research through other means and to offer opportunities for discussion, whether or not a formal council ethics board and process existed. Even though no one responded to the invitation in the article or the radio interview, these extra steps may have prevented other misunderstandings.

The university ethics board regarded consent from both the Six Nations and Kahnawake communities as a priority. However, in terms of interviewing Native performers at EuroDisney, the university ethics board was not concerned about band or council consent because these Native people were acting "off the reserve." Neither were they concerned about corporate consent; here, individual consent was sufficient. Nonetheless, I contacted the head of public relations for Disney in the U.K. for permission to interview current performers at EuroDisney; I was put in contact with Karine, in press relations and communications at Disney Village in France. Acquiring permission to conduct research at EuroDisney was

less complicated; I sent a letter of information to Karine, asked for assistance from the staff at the Wild West show, and requested permission to conduct research, which was granted. A letter of information was posted on site at EuroDisney before my arrival. I also informed each performer in person in more detail about the project and their rights as participants; participants signed individual consent forms I designed for the project.²² Given Disney's reputation for keeping its backstage activities secret, I expected negotiating access and permission to interview performers at EuroDisney to be difficult, but this was not the case. Perhaps this is because I followed a similar procedure with the Disney Corporation as I did with the First Nations communities.

To summarize, the university research board decided whom I should get permission from and what process I should follow. Navigating through different Native communities was complex and involved a series of permissions and protocols. I was left to find my own way in Kahnawake because of a lack of clear protocols. Research approval and supervision of the project by KOR was satisfactory for the university board but left one community member unsatisfied. While university ethics boards are needed, their knowledge of community dynamics and of who the gatekeepers might be is limited. Every community includes members who view themselves as gatekeepers. Thus, even if one takes the necessary steps in good faith and follows university guidelines, it is not always possible to predict reactions from all individuals: communities are not homogeneous entities and there are many gatekeepers who protect access to people and information. In every community, protocols vary and such gatekeepers may perceive research differently. My research was not about any specific First Nations community; thus, in my view, individual consent was just as important as community consent.

SUMMARY

The nature of my research plan and questions resulted in a "polymorphous engagement" approach to the investigation of Native participation in Wild West shows and other spectacles. This multi-sited ethnographic, ethnohistorical research project offers a diachronic perspective on Native experiences that traverses space and time. Multiple sources ranging from fieldwork observations and the examination of popular media to in-depth interviews, archival research, and oral histories generated data on the context of Native performers' participation in Wild West shows as well as evidence about their perspectives and experiences in this context. The dialogue between these diverse data forms enriched this study, as it also led to indigenous interpretations and views of Native participation in Wild West shows and spectacles.

CHAPTER 1

WHERE THE WILD WEST BEGAN: BUFFALO BILL, PAWNEE BILL, AND THE MILLER BROTHERS

In 1905, many opportunities existed to see Native people performing in Wild West shows and exhibitions. The Cummins Indian Congress and Wild West Show was touring in the United States, while the Miller brothers were organizing their first Wild West show at the famed 101 Ranch in Oklahoma. Native people from Kahnawake were performing at the Indian Village at Earl's Court, London, as part of the Naval and Fisheries Exhibition. And Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (BBWW), on its second European tour, was now playing in France. Other entrepreneurs attempted to imitate the BBWW show, but none could match William F. Cody, whose Wild West show career spanned three decades. After the BBWW show, the two most successful Wild West shows were the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show and Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show. This chapter situates the beginnings of the Wild West show and outlines the content and themes typical of the three major shows. My analysis of Native experiences draws mainly on their participation in these three shows, but since this thesis is not a history of Wild West shows themselves, this chapter outlines the development of the shows, providing details of the performances and how the shows differed.

LIVE DISPLAY, EXHIBITS, AND THE EMERGENCE OF WILD WEST SHOWS

Wild West shows emerged in the nineteenth century as part of a larger context of spectacle that blurred the line between education and entertainment in the displays of Others. In the 1840s, for example, American painter George Catlin toured the U.K. and France with a troupe of Native performers.¹ Catlin combined his exhibition of paintings of Native Americans, called "The Indian Gallery," with lectures that were meant to educate the public on Native American life; his book *Letters and Notes* was very much like a Plains ethnology (Truettner 1979, 43). But it was Native performers who provided the entertainment value. Native dancers animated Catlin's paintings by performing "the mock ritual of the *Tableaux Vivants*" and spectacular war dances (Truettner 1979, 44).

Large exhibitions and world's fairs began in the mid-1800s, and they influenced the content and form of Wild West shows.² While world's fairs encouraged trade and industry, they also reinforced national identities and notions of progress based on material and economic growth (cf. Rydell, Findling, and Pelle 2000).³ The fairs displayed people as well as goods (Benedict 1983, 13, 43), and Others were put on show in anthropological exhibits and villages arranged to illustrate the hierarchy of racial types, as well as the progress and civilization of the Euro-American, white world. Midway and entertainment zones similarly

displayed Others as representative of races lower on the evolutionary scale. These displays of colonial and imperial power popularized discourses about race and progress that were premised on notions of evolution (Rydell 1984, 5).

Other entertainments would similarly create and disseminate popular images of race and progress. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, historical pageantry was another popular expression of nationalism and identity (cf. Glassberg 1990). In fact, the years from 1870 to 1910 witnessed the greatest growth in virtually all forms of outdoor and variety entertainment (Wilmeth 1982, 3). Wilmeth discusses the growth of theatre, variety and vaudeville, minstrel shows, medicine shows, and dime museums, many of which often included Native performers. These forms of entertainment and public display and performance thrived in the decades leading up to the birth and growth of Wild West shows. These entertainments were not immune to displays of gender, race, and ethnicity; in fact, they were prime sites for the construction of narratives based on these attributes and categories. At the same time, dime novels about the West told stories about the frontier and America's conquest and progress. The frontier was expanding, and the tension between settlers and Native people was growing. It was a time of unrest and confrontation competing with the desire to settle the West and fulfill manifest destiny. Wild West shows grew out of this context of colonialism and progress, as well as this history of the cultural display of Others. Combining elements of theatre, circuses, and pageants along with the didactic goals of exhibitions, Wild West shows became a sensational phenomenon.

Wilmeth defines the Wild West show as "an exhibition illustrating scenes and events characteristic of the American Far West frontier" (1982, 77). Typically a two- to three-hour extravaganza, the Wild West show consisted of a series of spectacular acts that fall into roughly seven major categories:

1. *Grand Entry*: the show began by introducing the heroes (and enemies) of the West, who rowdily rode in on horseback.⁴
2. *Cowboy Pastimes*: a demonstration of frontier and cowboy skills of horsemanship and marksmanship, such as trick shooting, fancy riding, lassoing, and racing.
3. *Indian Vignettes*: re-enactments of Indian ceremonies and life, such as a thrilling buffalo hunt or a "savage" war dance.
4. *Historical Re-enactments*: re-enactments of significant battles or famous attacks, such as the Battle of Little Bighorn or the attack on the Deadwood stagecoach; at the very least, shows included an attack on an emigrant train or settler's cabin.
5. *Military Displays*: military drills or shooting, often including representatives of U.S. Army units demonstrating their techniques; they might also include representatives from other countries such as Britain or Japan or Devlin's Zouaves.
6. *Ethnic Others*: other international acts that exhibited the diversity of the "races," such as Russian Cossacks or Bedouin bandits.

7. *Circus Acts*: variety acts such as dancing elephants and Arabian acrobats.

These categories are not exclusive and could overlap thematically; the top three Wild West shows incorporated these themes to various degrees.

COLONEL WILLIAM F. CODY AND BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW

William F. Cody, frontiersman, buffalo hunter, Pony Express rider and army scout, was born in 1846.⁵ Dime novels immortalized his legendary adventures,⁶ but Wild West shows brought them to life. Cody's theatre debut was in an 1872 stage production called *The Scouts of the Prairie*, followed by *Buffalo Bill Combination* in 1873, written by dime novelist Ned Buntline. The combination featured three frontiersmen: William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, John "Texas Jack" Omohundro, and "Wild Bill" Hickok. The stage productions received a lukewarm reception from the press (Kasson 2000, 21), but Cody's experiences as a buffalo hunter and scout, combined with his charisma, made him popular with audiences. Cody continued to alternate between theatre and scout work for the next decade (Kasson 2000). In 1882 he celebrated America's progress with a nationalistic display for the Fourth of July in North Platte, Nebraska (Reddin 1999, 59; Russell 1970). His recognition of the public's desire to see myths of the west live, together with his success as marshal of the Fourth of July celebration and encouragement from Nate Salsbury to move beyond "dime novel thrillers" (Reddin 1999, 59), eventually led Cody to produce a form of live entertainment that became extremely popular with international mass audiences — the Wild West show.

Cody toured with Wild West shows from 1883 to 1916, making two grand tours of Europe with his BBWW show in 1889–92 and 1903–06. His first Wild West show production in 1883 — The Wild West, Hon. W. F. Cody and Dr. W. F. Carver's Rocky Mountain and Prairie Exhibition — brought recognition for Cody and for this form of entertainment. But it was not until 1884, when the show was reorganized according to the vision of theatre businessman Nate Salsbury as the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, that Cody achieved true stardom. That was not a record year in terms of profits, because of an accident and persistent rain (Kasson 2000; Shirley 1993, 110), but the Wild West formula proved successful. What the show needed was a draw, something that would bring in audiences, thrill them, and excite them. In 1885 Cody engaged Annie Oakley, known for her skill as a trick shooter, but it was Sitting Bull, the "killer of Custer," who drew in the crowds. A camp of Cheyenne, Arapaho, Sioux and Pawnee Indians created an atmosphere of impending danger, and from that point on, Native people continued to be an essential component of the show.

The 1885 program included an array of acts, mainly in the category of cowboy pastimes, Indian vignettes, and historical re-enactments, and closed with the dramatic "Attack on Settler's Cabin."⁷ In 1886 the BBWW show played at Erastina, on Staten Island, New York, for six months. The Oglala Sioux American

Horse Jr. replaced Sitting Bull as the Indian star. Cody also added a Canadian hero, Gabriel Dumont, “the Hero of the Half Breed Rebellion,” the Riel Rebellion of 1885.⁸ The winter show at Madison Square Garden included a new feature, a pageant “History of American Civilization” in four epochs, or “The Drama of Civilization,” produced in collaboration with Steel Mackay (Reddin 1999, 83).⁹ The show progressed as a coherent narrative rather than as a series of acts (see Moses 1996, 34 for a description). Historical re-enactments and vignettes of life in the West such as these would become standard features of the BBWW and other Wild West shows.

The BBWW show went on its first European tour from 1889 to 1892, bringing the production prestigious recognition from overseas. Cody’s first overseas trip, however, was in 1887, to participate in the American Exhibition at Earl’s Court in London, England. The BBWW show opened on May 9, but Cody held a command performance for the Prince of Wales on May 5 (Moses 1996, 50). On May 12 the arena was again closed to the public for a command performance for Queen Victoria (Moses 1996, 52). Reporters praised the BBWW show for its realistic portrayal of Western life and authentic displays of horsemanship.¹⁰ One reporter wrote of the London show, “the most realistic and dramatic representations of pony expresses, the postmen of the prairies, pursued by Indians, of stage-coaches stopped and rifled, of sleeping camps stormed in the night, of shooting, scalping, burning (of huts), and a score of other wild adventures.”¹¹ Cody promoted his show as an authentic portrayal of life in the West, which distinguished it from other outdoor entertainments like the circus. The framework of the BBWW show was based on discourses of the savage and vanishing Indian, the frontier, heroic individualism, and progress.

The press was obsessed with the Native performers, reporting on their appearance and their every move in stereotypical ways, both romantic and derogatory. In particular, Red Shirt was the “pampered favourite of European sovereigns.”¹² Red Shirt’s meeting with former prime minister William Gladstone, as well as his opinions and comments, was covered extensively by the British and American press, complete with sketches of his encounters with white society and his performances.¹³ The public’s fascination with Native people never wavered, and they continued to draw curious audiences.

After a year of performances in the United States, Cody returned to Europe. The BBWW show opened in Paris on May 19, 1889, at the Exposition Universale and the grand opening of the Tour Eiffel. The European tour covered France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Wales, Scotland, and England, including a return visit to Earl’s Court in 1892.¹⁴ Cody continued to enjoy the patronage of royalty, politicians, and well-known members of the elite, who all praised the show. The program consistently thrilled audiences with displays of horsemanship and marksmanship, races, Pony Express re-enactments, emigrant trains, attacks on the Deadwood coach and settler’s cabin, a buffalo hunt, Indians, and famous cowboys.¹⁵ In 1893 the BBWW show played alongside the Columbian Exhibition

in Chicago to record crowds,¹⁶ and from 1893 to 1901 the show toured North America.¹⁷

While Cody proved triumphant in matters of showmanship, he was less successful at managing financial matters, and James Bailey, of circus moguls Barnum and Bailey, took control of the BBWW show in 1895 (Russell 1970, 61). The basic show format and content continued along similar lines; however, Cody continuously added acts based on current events.¹⁸ In 1892 “Rough Riders” were added to the show.¹⁹ Cody subsequently added Cossacks, Mexicans, and Riffian Arabs and expanded military displays to include drill teams from America, Germany, and Russia, giving the show an international flavour — in 1893 advertised as a “Congress of Rough Riders.”²⁰

Cody returned to Europe in 1903 for his second grand tour, which closed in Ghent, Belgium, in 1906 (Reddin 1999, 150).²¹ The expanded program for this tour included twenty-three acts with a wide array of cowboy pastimes, historical re-enactments, and Indian vignettes.²² The show maintained its international flavour and military displays, but the Battle of Tien-Tsin and the Battle of San Juan Hill acts were replaced with the European crowd-pleaser The Battle of Custer.

In 1907 Cody approached another successful entrepreneur, Gordon Lillie, for financial assistance. Their two Wild West shows combined in 1908 when Lillie bought one-third of the BBWW show and became an equal financial partner with Cody, although he did not share in the recognition (Reddin 1999, 152). Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Pawnee Bill’s Great Far East Combined, also known as the “Two Bills” show, toured North America. With Cody’s reputation and fame and Lillie’s financial backing and business sense, the Two Bills show continued to impress audiences in North America.²³ The BBWW show format changed little, except for the addition of a Far Eastern component, which was condensed into one large act of “genuine Natives who enact the characters which they represent.”²⁴ The 1909 version consisted of the full array of thematic acts: cowboy pastimes, Indian vignettes, historical re-enactments, extensive military displays, different “races,” and circus acts.²⁵ The show maintained its claims of realism and educational value: “The intent and purport of the allied exhibition is to entertain while educating the spectator, through the medium of animated pictures and scenes typical of the Wild West and Far East.”²⁶

In 1910 Cody announced his retirement from show business with a series of “farewell” performances that stretched over two years.²⁷ In the end, it was competition from other Wild West shows, circuses, and an emerging film industry, as well as poor financial management on Cody’s part, that led to the demise of the Two Bills show in 1913. Reportedly the Two Bills owed its printing company \$40,000; Lillie could pay his part of the debt, but Cody could not, and Lillie would not transfer the mortgages secured from Cody in order for him to pay his share.²⁸ Cody lived out the last four years of his life in debt, touring with the Sells-Floto circus in 1914–15 and the Millers’ Wild West show in 1916.²⁹ He died in Denver, Colorado, on January 10, 1917.

MAJOR GORDON LILLIE'S WILD WEST SHOW AND ETHNOLOGICAL CONGRESS

Frontiersman, scout, teacher, interpreter, and Oklahoma “boomer” Gordon Lillie’s knowledge and experiences in the West formed the foundation for his show-business career. As with Cody, his experience was his claim to authority. Born in 1860, Lillie grew up reading dime novels; years later, as Pawnee Bill, he would become the inspiration for dime novels. In his teen years Lillie became acquainted with some Pawnee Indians near Wellington, Oklahoma, who had been relocated from Kansas.³⁰ He eventually formed a friendship with the elder Blue Hawk, learned the Pawnee language, and went on buffalo hunts. He also joined a cattle drive and worked in the fur trade with “Trapper Tom.” Lillie became a teacher to the Indians and an interpreter and secretary for the Indian agent Major Bowman at the Pawnee Indian Agency until 1881 (Shirley 1993, 73, 81).

Lillie entered the Wild West show business indirectly. He first provided Pawnee Indians for Cody’s Wild West show in 1883–84 and then took some Indians on tour with the Healy and Bigelow Medicine Show in 1885 (Russell 1970, 32; Shirley 1993, 94, 105). In 1886 he worked as an Indian interpreter with the BBWW show (Russell 1970, 32). With his experience and connections with Indians and the BIA, Lillie decided he could produce his own show rather than working for others (Shirley 1993, 115). In 1888 he went on tour with Pawnee Bill’s Historical Wild West Exhibition and Indian Encampment (Russell 1970, 32), and from 1890 to 1893 he toured the U.S.A. and Canada with a new and improved show.³¹ Lillie also targeted the European market, going on tour in 1894 to Belgium, Holland, and France, among other countries (Blanchard 1983; Russell 1970, 52).³² While in Europe he held a command performance for Queen Wilhelmina I of Holland in honour of Princess Victoria of England (Shirley 1993, 143).

The PBWW show had all the features of the BBWW show, and more. Major Gordon Lillie billed himself as the “White Chief of the Pawnees”³³ and “famed guide, government interpreter and Oklahoma hero” (Shirley 1993, 133). Lillie and his wife, May — “Champion Girl Horseback Shot of the West,” were the central characters of the show, demonstrating the usual array of cowboy pastimes. However, Native people and Indian vignettes remained an important feature attraction. The PBWW show also featured several historical re-enactments such as Trapper Tom’s Cabin, the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the Horse Thief acts, as well as an attack on a stagecoach.³⁴ In later years Lillie’s show consisted of some military-themed acts, but not to the degree of the BBWW show. For example, one act presented a “Grand Military Tournament — Introducing the cavalry tactics of the great nations of the world,” with Americans, Cubans, English, Indians, and Arabians.³⁵

As with the BBWW show, Native performers camped in an Indian village outside the performance arena. But Lillie more explicitly advertised his encampment as part of the show than Cody did. Certainly the encampment was a draw because it afforded an opportunity to see Native people going about their

daily lives. In addition, Lillie travelled with a museum of Native North American items he had collected in the U.S. and Canada, such as garments, headdresses, beadwork and quillwork, wampum belts, scalps, instruments of war, bows and arrows, and farming tools (Russell 1970, 52; Shirley 1993, 135).

Lillie's ethnic component was quite expansive in comparison with the BBWW show. Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome of 1893 added a large Mexican segment, with vaqueros demonstrating their riding and roping skills, a Mexican contra dance, and a twelve-piece Mexican band.³⁶ By 1898 Lillie had expanded his show to include even more ethnic Others and circus acts including mind readers, magicians, and snake enchanters.³⁷ His 1901 show contained Mexicans, "bushmen," Arab Bedouins from Africa, Russians, South American gauchos, Singhalese artists from Ceylon, Hindus, Japanese, and more.³⁸

By the beginning of the 1900s, Wild West shows were no longer a novelty. According to Russell, Lillie's "Far East" component added much-needed interest to the PBWW show in order for it to remain competitive (1970, 54). In the 1904 program, Lillie states that not many are familiar with his travels to the East, and this feature "will be equally instructive, elevating and entertaining."³⁹ Lillie promoted three main components — the Wild West, the Far East, and the Mexican Hippodrome — as unique, not to be missed features of his show: "All three will present . . . a living, picturesque and consummate history of the entire world."⁴⁰ Thus the PBWW show drew in the public with an incredible mixture of cowboys and Indians, Eastern exotics, ethnic diversity, circus-type acts, an array of animals, museum-like displays, and an Indian encampment.

In 1908 Lillie bought out one-third of the BBWW show (Mrs. Bailey's share) to form the Two Bills show. May Lillie was against the merger and did not travel with the combined show; she argued that the PBWW show had made good money and that the Pawnee Bill name was well established (Shirley 1993, 180). But Lillie envisioned combining the top two Wild West shows into a mega production with him as manager. Despite Cody's intention to leave the show to Lillie after his retirement, Lillie did not continue with the Two Bills show after Cody could not pay his share of the debts.

At the ripe age of seventy, Lillie attempted to recapture the West one last time. In 1930 he established the Old Town and Indian Trading Post near Pawnee, Oklahoma. The trading post sold items made by local Pawnee and Ponca Indians, and a museum contained Lillie's collection of curios. The west side of the Old Town contained a model of Southwest cliff dwellings; the east side featured an Indian village with replicas of Pawnee dwellings and "towering tepees of the Cheyennes, Comanches and Kiowas, the bark houses of the Seminoles and Pottawatomies, and the historical Pawnee Council House and mud lodges" (Shirley 1993, 228). Tourists could visit for the day or stay in one of fifteen cabins for the full experience. Former employees and Native friends from the PBWW show served as custodians of the Old Town until it burned down in 1939 (Shirley 1993, 228). Lillie died on his ranch in 1942. Today, a visit to the Pawnee Bill

Ranch and Museum leaves no question about Lillie's success and the mark he left on Oklahoma as one of the participants in the "winning of the West."

THE MILLER BROTHERS' 101 RANCH REAL WILD WEST SHOW

Colonel George W. Miller founded the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma on land leased from the Ponca Indians (Reddin 1999, 159). The Miller "empire" grew to 110,000 acres of farming and ranching, and afterwards oil investments (Reddin 1999, 159; see also Collings 1971). After the death of the colonel in 1903, his three sons took over. Zack took care of the ranch and livestock, George was in charge of the finances, management, and the oil and gas business, and Joe would become director of their Wild West show ventures.⁴¹ The Millers staged their first Wild West show in 1905 to entertain convention-goers from the National Editorial Press, the National Association of Millers, and the National Association of Cattlemen, as well as a crowd of other spectators (Reddin 1999, 160). They presented an awe-inspiring spectacle that included a buffalo hunt, an Indian attack on a wagon train, Indian dancing, bulldogging,⁴² and bucking broncos, as well as five hundred cowboys and a thousand Indians, including the famed Apache leader Geronimo (Reddin 1999, 161). The show engrossed the public and press alike.

After the success of their Wild West shows in 1905 and at the 1907 Jamestown Tercentenary Exhibition in Norfolk, Virginia,⁴³ the Miller brothers decided to make their Wild West show a permanent business enterprise. A joint venture with showman Edward Arlington of Ringling Brothers, the Miller Brothers' & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show toured Mexico, North and South America, and Europe from 1908 to 1916. They often had more than one show travelling at the same time. For example, in 1913 the Millers had a show touring North America as well as a contract with the Sarrasani Circus in Germany. Zack also took their Wild West show to London for the Anglo-American Exposition of 1914. The four-act production consisted of a Western vignette with settlers building a cabin and displaying cowboy skills, followed by an attack by Indians who burned the cabin; an Indian vignette with Indians setting up camp, complete with a war dance followed by an attack on a stagecoach; a pioneer vignette of the Santa Fe Trail; and finally another Indian ambush on settlers in the Grand Canyon (Reddin 1999, 173–74).

From 1905 to 1916, the Millers' Wild West show followed a formula reminiscent of the BBWW show. It consisted of displays of cowboy pastimes, Indian vignettes, and historical re-enactments with "real Indians, real cowboys, real scouts, real cowgirls" from the 101 Ranch.⁴⁴ A unique aspect of the Miller brothers' show was the large cowgirl contingent: the fifty-cowgirl entourage attracted the attention of the public and received much publicity in the press (Reddin 1999, 170). The 1912 show featured a pony express demonstration, a buffalo hunt, a stagecoach hold-up by bandits, and the "Indians' thrilling attack on an old-time pioneer's camp" — standard Wild West show fare.⁴⁵

However, as Reddin (1999, 162–63) points out, the Millers attempted to redefine Wild West shows by presenting a new view of the West based on ranchers rather than celebrating the “conquest of the Plains,” as was the case with the BBWW and PBWW shows (1999, 162–63). They promoted their show as a reproduction of ranch life in Oklahoma, with the 101 Ranch epitomizing the “American era of ranching.” Programs described the 101 Ranch “empire” and the Millers’ success. Detailed descriptions of the founding of the 101 Ranch and in-depth biographies of the three brothers established the Millers and their ranch as representative of the West. A 1911 program stated:

The 101 Ranch is to-day a monument to the enterprise and industry of the owners . . . Each one has contributed their best to the accomplishment of the ambition of all; to carry out the purpose of the father and husband, George W. Miller, to make the 101 the largest, the best and the most famous ranch in the United States. In this they have been successful.⁴⁶

An advertisement for the 1912 tour similarly publicized the show as an opportunity to see “heart-stirring events of the old days” and “sports and pastimes of the modern ranch.”⁴⁷

Reddin maintains that this new narrative did not resonate with audiences because no “imaginative literature” about ranchers existed, as it did with frontiersmen such as Buffalo Bill (1999, 162). Furthermore, their narrative was too narrowly restricted to the Millers’ experience, and audiences “would not accept the Millers and the 101 as the sole embodiment of the West” (Reddin 1999, 164). The Millers may not have been completely successful in transforming the narrative of the West to one of ranching, but their show proved interesting to audiences and fairly successful because it offered something more. Moses similarly suggests that the success of the show may have been due in part to the Millers’ emphasis on “real ranching” rather than “marauding Indians” (1996, 183). In addition, while some of the acts were similar to those in the BBWW show, such as fancy riding and shooting, the Millers’ show was closer to rodeo, featuring rough-riding of mules and steers, bronco riding, bulldogging, bucking horses, and lassoing events, and emphasized competition between the performers.⁴⁸ It may be that the Miller’s Wild West show was successful in part because they incorporated more rodeo events, which certainly brought a different kind of excitement to the show.⁴⁹

Reddin also suggests that the role of Native Americans and Native performances was less prominent in the Millers’ shows because of their focus on the ranch as representative of the Plains (1999, 163–64). Based on show programs, advertisements, and newspaper clippings I examined, it would be fair to conclude that the Millers’ show did follow a primarily Western theme, focusing on the skills of the cowboy and ranching life. Out of twenty-one displays described in the 1911 “Program of Events,” for example, only two explicitly included Native participation: Indian war dances and an attack on an emigrant

train crossing the Plains.⁵⁰ However, the number of Indian vignettes and re-enactments with Native participation in the Millers' production did not differ greatly from the BBWW or PBWW shows. There were three or four Indian vignettes out of twenty or more scenes in the BBWW and PBWW shows as well, the main difference being that Cody and Lillie more explicitly highlighted the Native components of their shows.

I agree with Roth on this point, who argues that Native people continued to play an important role in historical re-enactments and vignettes in the Millers' Wild West show (1965–66, 423, 425). A portion of their program invariably featured Indian dances or a buffalo hunt. Most important, the Millers' programs featured pictures and stories about Native people and their cultures, and their posters and advertisements almost always included Indians.⁵¹ The Millers similarly hired Native people from various tribes and agencies, including Ogallala, Brule, Cheyenne, Ponca, Sac and Fox, Comanche, and Kiowa (Moses 1996, 179). And in terms of numbers, the Millers' show included just as many Native performers as Cody's and Lillie's.⁵²

Military displays were also a part of the Millers' show. The 1916 version in particular followed a militaristic theme, adding patriotic displays of military power in their "Military Pageant 'Preparedness'", and the 1916 program capitalized on current events⁵³ with a reproduction of the Battle of Columbus (Reddin 1999, 175). In 1926 the Millers invited Swift's Zouaves to display their skills and Russian Cossacks to demonstrate their daring horsemanship.⁵⁴ While the 1929 program and daily review magazine stated that the show would offer a "gathering of crack cavalry troops of the world powers," including English, Germans, Italians, Mexicans, and Americans, the section that outlined the show's acts listed only the Zouaves and Cossacks.⁵⁵

The Millers re-entered show business in 1925 after a nine-year hiatus and attempted to keep the Wild West show alive into 1930, with little success.⁵⁶ Reddin writes: "In this time when circuses often included a western segment and the Millers' entertainment contained a circus, Wild West shows lost their identity as a distinctive form of entertainment" (1999, 180). In response to growing competition, the Millers incorporated more circus acts and Eastern themes in the 1920s. Now called the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Real Wild West and Great Far East, their "Far East" component included Eastern dances, circus acts, elephants, and camels to meet the public's demand for novelty and to compete with a growing circus business (Reddin 1999, 178).⁵⁷ In fact, one-third of the show consisted of a Far East spectacle (Reddin 1999, 178). The Millers even experimented with ancient history themes such as "Julius Caesar" (Reddin 1999, 180).

Still, the Millers' Wild West show maintained some traditional Western acts. The 1926–27 and 1929 seasons featured more than twenty acts demonstrating cowboy pastimes, Indian vignettes, ethnic Others, circus acts, and historical re-enactments.⁵⁸ According to the 1929 courier program, cowboy pastimes featuring cowboy skills and rodeo events continued to be an important

part of the show.⁵⁹ A section in this program explicitly links early roundups on the 101 Ranch with the development of Wild West shows and Western rodeos. Eight of the acts contained a cowboy sports component, in addition to the Pony Express display. Possibly because of the show's identity crisis in later years, business declined. By 1931, competition from Western films and the emergence of rodeo contests, coupled with the Depression and the Millers' financial troubles on the ranch, finally put an end to their Real Wild West show; the demise of the 101 Ranch "empire" soon followed in 1932.

FILMS: THE END OF LIVE WILD WEST SHOWS

Perhaps in an effort to sustain the Wild West show as a form of entertainment, all three of these show entrepreneurs produced films. The contribution of their films and Wild West shows to the development of the Western film genre requires further investigation, but for now it is worth mentioning their attempts to move into the film industry. See Moses (1996, 223–51) for a discussion on early films and Cody's motion-picture venture and Wallis (1999) for information on the Miller Brothers' film projects.

Buffalo Bill Cody stated that his goal had always been the preservation of history.⁶⁰ In 1914 Cody embarked on a film venture that sought to immortalize the Indian Wars and the stirring events of American history in moving pictures.⁶¹ Produced by the Essanay Film Company, *Indian Wars* presented "realistic portrayals" of significant battles of the Indian Wars from 1876 to 1891.⁶² Filmed at the Pine Ridge Reservation, the motion picture provided a visual record of progress — the winning of the West and Indians' progress towards civilization.⁶³

While Cody sought to preserve historical events on film, Lillie's main goal was to provide "educational entertainment." In fact, Lillie reproduced his Wild West show in his film *Pioneer Days*, or *Pawnee Bill in Frontier Days*.⁶⁴ Unlike Cody, Lillie produced numerous films: *The Buffalo Hunters*; *May Lillie, Queen of the Buffalo Ranch*, a classic story of robbery and ransom; and *Pawnee Bill, the Frontier Detective*.⁶⁵ His film *Pawnee Bill, the White Chief* presented a more biographical storyline, portraying his life as a guide and trapper and early life in Oklahoma.⁶⁶

The Miller brothers also produced several film reels of their Wild West show and ranching life.⁶⁷ Moviemakers came to the ranch to film as early as 1908 (Reddin 1999, 186; Wallis 1999, 342, 377). The Millers had a contract with the New York Moving Picture Company to use their Wild West show outfit in film projects during the 1911 and 1912 winter seasons in California.⁶⁸ This quickly turned into a partnership as the Bison 101 Film Company, which produced four epic two-reel movies: *War on the Plains*, *The Indian Massacre*, *The Battle of the Red Men*, and *The Deserter* (Wallis 1999, 372). Descendants of the Millers claim that they did not receive the recognition they deserved for their contribution to the Western film genre (Wallis 1999, 349–50).⁶⁹ Perhaps this is so; despite their success with their outdoor spectacles, all three of these entrepreneurs failed to

make the transition into Western films. The live outdoor Wild West show had become a thing of the past, or so it seemed.

CHAPTER 2

WORKING IN WILD WEST SHOWS

This chapter examines employment in Wild West shows as one type of colonial contact zone encounter characterized by unequal relationships among multiple actors that reflect the power relationships at play. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) dominates this employment encounter because it had the power to regulate recruitment. BIA policies on working in Wild West shows advanced discourses of “harm” to discourage the hiring of Native performers. These restrictions were in place to protect Native performers, but show entrepreneurs still purportedly profited from, and sometimes exploited, the performers. An examination of Indian school newsletters provides telling examples of the political and ideological context, which centred on the assimilation of the Indian; in general, the newsletters highlighted the view that working in Wild West shows inhibited the civilizing process. The second part of this chapter focuses on Native experiences in more detail and considers how Native performers negotiated working in Wild West shows in terms of opportunity. Drawing on Ortnier’s notion (2006) of agency as cultural projects, I argue that Native performers were active agents in this employment encounter: they pursued opportunities available to them within the constraints and power structures of the BIA and the existing political and ideological context. Employment provided Native people with opportunities outside of reservation life and benefits that made this prospect a desirable one, including economic security and the freedom to travel with their families.

“ENGAGING INDIAN ACTORS”: RECRUITMENT, THE BIA AND INDIAN SCHOOLS

The hiring of Native performers was situated within a larger political, structural, and ideological context — the assimilation of the Indian. This first part of this chapter establishes the context of the employment encounter in the Wild West show contact zone. I trace the power relationships at play, which are made visible in the BIA’s ability to regulate employment and the Indian schools’ aim to define (and form) Nativeness in terms of civilized or uncivilized in the context of Wild West shows. I outline how the BIA established authority over recruitment by promoting discourses of “harm” and examine what the archival record reveals about the working conditions of Native performers.

Recruiting Native Performers and Contracts

Public interest in the Indian never lags. Savage or civilized, he is always picturesque and always mysterious¹

Quoted in a 1908 newspaper article titled “Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them,” theatrical manager and recruiter William McCune recognized the appeal of the Indian. Show entrepreneurs, managers, agents, and local businesses hired Native performers for Wild West shows, exhibitions, fairs, and other entertainments. In the 1880s and ’90s, the BIA received dozens of requests for Native people to appear in a variety of local entertainments and exhibition venues.² Sometimes theatre managers and show agents hired Native people on behalf of organizers of local events or for larger show entrepreneurs. McCune recruited Indians for shows for more than twenty years, drawing mostly on the Sioux tribe at Pine Ridge, South Dakota.³ While Moses (1996, 170) maintains that Cody hired mainly Lakota Sioux from Pine Ridge, archival correspondence and programs indicate that he and other show entrepreneurs also hired Native people from other tribes and reservations, including the Ogallala, Brule, Pawnee, Ponca, Cheyenne, Cherokee, Arapaho, Sac and Fox, and Kiowa, to work in public entertainment.⁴ The three major Wild West shows had long-standing agreements with the BIA, and other large companies such as the Thompson Exhibit and the Doc Carver show also applied to the BIA to hire Native people.⁵ Native performers were in high demand; by the late 1800s and early 1900s, competition to recruit appropriate (read “authentic – traditional”), good (read “disciplined and skilled”), and famous Native people as performers was fierce. In his personal recollections, Gordon Lillie wrote:

You also know, that during all this time the ‘Buffalo Bill show’ did all in their power to stop us. Even hiring our best performers, also stopped us from getting a permit from Washington, D.C. to legally take the Indians off ther [*sic*] reservation. I had to steal them, thereby, taking a chance of going to jail. We would have been lost without them, as the “Pawnee Bill’s Show” featured Indians, and we would have had to stop showing without them.⁶

Lillie’s comments clearly illustrate the demand for Native performers, who were essential to the success of Wild West shows.

In the Wild West show contact zone, the employment encounter was regulated by the BIA, which gave permission to recruit Native people for Wild West shows and other entertainments only under certain conditions. The BIA required security bonds of up to \$10,000, transportation from and back to the reservation, a fair wage for Native performers, and provision for food and medical care.⁷ These employment contracts varied from a few weeks, for local events, to one or two years with larger Wild West shows.⁸ Recruiters were also required to sign individual contracts with Indians that stipulated the length of employment and confirmed the performer’s understanding of the terms. That the BIA was able to regulate the hiring of Native people in shows and establish the terms of contracts demonstrates that the nexus of power over how Native people participated in Wild West shows lay with the BIA.

The archival record does not reveal a clear pattern of reasons why requests for Natives were either denied or accepted. One possible explanation for the inconsistencies may be that, in many cases, the requests went through the various individual Indian agents rather than directly to the BIA.⁹ Smaller companies and fairs often had difficulty meeting the conditions of employment, in particular the large security bonds and the requirement to provide transportation for Native performers. Consequently, these smaller operations sometimes hired Natives without contracts or permission from agents (Greci Green 2001, 114). Indian agents might also deny requests if they were not satisfied with the credentials of the entrepreneur, recruiter, or entertainment company.¹⁰ For the most part, the big three Wild West shows had no problem hiring Native performers, because they had the resources and reputation (Deloria 1981, 52). Generally the BIA trusted them and considered them reliable entrepreneurs because of their background: Lillie's experiences as an interpreter and teacher, the Millers' reputation as successful ranchers, and Cody's authority as a scout and frontiersman, as well as his connections with certain army and government officials.

BIA Policies: Protecting Native Performers from Harm

As a matter of official policy, the BIA did not support employing Native people for Wild West shows, exhibitions, or any other exhibition venue. Native employment in Wild West shows presented challenges to assimilation, or the so-called civilizing project, and the BIA advanced paternalistic discourses about potential "harms" in order to discourage the hiring of Native people. The BIA's concern about the consequences of working in Wild West shows appears as early as 1887, when BIA commissioner Atkins sent a letter to Kiowa Indian agent Jesse Lee Hall outlining the potential harm for Natives. He wrote:

Experience has shown that where irresponsible persons have taken Indians away for exhibition, or other purposes, they have sometimes abandoned them, without clothing, subsistence, or means of returning to their reservation.¹¹

On March 8, 1890, BIA commissioner Thomas Jefferson Morgan sent a memo to all Indian agents clearly outlining the department's position on Native participation in Wild West shows and any other form of entertainment, exhibition, or fair:

The replies of agents to Office circular of November 1, 1889, fully confirmed the previous impression of this Office that the influence of "Wild West" and other similar shows has been harmful both to the Indians individually participating in the "shows" and also to the Indians generally. Therefore, in the interest of Indian civilization and advancement, I deem it

the duty of this Office to use all its influence to prevent Indians from joining such exhibitions.¹²

In these and other memos and letters, the main argument against the hiring of Native people for Wild West shows was that it would be *harmful*. Travelling with Wild West shows, among other things, exposed Natives to the worst aspects of white society, tempted them with many vices such as alcohol and gambling, and encouraged idleness and waste.¹³ BIA officials also discouraged the hiring of Native people for shows because it took them away from more ‘civilized’ activities such as tending their crops or ranching.¹⁴ Government officials further argued that wearing traditional clothing, dancing, and riding around like warriors only encouraged traditional ways. Finally, employment was harmful because it exposed Native people to mistreatment and illness.

The opportunity to make a strong case against the employment of Native performers in Wild West shows occurred in 1890, when General O’Beirne charged Cody with mistreatment of seventy-five Indians with the BBWW show in Europe, which was well publicized in the press.¹⁵ After positive testimonies from other Native performers and an unsuccessful (from the BIA’s perspective) investigation into the charges, the case was dismissed, and Cody and Burke returned to Europe with more Indians.

Working Conditions

What exactly does the archival record tell us about the potential harms of working in Wild West shows? My examination of correspondence between Indian agents and show entrepreneurs, plus occasional letters from Native performers, does reveal cases of exploitation of Native employees by show entrepreneurs and a lack of Native agency in regard to controlling hiring policies and working conditions in this employment encounter. However, it also raised questions about the nature of the material that has been preserved in the archival record.

Aside from the 1890 charge, few archival records exist in regard to the mistreatment of Native performers with the BBWW show. This is not to say, however, that cases of mistreatment did not occur with other Wild West shows and exhibitions. For one thing, Native performers with other Wild West shows sometimes complained about unpaid wages.¹⁶ In 1905, for example, Native performers with the Cummins Wild West Show — Herbert Walker, Ida Walker, Margarite Walker, Starving Elk, Wolf Robe, and William Howling Wolf — complained to their Indian agent that they were anxious to receive their pay.¹⁷ Sometimes Native performers wrote to Indian agents about breach of contract, requesting assistance to return home.¹⁸ Mack Hay, Coyote Red Cloud, and Frank Hill wrote to their Indian agent in 1910 that fifteen Indians, most of whom were women, had been stranded by Mr. McNeill of El Reno, Oklahoma, and were owed more than one month’s wages.¹⁹ Indian Sam Mayson also wrote on their behalf: “As is usual in taking Indians off of reservations for show purposes, the parties so

doing are required to give bond for their safe return . . . I hope it is so in this case . . . [and] that you will take such actions as may relief [*sic*] to these people.”²⁰

Another concern with Native employment in Wild West shows was frequent reports of illness, which led to the assumption that Native performers were not well cared for. Cases of illness did occur, but archival evidence demonstrates that Cody showed respect and concern for Native performers with his show and honoured the terms of his contracts; he sent home Indians who were themselves ill or who needed to take care of ill family members back on the reserve.²¹

In sum, some Native performers complained of unpaid wages or breach of contract and suffered from infectious ailments.²² Given such evidence, one could make an argument for the exploitation and mistreatment of Native performers. However, I suspect that the negative letters discussed above might be a reflection of the nature of the archival record rather than a true indication of Native experiences on the whole. I am not saying that some Native performers were not exploited, as real harms did exist, but only that what is preserved in the record affects how we might interpret experiences in this employment encounter. Native performers sought assistance from Indian agents if the terms of their contracts were not met, whereas contracts that were fulfilled did not generate letters.²³ In addition, most of these letters were in regard to smaller companies or the Miller Brothers’ 101 Ranch Wild West Show. The BIA collected these reports because it was building its case against Native employment in Wild West shows and seeking to gain public support on the issue.

It is important to note that even though illness, injuries, disputes over pay, and drunkenness did occur, these conditions were not restricted to Wild West shows.²⁴ Problems with illness, alcohol, gambling, and other “harms” also existed on reservations, so the argument that working in Wild West shows *caused* unusual harm to Natives falls short. Reservation life was plagued with similar problems because of a breakdown in traditional life caused by relocation to reservations, fragmentation of traditional family and kinship ties, and disintegration of subsistence patterns as a result of assimilation policies.²⁵ In addition, similar diseases existed on reservations and in Indian schools; many died of tuberculosis, influenza, or smallpox, and children sent to Indian schools in the East became sick because of “climate change and new diseases” (Starita 1995, 161). An estimation based on data from 1890 suggests that the number and types of deaths were comparable in both contexts. In 1890, approximately forty-five people died every month out of 5,500 living on the Pine Ridge reservation, which translates to 9.8 percent of the population (Warren 2005, 376).²⁶ In comparison, five out of seventy-five performers with the BBWW show died in 1890, which translates into 6.7 percent (Moses 1996, 92–98).

The above estimate is only for one year and the statistics on illnesses and deaths require further investigation, but I suggest that the sources of Native people’s living and working conditions were more complex than simply employment in Wild West shows. These “Wild West show problems” also occurred on reservations, but it is possible that the BIA found it convenient to

shift the focus away from reservations by targeting Wild West shows and exhibitions. By condemning the shows, the BIA may have been attempting to deflect criticisms about the failure of and problems in the reservation system. Ironically, the desperate conditions on the reservations may have influenced some Native people to explore the Wild West show opportunity.

Indian Schools' Support of BIA Policies and the "Civilizing Project"

BIA policies on Native employment in Wild West shows reflect broader government policies and the political milieu of the era. Government policies in the late 1800s focused on the 'civilizing' and assimilation of Native people, which involved prohibition of ceremonies and dances and forced settlement onto reservations.²⁷ Reservations were meant to encourage a sedentary life based on farming or ranching — productive and civilized industries that would lead to Native people's self-sufficiency. Therefore, besides concern about the well-being of Native performers, the underlying worry was that participating in Wild West shows would undermine government policies of assimilation, which sought to extinguish, not reinforce, traditional ways.

Moses effectively demonstrates how images of 'traditional' Natives presented in Wild West shows conflicted with images of 'progressive' Natives disseminated by government officials and Indian schools: "the major conflict between Wild West shows and Indian-policy reformers became largely a struggle to determine whose image of the Indian would prevail" (1996, 5). This tension between civilized and uncivilized (or progressive and traditional) Indian images represents the negotiation of multiple interests and power. I extend Moses's analysis and offer discourses found in some newsletters, such as *The Arrow* and *Indian Helper* from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania,²⁸ about Native participation in Wild West shows to demonstrate how Indian schools attempted to promote a particular vision of Nateness in the context of working in Wild West shows.

First, Indian school officials, who also subscribed to the principles of the civilizing project through education, supported the BIA's position against Native employment in Wild West shows. Many articles expressed the opinion that Wild West shows promoted images of "old Indians" as savages and did not represent "today's new Indians" and the progress they had made towards civilized existence. An 1888 article criticized British audiences for their enthusiasm for the BBWW show's "overdrawn pictures of our western life . . . thinking that the Indians are savage beasts."²⁹ More important, Wild West shows undermined the goals of the BIA and the work of Indian schools to civilize and assimilate the Indian:

This disgraceful show can do more in six months, to drag the Indian down and give a wrong impression of his real character, than forty Carlisle's could do in six years to build the Indian up and help him to stand on his

own feet . . . Buffalo Bill is rapidly tearing down what all good schools for the Indian are building up.³⁰

Second, Indian school officials argued that the show encouraged Natives to act in these “old” uncivilized ways, hence preserving tradition rather than progressing in the white world. Native dress, long hair, use of war paint, and performance of traditional dances in Wild West shows marked Native performers as uncivilized. For example, an 1897 article in the *Indian Helper* described how Iron Tail wore “braided hair” and “all sorts of toggery [*sic*]” such as beaded necklaces, blankets, leggings, moccasins, and beaver skin.³¹ Native people such as Iron Tail were paid to appear in “wild dress” and perform the “most blood-thirsty savage dance known.”³² The contrast between civilized and uncivilized was exemplified in the difference between father and son. The article stated that while Philip Iron Tail “was out on a New Jersey farm, gaining manhood and experience that will fit him for useful, civilized life,” his father, Iron Tail, was “a perfect picture of ignorance and superstition!”³³ Son and father represented opposite poles of the civilized/uncivilized Indian. Indian schools banded together with other agencies and authorities to support their position against Native participation in Wild West shows, encouraging Native participation in productive ‘civilized’ industry:

Let the American Indian Association and other agencies, together with the authorities in Indian Schools, tell the Indian of the dangers which lurk in the practice of Indian youth wasting their days in such activities. Help these young people see that it is their part to settle down to some kind of productive industry which will lead to larger happiness and greater contentment, and to turn away permanently from the activities which though exciting are short-lived and harmful.³⁴

Third, many of the newsletters from Indian schools, like the correspondence from the BIA and Indian agents, also emphasized the exploitation of vulnerable Native people, who were portrayed as helpless victims, incapable of making decisions of their own. A 1911 article in *The Arrow* stated that the American Indian Association vowed to use its influence against the “luring” of Indians into shows and circuses, where they would “squander” their money and become “engulfed in viciousness and vice.”³⁵ According to Indian school newsletters, not only did spectacles such as the BBWW show present degrading images and encourage Native participants to act in old savage ways, they also exploited Native people:

The hope is . . . that those who should witness the disgraceful exhibition of the so-called *savagery of their kin*, would have the intelligence enough to see that the whole thing is only a bold scheme to get money out of portraying in a exaggerated and distorted manner the lowest and most

degraded side of the Indian nature. Only the SAVAGE in the Indian does Buffalo Bill care to keep constantly before the public gaze³⁶

It is interesting that this article appears to be addressing other Native people in an effort to deter them from becoming involved in such enterprises.

Finally, this was a complex issue, not simply a contest between Indian schools' goals (and BIA control) and Native performers' agency. Some Native people also subscribed to the Indian schools' views of progress through education. Chauncey Yellow Robe, a Sioux from the Rosebud reservation and an 1895 graduate of the Carlisle Indian School, delivered a forceful critique on the "commercializing of Indians" in Wild West shows, moving pictures, and fairs, in a speech at the Society of the American Indian conference in 1914. He passionately argued that the commercialization of Indians was "the greatest hindrance, injustice, and detriment to the present progress of the American Indians toward civilization" (Yellow Robe 1914, 225). He further argued that showmen manufactured these shows to entertain and instruct the public but were "teaching them that the Indian is only a savage being." In reference to battle re-enactments in shows, and specifically in the film called *The Last Great Battle of the Sioux*, Yellow Robe criticized claims of historical accuracy, stating that "the whole production of the field was misrepresented and yet approved by the Government." Ironically, Yellow Robe co-starred in the 1930 movie *The Silent Enemy* (Francis 1992, 127); perhaps the draw for him was that the film was offered as a "corrective" Native history narrative. The goal of the writer/producer, Douglas Burden, to present an "authentic picture of primitive Indian life to counter inaccurate and demeaning portrays of Indians as wild savages" (McBride 1995, 98), may have influenced Yellow Robe's decision. In fact, however, the film substitutes one stereotype for another.

Indian schools were not the only institutions to promote discourses of civilizing through education. Drawing on paternalistic and colonial discourses of assimilation, William Cody spoke in favour of employment of Native performers by arguing that working in Wild West shows would be educational: it would provide them with an opportunity to see the wonders and successes of the white world, and, in consequence, Indians would set themselves on the path to becoming civilized. Cody also stated that working in Wild West shows did not encourage idleness; rather, it provided Native people an opportunity to earn an honest living.³⁷ He went so far as to say that working in Wild West shows in fact supported the goals of the BIA because it made Indians self-sufficient.³⁸ Cody worked to establish good relationships with both Native performers and the BIA early in his career as a Wild West show entrepreneur, but he also used existing discourses, along with his reputation and connections, to promote his own interests. While he emphasized the educational value of employment as leading to the "civilizing of the Indian," Wild West shows still depended on images of the "traditional, uncivilized" Indian.

In sum, discourses of both the BIA and Indian schools attempted to advance a certain vision of Nativeness — civilized, industrious, sedentary, and assimilated into white society, representing the broader political agendas of the time and the power relationships in this employment encounter. Despite the BIA's insistence that Native people stay on reservations and its vigilant monitoring of Native recruitment, hundreds of Native people left the reservations every year, with and without permission, to work with Wild West shows and exhibitions. The next section focuses on the Native side of the recruiting story. Given what the archival record reveals about the exploitation and regulation surrounding the hiring of Native performers, why did some Native people opt to work in Wild West shows? What were their experiences like, and what agency could they exercise in their employment?

NATIVE EXPERIENCES WORKING IN WILD WEST SHOWS

The nexus of power may have lain with the BIA, which controlled recruitment, and some entrepreneurs may have exploited Native employees, but Native performers were also active social actors in this employment encounter. Scholars have suggested that Native people joined Wild West shows for good reasons: the possibility of continuing with “old ways” while avoiding forced acculturation, and an opportunity to travel freely without passes, to see and learn about the world, and to make some money (Deloria 1981, 54; Napier 1999, 385, 6; Warren 2005, 358, 361). The archival records I examined support this hypothesis and reveals the agency Native performers wielded in this employment encounter. I contend that Native performers recognized the benefits of working in Wild West shows and took advantage of those opportunities; that they actively and consciously pursued those opportunities represents their agency of cultural projects.

“Opportunity” and Agency of Intention: Prevalence, Economics, and Family

It is useful here to draw on Buddle's idea that Native people reframe or indigenize contact zones (2004, 39–42), and on Ortner's notion of cultural projects (2006, 2001), outlined in the introductory chapter, to shed light on the negotiation of power and agency. Ortner (2006) discusses two related modalities of agency: power (involving domination and resistance) and intention, or cultural projects. Here I apply Ortner's theoretical approach to agency (2006, 147) in terms of intention or cultural projects, which highlights how desires and pursuits grow out of (Native) people's own structures of life, not only out of structures of inequality or power (in this case, *structures of inequality* relates to the structural power of colonialism and the BIA's control of the employment encounter).

Following Buddle's and Ortner's approaches to tracing and analyzing agency, I suggest that Native performers reframed this employment encounter into one of *opportunity*. In other words, Native performers pursued their own cultural

projects and had their own reason for working in Wild West shows: survival during an era characterized by assimilation policies. They had self-conscious intention (cultural projects) of pursuing the opportunities and benefits of working in the shows. This intention is demonstrated by the fact that a large number of Native people worked for Wild West shows and that some sought employment on their own initiative. The benefits of this opportunity included economic rewards, independence and freedom to travel, and the chance to maintain the family unit.

Prevalence: Participation and Employment Numbers

The archival record supports the argument that many Native people were eager to work in Wild West shows and other performance venues. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, hundreds of Native people worked as performers in public entertainments ranging from Wild West shows and exhibitions to circuses and, later, Western films. Buffalo Bill Cody employed hundreds of Natives every year,³⁹ and more than a hundred Wild West shows existed from 1884 to 1938, which does not even take into account other forms of spectacle.⁴⁰ The archival record is incomplete and does not account for every performer in every year, so the number of Native people working in Wild West shows and other exhibitions is certainly underestimated.⁴¹

Table 1: Number of Native people hired (according to archival records)

Year	1890	1904	1905	1907
Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show	75+	110	75	
Miller Brothers' 101 Wild West Show			1,000	100–165
Cummins' Wild West Show		500	500	
Earl's Court Indian Village			42	
Total Number Employed	75+	610	1,617	165
Number of known Wild West shows that year	3	6	4	3

In Table 1, the number of Wild West shows in each particular year is based on Russell (1970) and does not include other exhibitions or local spectacles. Given these figures, the number of Native people working in shows or exhibitions at one time or another in their lifetime probably numbered in the thousands.⁴² Moses (1996, 174) suggests, and I agree, that the maintenance and even lowering of

wages by show entrepreneurs in the 1900s is an indication of the large number of Native people available for employment.

The record also confirms that some Native people actively sought out these employment opportunities on their own initiative.⁴³ In 1880, the Sells Brothers wrote to Indian agent D. B. Dryer that they had hired several Indians at Columbus, Kansas, “at their own solicitation *not* in the Indian nation nor knowing they belonged on a reservation.”⁴⁴ The Miller brothers received numerous inquiries for employment on the ranch and in their Wild West show from both “cowboys” and “Indians.”⁴⁵ One of them was Black Horse Sr., who wrote a letter to Joe Miller asking if he would be going out on the road again in the spring.⁴⁶ An experienced performer, having worked for Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, circuses, and the Bigelow Medicine Company, Black Horse sent his inquiry on personalized letterhead that highlighted his riding, roping, and bronco riding skills, complete with a picture of himself (See Figure 1).

While not every Native person who appeared in shows made a career out of performing, many were employed more than once and/or in more than one show. Red Shirt, Black Elk, Standing Bear, Samuel Lone Bear, Black Heart, Rocky Bear, and No Neck, to name a few, worked many seasons with the BBWW show. In particular, the Lakota from Pine Ridge and Standing Rock have a history of working as performers, and gained professional status as “show Indians” (Moses 1996, 171). One such performer was George Dull Knife from Pine Ridge, who started with the BBWW show in 1893 and worked as part of the large troupe of Lakota entertainers off and on for fifteen years (Starita 1995, 138). According to his grandson, employment with Wild West shows could last a long time, from one to three years (Starita 1995, 145).

Both Lillie and the Millers also had return performers. For example, Creeping Bear wrote to Joe Miller in 1926 seeking employment: “I am Creeping Bear, one of the Indians who went with you to Germany last year. I want to go with your show again this year, and hear that you are going to start sometime next month. I have a friend, Watan, who also went with you last year who wants to go with you again this time.”⁴⁷ Working in Wild West shows was not the only job opportunity available, but it appears to have been appealing, given that Native performers returned year after year.

Native performers were free to travel while employed in Wild West shows. Performers joined or left the show as they chose, and examples of Native travels and sightseeing abroad were documented in newspapers, as discussed in chapter 4. Some Native performers quit the show because they were tired of performing or were homesick.⁴⁸ Show manager Henry P. wrote that some of the Comanche Indians liked the show, while others did not and went home even before they were paid.⁴⁹ Cody had his share of Native performers leave the show for unspecified reasons. On rare occasions, this freedom of mobility led to performers being accidentally left stranded. The performers left behind, such as Black Elk, usually found employment in other shows or exhibitions and worked in the performance circuit abroad.⁵⁰

Economic Motivations

Working in Wild West shows provided income for Native people beyond the jobs available on the reservation at a comparable rate. Luther Standing Bear wrote that he earned \$300 a year in 1884 to teach, or about \$25 a month (Standing Bear 1975, xiv). He was also paid \$2.50 a day for a man and his team to fence in the reservation (Standing Bear 1975, 242). Based on archival evidence, the average pay for Native performers was about \$1 per day, or \$30 per month.⁵¹ Thus Native people did not have to stay on the reservations in order to earn income; some found employment in Wild West shows, believing it offered a better opportunity.

In part, working in Wild West shows was a response to the reservation system and conditions. Employment prospects for Native people, even for those who, like Luther Standing Bear, were educated in Indian schools, were few. Many Native performers agreed with entrepreneurs that they were better off working in shows than on reservations. Short Boy, a performer with the BBWW show, was quoted as saying:

“I wouldn’t go back to the reservation for a new rifle and cartridges enough to last me the rest of my life . . . There’s no more hunting for the Indian and there’s no use fighting against the hopeless odds, and so we take a great pleasure in going up against a fair fight with the American soldiers even with blank cartridges.” Then he shook his head in disgust. “But even there we don’t get a square deal; we are always licked — always licked.”⁵²

According to the reporter, Short Boy was echoing the sentiments of the entire band. Despite the satisfaction of performing a fight against whites, Short Bull recognized the irony of appearing in Wild West shows. The Native performers were in effect re-enacting their fate as the conquered and defeated.

Although the BIA and Indian school officials accused Native people of squandering their money, some Native people did, in fact, manage to accumulate savings. During his visit with the commissioner of Indian affairs in Washington, Young Spotted Tail, a performer with the Pawnee Bill show, stated that “he not only had a good time, but he could go home with some money in his pockets and some fine clothes on.”⁵³ Many Native performers with the BBWW show also sent some of their pay home to their families.⁵⁴ Cody stated that Little Chief, who worked for him for two years, never gambled — rather, he saved his money.⁵⁵ Reportedly, Fast Thunder put aside enough money to acquire four thousand cattle and a comfortable cabin (Warren 2005, 409). Show wages paid for cattle, horses, and farm equipment as well as food and clothing (Warren 2005, 408).

An examination of the wages at the Millers’ 101 Ranch Wild West Show draws attention to an obvious gender and ethnic or racial pay hierarchy with their employees. Women performers, both cowgirls and Indians, were generally paid

lower wages than men, and children were paid considerably less.⁵⁶ In most cases, Native performers were paid less than cowboys and other ethnic groups such as the Cossacks.⁵⁷ There was also a pay hierarchy among the Native performers.⁵⁸ According to Reddin, the Miller brothers did not see the Indians as the main attraction of the show, even though they formed an equal, if not larger, part of the show in terms of numbers (1999, 163). This suggests that the Millers could hire more Indians for less money, hence increasing the size of their cast without decreasing their profits, and implies a certain degree of exploitation of their Native performers.⁵⁹ Still, the wages were decent in comparison with other job opportunities, and they received higher wages than non-Natives who were employed in the cookhouse or tending ring stock, for example.

The pay differential among and between Native employees and cowboys was in fact based on the type of job (superintendent, interpreter, head performer, performer, or extra), skill level, and status (including fame or age). Those who had a special position, such as interpreter, superintendent, Indian police, or head Indian, earned higher wages. Some Native performers were paid a higher rate because of their reputation (i.e., status, fame, or notoriety) and experience. Sitting Bull, for instance, was paid \$50 a week for his short stint with the BBWW show in 1885. He also negotiated a \$125 bonus and the right to sell his photographs and autographs (Kasson 2000, 174). Star performers or elders who had more experience generally commanded higher wages.⁶⁰

A Family Affair

Entire families worked and/or travelled together in Wild West shows. Scholars have focused mainly on the employment of male Native performers, and it is true that the more famous performers were males who had status as warriors and had participated in battle. The visual record is also skewed towards portraits of the male ‘exotic’ or male ‘warrior.’ But women and children also travelled and performed in these spaces of public entertainment, and often family members travelled together. In her article on engaging Indian actors, Quimby wrote that Indians were often recruited as family units who could enjoy a “unique outing with pay.”⁶¹ Men, women, and children alike were anxious to hand in their applications for the BBWW show winter recruitment in 1908.⁶² Newspaper images and photographs show women and children in the Wild West show casts, in the associated encampments, and on city excursions while on tour (See Figure 2.1 and 2.2).⁶³ Lillie employed “Indian Princesses” and other women, as well as children, for the PBWW show.⁶⁴ The Miller brothers also hired families. One of their employees, High Chief Cheyenne, wrote to Superintendent Shell asking him to send his daughter to the Jamestown Exhibition, as his wife and some of his children were already there.⁶⁵ In 1926 the Sarrasani Circus in Germany recruited Native performers and their families through the Miller brothers; for example, Ghost Dog went with his wife and three children.⁶⁶

It seems that so many women and children were employed that letters were sent out to discourage this practice. Mr. Freer wrote to Joe Miller of the 101 Ranch in 1911, informing him that Indian families were considering joining the show next season, including the Prentiss family: Noble Prentiss; his wife, Julia; daughter Nellie; son Stewart; and an infant. In this letter, Freer asked Miller not to hire a “promising Indian girl” (Julia) from the Carlisle School.⁶⁷ In 1912 Freer received another letter about children employed with the 101 Ranch show in Venice, California, as well as in the Millers’ film project.⁶⁸ There is, in short, ample evidence that families, both nuclear and extended, were part of Wild West shows. The participation of families is significant because it points to other possible benefits of this employment opportunity, both socio-cultural and economic, that require further attention.

Photographs from the Denver Public Library collection illustrate women in the arena, suggesting that they were performers, not simply travelling with their husbands and kin (See Figure 3).⁶⁹ Women performed in the Indian vignettes and engaged in everyday activities in the encampment outside the arena. They also brought in additional income by selling their beadwork and other handmade items such as moccasins and purses (Warren 2005, 409). Women and children drew as much public interest as the “brave savage” warriors. Standing Bear recounts the birth of his daughter while on tour with the BBWW show in Birmingham. He writes that the birth was headline news in the papers and became a big draw (Standing Bear 1975, 265). Visitors lined up long before the show to catch a glimpse of his wife and daughter:

My wife sat on a raised platform, with the little one in the cradle before her. The people filed past, many of them dropping money in a box for her. Nearly every one had some sort of little gift for her also. It was a great drawing card for the show; the work was very light for my wife, and as for the baby, before she was twenty-four hours old she was making more money than my wife and I together. (Standing Bear 1975, 266)

Standing Bear’s account reveals his pride in his family and also the economic benefits of having women and children as part of the show.

Beyond the economic gains, there were other socio-cultural benefits to pursuing this employment encounter. Working in Wild West shows facilitated the socio-cultural well-being of Native performers’ families. The opportunity to travel together as a family, and at times with kin from the community or other reservations, must have attracted Native people. Plains tribes lived together in extended family groups; for example, the *tiospayes* (“those who live together”) was the fundamental social unit of Lakota society (Starita 1995, 155–56). Guy Dull Knife Jr. recalls stories that his grandfather George Dull Knife told him about his travels with the BBWW show. He said that Native performers lived together in a camp that “began to resemble the camps they had always lived in on the Plains”, with campfires, children running, women beading, men smoking and

talking, and occasionally fresh buffalo to eat, *just like an Indian village* (Starita 1995, 150–51, emphasis added). Thus the Wild West show encampment was a space where Native participants could maintain certain aspects of “village life” (Starita 1995, 142–43; Warren 2005, 362)

Cultural Projects /Intentions and Native Agency in the Employment Encounter

The BIA, Indian schools, and show entrepreneurs dominated the employment encounter. If we measure agency only in terms of power relationships — Native performers’ ability to control or resist employment policies and conditions — then Native people did not wield any agency. This approach to identifying agency centres on analyzing power relationships in terms of a domination–resistance axis and focuses on structural constraints. However, if we also recognize agency in terms of intentions or cultural projects, then other forms of agency may be traced. I suggest that Native performers worked within the structural constraints of the employment encounter — the constraints of an economically limited context and a political milieu characterized by assimilation policies and colonial discourse of progress — rather than manipulated it, signifying an identifiable, albeit limited, form of agency.

Although the employment encounter of the Wild West show contact zone may be characterized by unequal power relationships, including BIA control and entrepreneur exploitation, this does not detract from the fact that Native performers had their own reasons for working in Wild West shows. I have provided evidence that Native performers had their own cultural projects or intentions (agency) to pursue opportunities by illustrating, first, the prevalence of this experience. Native performers were not passive victims lured away from the reservations, as the BIA claimed. In fact, Native participants capitalized on opportunities to their advantage. That Native people would send in requests for employment and worked for more than one show over extended periods of time indicates that Native performers were treated satisfactorily, despite the evidence collected by the BIA, or, at the very least, treated well enough that they would return for another season. In addition, Native performers exercised a fair degree of freedom within the context of working with Wild West shows: they joined and left shows as they pleased; they enjoyed the freedom to travel; and once on location, Native performers were free to wander the cities and take in the sights without passes. Show entrepreneurs such as Buffalo Bill Cody were not as diligent in restricting Native performers’ movements as was the BIA (Warren 2005, 362), and this benefit may have led some Native people to work in Wild West shows. In short, I maintain that some Native people pursued employment opportunities and that there were benefits to working in Wild West shows, and this represents a form of agency of intention or cultural projects.

Second, there were definite economic benefits to working in Wild West shows. Even though a hierarchical pay structure existed, Native performers were paid well in comparison to other opportunities available on or off reservations.

Because Native people were now part of the cash economy, working in Wild West shows provided much-needed income to purchase necessities and feed their families, offering them independence from insufficient rations.⁷⁰ Employment in Wild West shows also afforded occasions to sell their beadwork and other handmade items, providing additional income (Warren 2005, 409). Following Sewell's interpretation (1992) of agency of intentions, Native performers demonstrated "the motivated capacity to act creatively" within the Wild West contact zone employment encounter. According to Sewell, everyone has *access* to resources even if all people do not have *control* over these resources. Within the structural constraints of the employment encounter and unequal power relationships, therefore, Native performers accessed resources available to them, even if they did not control them. That is, some Native people took advantage of the economic opportunities that working in Wild West shows presented. That employment opportunities were also a matter of survival does not diminish the fact that Native performers had intentions or agency.

Finally, working in Wild West shows was a family affair. Native people freely socialized with relatives, wore traditional clothing, and continued traditional activities at the Wild West show encampment, away from the watchful eye of the BIA. While the BIA sought to dismantle Lakota society, kinship groups, and traditions through assimilation policies (Starita 1995, 153, 155), the Wild West show camp was a place where they could be maintained. As Warren notes, "travel away from the reservation allowed Lakotas to better retain proscribed spiritual and cultural traditions" (2005, 362). At Wild West show encampments, Native participants could maintain their extended family unit and mobility. I posit that these freedoms may be read as benefits of working in Wild West shows. Viewed from this perspective, working in Wild West shows may also be seen as a subtle form of resistance. That the performers would choose to travel with their families rather than send their children to Indian schools suggests another possible case of subverting BIA policies. I am careful here to emphasize that such resistance was subtle in degree and form; it was *evasive* rather than oppositional. From the data I collected, it is not possible to ascertain if Native performers consciously sought to resist BIA policies by working in Wild West shows. However, I believe that they actively sought out employment opportunities, and as a result of their employment, Native performers subverted BIA and Indian school attempts at assimilation, in particular the reorganization of Lakota society into a European family model.

SUMMARY

This chapter considered the complex relationships, actions, and interests of major players in the Wild West show contact zone, with specific reference to the employment encounter. BIA discourses of "harm" and Indian schools' discourses of "civilized/uncivilized" Indians represent the larger cultural and political context and power relations at play. The BIA was concerned with limiting recruitment and

Figure 1: Personalized Letterhead from Performer Black Horse Sr.



Figure 2.1 and 2.2: Women and Children in Wild West Shows

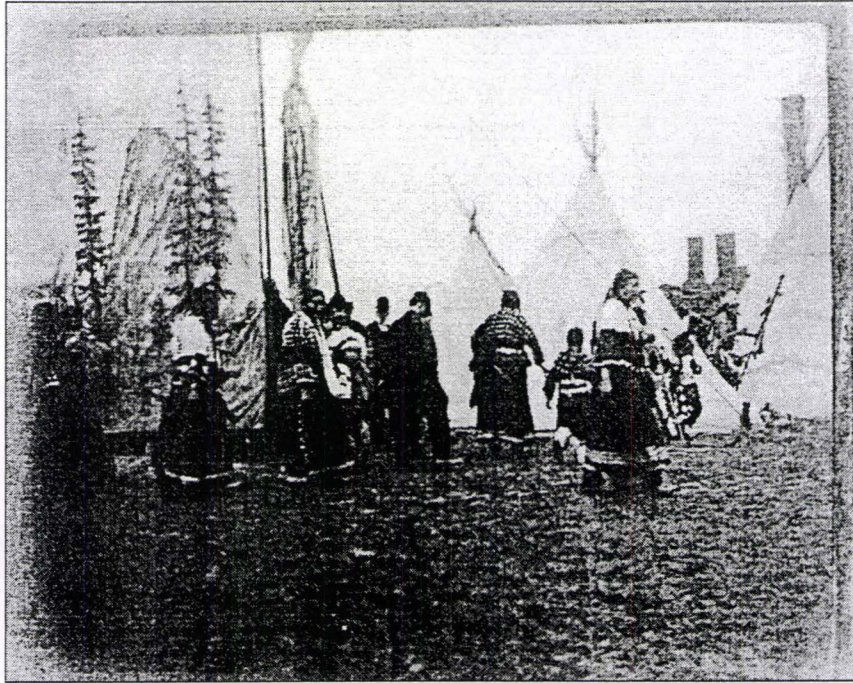


Figure 3: Group of Native performers at Earls' Court, 1909



CHAPTER 3

PERFORMING IN WILD WEST SHOWS

For many white Americans, their only contact with Indian people was through the medium of performance, and for many American Indians, their only way of representing themselves to white Americans was through performance. (Maddox 2002, 9)

The Wild West show contact zone brought about performance encounters, which includes the show performances themselves as well as discourses about performances found in programs, couriers, newspapers, and other print and visual media. The Wild West show contact zone is a complex and incongruous space in that it is both a performance and a living space (cf. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994). While Wild West shows may be viewed as an exploitive space where Native participants are asked to perform their savageness and exoticism, this does not preclude the possibility that Native performers experienced the performance encounter and Nativeness in other ways.

Based on an examination of discourses in the performance encounter, this chapter interrogates the hegemonic production of the exotic savage warrior and argues that Native performers used the performance encounter for their own ends and also constructed social meanings of Nativeness in this space. Using Whissel's concepts (2002) of "spectator position" and "pictorial realism," I first establish the context of the performance encounter by outlining how Wild West shows created a sense of authenticity and produced a certain vision of American history and Nativeness. In particular, they constructed and reinforced stereotypical and essentialized images of Native people. The second part of the chapter focuses on Native performers' perspectives and considers the alternative, co-existing production of Nativeness that existed in this performance encounter. I maintain that although Native performers did not transform the meanings of arena performances, neither were they simply taken over by them. The performance encounter illustrates the process of transculturation that occurs in contact zones; Native performers adopted and modified the performance encounter to experience their identity (as expressed through warrior identity, dance, and dress) in unique ways. That they used the Wild West show contact zone, modified warrior songs, and constructed and experienced their own social meanings of Nativeness through song, dance, and dress demonstrates expressive agency.

SPECTACLES OF THE "REAL AND AUTHENTIC" WILD WEST

Wild West shows are spectacles in every sense as defined by Manning (1992) and MacAloon (1984) in the introductory chapter; they are visual treats of dramatic action bordering on over-the-top entertainment. Scholars have examined

the relationships between history and the spectacular simulation of historical events (Kasson 2000; Martin 1996; Nelles 1999; Whissel 2002). As Slotkin notes, Wild West shows were not true historical re-creations but rather “mythical histories” that both reduced and conflated complex historical moments into typical scenes that were ritually re-enacted to achieve symbolic status (1981, 33, 34). Wild West shows are also “nation building projects” like the one described by Mackey (1999) and others in the introductory chapter, in that they shaped the construction of Nativeness and attempted to define, situate, and manage the place of Others in America. The production of Others, specifically Native people, supported evolutionary views of race based on opposing tropes of civilization and savagery (Martin 1996, 95). The imagery produced in Wild West shows as described in the print media depict Native people as exotic savage warriors, different from members of white society. More than images, these tropes reflect the hegemonic capacity of the performances to construct social meaning and form the public’s view of Nativeness. By drawing on Whissel’s concepts (2002) of spectator position and pictorial realism, I illustrate how Wild West shows became viewed as authentic representations of life in the West and how they produced social meanings such as “progress” and “savagery.”

Spectator Position: Witnesses of the West

Show programs and newspaper reviews stressed that Wild West shows were authentic representations of life in the West with real cowboys and Indians, not mere actors: “these ‘noble red men’ are the genuine article.”¹ However, authenticity demanded more than real cowboys and genuine Indians. Whissel maintains that Wild West shows gained status as realistic representations of history by engaging people who participated in significant historical events to perform re-enactments, what she calls spectator position (2002, 227). Several Wild West shows hired famous Indians such as Sitting Bull, Kicking Bear, Short Bull, No Neck, Spotted Tail, Chief Bull Bear, Standing Cloud, and Long Bull, in addition to veterans of the U.S. Cavalry, for example, all of whom had participated in real battles.² Cody, Gordon Lillie, and the Miller brothers also claimed first-hand knowledge of life on the West.³ Not every performer had been “at the scene” or participated in the historical events re-enacted, but the presence of a few representative individuals confirmed that these reproductions were based on first-hand knowledge.

Whissel’s notion of spectator position is useful for understanding how Wild West shows came to be viewed as authentic representations of events through acts of witnessing and performing. My analysis of programs and clippings confirms her argument; however, she does not consider how the spectator position performance strategy presents a partial view. Following Conquergood’s hermeneutic approach to performance (1991), I suggest that Whissel’s concept be expanded to consider how certain representations of history, culture, and identity through performance are valued over others. Native people

“from the scene” were essential for establishing the authenticity of Wild West shows, but their view of life in the West was not equally valued. Wild West shows legitimized the *elite*’s vision of America; they sustained hegemonic discourses that supported industrialization and progress and demonstrated the social order of civilization (Martin 1996, 96–97). Wild West shows’ use of the spectator position privileged the knowledge and experiences of frontiersmen and cowboys, that is, of dominant white society.

Pictorial Realism: Pictures of Cowboy and Indian Life

Wild West shows consisted of series of spectacles that reduced history and culture to a display form that Mitchell (1992) calls “world-as-exhibition.” Characteristic of nineteenth-century imperial culture, the world-as-exhibition model entailed the framing of realistic scenes of life in wax museums,⁴ fairs and exhibitions, landscape paintings, and dioramas that evoked cultural myths, values, and ideologies such as progress (Whissel 2002, 228). Similarly, historical re-enactments and Indian vignettes in Wild West shows gained status as authentic representations by presenting “living pictures” of cultures, what Whissel refers to as pictorial realism (2002, 228).

Wild West shows were spaces in which to dramatize history and cultural myths, or, as MacAloon argues about spectacles, to “think out stories” of America. They consisted of a series of “object lessons” that promoted a particular vision of American identity and a story of the discovery of the “savage” and America’s conquest of the West, and they provided a venue through which Americans could manage ambiguities and justify progress (Martin 1996, 94, 96; Slotkin 1981; Whissel 2002, 227). Wild West shows celebrated the admirable deeds of frontiersmen and cowboys, demonstrating the skills of horsemanship and marksmanship that they employed in order to conquer the West (Deahl 1975, 151).⁵ European and American audiences alike witnessed “the hard work, the skill and the heroism of the cowboys . . . whose relentless march forward [has] ensured their compatriots of the possession of a land they have often drenched with blood.”⁶ On the other hand, Indian vignettes demonstrated the savageness of Indians. As outlined in chapter 1, every Wild West show included at least one scene with a war dance and a dramatic attack by Indians.⁷ The symbolic, ritualistic repetition of these object lessons and identities validated the authenticity and object lessons of the performances.

Another example of the world-as-exhibition model and pictorial realism occurred outside the arena, in the Indian Village, or encampment.⁸ The encampments were crucial for connecting “re-enactment” with real daily life. An article on the BBWW show at the American Exhibition commented on how the Indians of romance novels were there at the show, and that visitors could come to the village, enter teepees, chuck the chins of babies, and watch women at work.⁹ This opportunity to gaze upon Native and cowboy participants enhanced the realism and authenticity of Wild West show performances.

Slotkin notes that programs provided “historical and ideological rationale for the show,” not just description (1981, 33–34).¹⁰ I maintain that programs also authorized the authenticity of historical re-enactments and Indian vignettes by employing educational ethnological-type discourses. Programs and couriers were quasi-anthropological, providing detailed summaries of historical events and biographies of individuals and tribes of the West. Biographical sketches of Buffalo Bill Cody, Johnny Baker, Annie Oakley, and the Miller brothers, for example, described the deeds of Western heroes, while in-depth stories about “Indians at Home” and the “Ghost Dance” phenomenon illustrated Native culture.¹¹ Feature program articles also recounted historical events such as the Custer battle, the attack at Deadwood, or the battle at Summit Springs.¹² Programs and other print media stressed Native people’s “weird” dances and “savage” attacks; they were central tools for constructing a view on Nativeness.

Constructing the Native: Tropes of Culture and Identity

Images and discourses of Native people in the performance encounter were ambiguous and contradictory. These contradictory images epitomize the construction of a “noble savage” dichotomy, which represents the simultaneous perceptions of Indians as noble children of Eden, close to nature, and Indians as backward, uncivilized, and savage.¹³ Deloria writes of “the familiar contradiction we have come to label noble savagery, a term that both juxtaposes and conflates an urge to idealize and desire Indians and a need to despise and dispossess them” (1998, 4). On the one hand stood the noble Indian. An 1885 article describes the “strong lines” of Native performers’ faces as indicating “thoughtful men.”¹⁴ Red Shirt is portrayed as “dignified, placid,” with a “handsome face.”¹⁵ He is generally described as having a “bright appearance and intelligent face,” even though the reporter considers him to have been one of “the most troublesome Indian[s] in the US.”¹⁶ On the other hand were the savage Indians. Crow Eagle’s countenance “indicates more of the savage and less intelligence” compared with Sitting Bull, according to this reporter.¹⁷ Another article states that Sitting Bull was a powerful warrior who burned a fort to the ground and dealt with captives cruelly, tying them to a tree, tearing out their tongues, and cutting their sinews.¹⁸

Almost every newspaper article I located includes some description of Native people’s physical appearance and stature, emphasizing the more “romantic” noble savage character of Indians.¹⁹ The print media are rich with adjectives describing Native people as “statuesque” or “a picture from nature.”²⁰ One article describes Native performers in the 1903 BBWW show as “picturesque” and “half naked,” yet spectacular in their Indian garb, displaying “all the lurid glory of war paint and native attire.”²¹ Physical descriptions also often highlight the differences between the “Red Man” and whites. A reporter writes that Sitting Bull had a “face of massive proportions . . . [that was a] deep reddish brick tinge [and] copper colored.”²² A French newspaper more explicitly

implies that the contrast between the Indians and cowboys was based in racial superiority:

These Indians are strapping fellows with a skin that is truly red, tattooed, and sporting other colorful markings. . . . The white cowboys contrast strangely in physique to the Indians. They are magnificent; they are pioneers as much as due to their physical strength as by their agility, and after seeing them, we can more easily understand how they are able to engage in the daily conquest of the American continent.²³

The image of Native people as exotic was ubiquitous in Wild West show performances and the print media. Tropes of strangeness highlighted the differences between civilized white culture and savage Native culture. Performances of Native dances and Indian vignettes, which ranged from setting up a village to attacking settlers, embodied these differences. In particular, Native dances and ceremonies were called “exotic and wild,” “weird and peculiar,” “superstitious” and “mysterious.”²⁴ Reporters describe the Mojave cremation as “an interesting and somewhat weird feature” of the PBWW show.²⁵ The 101 Ranch Wild West Show advertised the opportunity to see Indian war dances and their “weird rites,” ceremonies, and pastimes.²⁶

Programs also offered detailed descriptions of traditional community ceremonies and dances that the public did not see in the show, such as the Sun Dance and the Ghost Dance, equally contributed to the image of the exotic Indian.²⁷ The 1893 BBWW program referred to the Ghost Dance as a “series of frenzied dances and incantations . . . a dance which is so weird and peculiar, so superstitious and spirit-like, as to rival the far famed Sun Dance.”²⁸ Ceremonies carried out by performers that occurred outside of the context of the show were also reported in newspapers. The Dog Feast fell into the category of weird and peculiar: reporters called this annual ceremony a “strange rite,” and the English were outraged at the idea of roasting a dog.²⁹ By including descriptions of both Wild West show performances and ceremonies performed on reservations in the U.S.A., programs blurred the line between performance and community ceremonies and dances. These dances and ceremonies, whether performed inside or outside the arena, were considered markers of an uncivilized society and an illustration of Native people’s exoticism.

The most pervasive trope in the performance encounter was that of the savage. One cannot read a program or newspaper article without coming across references to “wild war whoops” or “blood-curdling yells,” attacks by Indians, and “wild” or “primitive” dances such as war dances, all which were said to be representative of “the savage life and customs” of Native people.³⁰ Wild West show posters depicted Indians on horseback ready to attack or in battle (See Figure 4). All Wild West shows contained at least one re-enactment of an Indian attack, and all featured a war dance by “savage Indians.”³¹ References to “warriors” and “braves” were ubiquitous.

In sum, the performance encounter promoted discourses of Euro-American progress and the savagery of Indians. Wild West shows influenced and reinforced ideas of Nativeness through their narratives and images of a noble, exotic, savage Indian. Performance strategies such as spectator position and pictorial realism were integral in establishing the authenticity of shows and producing these hegemonic discourses based on dominant society's vision of America. However, Native performers also constructed their own social meanings in this context.

NATIVE PERFORMANCES OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

If Wild West performances became viewed as authentic representations through spectator position and pictorial realism, and are further endorsed by anthropological-like discourses, can such hegemonic performances contain multiple meanings? Did a space for agency exist? How did Native performers construct social meaning in this performance encounter? At first it may appear that Native performers are engaging in what Bhabha has called "colonial mimicry" (1994, 96). While Bhabha emphasizes the ambivalence of colonial mimicry, he ultimately considers it a power strategy of colonial power in which the Other appropriates colonial discourses, but only to reproduce them (1994, 88). Transculturation, conversely, emphasizes how Others adopt colonial relationships and discourses in a dialogical process, not only to reproduce them, a process that involves the negotiation of power and agency. Most important, Others also have social relations, meanings, and projects of their own. Ortner critiqued the Camoroffs' later work in *Of Revolution and Revelation* (volume 2) as lacking attention to this type of agency — an agency of intention or cultural projects. She writes that the Tswana react "but do not appear to have lives, as it were, outside of their relationships to the missionaries, lives with their own forms of intentionality" (2001, 81).

Using the notions of transculturation and cultural projects as an analytical framework, I consider how Native performers adopted and modified colonial relationships of the Wild West show contact zone, and how they had their own forms of relationships and identity that shaped the performance encounter. I argue that Native performers modified the performance encounter to suit their own cultural projects and experienced their own social meanings of Nativeness as they adopted this context. Guided by their cultural projects, performers exerted *expressive agency*, of which I provide two examples: the modification of warrior songs and dance, and the expression and experience of traditional dance and dress.

Warrior Dance — Warrior Identity

Focusing on Native perspectives offers an opportunity to consider the construction of multiple meanings of the war dance as performed in Wild West shows and as experienced by Native performers. Ethnographic information on the

Lakota informs our understanding of the possible significance and meanings of performing the war dance and a warrior identity in this space. The Lakota example is relevant because many Wild West performers came from that tribe. Because government policies sought to assimilate Native people and eliminate their “savage” ways, the warrior society and their dances, among other ceremonial dances, were prohibited. But the Lakota found social meaning as warriors in new contexts such as Wild West shows. I contend that Native performers adopted and modified the performance encounter in Wild West shows as a space to perform songs and dances associated with their warrior identity and status; that is, they created their own social meaning in this space.

In nineteenth-century Lakota society, a warrior had status and a position of honour. Two distinct honour traditions came together in a warrior: spiritualism and that of the fighter (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 79). Warriors’ bravery was marked by the fact that they were always ready to face death. After the reservation period, the Native warrior identity lost strength (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 79). This occurred in part because of deliberate attempts by the BIA to “break the power of the chiefs and their *akicita*, or warrior societies” by disrupting gatherings and by outlawing warrior dances and sacred ceremonies (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 86). In response, some dances went underground or were adapted for patriotic holidays; as Young Bear and Theisz observe, “Our warrior society parades and ceremonies were adapted to fit white American patriotic holidays like George Washington’s or Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, or Memorial Day, or Flag Day in June, or July Fourth so the BIA agent would allow us to dance” (1994, 86; see also Greci Green 2001). In addition, the Lakota developed special new songs and dances for holidays, American celebrations, fairs, and rodeos: “For New Year’s there would be lots of masquerade songs and honoring songs, and for the patriotic days we would have many veterans’ and warrior songs, while for the fairs we would have race-horse songs or bronco-riding songs and honors songs too” (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 55).

Lakota warriors found honour in other contexts as well. For example, they were ready to fight and face death during the First World War and in other wars as a way of maintaining their status and “honored place” in society (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 82). Victory songs such as the one about the Battle of the Greasy Grass (or Battle at Little Bighorn) highlighted the bravery, honour, and duty of the warriors: “Where were you? We made the enemy cry!” (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 82–83). Young Bear and Theisz write: “After 1880s those old victory songs over other tribes or against Custer and his cavalry survived and were used as World War I victory songs” (1994, 83). They convincingly argue that the Lakota changed the wording of traditional warrior and victory songs to fit these new contexts, “but the meanings of the songs were kept alive” (1994, 83).

Besides patriotic holiday, fair, and First World War songs, there is evidence that some Native people also adapted and created new songs specifically for Wild West shows. Before the reservation period, Lakota dances were mostly part of either warrior society activities or ceremonial events (Young Bear and

Theisz 1994, 55). Traditional warrior songs are “high-spirited songs” that tell stories not only of battles but also of the way of life of the warrior (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 79). For instance, the “Sneak Up Song,” a warrior honour song, tells the story of a fallen warrior and his rescue by his friends (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 80). This song started out as a *hunka bloka olowan* (honoured warrior song), then changed names, Young Bear posits, as part of a show (1994, 80). It is possible that the song was modified on the one hand because of the restrictive context of assimilation and laws prohibiting ceremonies, and on the other to take advantage of the opportunity to perform the song in a new context, as was the case in the other examples above. We do know that the *oskate*, or “show tradition” songs and dances, emerged in the 1890s, and that special songs for show performers existed (Young Bear and Theisz 1994, 97). Young Bear and Theisz recount two songs:

White Buffalo Man — his name was Sam Stabber — be brave. There’s a big Wild West show coming for you. When you hear the sound of the boat, your heart will beat faster.
There will be a Wild West show that will start soon, so I got my war bonnet ready and I’m ready to go. This is what (name the person) White Buffalo Man said, and then he went to the Wild West show. (1994, 97)

The Lakota recognized participation in *oskate* as an “honorable accomplishment,” a way to gain status. Greci Green writes:

The show experience is conceptually related to the older tradition of going on a *warrior’s expedition*, for it parallels the structure of that type of event: The departure for a challenging endeavor, the outcome of which may not be known, and the successful return home, laden with trophies and experiences for which to be celebrated. (2001, 123, emphasis added)

When government assimilation policies forbade ceremonies and dance on reservations, patriotic events, holidays, fairs, and Wild West shows provided a context in which warrior songs and dances could “hide in plain sight.” The personal meaning and significance of these modified war dances escaped the viewing public. Ironically, war dances presented in Wild West shows could have been victory songs about the battle against Custer at Little Bighorn. While Wild West shows were celebrating white society’s ultimate victory, Native performers may well have been singing about their own bravery and victories.³² Native performers enjoyed such humour and irony at Wild West shows. Native visitors to a Wild West show enjoyed seeing a Sioux perform Omaha dances, and understood “a subversive monologue when Kicking Bear recited his deeds in Lakota” (Kasson 2000, 212). Rocky Bear commented on the delight of such private understandings:

Sioux have plenty fun, too. He dance Omaha dance when he feel like fun; white man no understand and say it war dance; no war dance, but dance for fun . . . White man no understand all of Indian fun; Indian no understand all of white man fun, but understand enough to laugh and see good time. (Kasson 2000, 212)

The idea that warrior identity was honoured through re-contextualized songs and dances associated with the warrior society leads me to consider whether Wild West shows also provided a context for acknowledging warrior status, accomplishments, and skills. Greci Green asserts: "For Lakota headmen, touring in the shows was a validation in the white world of their accomplishments as warriors" (2001, 125). Evidence from the print media supports this argument; accounts often include narratives of Native warriors as worthy opponents and/or as defenders of their land, traditions, and rights. For example, an 1893 article recounting the burial of a performer, Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horse, describes him as a courageous warrior who defended his people, property, and home.³³ The reporter writes that friends gathered at the BBWW show camp to mourn and recount his valorous deeds. William Cody stated in an interview that Sitting Bull was a great warrior and knowledgeable about his country.³⁴ He similarly praised the Pawnee Indian performers with his show as a brave band that had "done gallant service during the late war by their constant activity in fighting the Sioux."³⁵ Newspapers consistently refer to some of the Native performers as "famous Indians," and their fame was due not only to their status as professional performers or "show Indians," as Moses suggests (1996, 171, 137–39). I posit that their status was also a result of their involvement in significant historical events, battles, and uprisings; that is, their fame was also connected to their warrior identity.³⁶

The print media sometimes also commend Native performers' riding expertise and occasionally recognize their oratory skills and diplomatic endeavours, which may have been connected to aspects of their warrior identity. Napier states that oratory skills reflected what the Lakota identified as valuable characteristics: wisdom and tact (1999, 396–7). London newspapers refer to Short Bull as an "Indian Diplomat" and "high priest of the Messiah Craze."³⁷ Red Shirt, who was often highlighted in the press, was also considered a "fine diplomat" (Napier 1999, 388). In a section of their 1926 program titled "Famous Warriors of the Indian Camp," the Millers acknowledge Flat Iron's skill as an orator and Long Bull as being "one of the greatest Indian statesmen of history."³⁸

Cody emphasized Native performers' abilities as horsemen and warriors rather than classifying them as savages (Deloria 1981, 53), but the performers themselves also drew attention to their expertise and skills. In an interview at the BBWW camp in 1885, Sitting Bull said his name meant that he was a powerful rider, but he credited the Arapahos and Nez Percé with being the best riders — and the Crow were good too, he added.³⁹ Black Heart asserted: "We were raised on horseback; that is the way we had to work. These men furnished us the same

work we were raised for; that is the reason we want to work for these kind of men” (Kasson 2000, 186). Performing in Wild West shows, and in particular displaying their superior horsemanship, was work that Native performers knew how to do, and how to do well. In short, the performance encounter provided opportunities for public recognition of Native performers’ accomplishments and qualities associated with their warrior identity, including riding and oratory skills, by both the print media and the Native performers themselves.

Transculturation and Expressive Agency

The performance encounter involved dialogical relationships and a process of transculturation (cf. Phillips 1998; Pratt 1992) in which Native performers adopted the Wild West contact zone by performing the savage warrior but also used it for their own ends. Besides being an economic opportunity, Wild West shows (among other American occasions and events) gave Native performers socially viable ways of maintaining and expressing their culture and identity — in this case, their warrior identity. In her study on Lakota performances and identity in the 1800s and 1900s, Greci Green argues that participation in Wild West shows “reflected and expressed well-established Lakota standards of achievement and self-worth” (2001, 123). I argue further that performing these songs at Wild West shows honoured the warrior tradition and kept the songs and dances alive in a new context. In other words, within the constraints of performing for Wild West shows, Native performers adopted and adapted the performance encounter in response to their new living conditions, as a space for the continuation of song and dance associated with a warrior identity.

The evidence above of warrior songs modified for new contexts suggests that Native people may also have modified or re-contextualized their war songs and dances for Wild West shows. The modification of warrior dances for Wild West shows, I argue, demonstrates expressive agency: the ability to negotiate power to create social meaning and express identity in the performance encounter. By using the term *expressive agency* I seek to further qualify the form and extent of agency. Rather than “colonial mimicry,” the performance of warrior identity in this context illustrates transculturation, as explained above, and is also an example of what cultural projects look like. As Ortner found in her study on the Sherpas’ engagement with mountaineering, which she argues is an example of “on the margins of power” or agency of cultural projects, arenas of cultural life “are shaped less by the mountaineering encounter and more by the Sherpas’ *own* social and political relations, and by their own culturally constituted intentions, desires, and projects” (2006, 142, emphasis added). Agency of cultural projects in this context refers to Native performers’ pre-existing social relations and the meanings for them of the warrior identity (as expressed through song, dance, riding, and oratory), which also shaped the performance encounter.

Finally, the performance encounter is also an example of dual signification that occurs in instances of transculturation, which refers to a process of co-

production of signifying systems (Phillips 1998, 19–20). The social meanings of Nativeness, in this case of warrior identity, are multiply produced, interpreted, and experienced. However, rather than being a co-production, as Phillips found with the production of Iroquois tourist arts, the performance encounter consists of two parallel signifying systems of the warrior identity: the hegemonic production of discourses of the savage warrior and personal expressions of a warrior identity. Both are made possible through the performance encounter. Even though Wild West shows produced hegemonic discourses of Nativeness, Native performers exerted expressive agency; they had the power to perform their warrior identity by modifying warrior songs and dances for a new context.

Maintaining Traditions of Dance and Dress

Dance and dress are embodied expressions of identity, expressions that reveal processes of transculturation and the negotiation of power relationships in the performance encounter. The negotiation of power and agency may be traced through the control of Wild West shows over defining and constructing social meanings of Nativeness, and Native performers' attempts to maintain traditions of dance and dress.

Dance as Expressive Agency

According to show programs and newspaper reviews, Native participants performed other dances besides the war dance. The 1885 BBWW show program indicated that one of the twenty-two acts consisted of "War, Grass, Corn, and Scalp Dances by Pawnee, Wichita, and Sioux Indians."⁴⁰ The 1887 and 1889 BBWW programs also listed a series of Indian dances as features of the show. One of the acts was described as "Indian Dances: The War Dance, The Sun Dance, The Love Dance; etc., of the Sioux, Arapahoe, Brules, Ogallala, and the Cheyenne."⁴¹ The Miller Brothers' 1910 show included an "Indian Snake Dance."⁴² Notably, newspapers consistently report that Indian dances were the most interesting and popular part of Wild West shows.⁴³

Entrepreneurs did not choreograph these songs and dances, although performers were likely encouraged to yell enthusiastically. We cannot know for sure how Native performers felt, but an ethnological understanding of the significance of dance in Native communities allows us to assume that there would have been a certain amount of pride in performing for themselves, regardless of how others perceived the dances. Young Bear and Theisz point out that music was an important part of Lakota life both in the old days and in the reservation period (1994, 43). They state that singing gave them "a lift in life"; it gave them an identity and pride (1994, 43). It is not difficult to imagine the importance of this "lift" and sense of pride amid the depressing conditions of the reservation period.

Some personal memoirs from Native performers with Wild West shows attest to this sense of pride. Standing Bear recounts how he and other Indians

dressed in their best and danced before the King of England. He states: “But when I got down to doing my fancy steps and gave a few Sioux yells, he had to smile in spite of himself. I saw that I had made a hit with him, and was very happy” (Standing Bear 1975, 256). Native performers also took pride in their role as representatives of Native people. Black Elk said that after the command performance for the Queen, she shook hands with the Indians and said they were the best-looking people (DeMallie 1984, 249). At the Queen’s jubilee celebrations, she further acknowledged them with a bow, and the Native performers responded with a song: “As the Queen passed us, she stopped and stood up back to where the Indians were sitting. All her people bowed to her, but she bowed to us Indians. We sent out the women’s and men’s tremolo . . . then we all sang her a song. This was the most happy time!” (DeMallie 1984, 251). Besides giving the Native performers a sense of pride, their singing and dancing abilities were highlighted and praised in their encounters with the public.

To be a good dancer meant recognition and some status. Greci Green states that

during the early reservation period social recognition became associated with dancing, so that the best dancers were accorded the honor previously bestowed on warriors. . . . the *oskate* contributed to this focus on dance ability by providing one area of opportunity for young men to prove themselves and earn respect within their communities. (2001, 125)

Native performers’ dance ability was recognized through this new context of performing in Wild West shows. This fact is exemplified by Black Elk, who writes that, for the performance before Queen Victoria, “we selected the best looking types of the Indians and the best dancers” (DeMallie 1984, 249). When Standing Bear and BBWW show recruiter McCune invited Indians to audition for the show, they chose only the best dancers with the finest clothes (Standing Bear 1975, 270). Even the Miller brothers’ program praised the Osage in their Wild West show as famous dancers and horse racers.⁴⁴ Newspapers also sometimes commented on the skill required for dancing. A reporter writes: “The Indians gave their war, grass, corn and scalp dances with a great deal of hard work, if little grace.”⁴⁵ Skilled dancers were highly valued in their home communities, and they continued to be so in the context of Wild West shows.

Young Bear and Theisz assert that music also facilitated survival in new socio-cultural and political contexts: “Music helped Lakota people survive a great deal of hardship and endure lots of pain because there was song there. We’ve proved that in World War I, Korea, Vietnam, Wounded Knee II, and in prisons” (1994, 43). The same may be suggested for dance at Wild West shows. I argue that Native participants used the Wild West show performance encounter to their best advantage. On the reservation, Native people were discouraged, even outlawed, from wearing traditional clothing, dancing, or participating in ceremonies, but these things were encouraged in the context of the Wild West

show, and certainly occurred in the associated encampment. They could gather together and practise traditional dances under the pretext of performing for the show. And outside of the arena performances, Native people travelling with the shows also celebrated traditional ceremonies and partook in social gatherings such as the Dog Feast in the encampment.

That Native performers used the Wild West show performance encounter to suit their new socio-political context is again similar to Ortner's conclusions in her study on the Sherpas. Ortner demonstrates how the Sherpas maintained a traditional life despite their involvement in Himalayan mountaineering. First, Ortner argues that "on the margins power" or cultural projects involves power relationships, but that cultural life is also shaped by a people's own social and political relations (2006, 142). Second, she reveals "how people sustain a culturally meaningful life in situations of large scale domination by powerful others, including slavery, colonialism, racism" (2006, 142). I find that this view of the negotiation of colonial relationships and power makes visible other forms of agency, including one that is in response to the Wild West contact zone as well as intersecting with Native performers' own goals or cultural projects. Situated in a new socio-political context that prohibited expressive culture and sought to assimilate Native people, Wild West shows facilitated Native participants' cultural survival, as it was a space where they could express, and hence maintain, their traditions of song and dress. By performing in Wild West shows and maintaining traditions in the associated encampment, Native performers subverted government policies that prohibited dance and encouraged assimilation.⁴⁶ I assert, therefore, that Native performers wielded expressive agency because, in contrast to the reservation context, they could express and maintain traditional dances and songs in the context of Wild West show performances and in the encampment, even if it was a space where they were asked to perform their exoticism.

Transcultural Processes: Distinctive Dress and Hybrid Options

Dress is a significant visible marker of identity and form of cultural expression. As Phillips argues, dress is an important site for "the aestheticized expression of group and individual identities" (2004b, 599). Images of Nateness were multiple and ambiguous, ranging from the exotic and noble to the savage Indian, and were often judged based on dress or appearance. Dippie argues that the ambiguity found in the variety of Indian images (such as the savage; the Indian school student; Indians wearing crucifixes or presidential medals, or holding peace pipes) alludes to the possibility of progress, civilization, and conversion of Indians (1992, 134–35). These "images of transformation," he states, documented the success of U.S. government policies, schools, or missionaries (1992, 134–35). While this may be the case, Dippie's view ignores the agency of the Native participants — the fact that Native people selectively appropriated and adapted settler/white characteristics, what Pratt (1992) refers to as transculturation. Therefore, the ambiguity of Native images may also reflect the

adaptability of Native people as they appropriated settler styles and materials to wear with their own traditional dress.

Following Phillips (2004b), I suggest that Native performers' hybrid dress reflected, first, their distinctiveness and second, their adaptability. In her study on Iroquois material objects and dress in the nineteenth century, Phillips found that while everyday Native dress took on settler characteristics, formal dress was an important medium for expressing distinctiveness and tradition (2004b, 600). However, formal dress involved the negotiation of "civilized" and "traditional" clothing. Phillips explains how Dr. Oronhyatekha's clothing was an "outward marker of 'civilization'" because he eliminated markers of savageness such as the blanket cloak or roach headdress, but at the same time maintained "traditional" elements such as "older geometric designs that have cosmological references" (2004b, 603).⁴⁷ This balance between modern and traditional, she argues, was an expression of both "difference and accommodation" (2004b, 604). That is, Natives' dress marked them as distinct — through its traditional elements — but also as adaptive — as represented by the appropriation of settler characteristics.

Similarly, Native performers' dress in Wild West shows was a site for expression of a distinct Native identity. Native performers were free, in fact encouraged, to wear their traditional clothing for the show. Photographs and newspaper sketches confirm that Native performers also wore traditional clothing outside the arena context, on tourist excursions or on visits with elites and politicians, for example. Although contemporary descriptions of Native people's dress and appearance often characterize them as "strange" or "exotic," their traditional dress also indicated their difference from American society — it was a marker of distinctiveness. And by dressing in traditional clothing in the context of Wild West shows, Native performers also subverted government assimilation policies.

However, Native dress was at the same time ambiguous and hybrid. Like Dr. Oronhyatekha, Native performers with Wild West shows incorporated settler characteristics into their dress. For example, the reporter in an 1885 newspaper article writes how Sitting Bull wore a linen shirt and dark flannel Mexican pantaloons, a yellow silk handkerchief with a very dirty gold pin, and a cameo ring; he was braiding his hair and smoking his pipe in the camp at the BBWW show.⁴⁸ Another article describes him as wearing woollen trousers, a fancy patterned vest, a shirt with "gaudy sleeve-buttons" at the wristband, a tawny silk scarf held with an unclean gold pin, a "cheap, prize package cameo ring," and a brass chain with crucifix, his copper skin covered with ochre.⁴⁹ Black Heart, another performer with the BBWW show, also wore hybrid clothing, including a full headdress and hair-pipe breastplate along with a shirt with American Stars and Stripes underneath (Kasson 2000, 186). Kasson correctly asserts that his attire suggests "a claim to his own form of cultural synthesis" (2000, 186).

After Phillips, I maintain that this hybrid dress was an expression of the wearers' "accommodation" or adaptability. From the descriptions above, it is clear that Black Elk's and Sitting Bull's dress reflects a time of intense cultural

contact. Sitting Bull's clothing consisted of materials and styles from settlers in combination with a traditional beaded vest, a traditional hair style, and the use of ochre. The crucifix represented the presence (although not necessarily acceptance) of Christianity. His dress also reflects contact with settler society in terms of economy: the use of silver in the fur trade. That these men incorporated traditional clothing with settler styles and new materials may be viewed as a statement of their adaptability rather than their assimilation.

To summarize, while Native performers' regalia appeared exotic and strange to the public, it was simultaneously an expression of tradition, distinction/difference, and adaptability. The hybrid nature of Sitting Bull's and Black Elk's attire reflects how the Wild West contact zone was a transcultural space of negotiation, as well as the multiplicity and hybridity of Native people's expressions and experiences of identity. On the one hand, Native performers were able to maintain their traditional dress and distinction or, on the other, could dress in a more hybrid style, adopting as they chose. Most important, at Wild West shows Native performers could express their Nativeness through dance and dress, as opposed to back on the reservation, where government policies and Indian schools were forcing Native people to eliminate all markers of their Nativeness, by cutting their hair, encouraging settler attire, and forbidding the use of their language and dance. These outer signs of "distinction and accommodation" demonstrated that Native people and their culture continued to survive and adapt. In fact, performing in Wild West shows supported the continuation and vitality of Native culture.

SUMMARY

Spectacles have the capacity to form cultural myths and identities. Wild West spectacles reduced Westernness and Nativeness to archetypical representations that became viewed as authentic representations of cultures and social meanings, such as progress, through pictorial realism and spectator position. These performances also constructed and disseminated social meanings of Nativeness such as stereotypical notions of the exotic, noble savage warrior. However, multiple discourses and social meanings existed within these hegemonic performances. For Native performers, Wild West shows provided opportunities to experience and express Nativeness through dance and dress as well as to maintain a warrior identity, albeit in a different context and in modified forms. I maintain that the fact that Native performers modified the war dance and the performance encounter demonstrates the process of transculturation and their own expressive agency, which occurred as a result of pursuit of their own cultural projects or goals, not only in response to the colonial context. It is ironic that while Wild West shows promoted an opportunity to witness Native people "before they vanished," this context likewise facilitated maintenance of Native expressions of identity.

Figure 4: Indian on Horseback



CHAPTER 4

TOURING WITH WILD WEST SHOWS

Native people's travels abroad have received some attention from scholars (Calloway, Germunden, and Zantop 2002; Feest 1999; Foreman 1943). Calloway and colleagues (2002) focus specifically on the relationship between Germans and Natives. Essays in this collection explore why German people feel an affiliation with Native people and culture by investigating several encounters ranging from Wild West shows and hobbyists to missionaries and travelling delegates, such as George Copway, to literature and popular media such as newspapers and film. Focusing on European perceptions of Natives, Feest's collection of essays (1999) contributes to our understanding of European fascination with Native people from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. Mulvey's essay, for example, outlines Catlin's travels to Europe and how his *tableaux vivants* were received. Fiorentino offers some insight on Europeans' perception of Natives as reported in the press, whereas Napier provides the first comprehensive attempt to examine Native perceptions of Europeans during their tour with the BBWW show from 1887 to 1906.

Native performers in Wild West shows were also tourists who visited theatres, churches, monuments, and other city sites abroad.¹ From the late 1800s to early 1900s, newspapers reported on these tourist encounters by informing the public about the performers' tourist activities, culture, and current affairs. This chapter investigates how these newspaper reports produced and reinforced social meanings such as progress and civilization, as well as perceptions about Native people and their plight. Newspaper reports (and other print media) contain biases as they were produced for a primarily white audience and reflected ideas of progress popular at the time. In addition, Native performers' comments were likely edited and selective. With these limitations in mind, and because of these limitations, I also consider how newspaper reports may consist of multiple meanings and interpretations.

In the first part of the chapter, I demonstrate how newspaper articles, through their selective presentation of events and Native comments, advanced a *foe-to-friend* narrative, particularly in the United States, as part of an evolving discourse about civilizing and assimilating Native people. Following Napier (1999), the second part of the chapter shows how an analysis of newspaper reports sheds light on Native performers' own opinions and criticisms of white people. An examination of their statements demonstrates that while they spoke similarly of peace and friendship, they also discussed the injustices their people faced. I suggest that the Native performers' use of the tourist encounter and the press to offer their own interpretations of the world and to make political statements represents communicative agency (after Buddle 2004) – the culturally mediated opportunity to communicate their opinions and concerns to the public.

WHITE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIVE–WHITE RELATIONS

Wild West shows enacted the progress of America and the conquest of the West, its land, and its original inhabitants, the Indians. Part of the “winning of the West” or conquest narrative involved the construction of Native people as a vanishing race, but the Indian Wars were now over and Native people had not vanished. Thus a modification in discourse from the “savage and vanishing Indian” to the “tamed Indian” was necessary to maintain the story of a successful conquest. I argue, therefore, that the conquest narrative also entailed discourses of friendship and peace demonstrating that Native people were no longer a threat. I posit that the foe-to-friend discourse found in newspaper reports and other print media signalled to the public the successful civilizing of Native people as well as their changing relationship with the settler community.

Foe to Friend

Among the earliest representations of the foe-to-friend narrative in relation to Wild West shows are the photographs of Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill. Sitting Bull’s role in the 1885 tour was that of a famous warrior, promoted as “the killer of Custer” (Lindner 2001, 41). While they were in Montreal, William Notman took a series of studio photographs that have been widely copied and reprinted in various forms.² The pictures of Cody and Sitting Bull feature them standing side by side as “heroes of the Wild West” (Bara 1996, 153). Sitting Bull is dressed in a fringed leather shirt and pants and full headdress, with an embellished sash and bag, and wearing a “stoic,” reserved expression; Cody wears riding pants, tall boots, a Stetson hat, and an embroidered shirt.³ Together they hold a rifle in front of them as they gaze into the distance. In another photo, Sitting Bull and Cody face each other and shake hands in friendship; equally heroes of the West, they both clasp the rifle with their other hand (see Figure 5).⁴ The caption on a souvenir photograph based on this series reads “Enemies in ’76, Friends in ’85” (Bara 1996, 153). The photograph of the two men was also reproduced for the 1893 show program with a slightly altered caption: “Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill — Foes in 76 — Friends in 85” (Linder 2001, 41; Pfaller 1969, 23).

In an interview, BBWW show manager and promoter John Burke explicitly stated that the Native performers were former foes.⁵ Burke was quoted as saying that the 1886 BBWW show included former foes from the Sioux and Pawnee tribes — foes until 1885, when they smoked the pipe of peace. He said that American Horse, Rocky Bear, Long Wolf, and Ogallalas from Pine Ridge were now “the most reliable of the treaty Indians.” Burke went on to promote the show as “education for Indians,” and stated that their experiences with the show would result in an end to frontier troubles, “especially the young bucks who have no idea of the extent and magnitude of civilization, and the chiefs . . . old Spotted Tail and Sitting Bull have been quick to seize the opportunity to teach the young warriors what they have to contend with in battling with the settlers.”

Newspaper articles also promoted the foe-to-friend narrative by featuring quotes from Native performers that highlighted the notion of friendship and peace with white settlers. Situated after an era of major conflict and Indian Wars, including the Battle at Wounded Knee in 1890 and the Ghost Dance War of 1891, these quotes were significant statements of America's victory and conquest. Ideas of peace and friendship came from America's recognition of the triumph of white society and the civilizing of the Indian. According to an 1893 article, for example, Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horse became "a thoroughly civilized and friendly Indian, recognizing the overpowering might of the white man."⁶ He made many visits to Washington, participated in treaties, and was a friend of U.S. generals Crook and Miles. The reporter writes that Young-Man realized there was more honour in living in peace and harmony with whites and other red men, and that he even arranged a peace treaty before his death with his bitter enemies, the Crow.⁷

Sitting Bull, for the most part, had positive things to say about whites and spoke of friendship in interviews with the press. He considered Major Walsh⁸ a "good man" and said he had been treated well by Cody and Salsbury.⁹ In the same article, the reporter writes that Sitting Bull wanted to make friends with whites and that he had met thousands on his journey and had shaken hands with them. In this article Sitting Bull also noted the peacefulness of the cities, and stated that when he returned home, he would tell his people about all he saw and "how respectfully everyone had treated him."

Another reporter interviewed Sitting Bull and Crow Eagle at a barbecue at Beacon Park in Boston in 1885. Sitting Bull commented how much he liked the people of the East, whom he considered friends: "They treated me very kindly . . . and when I return to my people I shall tell them all about our friends among the white men, and what I have seen. . . . as long as I am all right and my people are all right, I want to travel and see all I can."¹⁰ The reporter writes that Sitting Bull declared that "the more he saw of the white men the more he liked them."¹¹ Crow Eagle was equally contented. He stated: "I have met many white people, and my heart is good towards them."¹² It is not known for certain how Sitting Bull or Crow Eagle actually felt or what they really believed, but such comments were presented as truth to further support the foe-to-friend discourse.

The press covered "peace and treaty" meetings with Native diplomats, such as Red Cloud, who were also performers. On the way from one such meeting in Washington with Sioux American Horse in 1897, Red Cloud came to visit Flat Iron and Cody at the BBWW show in New York. Cody made a speech saying that they had met in peace and in war, but now they celebrated "lasting peace."¹³ Red Shirt had expressed similar sentiments of friendship with Cody in 1887. He stated that the battle of Yellow Hand was past, and now Cody and he were brothers and equals: "Then we would have killed each other, but now we have the same heart, and we are brothers. Col. Cody is awfully good to me and my people."¹⁴

Red Shirt had visited England twice before with the BBWW show and had not seen any changes since his last visit in 1897, writes a reporter, but his demeanour had changed. In this article Red Shirt declares: "I have taken part in

many battles and several peace conferences, but now I have thrown off the mantle of fighting and have become a man of peace. I must confess that I was once a notorious character and took part in some great uprisings.”¹⁵ Comments such as these from chiefs and “famous Indians” such as Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, and Red Shirt carried an important message to the public, one of peace and friendship, and the public presumed that the words of these diplomats represented Native people’s mindset as a whole.

Other references to enemy chiefs who had become friends and taken up the mission of peace appeared in newspapers. An article about famous chiefs and generals, with photographs of Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, American Horse, Rain-in-the-Face, and Crow Eagle, described their roles in decisive battles that were ultimately won by the American army. The article emphasized how these chiefs who had participated in rebellions had been subdued and later became friends of Buffalo Bill: “Each of the distinguished redskin warriors has ‘after the war,’ clasped hands and smoked the ‘pipe of peace’ with his eventual ‘Coola’ (Friend) ‘Buffalo Bill’.”¹⁶

Although Wild West shows were premised on the re-enactment of battles and attacks by Indians, Gordon Lillie’s show programs implied that one result of American progress and civilization was peace. A Pawnee Bill courier from about 1908 outlining the Ethnological Congress describes the atmosphere both inside and outside the arena as one of friendship: “The Indians have no better friends around the show than the scouts, cowboys, frontiersmen and trappers. Only a few years ago the Indians had no greater enemies than the very same men who are now their best friends.”¹⁷ Comments such as these suggested that friendships found in Wild West shows were indicative of the friendship and peace to be found in America.

Native performers also had an opportunity to meet with royalty and political figures during their travels, and they often expressed their opinions of these leaders of the white world. In this example, Red Shirt speaks of friendship between Native people and political leaders. Through interpreter “Broncho Bill,” Red Shirt commented on the British Prime Minister, William Gladstone:

When I saw the Great White Chief, I thought he was a great man. When I heard him speak, then I felt sure he was a great man. But the White Chief is not as the big men of our tribes, he wore no plumes and no decorations. He had none of his young men (warriors) around him, and only that I heard him talk he would have been to me as other white men. But when my brother (Mr. Gladstone) came to see me in my wigwam as a *friend*, and I was glad to see the GWC, for though my tongue was tied in his presence my heart was full of friendship. After he went away they told me that half of this great nation of white men have adopted him as their Chief. Thus I am right, for if he were not both good and wise so many young men of this nation would never have taken him for their leader.¹⁸

This quote also offers some insight on how he viewed the political structure of the white world. His evaluation of Gladstone as a leader is based on “Indian” criteria: meeting in friendship and the prime minister’s oratorical skills, wisdom, and appearance, specifically his lack of regalia and supporting warriors. In his comparison between “Indian chiefs” and “White chiefs,” Red Shirt recognizes the power of the White Chief, but also implies that Indian and White chiefs are equal.

Can these comments by Native performers be taken as fact, or were performers negotiating these tourist encounters by strategizing their comments? Newspaper reports used performers’ quotes to support a foe-to friend narrative, and even though some performers may have similarly spoken of friendship, they did not necessarily consider themselves to be ‘conquered.’ In the next section, I consider other possible meanings to be found in these tourist encounter reports and how performers’ may have used this encounter to express their own opinions.

NATIVE PERFORMERS AS TOURISTS AND THEIR OPINIONS OF WHITE SOCIETY

Deloria writes that Wild West shows performed an important function: “Touring with Buffalo Bill enabled a whole generation of Indians to learn about American society in a relatively non-threatening atmosphere” (1981, 54). One of the reasons that Native people participated in Wild West shows was the opportunity to travel and learn something of the white world. A few of their opinions and reactions have been documented in newspapers and personal memoirs. Although recorded through others, the reminiscences of Luther Standing Bear and Black Elk offer first-hand accounts of their experiences. Because so few personal memoirs of Native people exist, these accounts are all the more valuable. Other Native performers’ opinions may be found in newspaper articles. Kasson suggests that “human interest stories” about Native tourists were part of a public relations strategy to increase interest in the shows (2000, xx). Moreover, these articles contain some problems of translation and bias: the tone of the articles supports the narratives promoted in Wild West shows, such as that the savage Indian cannot survive in the face of civilization; Native performers’ comments are selective and edited, and their quotes can not be taken simply at face value.

Despite these problems, useful information may be gleaned from these sources because Native tourists offered a distinctive non-Western perspective on white people and society (Napier 1999, 383, 386), as well as Native opinions of current events and the condition of their people. A comparison of white and Native perceptions of one another as revealed in these reports (and, to a lesser extent, in the rare personal memoirs narrated by Native people themselves) exposes the possible different interpretations of Native–non-Native relationships, the educational value of travelling with Wild West shows, and Native performers’ perspectives on both white society and the condition of Native people. I further suggest that the opportunity for Native performers to express these opinions in newspaper articles represents communicative agency.

Educational Value

Travelling with Wild West shows supposedly provided Native people with an “education” about the white world. Buffalo Bill Cody suggested to them that they take the opportunity to learn, as progress was inevitable. In a speech to his Native performers, Cody stated: “You have done what you thought was right and best for your people. Now it is the white man’s turn, and his civilization has overcome yours.”¹⁹ He beseeched them to learn the ways of the white man: “I hope both of you will take this opportunity to see all you can of the great city of the whites.”²⁰ The press picked up on this theme and wrote about how Native people were becoming “tamed,” or civilized, by seeing the might of the white world in their travels.

Newspaper articles also emphasize the educational value of touring the civilized world, and that this education is part of the Native people’s “civilizing process.” For example, Chief Red Shirt is “impressive” and “greatly struck with the wonderful land he is visiting,” according to one reporter.²¹ Iron Tail says that he likes travelling, as it affords him an opportunity to see other parts of America.²² A reporter writes that one performer, Walk-Under-the-Ground, has undergone a “process of education” with the BBWW show. The reporter describes the “magnificent Indian,” 6 feet 3 inches tall, as an “untameable [*sic*] spirit and cunning . . . formidable foe,” but “the power of the white man has had a most sobering effect upon his warlike instincts.”²³ Walk-Under-the-Ground is quoted as saying: “I am contented to rest within my tent and to watch the wonderful ways of the White Man, which are freely shown to us during our travels with the Wild West.”²⁴

During their visit to the eastern United States, Black Fox and Plenty Shawls were “put through the paces of civilization,” writes another reporter²⁵ — this involved experiencing non-reservation activities that included riding a bike and enjoying a Turkish bath. Seeing the material wealth of white society was part of this education process. Plenty Shawls toured the Waldorf Hotel and Tiffany’s jewellery store, and said that she would like this kind of luxury all the time. However, Plenty Shawls did not equate luxury or “civilization” with superiority. Observing the city women’s clothes, she noted that they were finely dressed and must spend much time making dresses, but that “civilization of that kind makes lazy women.”²⁶ Plenty Shawls had a different opinion about what it meant to be civilized.

Memoirs from Native performers suggest that this “education” was not a civilizing process but rather, in their view, an opportunity to learn so that they could further their needs and make things better for themselves in the face of an encroaching white world. For example, Black Elk had specific reasons for joining the Wild West show: “he chose to go with the show as a quest after a cure for the death of his people” (Napier 1999, 385). Black Elk wrote:

I wanted to see the great water, the great world and the ways of the white men; this is why I wanted to go. So far I looked back on the past and recalled the people's ways. They had a way of living, but it was not the way we had been living. I got disgusted with the wrong road that my people were doing now and I was trying to get them to go back on the good road; but it seemed as though I couldn't induce them, so I made up my mind I was going away from them to see the white man's ways. If the white man's ways were better, why I would like to see my people live that way. (DeMallie 1984, 245)

Napier suggests that Native people such as Black Elk and Red Shirt may have chosen to travel because they "had lived through the time of great wars [and] defeat" (1999, 385). Being a medicine man, Black Elk also wanted to learn about white men's religion and how they "upheld the law": "So thus all along, of the white man's many customs, only his faith, the white man's beliefs about God's will, and how they act according to it, I wanted to understand. I traveled to one city after another, and there were many customs around God's will" (DeMallie 1984, 9–10). There were other educational benefits as well. "As a result of his trip abroad, Black Elk was able to speak English, and he had a realistic perspective on the world" (DeMallie 1984, 11).

Sitting Bull also sought to learn about white ways to help his people. When a reporter asked Sitting Bull why he had left his people and travelled with the show, he responded: "to learn the way of the whites and teach my people how to live better. I go back in four weeks and tell my people what I have seen. They will not go on the war path again, I have learned much. Indian must keep quiet. The great father must protect us and give us justice."²⁷ Sitting Bull's comments demonstrate his desire to learn white ways, but his response also expresses a sense of injustice and futility.

Native perspectives on the educational value of seeing the white world, therefore, were not as much about becoming "civilized" as about survival. From this point of view, there may have been deeper underlying meaning and intent to the comments made by Red Shirt, Iron Tail, and Walk-Under-the-Ground, quoted above, as well as the statements outlined in the previous section. The comments of both Black Elk and Sitting Bull demonstrate that they in fact had a different perspective from white society on what their "education" would entail.

Impressions of White Society

Native performers often used the metaphor of children to describe whites. Like the paternalistic image the BIA had of Native people, some Native performers viewed white people as spoiled children, always wanting things and in a rush. During a visit to New York, Flat Iron expressed the opinion that white men were not very intelligent or reasonable: "The white man is a papoose. He cry for many things, when he get the things he cry to know what to do with them. White

man talks too fast. He run all time. Indian run sometimes.”²⁸ Chief Last Man, a Sioux performer with the 101 Ranch show, also thought that city folk were “crazy.” His conclusions about the big city and whites were not positive: “Palefaces run here, run there. Rush to work and rush home. Heap big hurry ’bout nothing. Palefaces damn fools. All crazy.”²⁹ Some Native performers thus critiqued white society.

The industrialized cities of white society were supposed to impress Native performers on tour. To some Native visitors, however, the city was not the civilized existence that white people believed it to be. During his 1885 tour of the eastern states, Sitting Bull was astonished by the poverty he saw, “often giving away his show money to the ragged horde of children who followed him around” (Starita 1995, 147). He expressed his disappointment to co-worker Annie Oakley: “The white man knows how to make everything, but he does not know how to distribute it” (Starita 1995, 147).

While whites were observing them, Native performers also observed and learned about the social, economic, and political differences of white society. Articles about Native tourists at various locations in America in 1897 are illuminating. In New York City, Stand First and Porcupine Creek went to an opera and a hotel and later visited the Bowery Concert Hall and Chinatown. This article is interesting because it reveals how these Native tourists recognized and perceived difference. They were made aware of class and ethnic differences in white American society by the contrast between the Waldorf Hotel and Chinatown. The reporter states that the hotel gave these “wild Westerners an idea of the luxury of New York society.”³⁰ Stand First comments that if Cody would give him the money, he would buy it and bring his people to live there. On the other hand, he was disgusted by the Bowery, according to the reporter. Noting the ethnic differences, Stand First says that he found Chinatown the most interesting: “I never saw people like those that live there before.” Native performers noted the difference overseas as well. Upon his arrival in London in 1887, Black Elk says of the London houses and people, “These houses were altogether different from the others It seemed that the men here were all different than others” (DeMallie 1984, 248).

Newspaper articles consistently describe Native people’s physical appearance and clothing, but Native performers also gazed back. Twenty-five Indians “of Wild West fame,” including Rain-in-the-Face, visited an Irish fair in 1897. Rain-in-the-Face makes a general comment about white men being lazy because they do not want to draw up the (pipe) smoke. He also gives his impression of the Irish, saying that the “men are strong and the women are fair.”³¹ Through an interpreter, he continues to make a comparison between these “ethnic Others” and his own people that has a political message:

[T]he Irish are a mighty tribe. The Indians, the forefathers of Rain-in-Face, once owned all the country. Now the Irish have come to rule around all the

coasts, and the Indian is driven into the interior . . . He says that he has nothing more to say. . . thinks that he has said enough.³²

This statement recognizes the impact of immigration and settlement in America: Native people continued to be dispossessed of their land to make way for whites.

In sum, these tourist excursions, as well as travelling with the show in general, exposed Native performers to differences in white society and to the current state of affairs. Even though it is difficult to ascertain the full meaning and intention of their comments, this brief analysis suggests that performers were observing and evaluating white society as they were being observed. As I will show below, Native performers also made an effort to explain to the public the changes they were experiencing and what that meant for their future existence.

Communicative Agency: Political Statements

Did Native performers accept their subjugation, or were they being diplomatic in order to negotiate this tourist encounter and manage this complex moment? The quotes presented in this chapter led me to consider whether Native people touring with Wild West shows used their position and status as performers to communicate their social and political concerns. Buddle (2004) suggests that an “Aboriginal public sphere” exists in culturally mediated spaces, such as newspapers, fairs, exhibitions, and powwows, in which aboriginal people join in their shared interests. She convincingly demonstrates that this public sphere, whether historical or contemporary, is a space for “Aboriginal communicative agency” with the possibility of activism (Buddle 2004, 34). Herle similarly posits that sites of cultural display such as powwows are also sites of political debate and a source of international solidarity (1994, 57, 80). She maintains that these “supernational strategies are an additional source of political leverage” and that “indigenous leaders are taking their claims into international arenas” (Herle 1994, 80).

I similarly argue that tourist encounters facilitated by participation in Wild West show were mediated spaces of communicative agency, but this agency, to the best of my knowledge, did not lead to the activism that Buddle (2004) suggests is possible.³³ As performers and tourists, some Native performers had an opportunity to interact with journalists, politicians, royalty, elites, and the public, as well as with other Native people. Touring with Wild West shows provided a chance for Native performers to unite in their political concerns and to express them to an international audience through the press. Because the press was interested in Native performances and their touristic activities, Native people working in Wild West shows could use their position and status as performers, as well as the public’s interest in them, to make political statements. It is not known to what extent their comments influenced the public’s understanding of Native culture and issues. I thus categorize this as communicative agency rather than resistance because it is more specific about the form of agency Native performers

exerted. Nonetheless, working in Wild West shows did provide occasions for Native people to make political statements. In this sense, tourist encounters were mediated spaces of communicative agency, in that the performers were able to express their opinions, concerns, and interpretations of white society through a print media otherwise filled with reports of savagery and the civilizing project.

Examples of communicative agency are found in newspaper reports that include Native people's opinions on the Indian condition, their rights, and the changes they were experiencing. Native people offer their own interpretation of the Indian Wars and the tensions between Native and white society. Commenting on the battle with Custer, for example, Sitting Bull states that whites were culpable for the Indian Wars: "Palefaces found gold on my land in the Black Hills. They drove us away as they . . . stole our horses. I fought for my people. My people say I was right."³⁴ Even so, he says, they did not scalp Custer because they honoured him as a great warrior.³⁵

Some of Sitting Bull's comments may be about peace and friendship, as outlined in the first part of the chapter, but he is also clear on Indian rights and circumstances. While they recognize the "inevitable supremacy" of the white man (according to the reporter), the undertone of Sitting Bull's comments reveals his views on the morals and responsibilities of white society. "[He] hope[d] that the red man had enough self respect, and the white man enough honesty, to make the end of the controversy a peaceful one."³⁶ Sitting Bull adds that "he only fought for his rights. He was sorry the white man was not as honest as he was full of brain power."³⁷ Sitting Bull's opinion of white society may have included some positive points, but his comments also disclose his opinion of white encroachment on Indian land and life and on the greed of white men:

They are a great people, as numerous as the flies that follow the buffalo, the Indian cannot fight them. The palefaces want the earth, the corn, the tree, the sky. Indian only want wide prairie, where he can live in peace and safety, where he shall not be disturbed, and where he can die. Indian only want justice. Palefaces feel kind and will do us right.³⁸

In his view, the paternalistic role of the government is one of responsibility and obligation rather than burden. He comments on the president: "great father is good. He order cattle man off our lands and protects us. Cattle man steal our horses and cattle and kill our game, and leave us to starve and die or fight. They rented land of two treacherous chiefs who had no right to do it."³⁹ Sitting Bull thus communicates the state of Native people on reservations and their problems in adopting farming and ranching. Implicitly his comments urge the government to live up to its end of the agreement and its responsibilities.

Occasionally Native people express their opinion on the state of their existence and the process of acculturation. In an 1897 article, for example, Native performer Flat Iron comments on the changes his people faced:

I have seen the Ogallalas [*sic*] in the wars . . . I have see the prairie black with buffalo . . . Now I have see the great water and the spitting horse, and the white men come and look at me and say who is he? And I remember the days of my youth, and it is not good. I am going to see the Great Father at Washington and tell him that it is not good. The Indian is a good Indian. He will learn fast — only not too fast. He will die to learn too fast. The tepees of wood will kill him. The planting and the working with the planting will kill him. He will learn the way of the white man, but not too fast. It is not good.⁴⁰

Red Shirt also expresses his opinion on the changes he has seen and his view of the future. His comments reveal sentiments of loss as a result of acculturation and Natives' dependency on white ways and society, yet there is also expression of entitlement:

The red man is changing every season. The Indian of the next generation will not be the Indian of the last. The buffaloes are nearly all gone . . . [the deer have vanished] . . . and the white man takes more and more of our land. But the United States Government is good. True it has taken away our land, and the white men have eaten up our deer and our buffalo, but the Government now give us food that we may not starve. They are educating our children, and teaching then to farm and to use farming implements. Our children will learn the white man's civilization and to live like him. It is our only outlook in the future. Now we are dependent upon the rations of the Government, but we feel we are fully entitled to that bounty. It is a part of the price they pay for the land they have taken from us, and some compensation to us for having killed off the herds upon which we subsisted.⁴¹

He also says that if the government no longer continued payment they would starve, because tribes are no longer self-supporting. He stated that he knows it is no use fighting the government, and he accepts his fate, even if some of the young men still do not understand this.

Fiorentino (1999) takes a narrow view of Red Shirt's comments. He argues that reporters wrote about the Indians as if they had accepted their fate as vanishing and reliant on the government for assistance (1999, 407). Native people like Red Shirt represented the "good Indian," ready to accept the white man's ways (Fiorentino 1999, 407). In a similar vein, I have proposed that newspaper reports promoted a foe-to-friend narrative as part of the evolving discourse of the civilizing project. This does not mean that Native performers interpreted the situation in the same way. The foregoing discussion about Native tourists' comments in newspaper articles demonstrates more purpose and meaning in these quotes than merely acceptance of defeat. In fact, Native performers and white society (as represented by the media) interpreted Native–non-Native relationships

and the condition and rights of Natives in multiple ways. Perhaps they were playing with the role of the ‘good (conquered) Indian’ as they were drawing on their experiences as diplomats.

Napier’s suggestion that some Native performers acted in a “diplomatic and public role” similar to the role they had in their own tribes makes sense here (1999, 392). She argues that Native performers’ ability to speak their views on white society reflects a “Lakota approach to political life,” and that their comments reflect Lakota characteristics of self-control, generosity, wisdom, and tact (Napier 1999, 396, 397). Napier writes: “Red Shirt, Rocky Bear, Standing Bear, Black Elk, and others show in their quiet demeanor, their stately bearing, their politeness, their ability to converse with great personages that they were well-trained Lakota” (1999, 397). Native performers were called upon by their communities to act as representatives of their tribe, and this diplomatic and public role was not new to them. They were politically aware spokespeople who tactfully discussed friendship and peace, seeking alliances, not enemies. But they also evaluated and criticized white society, recognizing differences and class, and spoke of injustice, Native rights, and white responsibilities to Native people.

SUMMARY

This chapter builds on scholarly research on Native travels abroad that seeks to better understand encounters between Natives and whites and their perceptions of each other. I have proposed that the foe-to-friend narrative found in the print media, which highlights Native statements about peace and friendship, is an extension of discourses about civilizing the Indian and reflects white society’s desire to resolve the underlying tension and ambiguity characteristic of Native–white relationships at the time. Newspaper articles and personal memoirs of Native performers shed light on Native perspectives of white people, cities, class, and ethnicity. Reporters wrote about Native travels abroad as if they were an educational and “civilizing” experience. However, from the perspective of some Native performers, the educational value of travelling with Wild West shows was not a matter of civilizing, but rather an opportunity to learn and a tactic for survival. Native performers’ statements about friendship were diplomatic, tactful, and strategic, perhaps as a means to build alliances in the white world; but they also expressed their opinions about the Indian condition, Native entitlements, and the responsibility of white society and the government to see that Native rights were protected and fulfilled.

Figure 5: Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill



CHAPTER 5

NOT THE ONLY SHOW IN TOWN: A MOHAWK CASE STUDY

This chapter adds Native voices to the interpretation of Native performers' experiences in Wild West shows, exhibitions, and a variety of performance spaces. Kahnawake provides an exceptional case study for the investigation of Native experiences and perspectives, as Mohawks from Kahnawake and Akwesasne have a long history of participation in these spaces, and contemporary community members have preserved memories and stories of these experiences.¹ In the 1860s and again in the 1870s, Kahnawake community members played games of lacrosse for European audiences (Beauvais 1985, 136),² and throughout the 1800s some acted as tourist and river guides (Beauvais 1985; Jasen 1993-94). They also travelled across North America and Europe into the early 1900s, performing dances and demonstrating riding, roping, archery, and "everyday life" in a variety of Wild West shows and exhibitions (cf. Blanchard 1984; King 1991; Nicks 1999; Nicks and Phillips 2007). Others performed in vaudeville, films, pageants, commemorative celebrations, or promotional events (cf. Brydon 1993; Nelles 1999).

Mohawk individuals' participation in a variety of performance spaces is part of a broader history of their engagement with various industries and economic opportunities as a result of contact; performing provided another way for Native people to make a living. Elder Billy Two-Rivers, who travelled and performed as a wrestler, described in our interview the diversity and long history of participation by Mohawk (Kanienkehaka) people from Kahnawake:

We were involved in dealing with the European in terms of money and business, and I guess our adaptability served us to be able to survive in many different circumstances. We went from fur trade to harvesting the great oaken forest in the lower Quebec and Ontario, sending oak panels to England After that was over, we quickly went into the construction, bridge building, raising high buildings So anyways, if this opportunity came along . . . such as entertainment, we were ready for it. Our people have already travelled much of the developed United States selling our beadwork, our medicines, and whatnot; they travelled, they went to Chicago and to Atlanta, they travelled to New York, to Toronto, they travelled all over the place selling beadwork, you know, and stuff like that And, like I said, over here they found quite a number of people ready and experienced to do that type of work; the work . . . to be able to travel, you know, and be able to manage the requirements of travelling. (Two-Rivers 2004)³

Participation in performance spaces required Native individuals, among other things, to “act Indian.” Scholars have convincingly argued that Native performers conformed to the public’s expectations, and hence performed an “Imaginary Indian” (Francis 1992; see also Deloria 1998). However, these spectacles are more complex than simply a story of essentialization or exploitation. Pratt (1992) has argued that the history of Native–white contact is a two-way process involving transculturation, in which both parties negotiate relationships. In this case, people from Kahnawake engaged with these performance opportunities as impresarios sought out Native performers for profit. Billy Two-Rivers stated that many recruiters came to Kahnawake because the people there were well suited to the industry and participated willingly:

And so when they arrived over here to recruit people who might fit into their Wild West show, they found a rich and plentiful number of people who could participate in the shows and what was required of them. To be able to sing, to be able to dance, to be able to ride horse, and had the costumes to go with their different performances. (Two-Rivers 2004)

He explained that individuals weighed the prospect of performing in terms of its potential, opportunities, and benefits. Travelling around was part of the fun, and there were monetary benefits as well (Two-Rivers 2004).

In part biographical, this chapter presents the experiences of three Mohawk families who capitalized on opportunities in a variety of spectacles and became successful performers: Jose Akwiranoron Beauvais and family, the Williams-Kelly family, and the Deer family, including Esther Deer (a.k.a. Princess White Deer). My analysis of their experiences through an investigation of the archival collections at the Kanien’kehaka Onkwaawén:na Raotitiohkwa (KOR) cultural centre was greatly enhanced by the knowledge and oral histories from descendants of the performers, who offered additional interpretations of the archival record and of their families’ experiences.

This chapter illustrates the variability of Mohawk performances and the negotiation of representations of Nateness through performances and regalia. As in the previous chapters, I trace and qualify the form of agency Native performers could exert in this context. First, the scope and potential of Native participation in performance spaces needs to be qualified; their adaptability, the variety of skills and performances, and their successes require more attention. Mohawk performers pursued careers as performers and were quite successful; I argue that narratives of skill and success revealed in oral histories are evidence of agency of cultural projects. Second, in spite of existing stereotypical images, people from Kahnawake brought in their own traditions of dance and regalia, suggesting that Native performers also constructed Nateness in this context. In some cases, they also controlled representations and performances. I maintain that Native performers’ conscious employment and incorporation of local identity markers in particular illustrates their expressive agency, which is the opportunity to express

identity through performance regalia, even as these spaces construct other images of Native identity.

AKWIRANORON: DRESSING FOR THE QUEBEC CITY TERCENTENARY PAGEANTS

Jose Akwiranoron Beauvais and his wife, Mary (Margaret) Irihwiioston Beauvais, performed in various performance spaces such as film, exhibitions, and pageants in the early 1900s.⁴ In 1908, Akwiranoron participated in one of the grandest Canadian pageants, the Quebec Tercentenary.⁵ Held in Quebec City in July, the celebrations consisted of lavish parades, military and naval demonstrations, and eight elaborate historical pageants. Akwiranoron also performed at the Canadian Indian Village at the Naval, Shipping, and Fisheries Exhibition, Earl's Court, in London, England, which opened on May 6, 1905. He travelled there with his wife and three children, Agnus, Margaret (Jocks), and baby Takariwaben (see Figure 6).⁶ Pictures at KOR captioned "stills from the Edison movie *Hiawatha*," variously dated "before 1890?," "about 1900s," and 1905, indicate that Akwiranoron and his wife were actors in a film about *Hiawatha* shot at an uncertain date.⁷ Conway Jocks, Akwiranoron's grandson, believes that these photographs are stills from the Edison film *Hiawatha* shot in New Jersey.⁸

Based on archival research at KOR of Akwiranoron's experiences, this section provides an examination of Native participation in the Quebec Tercentenary pageants, which depicted the Europeans' arrival and founding of Quebec City.⁹ Native people were inserted into this narrative, and their roles were not superficial: five of the eight pageants included substantial Native participation, resulting in multiple, and at times contradictory, productions of Native history and identity.¹⁰ This participation resulted in an injection of narratives about their role in history, and their very presence at the pageants attested to the fact that they had not vanished. As Nelles argues, Native participation in these pageants turned a commemoration of two nations — French and English — into a story of three — French, English, and Native (1999, 168, 179, 181). The pageants also provided a space in which to mark and express identity through performance regalia. This section illustrates how multiple images of Native identity were presented, in part because Native performers influenced representations of their identity by incorporating local styles and iconography in their performance regalia.

According to visual documentation of the pageants, including stereographic cards, newspaper sketches, and photographs in souvenir books, it appears that pageant organizers sought to present an overall image of Native people that was based on the well-recognized Plains style. Nelles writes that the Native people participating in the pageants could not present themselves as they were, but rather as the public thought Indians should look — that is, as Plains Indians (1999, 174). According to Nelles, Native performers "came as they were," so costumes had to be bought for them (1999, 174). A stereo card of some of the

male Native performers illustrates that many of the hide shirts were similar in style, suggesting some type of mass-produced costume (see Figure 7). These costumes conformed to what the public perceived as being “Indian.” American Horse’s dress, for instance, calls to mind familiar Plains Indian imagery: he wore a two-piece hide shirt with fringe and geometric and circular beadwork across the chest, as well as a feather war bonnet (see Figure 8).¹¹ His fringed hide leggings are trimmed in red flannel with an abstract floral and swirl design, which is perhaps more reminiscent of Woodlands design. A stereo card depicts a “friendly Chief” similarly dressed in hide shirt and feather headdress, and holding a spear.¹² On another stereo card, captioned “Indians Playing Cards in the Pageant Camp — A Modern Development,” Native performers relax in their performance dress of fringed hide shirts and pants; many wear a large feather headdresses, although one person has a felt hat (see Figure 9).¹³

Although the performance regalia at Quebec City drew on the Plains clothing styles common in Wild West shows, they also incorporated local styles and various materials not considered Plains. One of the headdresses pictured in the stereo card of Indians playing cards has an Iroquoian crown-style headband as its base (see Figure 9).¹⁴ Another stereo card depicts a Native person wearing a shirt with a beaded collar or yoke with an abstract floral design, perhaps the tree of life (see Figure 7). A picture of American Horse with women cooking shows the women wearing Iroquois beaded caps and children wearing beaded yokes, both decorated with Iroquois-style floral designs (see Nelles 1999, 180).¹⁵

This evidence indicates that performance regalia, despite the pageant organizers’ desire to present a Plains image, consisted of a more hybrid, pan-Indian expression, suggesting that the performers also actively constructed identity in this space. Pan-Indian expressions, as I maintain in the introductory chapter, recognize both local and intertribal contact. In fact, Plains attire was quite variable. Thus opportunities for expression of identity existed through regalia and beadwork, and performance regalia were inspired by various tribal or local designs including and extending beyond Plains style. I will elaborate on the variability of performance regalia in the next section.

This brief analysis of Native participation in the Quebec Tercentenary pageants suggests that performances were complex and contradictory, and that Native identity was produced in multiple ways through performance regalia. I was not able to obtain substantial oral histories about the Beauvais family. Conway Jocks did describe how agents came to Kahnawake to recruit performers; his mother, Margaret Beauvais, was sought after as a local beauty, and his grandfather was known for his role in the *Hiawatha* film. While scholars rightly critique representations in spectacles as stereotypical, Native oral histories about their experiences may reveal a more complex picture.

THE WILLIAMS-KELLY FAMILY TRAVELS THE WORLD

Thomas Thanenrison Williams (1851–?), also known as Scar Face, travelled the world as a well-known performer. Scar Face; his wife, Mary Kwa-to-ra-ni Williams; daughter Margaret Jawitson Tsiohawison (Williams) Kelly (1876–1970); son-in-law Michael Kelly (1877–1957); and their son Paul Kelly (1907–86) all participated in various performance spaces, often working together as a family (see Figure 10).¹⁶ They performed at the Canadian Indian Village at Earl's Court in 1905, the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary pageants, and the Lake Champlain pageant in 1909, to name but a few. Scar Face's great-great-granddaughter Barbara Koronhienhén:te Little-Bear Delisle has been researching her family history in an effort to keep their memories and experiences alive for her children. Barbara's great-grandfather Michael and great-grandmother Jawitson were still living when Barbara was very young, and they would tell her all about their experiences and adventures. Paul Kelly, Barbara's grandfather, also told her stories about travelling with a Wild West show and going to England. Barbara's oral histories offer great insight on Native participation in spectacles, including the nature of performances and how Native performers may have viewed their experiences, and the expression of Native identity through regalia.

Nativeness and Regalia

Performances of Nativeness often incorporate Plains imagery, which for the general public came to signify all Native people. Early explorers' accounts, paintings, books, and popular literature had a role in creating the image of the Plains Indian as quintessential Indian, and Wild West shows popularized this image (cf. Ewers 1964; King 1991; Rogers 1983).¹⁷ The Plains image perpetuated in popular media, Wild West shows, exhibitions, and other performance spaces consisted of a warrior dressed in a fringed hide shirt and leggings, wearing a flowing eagle-feather war bonnet, perhaps carrying a shield and spear, and riding a horse; or a woman wearing a beaded buckskin dress with fringe, her hair in braids. However, it is difficult to pin down the characteristics of performance regalia according to classic ethnographic works on Plains dress. For example, while Wissler argued that the two-hide dress was typical Plains Indian female attire, women wore hide skirts and ponchos, three-skin dresses, and trade-cloth dresses as well (Ewers 1997, 117, 120, 122; cf. Lowie 1963). Hail's book (1993) clearly explains and illustrates Plains styles, materials, and designs, but also recognizes that intertribal exchange and contact with settlers resulted in blended styles. Because of this lack of clarity and assumptions made about Plains dress and imagery, performance regalia worn in spectacles have not been systematically evaluated.¹⁸ Here I offer a limited critique because I also presumed that performance regalia conformed to the Plains stereotype until photographs at KOR and community members' oral histories brought to light some discrepancies.

Building on my analysis of performance regalia from the Quebec Tercentenary pageants, this section provides a closer examination of the occurrence of Plains imagery and styles in performance regalia, based on an evaluation of the images at KOR and oral histories from Barbara Delisle. Using examples of performance regalia worn at Earl's Court and Barbara's collection of family regalia, I contend that the influence of Plains dress in public entertainment was present but not all-encompassing. Performance regalia for Mohawk performers were in fact variable (as was Plains dress) — part Plains, part Iroquois-inspired. Barbara's oral histories and her knowledge of beadwork, as well as her reading of the visual record at KOR, highlight the fact that not only were performance regalia diverse, but performers also claimed their regalia as statements of identity. Mohawk performers did not contest Plains imagery; rather, they incorporated it into performance regalia along with local beadwork and regalia styles. I suggest then that Native performers were also active agents in the representation of Native identity in spectacles, which I qualify as expressive agency.

According to a newspaper article about the Indian Village at Earl's Court, the public considered the Canadian Native participants to be "subjects of our King" and "genuine Redskins of the old breed."¹⁹ The article states that the public may see traditional clothing yet notes that Native people have been influenced by civilization. The reporter indicates regret and nostalgia for the traditional:

All may be seen in their historical and traditional garments of leather, beads, and feathers, but, like all the red men of the West, they have fallen in with civilized methods to such an extent that they seem to prefer felt hats of the bowler type to the bonnet of eagles' feathers, sloppy trousers to buckskin leg gear fringed with scalp locks, and cheap brown boots to moccasins; more's the pity.

Based on photographs and postcards at KOR, it appears that some Native performers did wear "traditional" clothing, or at least what the public thought was traditional — Plains Indian dress. Performance regalia incorporated traditional Plains elements, as is evident in a group photograph from Earl's Court, for example, of males wearing Plains-style large feather headdresses, fringed hide shirts, and moccasins (see Figure 10). A postcard identified as from Earl's Court depicts Scar Face in a headdress, wearing a tooth necklace and holding a war club, and gazing into the distance (see Figure 11).²⁰ Poses and objects in the postcards and newspaper sketches include recognizable signs of Nativeness associated with Plains imagery, such as postcards of Akwiranoron in chiefly warrior poses, looking into the distance and wearing a feather headdress and holding a tomahawk (see Figure 12).²¹ These warrior-chief signs and poses are consistent with colonial images of Native people that were popular at the time, images that had been established by photographers and painters such as Edward

Curtis and George Catlin, who generally reduced Native people to allegorical symbols such as the noble savage (Mydin 1992, 250–51).

Despite the prevalence of these stereotypical Plains images, evidence from oral histories and other visual images at KOR reveals the diversity of performance regalia. As was the case with dress at the Quebec pageants, performance regalia were more varied than solely adopted versions of Plains dress; they included other local styles and designs as well. Barbara Delisle (2004) agrees that Europeans thought everyone looked like the Sioux because they “stereotyped Natives all as one group” and because of the prevalence of the Plains image in Wild West shows. But performers blended styles, she says, “because outside people didn’t know the difference,” among other reasons. The reporter’s assumption about the influence of civilization reflects the fact that performance regalia, and Native dress in general, were actually the result of intertribal contact as well as contact with settlers.

To illustrate, Scar Face wears a cloth shirt and pants in the Earl’s Court postcard (see Figure 11). While many Native groups, including those from the Plains, had adopted the use of trade cloth, this material is not typically associated with stereotypical Plains imagery. In addition, although Scar Face wears a feather headdress, it is not the large plumed war bonnet that came to be associated with Plains Indians. Some of the headdresses pictured in the KOR collection appear similar to the Iroquois bonnet-type headdress (*wen-na-so-ton*) worn by the Cayuga and Seneca (Gabor 2001, 2, 4).²² They could be eastern-style headdresses, which consist of fewer feathers (often other than eagle), standing straight up rather than flowing over the head and down the back. Historical documentation also suggests that women kept more to their traditional style of dress, with local insignia, rather than conforming to Plains imagery (see also Nicks n.d.). Barbara Delisle (2004) supports this opinion: “Michael Kelly, his outfit was more Sioux style But the women always had the floral and kept to the more traditional style.” Photographs of the Williams-Kelly family show the women in cloth dresses embroidered with Iroquois beadwork designs. Thus performance regalia were variable rather than stereotypical. Significantly, Barbara noted that even though some performers wore Plains-style headdresses instead of the small beaded caps typical of the Iroquois, the beadwork and regalia were ways in which they represented the Mohawk people to the public in their travels (Delisle 2004).

Performance regalia were also inscribed with signs of local identity. Barbara Delisle (2004) indicated that clothing styles, in particular the beadwork, represented local and personal identities (cf. Nicks n.d.; Phillips 1998). For example, Scar Face is pictured carrying an Iroquois-style beaded bag with a bear design, referring to his clan affiliation (see Figure 11) (Delisle 2004). But because Mohawks are a matriarchal society, Barbara explains, the bear design could also be a reference to the bear in the woods that scratched him on his face, which is how he got his name.²³ Other photographs illustrate women and children wearing Iroquois crown-style beaded headbands (see Figure 10). Barbara’s family made

their own regalia, using both floral and geometric designs (Delisle 2004)²⁴; the twin flowers used on their dress represent the family. Barbara explains the significance of this design and how her son proudly wears on his regalia the flower Jawitson designed:

I don't have any of her pieces [with the flower], but I have the flower thing [design] that shows me how to make it. She [Jawitson] learned from her mother, my great-great-grandmother. So when I make my children's regalia, I try to incorporate that flower so we carry it on. . . . My grandfather Paul Kelly, his name is Tekatsitsianeken, which is "Twin Flowers," so my son is named after him. (Delisle 2004)

Barbara affirms that most of their beadwork was floral but that they also used geometric and celestial designs (see Figure 13)²⁵:

She (Jawitson) has a hummingbird, and most of our beadwork is floral, because we are a Woodland people Her belt had geometric designs, which I didn't know until I did some research with the Smithsonian, that we did a lot of geometric designs because they did a lot of study with the stars I thought it was just the Plains that did the geometrics, but no. (Delisle 2004)

This comment is interesting because it demonstrates how Barbara claims geometric designs as "their own" (representative of the Mohawks and her family) even though these designs are also associated with Plains Indians.

Barbara's explanations of her family's performance regalia recognize locality as well as diversity and intertribal contact.²⁶ The styles and designs of performance regalia like the ones used by Barbara's family represent Mohawk identity, but it is a hybrid expression of local identity markers and incorporated Plains styles and designs, illustrating how some Native performers adopted and incorporated various signs and symbols of Nativeness. Spectacles were complex spaces for the representation of Nativeness. While Native performers may not have had much say about the content of performances, they could control representations of identity through their incorporation of local styles and beadwork designs. Hence, performers consciously expressed their Mohawk identity through their performance regalia in spectacles, demonstrating expressive agency.

While women's performance regalia incorporated local styles, they were also more variable than men's. Besides Iroquois-inspired traditional clothing, the Plains "Indian maiden" continued to be popular. Women performers such as Esther Deer (whom I discuss in the next section) and Molly Spotted Elk often conformed to the style of fringed hide dress, headband, and braids that the public perceived as authentic Plains.²⁷ However, other styles of performance regalia existed. A Native cowboy look also appears in the photographic record at KOR;

performers with the Deer Family Wild West Show incorporated both cowgirl styles and materials with Native-style beadwork (see Figure 14).²⁸ Many performance outfits did not fit any standard design; indeed, some of the clothing for shows and exhibitions was very flamboyant. Jawitson had a gold lamé bikini for her riding shows (Delisle 2004), and Esther Deer owned several performance outfits that were quite risqué for the time (See Figures 16 and 17).²⁹

Notwithstanding this variability, beadwork remained both an identity marker and a source of income. Barbara Delisle says that Kwa-to-ra-ni and Jawitson would bring beadwork with them on their travels to sell at the shows in order to supplement their income. The production of merchandise for the tourism and entertainment industry must have been substantial. Barbara recounts:

they would go to Montreal — a lot of them used to go to the Canadian Exhibition and perform there, on my grandmother's side. They'd fill up their baskets, sell their beadwork. They travelled around Toronto and Ottawa, Philadelphia. They'd sew all winter making their beadwork, and in the spring they'd take off. (Delisle 2004)

Sylvia Trudeau, a Kahnawake Mohawk living in Lachine, Quebec, also mentioned how her grandmother and her mother, Mae (Moonbeam) Splicer, were excellent beadworkers and that her mother would go to events such as the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto to sell her work. She explains further: "My grandmother would make beadworks and my grandfather would travel and sell it. He would send a trunk to Europe and then go down with his one bag to sell it. He went to Europe, Africa, Mexico . . ." (Sylvia Trudeau, October 26, 2004, pers. comm.).

To sum up, although some of the ethnographic work on Plains dress recognizes the diversity of styles, designs, and materials, it is commonly assumed that performance regalia worn in spectacles such as Wild West shows and exhibitions conformed to "a Plains stereotype." I have shown how performance regalia and beadwork varied and hence were also opportunities to express local identity, as well as to procure income. Performance regalia consisted of both Plains and local signification, and some performers, such as the Williams-Kelly family, mixed styles, incorporating Iroquois styles and beadwork designs. The visual documents at KOR and Barbara Delisle's oral histories and knowledge of beadwork support my contention that performance spaces presented occasions for expressive agency — opportunities to express local identity through performance regalia — even if the performers did not control performances or representations in their entirety.

More Than a War Dance: Families That Dance, Ride, and Survive

The format of historical re-enactments and Indian vignettes in Wild West shows influenced exhibitions such as the one at Earl's Court in 1905. In this

section I show how the nature of performances by Native participants was in fact more varied. This challenges our understanding of what Native performers' participation and experiences in Wild West shows and other spectacles may have been like. A brief description of the Earl's Court exhibition is necessary before I can demonstrate the diversity of spectacles and discuss Native perspectives on these experiences.

The 1905 Naval, Shipping, and Fisheries Exhibition at Earl's Court in London was a celebration of British naval might and success. Native people participated in the naval theme, albeit in a minor way. Visitors could witness canoe races or ride in a single- or double-paddle canoe with the Indians across the manmade "Great Lake" that linked the main entrance to the Queen's Court exhibition space.³⁰ An advertisement for the exhibition in the *Illustrated London News* listed the "Great Canadian Indian Village" as an opportunity to see "Chiefs, Artisans, Squaws and Papooses."³¹ While the Indian village was not explicitly connected to the exhibition theme, it was nonetheless noted as a popular, must-see component of the exhibition:

The many attractions of the exhibition at Earl's Court, of which the Naval, Shipping, and Fisheries Exhibition, with its reminiscences of Trafalgar, and its picturesque Life of a Man of War, are the principal, have not prevented the public from visiting and enjoying the Red Indian Camp, of which we give some sketches.³²

The Indian village also had an Indian museum, like the PBWW show, with various "historical curios, war-clubs, tomahawks, idols . . . etc."³³ The village was similar to Wild West show encampments in that it offered visitors an opportunity to see Native people going about their daily work:

They have built their own typical Indian village there, erected their wigwams, and arranged the cooking apparata, in order to live, work, and amuse themselves as they do in their native homes. The various craftsmen can be seen tanning skins, making bows and arrows, pipes, mats and baskets of all kinds, decorating deerskin garments or doing bead-work and ornamental quill-work. Repairing and constructing while mashing and baking of corn and open-air cooking will be among their labors.³⁴

It is interesting to note that advertisements and programs specifically acknowledge that the Native people participating are from Canada, rather than referring to them generically as Indian. The program states that the village included forty-two "representatives of the Sioux, Ojibbeway [*sic*], Iroquois, Onondaga, and Abemihi [*sic*] tribes."³⁵ According to an official guide for the exhibition, nineteen men, eight women, twelve children, and three babies had come to London³⁶; some of whom were Barbara Delisle's relatives.

In an important article on Canadian and American exhibitions at Earl's Court, King writes that the Indian village of 1905 "depended on Cody's type of Wild West Show" (1991, 39). Historical re-enactments and Indian vignettes and the war dance were a large part of Wild West shows and other exhibitions. However, despite apparent similarities with Wild West shows, the scope and content of Native performances and participation at Earl's Court were more varied.

Under the charge of Fredrick R. Burton, the Indian village departed from the historical re-enactments of Wild West shows or pageants reminiscent of the Quebec 1908 celebrations. Instead, performances consisted of a large repertoire of dances, which were promoted as one of the main features of the Indian village. The war dance was but one of the dances and ceremonies performed by Iroquois chiefs Scar Face, American Horse, Akwiranoron, and the other Native people in the village, who also demonstrated the Snake Dance, the Caribou (Prayer) Dance, the Medicine Dance, and the Pipe of Peace ceremony.³⁷

The exhibition also highlighted the sports and skills of Native performers. A full-page promotion for the "Canadian Indian Village" invited visitors to witness the "sports, ceremonies, and industries" of Native people.³⁸ The program billed Chief Sose Akwirranoron [*sic*] as "the champion strong man of the North American Indians, [who] will give a sensational exhibition of spike driving with the bare hand, stone breaking and iron bending, followed by the archery contest."³⁹ Other activities in the village included demonstrations of "Red Indian Sports" in which Native participants engaged in exciting matches of the corn-cob game and the arrow game.⁴⁰

This evidence suggests that, while the war dance continued to be a popular feature, some exhibitions such as the Indian Village at Earl's Court also emphasized dance, sport, and the skills of Native participants. Barbara Delisle's oral histories also support this view. Speaking of the variety of skills and acts that her family would perform, she says that her family often danced, and that rodeo-like feats and displays of skill and strength were popular as well. She recalls how Jawitson was a skilled rider and would do tricks such as jumping off a moving horse or standing on her head in the saddle. Barbara also remembers hearing stories of Scar Face doing tricks with chairs and shooting with bow and arrows (Delisle 2004).

Contrary to King (1991), therefore, the 1905 Indian village did not depend on a Wild West show format of historical re-enactments, although it was undoubtedly influenced by the Indian vignette format found in Wild West shows. In fact, both Wild West shows and exhibitions such as the Indian village at Earl's Court were diverse spectacles. Besides problematizing the assumption that all spectacles conformed to the same stereotypical format, this fact is important for better understanding of Native experiences and their views of performing in spectacles. The variety of performances, and dances in particular, at Earl's Court supports my suggestion in chapter 3 that spectacles were also spaces in which to maintain other dance traditions. In addition, the variety of dances and skills that

Native performers such as the Williams-Kelly family mastered meant that they were able to travel and perform in many different types of spectacles and thus establish successful careers. This diversity is also significant because it is more possible to imagine that performers felt pride in their dancing and other skills and sports, as opposed to in their re-enactments of historical battles.

Native performers were seen as stars of the show. Barbara Delisle remembers her grandfather telling her how people loved seeing Native performers:

My grandfather used to say how people adored having the Native segment in the show as opposed to just, you know, the cowboys, because I guess Native people were glorified at that time, and they really enjoyed the shows, and the people would come up and talk to them and want to touch them and take pictures with them. (2004)

The celebrity status of some Native performers such as those in Barbara's family reveals how complex these performance spaces must have been. The idea that Native performers considered themselves celebrities rather than exploited presents a different perspective on their experiences. "I think at one time they probably thought we were all dead," Barbara jokes, "[but] Custer did not kill us all" (Delisle 2004). "We are like this great mystery," she declares. "They hear about us, read about us, but we are not really out there as much . . . so when we do appear [they are astonished]." Barbara's comments speak to the survival of Native people, which was made evident by their participation in spectacles. These types of personal perspectives and experiences do not always come through clearly in the archives, but oral histories illuminate the additional meanings of experiences. The Deer Family Wild West Show described below offers another example of the variability of content of spectacles and what this means in terms of interpreting Native performers' experiences.

THE DEER FAMILY PERFORMS

At first glance, the archival record appears to support the view that performances by the Deer family and their daughter Esther Deer conformed to stereotypical constructions of Nativeness. In this section I question this assumption. Recently, scholarly work has demonstrated how oral histories and visual documents may provide access to Native perspectives and alternative readings of history (cf. Brown and Peers 2006; Dussart 2005; Edwards 2005). The oral and relational aspects of photographs, for example, provide valuable insight into indigenous perspectives (Edwards 2005), and thus on our understanding of Native participation in performance spaces. Sylvia Trudeau's oral histories and her reading of archival photographs and newspaper clippings provide insight on Native perspectives and experiences, demonstrating how an indigenous reading of the Deer Family Wild West Show and Esther Deer's career reveals a story of

success and pride rather than stereotypes. I argue that these narratives are indicative of these performers' agency of cultural projects. I also suggest that Esther used her Nativeness to her advantage in order to advance her career, illustrating how some performers were able to control their representations and their careers.

The Deer Family Wild West Show: Beyond the Stereotypes

Mohawk performers actively participated in Wild West shows and other performance spaces on their own initiative, as well as forming their own performance troupes and guiding their own careers as performers. Esther Deer (also known as Princess White Deer); her grandfather Chief Running Deer; her father, James Deer; her mother, Georgette (Osborne) Deer; and her uncles John Jr. and George performed together as the Deer Family.⁴¹ In the late 1800s and into the early 1900s, the Deer family participated in exhibitions and events across North America, such as the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901.⁴² From 1904 to 1910, the family travelled abroad to perform in countries across Europe and in South Africa.

In 1904 the Deer family performed in the Texas Jack Wild West Show in South Africa. Texas Jack's followed a standard Wild West show formula, complete with historical re-enactments, Indian vignettes, cowboy pastimes, circus acts, and a few ethnic Others. Newspaper articles reported that Esther sang "Pocahontas" and "Hiawatha" in addition to performing a war dance.⁴³ The finale was an Indian vignette presented as a historical sketch; a reporter described the sketch as "very effective and dramatic, and recalls most vividly the awful tragedies perpetrated by their ancestors."⁴⁴ The family also performed some impressive fancy riding, and some newspapers commented on their skill, declaring that they were "the most athletic of all races."⁴⁵ Finally, an Indian encampment outside the arena provided further opportunity for scrutiny of the Indians.⁴⁶ In the menageries at Texas Jack's show, an article announced, one could see the animals and "inspect the cowboys and Indians," as well as other articles of interest such as a wampum belt, a peace pipe, war clubs, snowshoes, and the scalps that Princess White Deer wore.⁴⁷ The combination of the Hiawatha song and the war dance supported the public's contradictory image of Native people as noble savages, and the tone of the historical sketch in particular implied that Indians were savage enemies.

The Deer family also travelled with their own production, the Deer Family Wild West Show, performing in the U.K., Germany, and Eastern Europe from 1905 to 1910.⁴⁸ The show included a sketch called "Indians of the Past," which combined historical re-enactment and Indian vignette approaches characteristic of the Wild West show format described in chapter 1. Billed as the top act, the sketch was described in an advertisement for their show in Edinburgh in 1908 as a series of tableaux.⁴⁹ In the opening scene, Indians sat around a fire while Princess White Deer sang and performed Indian war dances. Next, White Rose and

Princess White Deer performed in front of an empty settler's cabin. This romantic picture was interrupted when the settler returned and braves in war paint "attacked an enemy," scalped him, and burned the cabin. This scene included a "sensational knife duel." The seventh and last act was called "settlers to the rescue."⁵⁰ An article describing their 1910 show at the Zoological Gardens in Dresden gives additional details. The attack by braves was followed by an Indian burial scene with "weird chants" and a medicine man curing sick Indians.⁵¹ The "Indians of the Past" sketch concluded with another stereotype: "the exposition of a genuine American cake-walk."⁵² Based on this archival documentation, it appears that the Deer family's production followed a structure similar to the Texas Jack show, in that they presented historical scenes that reproduced stereotypical imagery.

Sylvia Trudeau's memories and discussions of the photographic record, however, bring to light additional interpretations of the Deer family's show and experiences. Photographs elicit memories, connect to family and community histories, and bring forth indigenous perspectives (Arid 2003, 31; Brown and Peers 2006, 4–5, 10; Edwards 2005, 37). For example, when Arid brought photographs back to an Australian Aboriginal community, he found that Aboriginal people "look past the stereotypical way in which their relatives and ancestors have been portrayed, because they are just happy to be able to see photographs of people who play a part in their family history" (2003, 25). On the one hand, the Deer Family Wild West Show Indian sketch was consistent with stereotypical representations of Indian life found in spectacles at the time.⁵³ But Sylvia Trudeau thinks about the show content in a different way. When I asked her about the performances in the Wild West show while we examined the pictures, she responded that Esther and her mother were excellent riders and did amazing tricks on horseback. She recalls with pride:

She [Georgette Deer] was so small, and this white horse would be running . . . and the horse would come by and she'd make a mad dash and jump on him bareback, no saddle or anything, and she's hanging on his mane. And then . . . she's riding with her hands round his neck and she's riding upside down. Or she'll stand up on her hands and her feet are up in the air and this horse is going fifty miles an hour. . . . It was really something.
(Trudeau 2004)

Sylvia looked past the Wild West stereotypes and saw family members who had demonstrated skill and established successful careers. For her, these were not pictures of loss and cultural exploitation or commercialization. They were pictures of family history, of work ethic, skill, and courage. Sylvia's view of the Deer family's show also indicates that the family exerted some control in their choice of performances that existed in tandem with — as it competed with — other performances and images of Nativeness.

Sylvia Trudeau's perspectives also help clarify the contrasting images of the Deer Family Wild West Show found in the archival record: newspaper

clippings and advertisements for the show appear to tell one story, while photographs collected by Esther in the Princess White Deer (PWD) collection tell another. Newspaper clippings emphasize the historical sketches in the show and promote Natives as savage warriors. Conversely, the photographs showcase the performers' regalia and/or illustrate their riding skills (see Figure 14).⁵⁴ The regalia pictured are richly detailed and diverse, a mixture of local beadwork, headdresses, and cowgirl style. There are no pictures of war dances or warrior poses among the photographs of the Deer Family Wild West Show. In an interesting role reversal, one photograph depicts an Indian on horseback roping a cowboy. Both rodeo-type acts and historical sketches were likely part of the show and emphasized to various degrees in America and Europe to meet public demands and tastes. But the photographs collected by Esther Deer preserved another memory of these experiences. Given the choice, Native performers may have preferred to focus on their skills and regalia rather than dramatize their history.

Based on Sylvia Trudeau's comments about her family's experiences, then, I further suggest that the discrepancy in regard to the content of the show found in the historical record between newspaper clippings and photographs is a result of reading the records from a Western perspective and a tendency to downplay the possibility of gaining access to indigenous voices. Based on our knowledge of Wild West shows and what scholars have written about world's fairs and exhibitions, anthropologists often read photographs and historical records using a post-colonial approach in order to deconstruct stereotypes, which has contributed much to our understanding of the politics of representation. However, Sylvia's oral narratives and her interpretation of the photographs led me to consider other possible meanings and interpretations.

First, Sylvia Trudeau's interpretations revealed the possibility that some Native performers had potential control over the content of performances, in particular when they produced their own show, like the Deer family and Esther Deer (whom I discuss below). These Mohawk performers were active agents in the production of Nateness. Performance spaces consisted of complex productions of Nateness that included stereotypical vignettes, Plains imagery, and local identity markers. While the Deer family likely had to meet the public's expectations, they also chose to focus on their riding skills, for example, moving beyond simple representation of stereotypes and historical re-enactments. According to the photographs she collected, Esther Deer certainly chose to remember certain aspects of her family's Wild West show.

Second, examination of photographs and archival records from community members such as Sylvia, in combination with their oral histories, offers another perspective on Native experiences in Wild West shows, one that highlights the performers' skills, adaptability, pride, and successes. The claiming of these performance experiences in terms of accomplishment and success is significant, for it shifts the focus away from externally imposed representations of Nateness in these spaces to how these experiences are also about Native performers' own

choices and successes. That is, to use Ortner's term once again, Sylvia's narratives of skill and success and her interpretations underscore that her family had their own cultural projects. I argue that, similar to agency in terms of opportunities for Native performers in Wild West shows, which I outlined in chapter 2, narratives of accomplishment, skill, and adaptability represent their cultural projects and reflect Mohawk performers' control over their careers and successes.

Princess White Deer: A Story of Success

Sylvia Trudeau opened up for me a suitcase filled with memories of her aunt Esther Deer: photographs, newspaper clippings, and stories, many of them more than a century old.⁵⁵ These items — Esther's experiences in tangible form — weave together with Sylvia's memories to tell us the story of the life of Esther Deer. Esther frequently visited her friends and family in Kahnawake and shared stories about her experiences. Photocopies of newspaper clippings, photographs, and much of Esther's regalia from Sylvia's suitcase form the PWD collection at KOR. With the aid of this material and Sylvia's oral histories, Esther's career emerges as an example of success and of conscious employment of Nativeness through regalia and performances. I contend that her story of success may be identified as another example of cultural projects, and that her control and use of Nativeness in order to be successful also represents her advancement of career goals and cultural projects.

Esther Deer (d. 1992) was born in 1891 in Akwesasne. Her home base was in New York State, but she spent much of her life travelling and performing with her family, from as early as 1901, in Wild West shows and exhibitions. Esther travelled abroad extensively as a solo performer from 1911 to 1915 to places such as Russia, Poland, Ukraine, England, and France.⁵⁶ She enjoyed a successful career in vaudeville into the 1920s, performing at venues in the well-known and highly successful Keith-Albee circuit and in Ziegfeld productions and revues.⁵⁷ Later in her career, she staged performances as her contribution to the war effort and appeared at special events and commemorations. This brief overview indicates the scope of Esther's extensive performance career, from early childhood into the 1930s, which may have been atypical for a Native person. (It is likely that scholars need to focus more attention on the many Native performers who were successful in various performance spaces in the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.)

Sylvia Trudeau (2004) speaks with great pride of Esther's success and accomplishments. At that time, she states, there wasn't much work; Indians were put on reserves and suppressed and could not compete with white society.⁵⁸ So performing and selling beadwork, she points out, were ways to make a living. She recalls how Esther performed with the Ziegfeld Follies, both in the chorus and as a headliner; her illustrious friends included Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, and Will Rogers. "People she was in show business with would come and visit. And when I

was there, I always had to dress up,” remembers Sylvia. Esther was successful in the white world, affirms Sylvia: she owned a nightclub, drugstore, and house in Port Chester, New York, with gardens and servants (Trudeau 2004).⁵⁹ Sylvia’s account speaks to Esther’s economic freedom and her ability to enter and succeed in the white world, which is evidence of her agency in terms of success.

Esther was known for her dancing style and ability. Newspapers articles and show reviews recognize her skill as a dancer, which increased her fame and celebrity status. A newspaper clipping about B. F. Keith’s bill *Tip-Top* states: “Princess White Deer is the personification of grace and ability and the manner in which she executes the difficult Indian dances is really wonderful.”⁶⁰ A review for the *Nine O’Clock Frolic* production by Ziegfeld reports that Princess White Deer danced particularly well.⁶¹ Another review for *Tip-Top* remarks that Esther had appeared in principal theatres and royal palaces abroad and received gifts from royalty, including a gold medal from Grand Duchess Marie of Russia.⁶² She even put on a command performance for Czar Nicolas II in Russia (Trudeau 2004).

Esther gained fame and status not only because of her skill but also because she was perceived to be a real Native and a real American. In fact, her performances negotiated various subjectivities (Nicks and Phillips 2007, 157–58). Nicks and Phillips argue that Esther played the role of Indian princess but also played with signs of blackness, the exotic, and femininity, thereby “destabilizing tropes of race and ethnicity” (2007, 157). They write: “She made it impossible for her audiences *not* to know that the Indian stereotypes were as much (dis)guises as the other, more patently fictional images she adopted” (2007, 158). These representations of multiple subjectivities or ethnicities were “self conscious and strategic” choices (Nicks and Phillips 2007, 146). Building on this insight, I argue that Sylvia Trudeau’s narratives of Esther’s success, and the fact that Esther knew how to use her Nativeness to her own advantage, demonstrate her agency of cultural projects. Esther controlled how she represented herself in both her regalia and performances, and that she moved in particular between Euro-American and Native identities in order to advance her career; her performances, therefore, were empowering, as they led to her success.

First, Esther’s status as a real American was an important part of her identity that contributed to her success. Sylvia Trudeau says, “She was always proud to represent the country, because she was always asked to do something for the army or navy or whatever. And she liked doing that because ‘It’s for my country,’ she says” (2004). Esther was proud to be American, to be North American: “She was very, very patriotic. She’d always say ‘our country’ or ‘my country’” (Trudeau 2004). Sylvia explains further: “Some people don’t understand that Canada and the United States are two different countries, but for the Indians, we are North American Indians. So we have — well, we are supposed to have — dual citizenship.” Sylvia’s statements reveal that Esther acknowledged her identity as an American with pride, and vaudeville producers and event organizers also valued her Americanness. Because of her status as a real Native

and a real American, Esther was often asked to appear at commemorative events or participate in the war effort. In a 1925 letter asking Esther to perform her pageant at a tribute to General Pershing at the Hippodrome, Robert Redmond wrote: “It is such a genuine American movement that an added reason for your presence is the fact that you are a REAL American.”⁶³ Thus her status as simultaneously a real Native and an original American generated the exotic appeal required to draw in audiences while playing on ideas of patriotism.

Second, Esther’s status as an “authentic Indian” brought her fame and likewise contributed to her success. Newspapers consistently note her descent, calling her “daughter of the last hereditary Chief” and a “Native American of the truest type.”⁶⁴ In addition, articles and reviews often recap her family’s deeds and relations. They note that James and John Deer were hired by Lord Wolseley to assist in the Nile campaign to rescue General Gordon in 1885, as well as their family’s connection with Dr. Oron-hy-atek-kha and Joseph Brant.⁶⁵ That Esther was an “authentic Indian” with such illustrious ancestry undoubtedly enticed audiences.

Newspapers highlighted her status as a real Native and her famous relations, but Esther also strategically played up her Nativeness through her performance regalia and dances. Studio photographs in the KOR collection depict her in costumes showcasing her Nativeness that played on markers of Plains identity that the public recognized as authentic. Esther’s Plains-inspired costumes often consisted of a large feather headdress that trailed down her back and a fringed dress (or shorts) (see Figure 15).⁶⁶ Her skirt and leggings were beaded with stylized teepees and geometric shapes; she also wore armbands, wrist and ankle bracelets, beaded or bone necklaces, and beaded vests (see Figure 18).⁶⁷

However, some of Princess White Deer’s performance regalia also included signs of local identity, such as the Iroquois-inspired beadwork found on a stunning leather vest and short skirt with elaborate floral and bird designs, and a leather bag with a floral design in raised clear beads (see Figure 19.1 and 19.2).⁶⁸ These costumes were produced specifically for performance, in order to make an impact, but they used designs inspired by Plains and Iroquois styles as well as trade materials that resulted from contact with settlers. As with the Williams-Kelly family, this demonstrates the variability of performance regalia and how performers incorporated expression of local identity within the constraints of a performance context that sought to meet audience expectations of Plains Indian imagery. The fact that Esther could incorporate local styles in the face of public demand for “authentic Plains style” suggests that she had control over representations of Nativeness in terms of her performance regalia.

Esther Deer also consciously employed her Nativeness through her performances, which Sylvia Trudeau suggests were of her own inspiration. When I asked Sylvia about the type of performances Esther would present, she explained that Esther was what you would call an interpretive dancer (Trudeau 2004). Esther’s range was immense, from Egyptian dancing to ballroom dancing. This form of “Art dancing” reached the zenith of its popularity in the 1920s and

basically consisted of ethnic themes (McBride 1995, 84). Notwithstanding the variability of her performances, many of the interpretive dances in Esther's repertoire had Native themes — such as the Indian dances she performed in Russia, her “Indian Song and Dance” from 1918, and the “Dance to the Great Spirit” performed at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, in 1921 — inspired by her personal experiences and cultural background. When Sylvia Trudeau asked her uncle Mitchell Williams how Esther started dancing, he replied: “Since she was a little girl like this, she was always making up things. She'd take a dishtowel or something, wrap it around her, and she would dance and sing” (Trudeau 2004).⁶⁹ Sylvia remembers fondly, “she always liked to be amongst people. She'd put on skirts when she was older. . . . we used to do that at home.” Sylvia proudly states that Esther had a “magic” that made her special.

Esther's interpretive dancing involved performance of diverse ethnicities. Based on a reading of newspaper clippings and revues, I suggest that her productions consistently moved back and forth between dances that represented her Nativeness and those that displayed her Americanness. For example, Esther appeared in two scenes of the production *Tip-Top* (ca. 1920) with Fred Stone at the Globe Theatre in New York City. In one scene she appeared in “full Indian war dress to do the scalp dance”; in the other she wore modern evening dress and did “a snappy buck and wing dance.”⁷⁰ Her “Revue of Dances Over Four Centuries” at the Hippodrome in 1925 started with a chief's address by a male performer and Esther in Native costume performing a symbolic solo.⁷¹ The rest of the revue moved from a Native theme to European and American dances; Esther performed a jazz dance and a foxtrot, a novelty waltz in evening dress, and a buck-and-slide routine.⁷² For the tribute to General Pershing at the Hippodrome that March, Esther modified this revue into “American Indian Revue in Three Periods: 1776, 1863, 1918.”⁷³ A prologue by Chief Eagle Horse was followed by Esther's “Dance of the Great Spirit” from the eighteenth century. Her “Pocahontas Dance” represented the nineteenth century, and Esther and Peppy De Albrew danced a waltz to represent the twentieth century. Through performances such as these, Esther oscillated between American and Native identities, which is perhaps representative of her professional and personal journey, which moved between Native and white worlds.

To conclude, scholars may critique these types of performance as inauthentic and romantic, but Esther's dances were her artistic creations and interpretations. She adapted her costumes and performances to meet public expectations, drawing on recognizable Plains imagery as well as Iroquois-inspired regalia. Even though her choices were situated within the constraints of public tastes of the time, she consciously used her Nativeness and controlled what and how she performed. Esther's promotion of her Nativeness through performance and through pan-Indian material cues was certainly more complicated than merely essentialist. She utilized her identity(s) to her advantage; hence the use of her Nativeness, with both Plains and local significations, was empowering and contributed to her success. In other words, Esther employed her Nativeness in the

Nativeness through regalia and dance provide an example of how some Native performers wielded agency in performance spaces and were successful in advancing their careers.

SUMMARY

This chapter introduces oral histories and archival evidence of three Mohawk families' experiences in a variety of performance spaces. I demonstrate the scope of Native performances, which supports the fact that spectacles consisted of more than war dances and historical vignettes; they also consisted of displays of skill and sport and a variety of dances. I show that performances and regalia consisted of meanings beyond the stereotypes produced for spectacle. Oral histories from descendants of performers and their reading of the archival record brought to light additional perspectives, meanings, and interpretations of Native performers' experiences in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In particular, I argue that participation in spectacle is also a story of success, skill, and pride rather than simply a story of exploitation and commercialization. The theme of success permeates the oral histories of the Williams-Kelly family, the Deer family, and Esther Deer. I maintain that narratives of success, accomplishment, and pride may be interpreted as evidence of these performers' agency in terms of cultural projects. Finally, I demonstrate that performance regalia were variable rather than solely stereotypical. From the perspective of variability, I was able to illustrate in these three family case studies how regalia worn in Quebec, owned by the Williams-Kelly family, and used by Esther Deer also contained Iroquois identity markers. Still, the use of Plains-inspired regalia was empowering in that it contributed to their successes. Playing with their Nativeness through performance and regalia, these families consciously and strategically were their own agents. Public entertainment may have appropriated Native culture, but Mohawk performers also appropriated performance spaces, and their successes were their own.

Figure 6: Akwiranoron Beauvais and Family at Earls Court, 1905

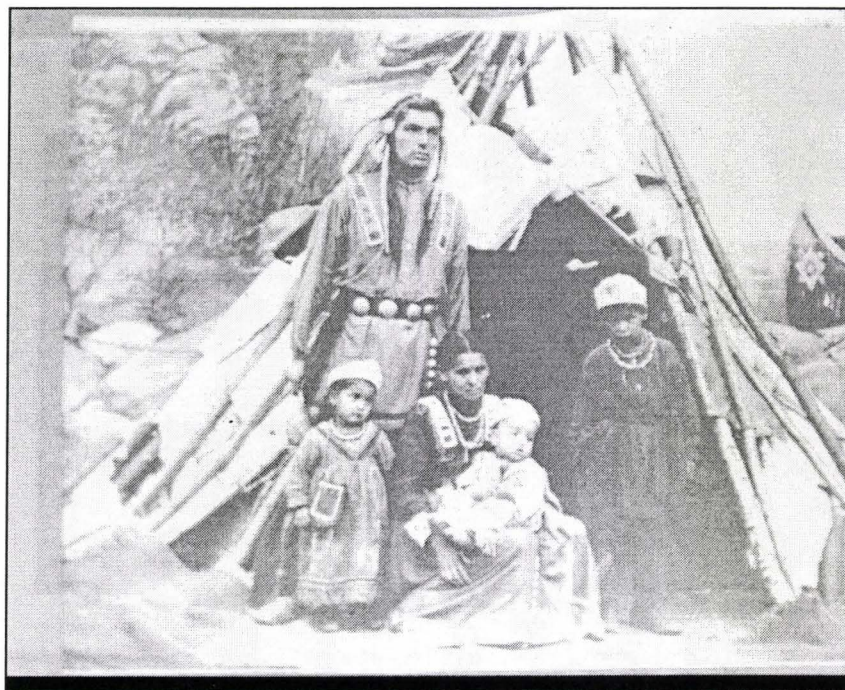


Figure 7: Regalia at the Quebec Tercentenary, 1908

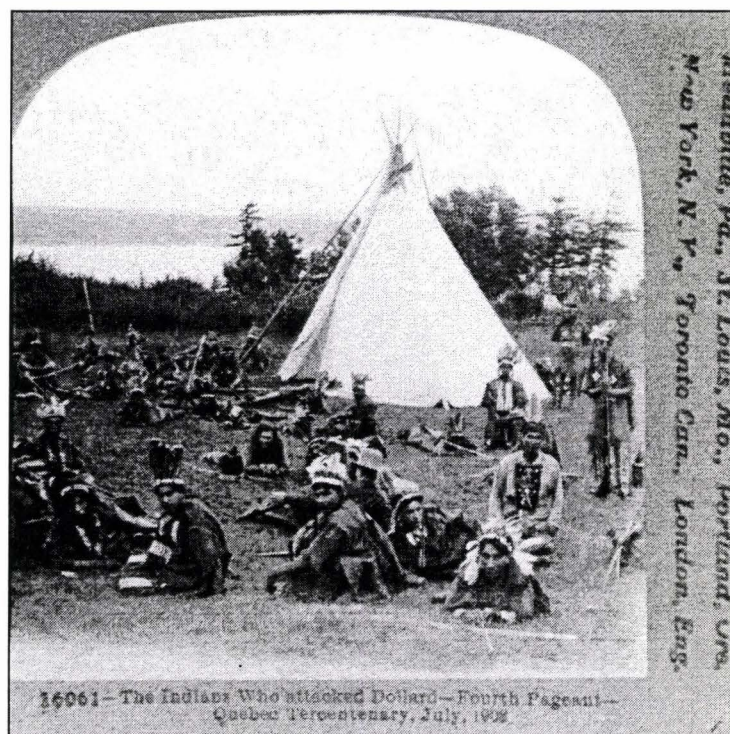


Figure 8: American Horse's Regalia

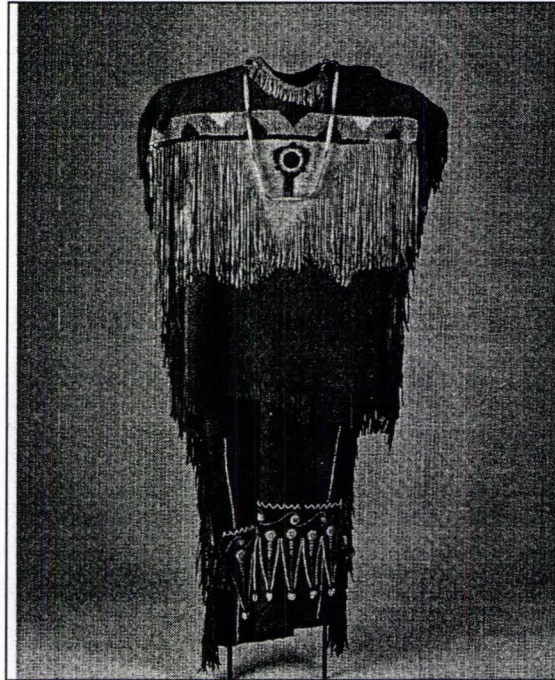


Figure 9: Stereo card "Indians Playing Cards"

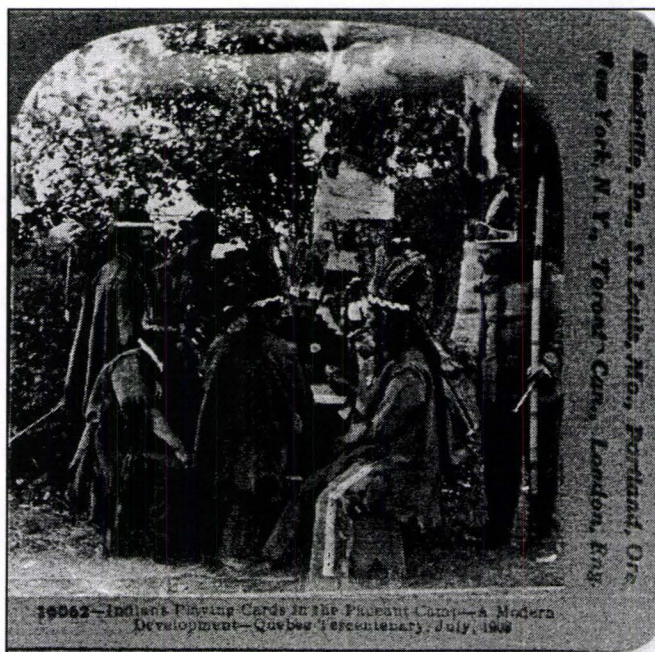


Figure 10: Williams-Kelly Family & Other Performers at Earl's Court, 1905



Figure 11: Scar Face's Regalia and Bag

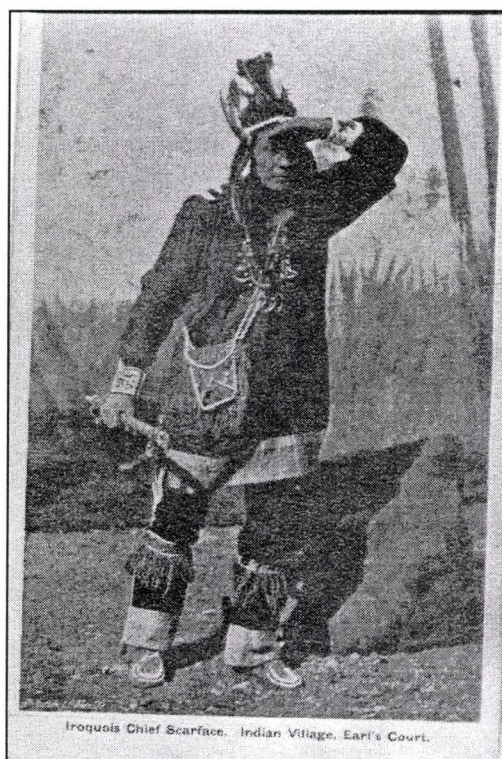


Figure 12: Akwiranoron

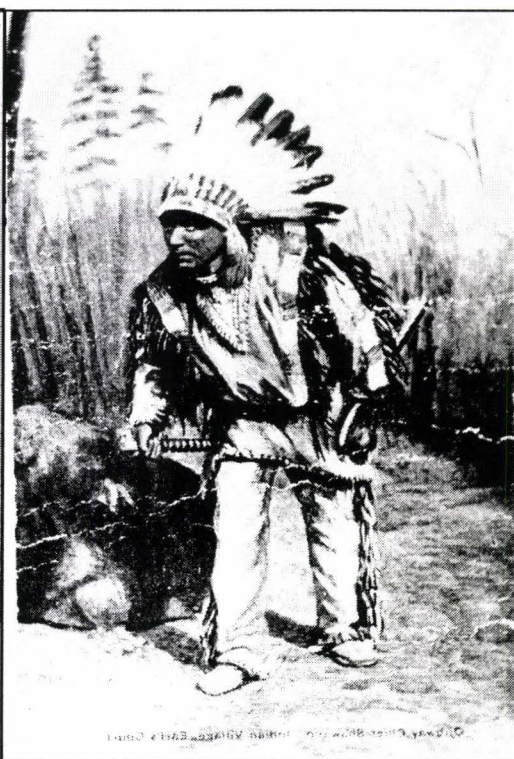


Figure 13: Jawitson's Performance Regalia – Skirt, Belt, and Headband



Figure 14: Dear Family Wild West Show - Riding and Regalia



Figure 15: Princess White Deer's Plains Inspired Regalia



Figure 16: PWD Short Ermine Skirt with Stylized Beaded Waistband



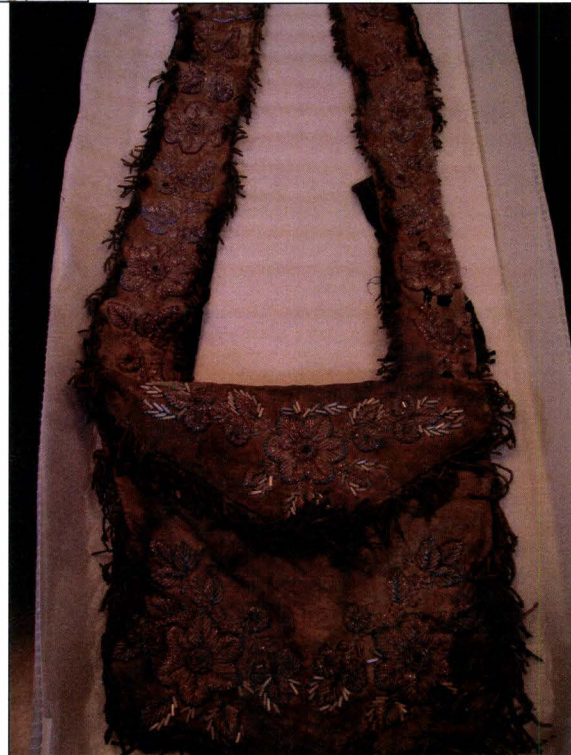
Figure 17: PWD Beaded Skirt and Leggings



Figure 18: PWD Performance Regalia Accessories



Figure 19.1 & 19.2: PWD Beaded Vest, Skirt, and Leather Bag



CHAPTER 6

AN ENCORE PRESENTATION: EURODISNEY'S SPECTACULAR WILD WEST SHOW

This chapter adds a contemporary analysis of Native perspectives and experiences in Wild West shows based on ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and first-hand interviews with performers. It examines the BBWW show at EuroDisney as a spectacular encounter in the Wild West contact zone that is part of an international market of cultural display and performance. This international performance encounter involves power relationships centring on control of the production of representations and social meanings of Nativeness.

Drawing on my fieldwork observations and an examination of multimedia promotional materials, the first section demonstrates how simulacrum works to reproduce the American frontier as well as stereotypical and “Disneyfied” understandings of Westernness and Nativeness. Building on this analysis, the next section elucidates the negotiation of power by examining the ways in which authenticity is invoked. Based on interviews with Native performers and producers, the rest of the chapter investigates how Native performers negotiate identity, authority, and power. I argue that the performance of Nativeness in spectacle engenders a space for the evaluation and expression of Native identities. Native performers attempt to reconcile spectacular representations and lived experiences of identity, which are multiple expressions of experiential elements, as well as tribal and pan-Indian expressions. I suggest that Native performers’ agency can be recognized in terms of the opportunity that employment at EuroDisney provides and the pride they feel as a result of their experiences and accomplishments abroad, despite the reproduction of stereotypes in the BBWW show.

SIMULATING A HYPERREAL AMERICA

Setting the Stage

One of the most spectacular contemporary reincarnations of the BBWW show may be seen at EuroDisney, which is located approximately thirty-two kilometres east of Paris, near the French town of Marne-la-Vallée. EuroDisney opened to the public in 1992, accompanied by much fanfare.¹ While it resembles other Disney parks and follows the standard Disney formula and arrangement, the “Imagineers” subtly reinvented EuroDisney in response to European expectations and tastes, then promoted it with a tightly focused marketing strategy and publicity campaign (Lainsbury 2000, 11).² Marketing research conducted by EuroDisney revealed that the idea of the frontier resonated with Europeans and that they associated the United States with the Wild West (Lainsbury 2000, 57).

Frontierland (originally called Westernland) was designed to satisfy the European appetite for American culture, and the Phantom Manor was reconceptualized as a mining town (Lainsbury 2000, 57, 60). An indigenous American theme (Native American and Mexican/Southwest) is also prevalent throughout the site, from the Pueblo Trading Post and the Legends of the Wild West self-guided walking tour to the Southwest-style restaurants and décor and the Pocahontas Indian Village. These spaces contribute to the construction of what Lainsbury calls “American exoticism” for European consumption (2000, 59). The French spokesperson for EuroDisney admits that they are bringing a “naïve, simple view of America” to Europe, but one that reflects European notions of what America is (Lainsbury 2000, 62).

Visitors may also experience American-style entertainment in a free-admission area called Disney Village. The “themeing”³ strategies of this area similarly contribute to creating a space for consumption of “American exoticism.” Disney Village brings to visitors the excitement of America “by evoking the atmosphere of Route 66” (Lainsbury 2000, 79) and by providing American-style entertainment through themed restaurants such as Annette’s Diner, McDonald’s, and Planet Hollywood, as well as live concerts and entertainment, including the Hurricane Discotheque, Billy Bob’s Country Western Saloon, and the BBWW dinner show.⁴

The BBWW show, which has been in production since the opening of EuroDisney, is the product of a team of creative producers, also known as “Imagineers.”⁵ According to the 2004 press information kit, the show consists of a crew of eighty technicians and a cast of sixty performers.⁶ Christel Grevy, the artistic manager of the BBWW show, informed me that they had conducted a good deal of research on America’s West, the cowboy lifestyle, Native culture (specifically the Sioux), and the historical BBWW show.⁷ The office walls are decorated with posters of Native Americans and the BBWW show (past and present) and photographs of performers, employees, and promotional events. The collage is a testament to the production team’s and manager’s passionate interest and the thorough research that has gone into the production of this BBWW show. Their research approach, as I will argue later in the chapter, figures importantly in their claim of authenticity.

The Spectacularization of Cowboys and Indians

Scholars in anthropology and cultural studies have examined how the Disney Corporation produces a metonymic America, constructing social worlds with its representations of race, gender, and history in a multitude of media products (e.g., Bell, Hass, and Sells 1995; Budd and Kirsch 2005; Giroux 1999). Disney creates a world of simulacrum that reproduces (essentialized) American ideologies and values (Castaneda 1993; Fernandez 1995; Kratz and Karp 1993). It constructs American life as a spectacle for consumption, or, as Schwartz (1999) would say, Disney is a spectacularization of American life. Its BBWW show,

located in the Disney Village entertainment zone, is laced with Disney flavour and depends on creating hyperreal experiences. Following the above scholars, I outline how EuroDisney's BBWW show constructs a simulated America that reproduces stereotypical historical constructions; this hyperreal Wild West America is based in danger and conflict, where cowboys and Indians are defined in opposition to each other. The production of Nativeness and Westernness is thus selective and essentialized.

EuroDisney's re-creation of the BBWW show is based on a historical program from Buffalo Bill's visit to France in 1905 (see Figure 20).⁸ That show had twenty-three acts, including a grand entry, the famous "Rough Riders of the World," military displays, and cowboy pastimes, which consisted of rodeo-like events.⁹ Historical re-enactments and Indian vignettes were popular features of the 1905 show. Several acts featured Indians, in attacks on a Pony Express rider, an emigrant train, a settler's cabin, and the Deadwood stagecoach. The "Battle of Custer" was also part of the show. Although neither Annie Oakley nor Sitting Bull appeared in the 1905 show, they are featured in the EuroDisney reinvention.¹⁰ The creative team at EuroDisney modified and melded many of these acts to produce a Wild West show for modern audiences. Features incorporated from the historical show include a grand entry of cowboys and Indians, Annie Oakley and sharpshooting, trick riding and roping, rodeo-type games, and a Pony Express race, as well as vignettes of a cattle drive, a buffalo hunt, and the Deadwood stagecoach chase.

The show begins when four cowboys charge into the arena to the sounds of Western movie music, waving flags representing four ranches: the Gold Star Ranch in Texas, the Red River Ranch in Colorado, the Blue Moon Ranch in Wyoming, and the Green Mountain Ranch in Montana (see Figure 21).¹¹ Buffalo Bill enters and introduces each ranch individually. Audience members, wearing color-coded straw cowboy hats they received upon entry to their seating sections, are encouraged to cheer for their ranch. Next, Annie Oakley demonstrates her sharpshooting skills on horseback. Then the atmosphere changes. As the arena darkens, a backdrop curtain rises to reveal cliffs and a sunrise. Mysterious, mystical Indian flute music floats through the arena. The shadow of an Indian with a spear and shield (which looks like a large dream catcher) moves stealthily along the cliff. Sitting Bull slowly rides out, seated proudly on a pinto horse and carrying his eagle-feather staff (see Figure 22).¹² He addresses Buffalo Bill in his native language, accompanied by hand gestures. Buffalo Bill replies, "Greetings to you and your tribe, Tatanka-Iyotanka, great medicine chief Sitting Bull. You honour us all with your presence." More Indians arrive; some ride around the arena and others dance to what sounds like powwow music.

Two vignettes, "The Herd" and "Buffalo Hunting," follow the introduction of the main participants and the stars of the show. In the herd vignette, chuck wagons pull into the arena accompanied by cowboys on horseback rounding up longhorn cattle to a Western movie-type soundtrack. The cowboys set up camp, sing songs, rope longhorns, and do rope tricks. The light-hearted feeling of this

scene is supported by banjo music, upbeat songs, and comic dialogue, complete with a rubber chicken. In contrast, the tone of the buffalo-hunting vignette is serious, mystical, suspenseful, and even dangerous. The music is eerie; the arena is dark, lit only with a blue ultraviolet light. In the distance an Indian rises from the cliffs; he gazes out in search of buffalo. Another Indian, wearing a buffalo headdress, enters the arena with a flaming torch, acknowledges the four directions, lights a campfire, and begins his buffalo dance. Other Indians join in, dancing and singing around the fire to the sound of drumming. Then the buffalo slowly enter the smoke-filled arena (an effect produced by dry ice). After a yell to attack, the Indians chase the buffalo, on horseback and on foot, around and then out of the arena.

Next is the rodeo portion of the show. Cowboys from the different ranches compete against each other to see who can lasso their horse in the fastest time. The Indians, now each associated with a particular ranch, race in the horse-rescue game (see Figure 23).¹³ The thrilling action as the Indians jump onto moving horses impresses the audience; spectators cheer loudly. In the pony express race, the cowboys vie to deliver the mail in the fastest time — more cheers! The Indians are up next, in a lance-throwing competition. Finally, cowboys, Indians, and audience members all participate in the medicine ball game. The audience members for each ranch pass a ball to one another and then throw it into the arena, where the cowboys and Indians try to get their ranch's ball on top of a skeleton teepee.

The excitement does not end there; there is one last vignette, the attack on the Deadwood stagecoach. Four audience members, along with the announcer, Auguste, are chosen to ride in the stagecoach, which races into the arena.¹⁴ In the blue-lit dark, Indians on horseback and on foot attack the stagecoach and then steal the horses with an incredible display of Roman riding. But it is the James Gang, the comical villains who drop in from above on ropes, who steal the gold. Their plans are thwarted by Buffalo Bill, who arrives with his cavalry just in time to save the day. In the finale, Auguste and Buffalo Bill salute their success in Paris with Champagne. All the great legends of the West — Annie Oakley, Sitting Bull, the “true, wise and brave” Native American Indians, Buffalo Bill, and, representing “the west,” the cowboys — unite as friends and bid farewell to the audience.

America's Wild West “Disneyfied”

According to the press kit, the purpose of the EuroDisney BBWW show is to “provide a genuine old-time experience” of the “heroic conquest of the west.”¹⁵ It thus inscribes anew many romantic and stereotypical ideologies and values of the American Wild West. First, the EuroDisney reproduction carries over much of the discourse of the original BBWW show in that it preserves the story of the conquest of the West and heroic cowboy life on the frontier. As Artz found in his analysis of Disney animated films, the EuroDisney show consists of discourses

that promote individualism and naturalize social hierarchies where heroes are inherently good (2005, 83, 85). The rodeo games highlight the skills and heroic feats of cowboys through demonstrations of “Western skills” such as shooting, roping, and riding. The qualities that made settlement — the “conquering of the West” — possible, such as a sense of adventure, bravery, hard work, and individualism, are implied. Both cowboys and Indians exhibit these skills, but cowboys are positioned as the heroes while Indians are the threat to the frontier, or at least an obstacle to be overcome. That is, Indians are constructed as the Other in opposition to cowboys. Despite being introduced as the stars of the show, the Indians’ stardom lies in the action they contribute to the performance; they are not stars as in heroes of the frontier. Instead, the cowboys are established as the centre of the frontier; they enter the arena first, and audience members are associated with their different ranches. The Indians are peripheral characters inserted into the frontier myth; during the games they become part of the ranches rather than members of tribes.

Second, the historical vignettes highlight the relationship between cowboys and Indians as one of conflict, communicating a sense of danger through re-enactments of “attacks” by Indians. The “Attack on the Settler’s Cabin” and the “Battle of Custer” are not included in the EuroDisney re-production, and the “Attack on a Pony Express Rider” has been transformed into a pony express race.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the spectacular action of the Deadwood stagecoach attack merited its inclusion (although EuroDisney calls their re-enactment a stagecoach race).¹⁷ This vignette, which I have already described, perpetuates the idea that the frontier is a potentially dangerous place and that Indians are a threat. The music also conveys a feeling of danger. When the Indians enter the scene, the accompanying music is suspenseful and threatening, whereas the music for the James Gang is a typical Western gunfight soundtrack. The Indians are not quite constructed as the “bad guys,” as the bandits take that role, but they are constructed as possibly dangerous rivals on the frontier, a threat in America’s West. Moreover, in the rodeo games, cowboys and Indians are never on the same side. That is, they compete only within their own group, except for the medicine ball game at the end.¹⁸ But in the finale all ride in together as friends (see Figure 26).¹⁹ This sanitizes and simplifies the history of and relationships in the “Wild West,” implying some kind of mutual resolution in the end.

The buffalo hunting and herd vignettes are essential for the storyline (see Figures 24 and 25), as they are meant to encapsulate an image of Western life (i.e., America) as consisting of cowboys and Indians and to provide a glimpse into “scenes of pioneer life” and “Indian rituals.”²⁰ However, this Disneyfication of culture and history involves a process of simplification, trivialization, and sanitization (Bryam 2004, 4–9). Fernandez found that films at the Epcot Center in Disney World Florida engage in representations of race through a framework of “simulacrum and disorientation” in order to rewrite history (1995, 236, 242). Giroux contends that the film *Good Morning, Vietnam* sanitizes the politics of war and rewrites the history of the Vietnam War as a trivialized story of rock and roll,

whiteness, and manhood (1995, 51). Similarly, the spectacularization of Nativeness in the EuroDisney BBWW show is clearly problematic because of its simplification of histories and identities. The representations of Native culture, history, and identity are not contextualized. While the herd vignette consists of extensive dialogue, the buffalo hunting vignette uses only yells and chants. According to the press kit, this scene is meant to give us an idea of “Indian rituals”; however, the audience is not privy to the meaning of the rituals because there is no narration. The re-enactment of Westernness and Nativeness in the BBWW show is hence selective and skewed, and identities and America’s history are “Disneyfied.” In sum, performances at this BBWW show do not deal with complex, subtle, and inclusive representations of histories and identities.

A deconstruction of the show’s performances through the lenses of hyperreality and simulacrum provides a starting point for addressing representation of the Other in spectacle. It illuminates the hegemonic reproduction of historic representations and identities, in this case the production of Westernness and Nativeness, but offers little in terms of understanding how representations of Nativeness may be negotiated. The next section takes the analysis of EuroDisney’s BBWW show performances one step further, by considering the notion of authenticity in order to provide a more nuanced examination of how representations of Nativeness are contested in spectacular spaces.

AUTHENTICITY, POWER, KNOWLEDGE

Authenticity is an unachievable goal for tourist sites, according to Handler and Saxton (1998, 253), yet tourist sites consistently employ the language of authenticity. Many scholars have considered authenticity in relation to representations of indigenous peoples in museums and cultural tourism or heritage sites (e.g., Adams 1997; Bruner 2005; Feinberg 2006; Gable and Handler 1996; Handler and Saxton 1988; Levy 2006; MacCannell 1976, 1995; Olsen 2002; Taylor 2001; Tilley 1997). As discussed in the introductory chapter, some scholars have abandoned theorizing authenticity. This calls into question whether we may in fact critique tourist performances in terms of authenticity. As a corrective, MacCannell (1976) focuses instead on “staged authenticity,” maintaining that tourist sites stage a traditional culture that tourists expect to see. However, the notion of staged authenticity underestimates the importance of these spaces as sites of identity politics and negotiation. Following Bruner’s examination (2005c, 149–54) of discourses of authenticity at a New Salem tourist site, I consider the meaning and use of authenticity at EuroDisney’s BBWW show. Moving beyond notions of simulacrum, I illustrate that an examination of how EuroDisney employs discourses of authenticity in this spectacular encounter provides insight into the politics of representation, by revealing the power relationships in terms of authority and knowledge production.

Despite the fact that the BBWW re-enactment cannot represent complex and inclusive histories, EuroDisney claims that its show is authentic.²¹ The first way in which this BBWW show evokes authenticity is in terms of realness, what Bruner calls originality (2005c, 150). EuroDisney seeks to fulfill the desire to gaze upon, learn about, and perhaps even experience Native culture.²² As artistic director Christel Grevy says, “The show is a good opportunity for Europeans to see cowboys and Indians live in person.” That they are *real* cowboys and Indians is implied, and part of the draw.²³ Christel explains further that the Natives are playing themselves and therefore do not need to learn a “role,” only the show. The real and authentic character of the show is emphasized in the press release and on EuroDisney websites promoting the show and parade.

EuroDisney also employs a “verisimilitude” definition of authenticity (Bruner 2005c, 149). That is, when the producers say the show is authentic, they mean that it is a credible reproduction of the BBWW show.²⁴ It also appears real in substance, what Bruner (2005c, 149) calls genuineness, in that they use hand-crafted regalia and paraphernalia made using “Indian methods.”²⁵ EuroDisney prefers to use original materials and designs for the show. According to its artistic director, the success of the show is due to this attention to detail — the authenticity of its production. Native recruiter Carter Yellowbird also notes the importance of “genuineness” authenticity: the EuroDisney show is different from a craft store selling beadwork or feathers made in China or Japan, he says (2005).

The artistic team of the BBWW show has done research, and they feel that this research gives the show validity. Therefore, authentic is also linked to who can authorize or certify the authenticity of the reproduction; that is, the authority to claim authenticity (Bruner 2005c, 150–51). An exhibit at the BBWW show contributes to this sense of authoritative authenticity. As Gable and Handler observed at historic sites, managers evoke authenticity in order to maintain the credibility of their sites and reproductions (1996, 569). In 2004 EuroDisney contacted the BBMG for research information and images to use in an exhibit they were planning to celebrate the centennial of Buffalo Bill’s visit to France (Grevy 2005).²⁶ This now permanent exhibit begins at the queue for the show, with a display of historical posters (see Figure 27).²⁷ A large screen presents a video of historical footage of the original BBWW show, and panels inside the waiting/bar area discuss Buffalo Bill’s visit to Paris, the show, and Native participation. The exhibit serves to give credence to EuroDisney’s BBWW show reproduction and to validate its historical accuracy and authenticity through “museum authority.” As one of the managers says, “It’s more than just a show.”

These four forms of discourses of authenticity — originality, verisimilitude, genuineness, and authoritative — serve to establish the EuroDisney team as the nexus of power and give it the authority to represent histories and identities. However, this authority to define what is or is not authentic does not necessarily go unchallenged. One day while I was there, Native performer Ferlyn Brass, from Key First Nation, Saskatchewan, wore a checked shirt for the show, much to the disapproval of the artistic manager.²⁸ Christel

asked him to change, saying that a Sioux wouldn't have worn a shirt like that. Ferlyn asked how she could know that for sure. She responded that she had been told by the Indians themselves, and had also learned from the research, that Indians would have worn flowered shirts. Ferlyn declared that an Indian could have owned a shirt like that; fur traders wore checked shirts, and he could have traded for it. Christel persisted, "But they are *not Indian shirts* — it is not authentic." When Ferlyn seemed unmoved by her concern, replying that the audience would not know the difference anyway, Christel seemed discouraged. She believes that these small details make the show authentic; moreover, if she let him wear this shirt, others would want to wear different shirts as well.²⁹ The discussion of authenticity faded out with both of them politely laughing it off, and Ferlyn wore his checked shirt that night.

Another performer, Brad, thought the shirt incident was silly (2004, pers. comm). When I asked his opinion about the dilemma, he replied that the artistic team would argue over some details but then allow others to slip by when it was convenient. He pointed to the sashes and belts on the rack in the Native performers' dressing room. "Like these bright colours," he said. "Purple, blue, highlighter yellow . . ." Although great for creating an impact, in his opinion these were not authentic colours.

Discourses of authenticity are central to the EuroDisney BBWW show. By reproducing a Wild West show with attention to authenticity, EuroDisney continues to perpetuate the stereotypes and historical discourses of Otherness and conflict, as discussed in the previous section. While the audience no doubt understands that this is a show, EuroDisney's engagement with multiple discourses of authenticity serves to promote the spectacle as a realistic, authentic reproduction with real cowboys and Indians, giving a sense of truth value to the representations and performances. Beyond the representations reproduced at the BBWW show, discourses of authenticity are enmeshed in a web of power relationships and in the negotiation of knowledge systems. The conversation between Christel and Ferlyn was about more than whether or not a shirt is authentic for the time period. It was also a discussion about the construction of history, identity, and culture and whose authority of different knowledges and historical understandings prevails. In sum, the disagreement over the checked shirt illustrates the power relationships at play when it comes to deciding what is authentic, what is selected for performance, and who has the authoritative knowledge to decide. For these reasons, discourses of authenticity remain an important point for analysis.

Narratives of authenticity recurred in my discussions with managers and Native performers, but, while management spoke openly about authenticity, the performers skirted the issue. This reticence may be due to contract obligations or to their unwillingness to express opinions freely for fear of endangering their jobs. On the other hand, perhaps Native performers do not see authenticity as an issue. I was interested in learning what they thought about the show, its representations and performances, and whether they felt that they were stereotypical; I was also

interested in what their experiences of performing Nativeness in this spectacular encounter were like. The next section investigates how Native performers negotiate performances as meaningful experiences for themselves and how they define Nativeness within the confines of the spectacular.

“BEING NATIVE” IN FRANCE: SELF-REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY, AND AGENCY

I learned to be a businessman, but this has also opened doors for me. I have travelled lots. I can express my culture, tradition, and ways — I keep my identity intact. I learned how to share, to be brothers and sisters with all the cast and with different tribes. This goes beyond being Native American — we are indigenous. We accept everyone with a good heart. But I am protected through the medicine man and my strong tradition. I am still here, still proud, and still live. This is my message here. (Dust 2004)

Because Native culture at EuroDisney is spectacularized with an emphasis on authenticity, Native performers must come to terms with their role as actors playing themselves — or rather, playing Nativeness — in a commercial and spectacular space. What are Native performers’ experiences like? What control do they have over the representations and their experiences in this spectacular encounter? Using interviews with Native performers and EuroDisney managers, I consider the issue of stereotypes and discuss how Native performers attempt to reconcile spectacular representations with their own understandings and experiences of Nativeness. I argue that this spectacular encounter engenders occasions for the evaluation and expression of Nativeness, which is multiple and complex, an intersection of external, personal, tribal, pan-Indian, and experiential understandings. In terms of contesting the representations and performances at EuroDisney, the possibility of Native performers challenging stereotypes within the boundaries of the show itself is limited. However, from a cultural projects view of agency, I suggest that Native performers pursue their own goals and have control over their careers. While some scholars and community members may feel that they are selling out, many of these Native performers feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments and view themselves as role models.

Negotiating Spectacular and Lived Identities

Both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars have been concerned about cultural appropriation of Native people and perpetuation of stereotypes, which are inexorably linked to colonial discourses of Otherness and superiority (e.g., Bellfy 2005; Crosby 1991; Doxtator 1992; Keeshig-Tobias 1997; Lischke and McNab 2005; Yellow Bird 2004). In an article that describes his encounter with a collection of toy cowboys and Indians, Yellow Bird argues that “cowboys and Indians [are] part of the colonial canon asserting white supremacy and Indigenous

inferiority” (2004, 33). As I was interested in the intersection of “authentic re-enactment” at EuroDisney’s BBWW show in terms cultural appropriation, reproduction of stereotypes, and expression and experience of Nativeness in spectacular spaces, I asked Native performers if they felt that the show challenged or perpetuated stereotypes. Many of them stated that the show just follows stereotypes, some made no comment at all, and others offered their own interpretations. It is interesting that for the performers I interviewed, the issue was not so much about changing stereotypes, although some hoped that they were contributing to the cultural education of Native people. Most of the Native performers tolerate the claims of authenticity and representations of Nativeness perpetuated by the show as simply part of show business, and business in general. But the performers I interviewed did grapple with how to reconcile spectacular and lived experiences of Nativeness.

Ernest Rangel, a Navaho from New Mexico who has been employed by EuroDisney for the past four summers, notes that everyone has their own opinion about whether or not the show perpetuates stereotypes, but in his opinion, it probably continues on with stereotypes (2005). Nonetheless, Ernest believes that the show should include real Native Americans, rather than hiring “intermittents” (French actors), in order to be an authentic representation of the historic show. Then it would truly be a real Indian and cowboy show, he says: “Like the show says, ‘real Native Americans.’” Ferlyn Brass also commented on how people want to see the real thing, including real Indians. Having genuine Native performers is important because audience members presume that they *are* real Natives. “[Tourists] ask all kinds of questions,” says Ernest, “like, ‘What tribe are you from? Are you a real Native American? [Are] you a French or German?’ And we’ve got to explain to them” (Rangel 2005). Ernest’s comments hint at the tensions between the reproduction of stereotypes and the issue of inclusion that Native people have with the chance to perform Nativeness. Interestingly, both Ernest and Ferlyn engaged in “originality” discourses of authenticity as discussed earlier, suggesting that there is power behind their Native identity, even if it is for spectacular performances.

Many Native performers acknowledged the complexity of managing various subjectivities, including spectacular identities produced in the show versus personal understandings and experiences of self, that is, with lived experiences of Nativeness. Some performers contemplated the persistence of the “Imaginary Indian” (Francis 1992). Ferlyn, who has performed with EuroDisney for more than four years, points out that Indians at EuroDisney are still “fabricated,” like those in Hollywood movies (Brass 2004). Real Indians, he states, “aren’t like that.” When Native performers go out in public to do promotions for the show, says Ferlyn, they always promote Disney in a positive way, because that is why they are there.

Occasionally the performers engage in other cultural performances at different venues. While they still promote Disney, they have other goals as well. Ferlyn explains the significance of these other performances and encounters:

When we go to schools and different places, [we] show them traditional dance, we show them fancy dancing, we show them the hoop dance, we talk about our ways. . . . And we get to show our culture the way it should be, without the stage. . . . So for me, I feel like I am a teacher at the same time as an artist. (Brass 2004)

Kave Dust agrees with Ferlyn, stating that what we see in cinema, television, and books is “fabricated by [the] white man” (2005). But when he speaks in other spaces, he is representing himself: “When I go out there and do give a talk, it’s the truth, and I can’t always speak for all of the Indians of North America” (Dust 2005). Ferlyn’s and Kave’s comments highlight performers’ attempt to balance their performances of Nativeness as a job (spectacular identity) with expressions of Nativeness as one’s self (lived identity).

Carter Yellowbird, from Hobbema, Alberta, a businessman, past performer, and current Native recruiter for EuroDisney, points out that *stereotype* is not a Native word (2005).³⁰ On the debate, Carter states: “[T]he bottom line is everybody always thinks stereotype and commodification, appropriations . . . I never understood what stereotyping meant.” Concerned about the issue, Carter once asked an elder if his performing at EuroDisney was stereotyping. The elder replied, “Where the heck has everybody been? This is 1900s now [this was in 1998]. Where the heck has everybody been, sleeping?” (Yellowbird 2005). Carter elaborates on the elder’s comments: “You know that’s a re-enactment version of a show. Stick by what you believe in and go with that; show people in France who you are. Go show them your dance, go show them your riding.” The BBWW show is a re-enactment of a historical spectacle, and some Native performers are not so critical about the reproduction of historical stereotypes. Rather, the issue for many of these performers is representing yourself as best you can, in a positive way.

The tension between spectacular and lived expressions of Nativeness is also a concern because, as many of the performers admit, European audiences are generally not educated about Native Americans. Even though this is “just a show,” some of the Native performers rightly point out that it is still important to put yourself into the performance and give it your all, to represent yourself and your community in a positive way — as Kave says, “Keep the heart in the dance.” Some of the performers, including Ferlyn and Kave, are featured in brochures and posters, so how they represent themselves and their community is even more important. Ferlyn states: “I’m across the world and a long way from home and I want to make sure that when I’m done over here, I can actually be proud of what I’ve done over here, what I’ve said — make sure I’ve projected myself properly” (Brass 2004).

Another important issue that arose in interviews when discussing stereotypes is that the BBWW re-enactment produces “Indians of the past” as representative of authentic Indians. The notion of authenticity is often linked to a perceived opposition between traditional and modern subjectivities, a dichotomy

that permeates discourse of authenticity (Jolly 1992; Raibmon 2005, 7). Comments from some Native performers reflect how they have attempted to resolve the tension between spectacular representations of the past and their personal experiences, and between traditional and modern subject positions. On the one hand, their employment at EuroDisney has led some performers to reflect on their ancestors and their experiences. Ferlyn contemplated:

It's not a circus show; it was intended for the performances of the cowboys and Indians, the way life was first like in North America — what cowboys did, what Indians did, at that time in the Plains in the 1800s. I didn't live at that time, but I know what, and how, my [ancestors] not so long ago experienced. So I take those experiences with me, I reflect back. I wonder how, why, where, you know? I'm always growing; even in my own culture, I always grow. I've come to appreciate, in my own time, the things my ancestors did. For me it was even learning from my own ancestors. I mean, I've learned more about my ancestors than I did back home. I really appreciate what they have, what they've done. (Brass 2004)

Wiley Mustus, a musician and performer from Alexis First Nation in Alberta, has been with EuroDisney's BBWW show for more than four years. He states eloquently:

In a lot of ways I'm really grateful because it is like being Indian of the old, because the buffalo is still feeding my family. Like the old warriors used to chase the buffalo and make a hunt. It's an enactment, but we get paid to chase the buffalo. So, in a way, the buffalo is feeding me. (2004)

While a few Native performers have found some meaning in their performances by connecting with their ancestors' history and experiences, re-enactments of the past present a conundrum for others. Kave notes that the show may reproduce "authentic representations" of the past, but they are modern now. This seemingly contradictory view of Nateness resonates in other public spheres of cultural display and performance. Hobbyists, for example, research Native culture and reproduce Natives' material and cultural lives, but these are Indians of the past. Kave recalls: "I said [to them] it's fine if you want to live the way we had a hundred years ago . . . but we're modern" (Dust 2005). What these hobbyists, and perhaps the wider public who view these re-enactments, have trouble understanding is that Native people may continue to have strong connections to "tradition" or traditional knowledge, but they can be modern at the same time. Kave feels pressured to change the stereotypes of romantic Indians from the past, as well as hobbyist and Indianist misrepresentations and misunderstandings about contemporary Native life.

Evaluating and Expressing Identity

Despite the possibility of misrepresentation by EuroDisney, I follow other scholars who critique the simplistic view that performing in spaces of spectacle and cultural display is nothing but an exploitative commercial enterprise (cf. Peers 1999; Tilley 1997; Tuttle 2001). The idea that these are spaces for construction of an “Imaginary Indian,” where Native participants are performing a story created by the dominant society, does not completely explain Native performers’ experiences of identity or why they participate in these spectacular spaces (Nicks and Phillips 2007). Moreover, the performance of Nativeness is more complex than a simple dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic, or traditional and modern, perceptions of Nativeness. In his study on cultural tourism in Vanuatu, for example, Tilley maintains that “by virtue of the practice of objectifying culture in the show people are beginning to learn that they have to *negotiate and transform* it” (1997, 86). Rather than being a representation of habitus, it provides a space for “conscious choice, contextualizing practices, modes of representation, rationalization and justification” — that is, self-reflexivity (Tilley 1997, 87). My research indicates that spectacular performance in this international contact zone leads performers to reflect on and evaluate Nativeness (cf. Buddle 2004; Herle 1994). I further suggest that this self-reflexivity represents Native performers’ attempt to wield the power to construct and represent Nativeness.

When I asked Native performers how their performances may contribute to what it means to be a Native person, the interviews revealed that performers view identity as a multiple expression of tribal and indigenous identities, as well as being based on experiential criteria such as dancing and riding skills and traditional knowledge. First, identity encompasses experiential or personal notions of Nativeness. Many of the performers state plainly, “We are real Indians.” What we do comes naturally for us, says Ernest Rangel (2005). When I asked Wiley Mustus if he felt that he was performing himself or playing some other role, he answered that it is important to be true to yourself: “It’s just me — 110, 115 percent me” (2004). Ferlyn echoes these sentiments: “The best part [of what I do] is that I get to be Ferlyn Brass every time, just the way I am without my regalia on, or with my regular clothes on. [But] when I put on my regalia, and I stand up in front of a bunch of kids, it makes me feel good” (2004). Ernest similarly expresses that it is important to be yourself at EuroDisney, not only for the performers but also for those back in the community:

The best part [about working at EuroDisney] would be being who you are. And try to bring back what we do back home, [what] we get to do here. Our cultures are so long[?]. The young generation doesn’t know how to speak their own language. That’s pretty sad, and you know, I was always raised traditional . . . so this is like to have kind of an opportunity . . . That’s the best part about it — being who you are. (Rangel 2005)

Thus, as Peers discovered for Native performers at living history sites, Native performers at EuroDisney feel that they are just being themselves, “playing themselves” (Peers 1999). Even though the performances involve reproduction of stereotypes, they also draw on personal understandings of Nateness. Significantly, Native performers also invoke originality discourses of authenticity. Therefore, besides the importance of being yourself, I suggest that Native performers’ use of originality discourses represents their attempt to obtain power and claim authority in this context.

Second, performers identify certain skills as being representative of Nateness, in particular, riding skills. This type of ability makes performing at EuroDisney second nature, according to those I interviewed. Ferlyn Brass saw an advertisement for EuroDisney on the news and thought, “Yeah, I can do that . . . I can ride” (2005). Wiley Mustus saw a poster for the auditions and thought, “Hey, I can ride a horse. Why not?” (2004). Tim Bruised Head (2005), who grew up on both the Peigan Nation and Blood Nation reserves in Alberta, was also experienced with horses, which he supplied for rodeos and shows.³¹ Many of the Native performers declare that working in the BBWW show is not really work but rather an extension of their skills and knowledge, of what they normally do back home. Kave Dust states concisely: “This isn’t really work; it’s hard play” (Sept. 24, 2004, pers. comm.). Ernest Rangel also draws on his personal experiences, having worked with horses all his life, in every job he has held (2005). But while many Native performers are experienced with horses, performing at EuroDisney requires a different approach. Ernest regards some of the differences between riding back home and riding in the show as a matter of different knowledge systems, but understands this as part of the job: “[I]f you’re riding the horse wrong, they’ll tell you how to ride it. I just feel like saying, ‘I’m the more experienced rider,’ but I just say, you know, that you’re paid to do what you’re hired for.” Hence, not only do many of the performers recognize riding expertise as a valuable skill, this expertise also reflects their distinctive knowledge base, an important point I will return to below.³²

Other performers also emphasized that traditional knowledge and upbringing are significant aspects of identity that permeate one’s performances and experiences. Kave Dust cites his experiences with horses and dancing, as well as the stories his mother told him, as significant experiences that made him who he is today (2004). When I asked how he came to be a performer at EuroDisney, he replied by describing his experiences growing up, which prepared him and led him along this path:

As a child, my imagination flourished. I would create stories and adventures. When I was very young, maybe four or six, my father brought home two horses for my sisters. My brother taught me how to ride it, how to be strong. I rode a lot; my riding skills were natural. He showed me how to ride, hunt, and dance. Then from about ten to eighteen years of age, I learned more about my tradition from my father and brother. They took

pride in dancing. They would wear bells on their ankles, and it made a sound like thunder or horses galloping when they danced. They would stomp their feet to the beat of the drum and strut proudly, like a rooster and a big warrior. The Crow traditional style of dancing is unique. It is like a rooster: we stand proud, straight, tall. We wear bright colours to show this; we wear our tobacco pouch with a mirror inside. I was taught to dance, and taught my tradition through the powwow lifestyle. These experiences make me who I am today, and make me strong.

The other influence was my mother, who would tell me stories; I learned from her. The elders at the Sun Dance tell stories like the one about Plays-with-His-Face. He fasted and received many visions and gifts. The Sioux came to get their land, but the Crow stood their ground. Plays-with-His-Face sang a song and kept changing his face; and then when the right song came, he rushed the Sioux camp by himself with one lance. He was brave; he had a powerful vision. These stories give me strength to be who I am — a Crow warrior.

A few weeks after fasting for four days and three nights, I did a re-enactment of Custer's battle; I was one of the riders. A man saw us; he wanted ten warriors or chiefs for a show. I was excited, "intoxicated with the possibility." I had never been off the reservation. We would take our own costumes and horses. There was a Sun Dance in the meantime; I received a vision of going somewhere. There were auditions seeking Crow for [the] BBWW show in 1992. I wasn't sure if I wanted to go, but my friends brought me to the audition. I danced my best; I was a warrior, proud. I was hired!

All this led me to this path. I feel that I have more power, and I am lucky But I am protected through the medicine man and my strong tradition. I am still here, still proud, and still live. This is my message here. (Dust 2004)³³

Wiley Mustus also hints at the skills, background, and attitude one needs to be successful at EuroDisney. He points out that the job demands a certain type of person with different skills and the whole scope of capabilities (2004). He explains further:

There are some who excel in everything, you know. And usually those are the guys that have the most fun out there . . . we love the show. Some of them are kind of narrow; their idea[s] about the show are not as grand. But most of us really enjoy ourselves. I mean, you see the difference in the performance. (Mustus 2004)

By "narrow," Wiley implies that some performers do not perform at full capacity; those who can ride and dance, and have the cultural background to support their performances, have more fun and put on a better show. Kave's and Wiley's

comments further illustrate that Native performers consider riding and dancing to be important skills that are markers of Nativeness, and how these skills may connect with traditional upbringing and knowledge.

These aspects of Nativeness — traditional background and knowledge (of culture, dancing, singing, and riding) — are also considered essential in terms of being successful in the show. When I asked Wiley what he would look for if he was a recruiter for EuroDisney, he outlined the scope of skills and background that make a good and successful performer abroad.

First of all, you have to be athletic. You definitely have to know how to ride a horse . . . dancing helps. A little bit of powwow background helps. And you have to have the look for sure. [Also,] someone who is going to go the long distance, the long haul. Someone who is not scared of different horizons . . . willing to apply themselves for the long term, stay on track, and stand by their guns. It takes a lot of courage to do what we do.
(Mustus 2004)

EuroDisney looks for good riders willing to work in France, but Carter Yellowbird (2005) believes that the company should also take an in-depth look at potential performers' work history to determine if they can succeed at this challenge: "Are they capable of leaving the community? Are they capable . . . of working in Europe and being ambassadors for our people?"³⁴ According to Carter, good performers possess not only riding skills but also a strong cultural upbringing so that they can represent Native people positively.

As the above statements indicate, a good performer has the riding and dancing skills necessary to perform in the show, skills that are inexorably connected to traditional knowledge and upbringing. By positioning these skills and forms of knowledge as important to their success, these Native performers privilege Native skills and knowledge as sources of authority and power in the context of performing in spectacle, thereby challenging the "authoritative authenticity" that EuroDisney asserts through its claims of historical accuracy and its museum exhibit.

Finally, Native performers connect to both tribal and broader indigenous or pan-Indian identities. The performers come from different First Nations and tribes, and they maintain their local identities through both performances and personal acts. In the show, for example, Kave Dust acknowledges his tribe and lineage as a Crow of the Greasemouth clan. He proudly declares that it is both his privilege and his right to assert his "Crownness" (Dust 2004). We discussed some of the elements of his identity that stem from the paint he wears for his performances and his dancing to the crest on his business card. The paint colours and patterns he wears are from his ancestors, and he feels he has the right to use them in this context (Dust 2004). Kave notes, however, that at times he feels uncomfortable having sacred items around as part of the show; eagle feathers, for example, should be handled with care and respect, not carelessly thrown around

(Dust 2005). Ernest Rangel says about the diversity of representation: “You know, there’s different tribes here, so they do their own sacred thing — dancing and singing and stuff like that” (2005). For the buffalo dance, he explains, they all do their own dances from the different tribes. Performers abroad also maintain some personal spiritual practices associated with their tribal identities. Kave explains that maintaining some traditional practices gives him strength: “I pray and smudge to protect myself, and I have my background and strength behind me. I am here, I see beyond the commercial. I am proud and have tradition” (Dust 2004). They may be a commodity, declares Carter Yellowbird, but EuroDisney respects their culture: “We’d go about our sweetgrass or our prayer, singing and drumming, and they supplied that as much as they can. They allowed us to, you know, practice whatever . . . I felt they treated me with respect” (2005). Performers therefore express their local/tribal affiliations of identity through performance of specific tribal dances and by maintaining their spiritual practices outside of the show.

Native performers also self-identify as Native North American. Travelling abroad has meant breaking a barrier, moving beyond local and tribal identity to a broader sense of being “indigenous.” Kave Dust affirms: “We are all Native American. I am Greasemouth clan, Crow, Native American. I have broken the barrier. [There is] a sense of global identity . . . we are indigenous” (2004). Ferlyn Brass proclaims: “It is a melting pot over here — Natives are from all over North America” (2004). Kave does not dissociate himself from his local and tribal ties; his comments illustrate that identity is a multifarious experience and that engaging in an international economy of cultural performance facilitates simultaneous expression of multiple identities, including broader categories such as indigenous.

To summarize, the performance of Nativeness in spectacular spaces engenders a process of external and self-identification in which the evaluation and expression of Native identity is multiple and overlapping. Performers highlight their status as “real Indians” and their skills and knowledge as important aspects of their identity and success. In emphasizing these attributes, Native performers are, I suggest, challenging the authority and power established by EuroDisney to define authentic Nativeness. In addition, Native performers reconcile spectacular and lived identities by finding meaning in their performance as it connects to their own personal understandings and experiences of Nativeness. Moving beyond arguments that centre exclusively on simulacrum, commercialization, and reproduction of stereotypes, attention to the various meanings and interpretations of Nativeness in this context demonstrates the multiplicity and complexity of Native identity and the negotiation of power in spectacular encounters.

Agents and Agency: The Business of Performing Nativeness

If Native performers are active agents in this contact zone, what does this agency consist of? Native performers’ skills and knowledge related to Nativeness (such as dancing, riding, clothing, and traditional knowledge) are “valuable

commodities,” as Carter Yellowbird so eloquently puts it. However, performing Nativeness does not necessarily entail only appropriation and commercialization. In fact, the Native performers I interviewed do not perceive performing Nativeness as selling out (cf. Myers 1994); rather, they have their own cultural projects. They view their accomplishments with pride and see themselves as role models. I suggest, then, that Native performers’ agency as cultural projects is evident in the way they talk about their experiences: in terms of opportunity, accomplishment, and pride.

All of the performers I interviewed acknowledge that working at EuroDisney has offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity (see Figure 28).³⁵ This fact points to the conclusion that, even within the constraints placed on them by EuroDisney scripts and representations, Native performers underline their agency of cultural projects in this context. Ferlyn Brass says about his experiences at EuroDisney: “[It] is a good place to build confidence and make a few dollars and show yourself and appreciate what you do as an entertainer for the individuals that come out to see you” (2004). Tim Bruised Head states that he took the opportunity because it was “a chance of a lifetime” (2005). Carter Yellowbird likewise believes that EuroDisney is a good opportunity: “[If they can] stick it out and be positive ambassadors for our people, then I think that’s a positive” (2005). He relates how, for people coming from a small community, working for Disney is a big deal and a phenomenal, lucrative prospect, but that it is important to approach it as a business opportunity and be professional. Still, Native performers must make compromises; Ernest Rangel insightfully notes: “You just got to learn to work with them [EuroDisney]. That’s the bottom line” (2005). Even though Native performers work under terms set by EuroDisney, Carter emphasizes how different it is from the 1800s. Now there is more control in the participation, he says (Yellowbird 2005).³⁶

As a recruiter, Carter exercises an even greater degree of agency in his role as a businessman. “Buffalo Bill back then was a businessman. I’m the businessman today,” he declares. “Now they’re coming to me. I recruit the Natives, I set up the auditions” (Yellowbird 2005). Carter wields power in this context by being able to choose performers he feels will be appropriate for the show at EuroDisney. There is also power in being able to provide opportunities for other Native people. Carter optimistically points out that Native people are adapting and changing and moving into the business realm (Yellowbird 2005). According to him, working at EuroDisney reflects the positive changes occurring for some Native people in general. In short, Native performers exert agency in this context by taking advantage of performance opportunities.

In addition, performing at EuroDisney has led to other opportunities for self-representation and other economic ventures. Ernest, Ferlyn, and Kave acknowledge that there are many Native North Americans in France and the rest of Europe working in a variety of shows other than EuroDisney. According to them, they go there to express their culture and build confidence, as well as to establish careers as performers, entertainers, musicians, and/or dancers.

According to Kave, a law in France states that he can freely express his culture outside of his contract obligations to EuroDisney (Dust 2005). Kave performs in other “Indian shows,” which he clearly differentiates from powwows and the trick-riding kind of show such as EuroDisney’s (Dust 2005). These Indian shows, he explains, involve performances of self-expression as Native people then and now; he wears his regalia and dances, including the hoop dance. While I was there in 2004, Kave performed at a corporate function, and on my second visit, in 2005, he was about to depart for Italy to perform in an Indian show. He was also involved in film projects about Native culture and EuroDisney with Blu Claire Productions. Some of these ventures “go sour,” says Kave, but he is not discouraged from pursuing opportunities that come his way (Dust 2004).³⁷ Back home, Wiley Mustus was first lead singer in a powwow drum circle; now he is pursuing his music career on the side. On my first day there, his CD was playing in the Native performers’ change room, and Wiley was booked to play at a venue near Paris with his band. Tim Bruised Head similarly hopes to further his career: “This is kind of a break for me, [a] foot in the door for other opportunities. I can always use this as a tool for other options like movies and other stuff like that” (2005). Some performers such as Ferlyn, Wiley, and Kave are also using this opportunity abroad to perform at schools in the hope of educating students, or at least challenging stereotypes.

Native performers also use their pan-Indian identity as Native North American strategically in order to facilitate these other opportunities and pursue their own goals and careers abroad. Audiences are not usually familiar with Native American culture beyond what appears in popular culture. Many performers note that, in general, the public knows about the Sioux or the Navaho, but not about the diversity of tribes and First Nations throughout North America. Kave Dust acknowledges that American audiences would quickly associate them with Plains Indians or Sioux, but he is not sure if European audiences could differentiate the tribes, or if that even matters (2004). For this and other reasons, performers use the recognition of Plains Indian imagery in order to open doors for them and, when the doors are open, perhaps to educate the public about who they are today.

To recap my argument thus far, EuroDisney has opened up new opportunities for some performers to pursue specific to their own goals and expression of Nativeness, outside what was available on reservations and reserves. I suggest that Native performers’ agency in terms of cultural projects, therefore, is evident in the *opportunities* this experience provides — the ability to control their work life and economic status as well as a chance to travel and pursue future career goals — rather than the degree of control they have over the show’s content and representations. Notably, the performance of Nativeness in other spaces, outside the EuroDisney context, is more representative of contemporary Native life and identity.

Some scholars may critique Native performers’ participation in an international market of cultural performance as evidence of their conversion to

capitalism and neo-liberal ideals of individual success, but this does not diminish the importance for them of their goals and accomplishments. It is important to recognize that these performers have their own “cultural projects,” after Ortner (2006), which involve negotiating their own interests and goals within their contemporary context — the performance of Nativeness in spectacular spaces. Hence, the pursuit of cultural projects is nonetheless agentive. As outlined in the introductory chapter, an investigation of agency involves the interplay of two interrelated modalities: power and cultural projects (Ortner 2001, 77). Furthermore, there is a tendency to view Native people as living “traditional” lifestyles, not engaged with modernity. Raibmon recounts in the introduction to her excellent book the public’s outrage at the Makah’s use of modern technology for their whale hunt. The reaction was based on “historically entrenched ideas about Indian authenticity,” but for the Makah whalers, the hunt was as much about the present as it was about tradition and identity (Raibmon 2005, 2, 3). For Native performers, engaging in performance in this spectacular encounter is similarly as much about contemporary Nativeness as it is about traditional ideologies.

Finally, rather than ruminating about appropriation of Native culture, the Native performers I interviewed view their experiences with a sense of pride that stems from their work at EuroDisney and their experiences abroad, and see themselves as role models. As Peers observed, while living history sites are controlled by the dominant society, performances in these spaces also allow Native participants to communicate pride and validate their identity (1999, 44). Ernest Rangel affirms that his community is generally supportive of its young members working abroad. Leaving home and what you know is difficult, he says, but the risk also provides opportunities (2005). Ernest believes that to make a better life, he had to move on and try something different (i.e., EuroDisney). “This job here really changed my life,” he asserts. “I had to make decisions on my own.” Ferlyn Brass explains that working at EuroDisney gives you a chance to prove yourself: “You want to prove to yourself that you can do more for your people — here. This is a trial for us, but it is actually for everybody who comes to Europe to try this. If you can do this . . . then you can basically make it anywhere” (2004). While the Native community’s view is not necessarily homogeneous, all the performers I interviewed express a similar sense of pride in their accomplishments. As Tilley observes, cultural tourism may be viewed as a space that reduces culture to an “exoticized spectacle” and reproduces colonial relationships, but performing may also be a “matter of personal pride and prestige in the presentation of traditional culture” (1997, 82).

Not only are their families proud of them, but many of the Native performers see themselves as role models for their relatives and communities back home. Apart from being actors, therefore, these performers are also ambassadors (Peers 1999, 47). Ferlyn Brass states that some Native people on the reserve are “trapped in the cycle” as a result of the reservation system and the turmoil

inflicted on them by colonialism, but slowly that cycle is ending (2004). He hopes to have played a role in trying to break that cycle.

We're given the opportunity to come here and try it, build it, see a different part of something and take your experiences back. That's helping . . . especially breaking the cycle. That helps because then they see a difference from what they seen back home [i.e., see what is possible]. They have a new idea . . . That brings up a lot of people, especially people that have been doing nothing for maybe ten, fifteen years, maybe going to school, but nothing really, just hanging out. At least you have someone like this, to talk about, you know. (2004)

Wiley Mustus similarly hopes that his successes offer hope and inspiration: "Maybe there are some little kids who are watching me right now who say, 'Yeah, I want to do something like that.' . . . I want to be a role model for [my kids]" (2004). Wiley hopes that his children follow his example: "Survival! Ultimately, yeah, [I want my kids] to be able to adapt, look around and say, 'Okay, I can do this.'"

Furthermore, the recognition and attention that performers receive in Europe in comparison with North America is positive. In Europe they are celebrities; people are interested in who they are and what they are about. Carter Yellowbird explains that in Europe performers speak with pride about themselves because of this recognition and admiration:

In Europe they're so open in talking about being Native. But these people [Europeans], they appreciate who I am, you know, they talk very positively about it . . . That's the difference . . . Yes, they're very, very honoured, very honoured, to be talking to Natives in Europe, you know, because they've never seen Natives. They're [the performers] big, they feel very powerful. You can't get that here [in Canada]. (2005)

According to Carter, this experience contrasts with the way Canadians view Native people. "But I can't talk like that over here," he says. "I think that a lot of people here see it as . . . There's not too many Natives walking down the road. It's, you know . . . on skid row, and that's how they stereotype Natives." This type of stereotype concerns Carter more than the Hollywood stereotype. But he does not dismiss the reality of the challenges and issues that Native people face: poverty, homelessness, land claims, and constitutional rights (Yellowbird 2005). However, in Europe the performers do not have these challenges; all they know is that people come to see them, and they are proud. Over here in Canada, Carter says, it is a challenge. Generally, Native performers speak about pride, accomplishments, and being role models as opposed to thinking about spectacular spaces as sites for appropriation and commercialization of Nateness, even if this is the other side of the same coin.

Although Native performers also construct social meaning and exert agency in this space, stereotypes and prejudices persist. In our follow-up interview in 2005, Kave Dust divulged more of his feelings about working abroad and his encounters with racism. After living in France for more than ten years, Kave has grown weary of the politics of working at EuroDisney. Managers are in control; they use the Native performers to promote the show, but performers have no input on EuroDisney's approach (Dust 2005). Moreover, Kave feels that prejudices still exist. He told me how a security guard would not let him into work when he forgot his identity card, even though he had been working there for several years (Dust 2005). While Kave affirms that performing is fun and "not work," the underlying tensions of racism make it "hard work mentally." He declares: "Mickey Mouse is not a mouse. He's a rat, I'm telling you." While Kave learned to be a businessman as a result of working for EuroDisney, and despite the status of being a "Native star" abroad, there are still challenges to being a modern Native person living and performing in France.

SUMMARY

The Eurodisney BBWW show is an example of what Baudrillard and Eco describe as simulacrum and hyperreality. Through this lens, I argue that the production of Westernness and Nativeness is both "Disneyfied" and simplified, and that the construction of cowboys and Indians is based on a dichotomy of identities and on the notion of conflict. While simulacrum provides a useful lens for deconstructing representations, I suggest that an examination of the use and meaning of authenticity, after Bruner (2005c), offers a more nuanced analysis of the negotiation of power and knowledge construction. To gain insight on Native experiences and perspectives, I turned to questions of identity and the reproduction of stereotypes, which revealed the tensions, contradictions, and negotiations of performances and meanings of Nativeness in this spectacular encounter. Important issues that emerged from interviews with Native performers about stereotypes include the tension between spectacular and lived experiences of Nativeness and the control and authority to define and represent Nativeness. I show how performance in spectacle engenders a space for the evaluation and reflection of Nativeness, which is a multiple expression of externally and self-defined criteria such as personal skills and traditional knowledge, as well as local/tribal and pan-Indian identities. Performers evoke authenticity discourses to privilege these expressions of identity and knowledges, challenging EuroDisney's power to define Nativeness. Native performers generally view their job as an opportunity to control their work life and pursue their own goals, demonstrating agency in the form of cultural projects. They also view their performances with pride and consider themselves to be role models, revealing that there is more to this experience than simply the spectacular.

Figure 20: Entrance to Buffalo Bill's Wild West show



Figure 21: The Cowboys Representing Their Ranches



Figure 22: Buffalo Bill Meets Sitting Bull



Figure 23: Indians Jump onto Moving Horses in the “Rescue Game”



Figure 24: The Buffalo Hunt Vignette, the Buffalo Dance

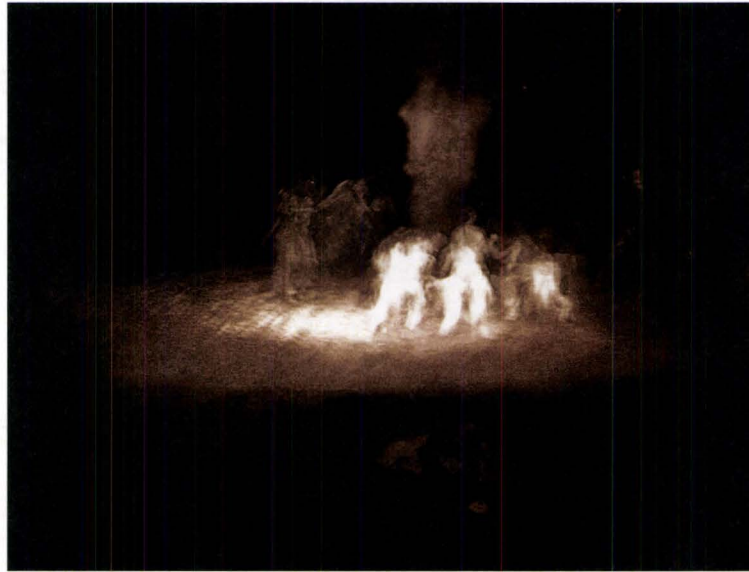


Figure 25: Cowboys in The Herd Vignette

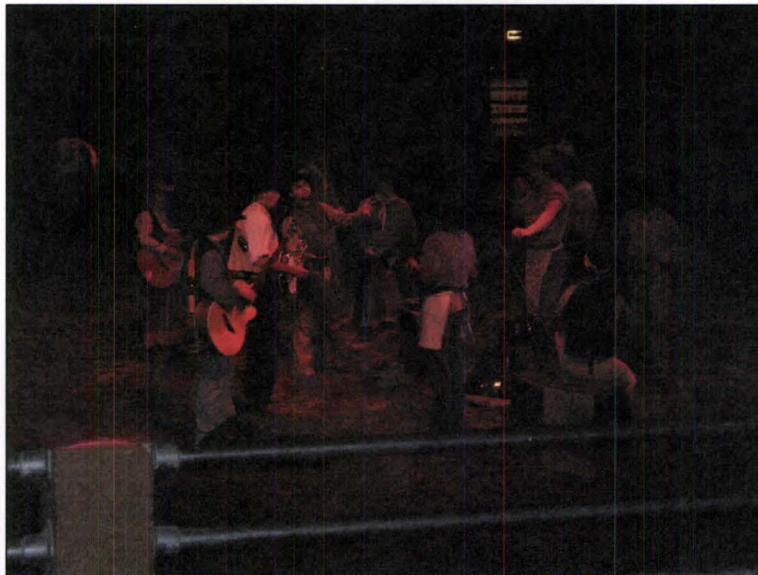


Figure 26: Cowboys and Indians

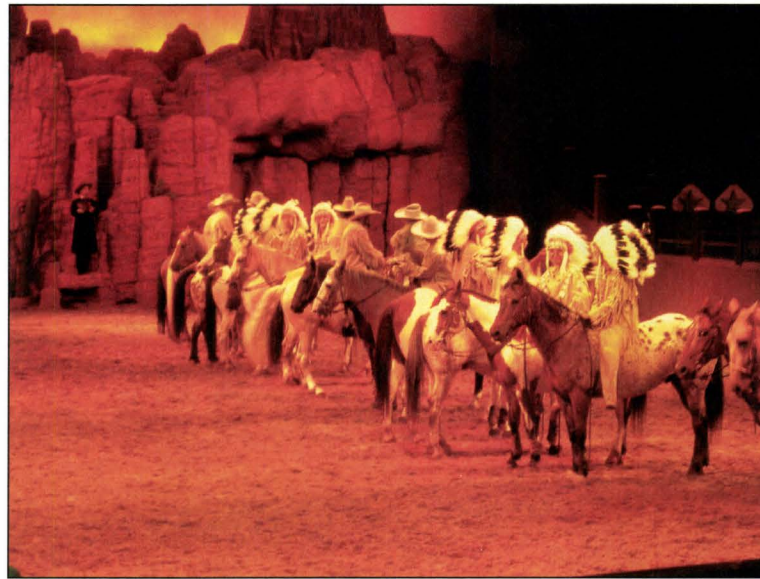


Figure 27: EuroDisney's exhibit of the BBWW show begins at the cue



Figure 28: Some Native Performers from EuroDisney
William, Tim, Jimmy, Linda, Kave, Jimeno



CHAPTER 7

COMMEMORATING THE WILD WEST IN AMERICA: WESTERN HISTORY — NATIVE IDENTITY

Our two-propeller plane from Denver approaches the small airport of Cody, Wyoming; I am awestruck by the landscape. The mountain profile cuts into the bright blue sky. Green nature contrasts with the red, dry earth, conveying a sense of the rugged life in Wyoming. The landscape promises opportunities for Western experiences and encounters with wildlife. (In fact, I spotted a herd of wild horses running high up on the mountain hills while exploring Yellowstone Park one day.) The lady beside me, a Cody local, says, “It’s something, isn’t it? Very unique.” Indeed it is. Certainly other American towns claim to epitomize “the West.” But in this moment it was very clear, this is the Wild West.¹

In this chapter I investigate how Westernness and Nativeness are constructed by and through re-enactments and performances at Buffalo Bill Days (BBD) in Sheridan, Wyoming. Following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998, 1995) and Bruner’s (2005) work on heritage and narrative, I argue that the production of Westernness and Nativeness at Wild West show re-enactments is a complex process of inclusion and exclusion in which narratives are constructed and performed as a reflection of the negotiation of power. In the first part of the chapter, I demonstrate how the production of BBD involves a process of “heritage-making” whereby representations and narratives of history and identity are constructed and linked to metanarratives of Westernness and Buffalo Bill. However, BBD is “a site of struggle” over interpretations and meanings in which multiple narratives compete in a dialogical interplay (Bruner 2005b, 128). The second part of the chapter illustrates how Native performers at BBD’s Wild West show challenge official narratives of Westernness by presenting a contemporary Native identity based on powwow music, dance, and regalia, which I argue demonstrates performative agency.

BUFFALO BILL DAYS IN SHERIDAN, WYOMING

Buffalo Bill Days first took place in 2003 to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Sheridan Inn, a national historic landmark (see Figure 29).² The Sheridan Heritage Center Inc. (SHC) hired the Great American Wild West Show, a travelling variety show complete with all the essential Western and Indian acts — a spectacular production. In 2004 the organizers hired a Denver, Colorado, group called the Westernaires, a non-profit group that teaches disadvantaged kids to ride and perform. They also put on a good show, with stunts, horse drills, whip cracking, an Indian scene — they did it all. In 2005 the SHC decided to take the

reins and try something different. Rather than contract a complete Wild West production, they hired individual acts from all over the United States. They found these acts through contacts established at previous shows in Sheridan and through Wayne Bauman, a former Buffalo Bill performer at BBD. Whether these performers knew the history of Buffalo Bill or Sheridan was not important, but the SHC did want to hire quality acts that incorporated a historical component. Buffalo Bill Days is more than just a Wild West show; it is a complete “Western experience.” The weekend events include a historical ball, a birthday celebration complete with chuckwagon barbecue and birthday cake, a Pony Express re-enactment, a historical parade, and finally, the Wild West show.³

On the first evening of events, locals and tourists alike dress in period costume to join in the re-enactment of the grand opening of the Sheridan Inn. Buffalo Bill was a part-owner of the inn from 1893 to 1902 (Atkins 1994, 15). In a re-creation of the events of 1893, the participants promenade along a walkway to the entrance of the inn’s ballroom, where Buffalo Bill greets his guests individually and attendees join in a Virginia reel. Now that the mood is set, the fun continues. The next day, the New Sheridan Band plays festive music from the era, and the Buffalo Bill’s Cowboy Band entertains as visitors stroll about the inn and eat birthday cake. Pistol Packin’ Paula (Paula Saletnik), who during other BBD events also plays Annie Oakley, demonstrates her gun-twirling and whip-cracking skills while Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok exhibit the “spirit of the West,” twirling their guns and mingling with guests. Children and adults alike wait expectantly for the Pony Express riders to arrive and take their postcards, stamped at the inn with an official U.S. Buffalo Bill Days stamp, to the post office. Buffalo Bill is there to insure that the post arrives and leaves safely. Other events in the town square include a Buffalo Bill look-alike contest. The afternoon events culminate in a historical parade featuring Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Pistol Packin’ Paula, horse demonstrations, Kearney’s Frontier Regulars and Company I U.S. Volunteers, horse-drawn wagons and stagecoaches, and Native Americans — they are all there (see Figure 30.1 and 30.2)!⁴ The climax of BBD is the Wild West show that evening at the fairgrounds. Although Buffalo Bill performed in Sheridan with the Sells-Floto circus in 1914, Sheridan’s Wild West show is not based on any specific year. Rather, it is inspired by historic shows and includes various of their features, including a grand entry, trick shooting and roping, gun spinning, Roman riding and other displays of horsemanship, an attack on a Pony Express rider, and an attack on a stagecoach.

Despite the recurring appearance of Buffalo Bill, the celebrations are not about the man himself. Edre Maier, manager of the Sheridan Inn and executive director of the SHC, states that the goal of BBD is to increase interest in the inn and boost support for restoration projects (Maier, June 24, 2005, pers. comm.). She says that Buffalo Bill is very marketable, and that his celebrity status combined with heritage tourism will bring attention to the inn and more generally to the history of their Western town. BBD incorporates a “living history”

component (re-enactment) with a heritage site (the inn) as a way of marketing both Sheridan's history and the inn. While the main goal is to raise the profile of the inn, the SHC is also commemorating Westernness through its heritage tourism strategy.

Heritage: Metanarratives and Making the Past Valuable

The politics of representation and identity occur in spaces such as tourism — sites for the construction and consumption of narratives about histories and identities enacted through performance. These cultural performances are occasions in which we define ourselves and dramatize our history (MacAlloon 1984, 1). After Bruner (2005) and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995), this section shows that BBD involves a process of “heritage-making” whereby official representations and narratives of history and identity are produced and linked to metanarratives of Westernness and Buffalo Bill.

Heritage literally means something that may be inherited; it is something of value related to the past, a tradition or thing that is passed down from previous generations (Concise Oxford Dictionary). It may be tangible (natural or manmade) or intangible (cultural), but we often think of heritage in terms of sites or places. Although heritage may be linked to places of significance, their significance or “value” is produced. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has argued, heritage is a mode of cultural production (1998; 1995, 370). In Sheridan, a series of narratives is endorsed to produce the inn as a valuable site. The building is significant in terms of architecture — it is known for its incredible sixty-nine gables — as well as a site of many firsts: the first inn built in Sheridan and the first building in town to have electricity, running water, and a telephone (Atkins 1994, 10). In addition, many famous people have stayed at the inn, including Ernest Hemingway; President Herbert Hoover; Vice President Charles Dawes; generals Pershing, Carrington, Howard, and Wood; humorist Will Rogers; artist Charlie Russell; and comedian Bob Hope, adding to the value of the site.⁵ That the inn is also designated a national historic landmark further increases its significance.

Because heritage is produced, it follows that it involves processes whereby symbols of history are selected, remade, and performed. Schouten writes: “Heritage is history processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing into a commodity” (Tivors 2002, 188). The success of BBD, I propose, lies in the SHC's ability to connect the inn and local narratives and experiences with what Bruner (2005a, 3) calls metanarratives, in this case larger conceptual metanarratives of Westernness and Buffalo Bill. These metanarratives “are not only structures of meaning but [also] structures of power” (Bruner 2005a, 21). But, as I will demonstrate in the next section, “official” metanarratives are not hegemonic.

Through the cultural production and performance of this heritage site, the SHC constructs the inn as a site that is representative of Westernness more

broadly and Buffalo Bill more specifically. First, the SHC connects the inn with the marketability of Buffalo Bill and his spectacular Wild West show. Buffalo Bill travelled to many towns across the country, so what is so special about Sheridan? The key to the Sheridan Inn's heritage narrative is to claim Buffalo Bill as one of their own. In this case, Sheridan is linked to Buffalo Bill through the heritage site itself. The inn was one of his many business ventures, and he auditioned acts for his Wild West show there (Atkins 1994, 29). Even though this was but a small aspect of the inn's long history, Buffalo Bill, and his connection to Sheridan's past through the inn, is the heritage produced for commemoration at BBD.

Second, the myths and narratives associated with Buffalo Bill — frontier life, the West, the Pony Express and horsemanship, the Indian wars — may be readily incorporated into existing metanarratives promoting Wyoming as the state that epitomizes Westernness (although it is not the only state to make this claim). The Buffalo Bill Historical Center in the town of Cody, Wyoming, advertises itself as the cradle of Western history; Buffalo Bill was instrumental in establishing Cody in 1895. Sheridan is also promoted as a place where one can see and experience Western heritage. Visitors can experience Western living at Eaton's Dude Ranch or purchase Western heritage in the tourist shops and Western wear and supply stores throughout the town. King Saddlery sells saddles and ropes but is also home to a museum that showcases a collection of cowboy memorabilia, including saddles, spurs, guns, animal trophy heads, historical posters, other Western paraphernalia, and Indian artefacts (see Figure 31).⁶ One can learn about cowboy and ranching history, as well as the history of the Sheridan WYO Rodeo, at several county museums and historic houses. BBD events connect these metanarratives of Westernness to the Sheridan Inn.

Place also factors into the cultural production of heritage. Sheridan as a place is made up of all things Western, including the inn, which cumulate in the production of heritage and link to metanarratives of Westernness. Edre Maier observes:

The nice thing about Sheridan is that you got all the pieces here; it's just a matter of contracting people and putting them together and seeing how it works. We've got the buffalo, we've got the longhorn, we've got the Indians, we've got rope — we've got everything here; it's just putting it together. Fort Phil Kearney [site of the Fetterman battle] is also nearby and is something we could recreate in the show. (2005)⁷

Place is also significant because it connects with personal experiences. While Schouten's definition does not account for the significance of experiences and memories in the production of heritage, Tivers argues that

we live in a dramatized, or "performative," society, where leafing through experience is given more credence than learning through cognition . . . people are drawn into an experience of heritage which may have meaning

for them . . . and which may contribute to a sense of identity and a better understanding of society (2002, 199)

Handler and Saxton similarly observe that the goal of living history sites is to re-experience history through holistic historical narratives that provide access to those lives and experiences re-enacted (1988, 251). Western life, ranching, and rodeos are all part of local people's memories in Sheridan. Edre Maier declares: "Everything happened within a hundred miles of here and you can touch people whose grandparents were involved, and you can do it right here in history" (2005). Some citizens have more specific connections with and memories of Buffalo Bill and stories of the West. Tammy Burr's grandfather travelled and performed with the BBWW show, even going to Europe with it (Burr 2005). Tammy also feels a certain affinity for Calamity Jane, who stayed with some of her relatives when she was ill (Burr 2005). This has motivated her to conduct research on Calamity Jane (whom she plays at BBD), Buffalo Bill, and his show, contributing to the historical narratives of BBD. Thus the social memory of individuals in Sheridan connects with the larger history of place and metanarratives of Westernness promoted in tourism. By participating in BBD, locals re-experience their history, validate memories, and authenticate their sense of Westernness.

Finally, re-enactment is an important aspect of establishing Western heritage. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests, "heritage is created through a process of exhibition," be it a museum display or a performance, in which it is given new meaning and value (1998; 1995, 269, 370). In other words, heritage may be further entrenched through exhibition and performance. While the Sheridan Inn is not an exhibition or "living history" site per se, re-enactment is a feature of BBD. An article in the *Billings Gazette* asks, "Ever wonder what life was like in the 1890s?"⁸ This suggests that one can actually experience the 1890s at BBD, just as living history sites offer historical interpretations through performance. Edre Maier confirms this goal: "Our concern was just having people here having *historical experiences* during the three days . . . and we can have that happen during Buffalo Bill Days, and they can get the true feeling of the West and not Hollywood or EuroDisney" (2005, emphasis added). From the Wild West show and historical ball to the parade and Pony Express re-enactment, these performances of Westernness are forms of exhibition that work to solidify official representations and narratives as well as the importance of the inn, Sheridan, and Western identity.

BBD involves a process of heritage-making whereby official representations of history and identity are produced and performed. Within this metanarrative of Westernness, is there any room for alternative narratives? Up to this point, it may appear that examining Wild West re-enactments at this heritage site illuminates processes of constructing Westernness, but brings us no closer to better understanding Native participation and experiences. It is this very absence of Native representations that requires further consideration.

NATIVES IN THE WEST?: PAN-INDIAN IDENTITY, AGENCY, AND PERFORMANCE

The story of the West at Buffalo Bill Days is not about “cowboys and Indians,” at least not explicitly. References to the history of Natives and their contributions to “the West” are absent and, in contrast to EuroDisney, Native participation at BBD is limited. Why these exclusions? While EuroDisney is interested in presenting a spectacular show, BBD and the other American site I discuss later are connected with heritage sites and museums that target educational entertainment. Both EuroDisney and BBD are driven by the tourism industry; however, the SHC is more concerned about education and commemoration. But what exactly is being commemorated, which histories are being told, and whose identity(s) are valorized? In the presentation of history, heritage sites and museums often commemorate the dominant group while excluding marginal groups; that is, they give primacy to the dominant society and its views of history (cf. Levy 2006), reflecting the power of the dominant society to produce narratives and social meanings. These narratives, however, are not totally hegemonic. As Bruner observes, performance has the capacity to suggest alternative meanings, regardless of the abundance of official narratives (2005b, 141). In this section I maintain that performances of a contemporary pan-Indian Native identity at the BBD Wild West show are a form of self-representation and performative agency that serves to counteract official narratives, contest stereotypes, and highlight cultural continuity and performers’ skills. I will start by discussing the challenges of inclusiveness faced by the Sheridan Heritage Center.

Performing Nativeness at Buffalo Bill Days: Issues of Inclusion and Negotiation

Historically, Native performers were an integral part of the BBWW show. When I asked Edre Maier what she thinks about Native participation at BBD, she admitted that they are “missing the Indian contingent” and may need to add more of that (Maier 2005). Attempts have been made to include Native participation in the past, but this is a complex issue, logistically and because of the nature of Native participation itself. In 2003 BBD included a re-enactment of auditions for the BBWW show in front of the Sheridan Inn (Maier 2005). The SHC put out a call for auditions, intending to select acts from those auditions to perform in the Wild West show. They received a variety of entries (both Native and non-Native) and about four acts were chosen to participate in the Wild West show, including some Crow dancers. According to Edre, many of the acts that auditioned were amateurs and not appropriate; while some dances and performances were quite good, others were “sedate and uninteresting.” And, as in powwows, dancers worked to their own time schedules, and things often came together just at the last moment (Maier 2005). BBD is a huge undertaking, Edre clarified, and if they want it to be a success, they need quality acts and reliable performers. Logistically it works better for the SHC to hire professionals, as amateurs slow the pace: “We

need something exciting for a Wild West show,” she proclaims, “like hoop dancers” (Maier 2005). In sum, BBD needs appropriate acts and professional performers to meet its goal of presenting Western history as well as providing “something exciting” to entertain audiences.

The types of performances and re-enactments BBD could include is another reason why Native participation is a thorny issue. BBD draws on narratives of Westernness but, unlike EuroDisney, “Indians” are not essential to the narrative. Only two Native performers appear in the Wild West show, presenting music and powwow dancing, and two Indians (played by whites) riding bareback chase a Pony Express rider. The omnipresent stagecoach is robbed by bandits rather than Indians, and saved by Calamity Jane rather than Buffalo Bill.⁹ This is quite different from the EuroDisney Wild West show, which consists of several re-enactment vignettes and “traditional” Plains imagery. Edre Maier conveyed an interest in presenting a more historically accurate show by incorporating more historical acts (2005). The only problem is that, historically, Native participation in Wild West shows included “war dances” and “savage attacks.” Thus a concern for political correctness curtails Native inclusion in terms of staging re-enactments of Native history, because historical performances perpetuated stereotypical images.

Beyond these two reasons, the question of inclusion reflects the negotiation of power — the control of representations and official narratives. Wild West shows, rodeos, commemorative events, and other spaces of performance are often controlled by the dominant society (e.g., Furniss 1999; Mackey 1999). Furniss maintains that events such as the Williams Lake Stampede in Alberta are controlled by non-Natives yet require inclusion of Native people to complete the “frontier complex” script, which is based on a dichotomy of Indianness and Western identity (1999, 164).¹⁰ Because the goal of BBD is to commemorate *Western* history, Native history is subsequently downplayed, in part as a result of the process of constructing heritage and official narratives of Westernness at Sheridan, as already discussed.

Still, tourist sites are contested spaces where multiple representations and performances of histories and identities exist and are negotiated (cf. Bruner 2005; Chambers 2000). Although BBD does not incorporate performances of Native history, it does include performances by a professional Native troupe called Native Spirit Productions (NSP). This limited inclusion of Nativeness is nonetheless significant because it demonstrates how Native performers can destabilize official narratives. I maintain, therefore, that their participation at BBD reflects Native performers’ desire and ability to negotiate power by controlling representations and symbols of Native history and identity, what I identify as performative agency.

Native performers at the BBD Wild West show contest metanarratives of Westernness by generating alternative narratives to “cowboys and Indians.” Contemporary performances by NSP provide a sharp contrast to the historical re-enactments and costumed characters of Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley, Wild Bill, and

Calamity Jane.¹¹ Brian Hammill, of the Ho-Chunk Nation in southern Wisconsin, and Navaho Lane Jenkins are professional performers and powwow dancers who challenge stereotypes through their performances of a contemporary pan-Indian identity. Dressed in powwow regalia rather than traditional deerskin, Brian asks the audience, “Have you heard this song before? ‘Heya, heya, heya, heya.’ Well, I can guarantee you that an Indian did not write that song.” Brian plays his flute and talks about traditional and contemporary music; he also speaks plainly about stereotypes and the fact that Native communities live and thrive today. Lane’s performance of the Fancy Dance and Brian’s Hoop Dance demonstrate their Nativeness and cultural vitality (see Figures 32 and 33).¹² This insertion of contemporary performance in combination with an educational agenda brings Native culture and identity into the twenty-first century. While Native *history* is absent in these commemorative events, the Native present is being celebrated.

Edre Maier notes this disjuncture between Native past and present identity constructions: “It was definitely a representation of contemporary Native culture, because that’s what you see at powwows” (2005). She also mentions that she was disappointed at first to hear that Brian and Lane were going to wear their brightly coloured powwow regalia (see Figure 34).¹³ Commenting on their modern look, Edre states that she is sure their regalia look great at night under fluorescent lights, but it is not “true Indian dress.” In other words, it’s not “traditional (authentic) Indian” clothing. Thus, even though the hoop dancers are more in tune with what Edre suggests is required for an exciting Wild West show, their inclusion concerned her because she felt that they might disrupt the historical picture the SHC was attempting to create. In the end, however, she admits that NSP’s presentation was exceptional and the audience loved it; they “stole the show,” she says. In fact, when I asked Edre to name her favourite part of the Wild West show, she replied, “the hoop dancers!”

The disjuncture between past and present identity constructions reflects the fact that NSP is presenting alternative social meanings of Native identity. Performing Nativeness as it is experienced *today* is one of the goals of NSP. I asked Brian Hammill how he felt about perhaps playing a “traditional” Indian in this type of venue and possibly re-enacting historic Wild West performances. He replied:

The way we do it here [at BBD], we’re not going back to the 1880s. A lot of the other stuff in the show is 1880s; we show who we are today. We are not showing what it was like in the 1800s, we are showing what we are today. So when somebody wants me to throw on a headdress and dance around a fire, I’ll tell them no, that’s not what they really want, that we can do it another way which would give them the same energy and give them a better effect. (2005)

Brian’s statements reveal how it is possible to contest representations of Nativeness associated with Wild West shows without sacrificing entertainment

value or spectacular appeal. They also illustrate how performances of contemporary Nativeness may be included even at a heritage tourist site. As Diamond observes, performance is “a contested space, where meanings and desires are generated, occluded, and of course multiply interpreted” (1996, 4). NSP destabilizes official narratives at BBD by inserting an alternative vision of Native identity, reflecting these Native performers’ ability to wield power and control representations in the performance encounter.

In presenting a contemporary Native identity at BBD, Native Spirit Productions also controls the *meaning* of Nativeness by controlling the use of symbols representing their contemporary Native identity. As Furniss notes, power comes not in presenting the stereotypical symbols themselves, but from the “epistemological power” the groups have “to control the meaning of these symbols” (1999, 181). The NSP dancers’ elaborate, brightly coloured powwow regalia, for example, are a recognizable sign of Nativeness, but this is not the historical deerskin attire associated with traditional Indian imagery (although it is certainly influenced by Plains dress). Without question, Brian and Lane’s powwow regalia are more meaningful to them than the “traditional Plains dress” found in historical Wild West shows and re-enactments that is perceived as authentic by others. The public recognizes both “traditional Plains Indian” and “powwow Indian” as signs of Nativeness, but in this case, Native performers draw on powwow identity markers — dress, dance, and music — to represent themselves. In this way NSP contests more stereotypical and romantic representations of Indians from the past, and, more important, they present meaningful representations of self. In contrast with EuroDisney, NSP is in control of the use and epistemology of symbols of Nativeness. By presenting contemporary Native identity through dance and regalia, Brian and Lane exert performative agency within the confines of a heritage tourist site that, in this case, restricts Native representations of history.

Performing Pan-Indian Identity and Agency

The significance of employing pan-Indian identity in these types of spaces requires more consideration, because performances of pan-Indian identity are occasions for *self*-representation (cf. Buddle 2004; Ellis 1990; Herle 1994; Lerch and Bullers 1996; Lerch 1992). In spaces of cultural performance such as tourist sites, I suggest that presenting a pan-Indian identity is not only acceptable but preferred, because it is a form of self-expression appropriate for public performance contact zones. The NSP website outlines the group’s intertribal approach: “the dancers represent various nations from all across the United States as well as Canada.”¹⁴ The powwow dances that NSP draws on are social dances suitable for public display, but these intertribal dances shared by various Native communities do not replace Brian and Lane’s local identity or tribal affiliation. As Ellis argues, pan-Indian expressions (such as the Gourd Dance) do not replace tribal identities; rather, “it serves a particular function in a particular place” (1990,

26). And as Herle observes at powwows, pan-Indian styles and regalia cut across tribal affiliations and local tribal expressions and encourage members to imagine themselves as part of a larger community (1994, 76–79). In NSP's case, pan-Indianism is about a shared experience, expressed through powwow dancing, music, and regalia, that serves a particular function: to provide educational entertainment for the public.

Central to negotiating power — to control representations, meanings, and preconceptions of Nativeness — in this performance contact zone encounter is NSP's approach to performances. Certain elements are integral to this performance approach: performances are didactic; they are professional, highlighting performers' skills and reliability; and they emphasize cultural continuity. NSP's performance approach facilitates agency, which is evident in the group's ability to negotiate narratives and meanings of Nativeness.

First, one of NSP's goals is to educate the public through their performances of contemporary Nativeness.¹⁵ Tourist sites such as BBD and other spaces of performance (such as powwows) are productive spaces for cross-cultural exchange. Brian Hammill formed NSP in 1997 with this intention in mind: “[It is] a way to share native culture and dances with various people from all across the United States as well as overseas.”¹⁶ Lane Jenkins echoes this sentiment: “A lot of people . . . think it's a really big deal to see Native American dancing and Native American singing” (2005). In our interview, Brian clearly stated their didactic priority: “We offer a good dance show and we also educate. The main thing is education through dancing, through talking, whatever. We want a show where people have a better understanding of our culture” (Hammill 2005). NSP provides “educational entertainment” through dances, music, artist demonstrations, videos, CDs, and lectures at a variety of venues ranging from corporate events to rodeos and fairs, special public events and celebrations, and schools and museums.¹⁷ Their educational agenda explicitly aims to increase cross-cultural understanding, confront stereotypes, and correct misconceptions. Participating in the Wild West show at BBD is an opportunity for these Native performers to inform the public about contemporary Native music, explain the significance of the dances, and, as stated previously, present contemporary Nativeness as opposed to the “traditional Indian,” revealing their ability to assume power by gaining epistemological control over meanings of Nativeness. Thus, performing a pan-Indian identity is an example of performative agency in that NSP controls performances, which are employed to negotiate representations and social meanings of Nativeness in public performance contact zones.

Second, Brian Hammill expresses the importance of providing a “professional face” and employees who are reliable (2005). This meets the requirements of clients such as Edre Maier, who are looking for dependable, professional performers. Brian is an all-rounder (hoop dancer, musician, and storyteller) who works with a core group of people whom he can depend on as *ambassadors* of Nativeness, people who have “exceptional skill and dance quality” (Hammill 2005, emphasis added). Putting a professional face on Native

dancing and performance in general means that the performers' skills are highlighted — their skills as dancers, musicians, storytellers, and artists — underscoring NSP's vision of how to represent Nativeness. Besides emphasizing the skills and accomplishments of contemporary Native performers, this professional face also defies such misconceptions as that Native people simply do not work. The group's didactic and professional approach to performing Nativeness is essential to its ability to control representation and wield agency in this performance encounter.

Third, performing pan-Indian identity provides opportunities to make statements of cultural survival. The point that Native performers at BBD present contemporary pan-Indian identity rather than representations of Native history requires some qualification. I have indicated that the limited inclusion of Native participants at BBD contributes to erasure of Native history. However, the significance of the "past" is not completely disregarded by NSP. Brian Hammill and Lane Jenkins emphasize cultural continuity in their performances, linking the past and present. Their dances have historical roots and modern influences.¹⁸ Brian confirms that the dances we see are not only educational presentations but also representative of dances that "have survived thousands of years."¹⁹ Native culture not only survives, it thrives. He proudly proclaims that "the Native culture is a living culture."²⁰

In addition, passing on knowledge and skills to others, as well as information to the public, is a way of keeping Native culture alive.²¹ And it also promotes a sense of personal satisfaction and pride. Lane Jenkins explains:

It makes you feel better, that you're performing for people. I don't know, it's not just performing like show-wise, it's how you feel, how you feel about yourself. And if you're doing something good, you know, keep on doing it . . . (2005)

Beyond the personal satisfaction that comes from dancing and performing cultural continuity for the public to witness, cultural knowledge may be passed down through performance. Lane hopes that his performances are an inspiration for youth:

Well, the best part is, I would say for myself, is to see the young generation keep on going and, you know, passing it on, passing it along. And I see a lot of different kids out there that we dance with sometimes; we dance with a couple of school kids and stuff like that . . . I work with some kids, you know. They really wanted to dance, but they get really into it. I just try to help them along and do the best that I can. (Jenkins 2005)

In sum, pan-Indianism in this context is an expression of pride, contemporary Native culture, and cultural continuity; it is also simultaneously tribal, intertribal, and pan-Indian. Performers draw on their pan-Indian identity to

facilitate cross-cultural exchange and offer alternative narratives of Nativeness. Most important, these performers are in control of their representation and performance of Nativeness.

PAWNEE BILL RANCH AND MUSEUM: A CASE OF EXCLUSION OR ABSENCE?

Many tourist sites and towns in North America promote a Wild West theme. The Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum (“the Ranch”) in Pawnee, Oklahoma, for example, puts on a three-weekend extravaganza of Wild West entertainment in June complete with a parade, barbecue, and Wild West show (see Figure 35).²² In the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show 2005–06 brochure, visitors are invited to experience the “excitement,” the “history,” and “the man” of yesteryear, “where the west remains wild.” The two-hour reproduction of the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show (PBWW) is packed with excitement: trick roping, pistol shooting, gunfire, whip cracking, a cavalry drill team, a sack race, stagecoach holdups, bad guys attacking settlers, a cabin burning, and, of course, Indian dances.²³ It appears, however, that inclusion of Native participation at historic sites and museums is complicated not only by the form of representations and competing narratives of Westernness and Nativeness, as is the case in Sheridan, but also by the various priorities of organizers, producers, and Native performers, including a conscious choice not to participate in this type of performance contact zone.

The priorities and goals of various organizations influence the PBWW show’s content, emphasis, and purpose. The Oklahoma Department of Tourism, the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS), and the Ranch produced its first show in 1988 to celebrate the centennial of Pawnee Bill’s Wild West Show. Erin Brown, co-manager and caretaker of the Ranch, says that they are interested in presenting an accurate historical portrayal because the Ranch is part of the OHS, and that is their goal (Brown, E, May 28, 2005, pers. comm.). Co-manager and caretaker Ronny Brown concurs, stating that he wants tourists not only to be entertained but also to learn about Pawnee Bill and get an idea of what it was like to go to a Wild West show: “It’s about his life, his show, Oklahoma State, and business” (2005). However, because they are just the “hosts” of the event, Ronny says, they have not had an opportunity for much input. While the Ranch aims to commemorate Pawnee Bill and Western history and to provide an educational experience, the advertisements emphasize the show’s entertainment value.²⁴

The show’s script was written by a Wild West show committee along with the Pawnee Chamber of Commerce and the Ranch’s friends group.²⁵ It is produced by the Chamber in collaboration with the OHS (R. Brown 2005). Education is not a priority for the Chamber, whose main goal is to promote tourism to Pawnee, but the latter goal is not contrary to the aims of the Ranch, which also wishes to increase tourism to the site.²⁶ However, the priorities of the various show directors fluctuate from year to year; while some are interested in historical accuracy, others are more interested in entertainment value, as with the 2005 show (E. Brown, May 28, 2005, pers. comm.). These competing priorities

and goals influence the choice of which histories, whose cultures, and which identities to perform.

Jeff Briley, assistant director of the Oklahoma Museum of History and occasional Pawnee Bill actor, confirms that the number of Native participants in the show varies from year to year depending on script, director, interest, and availability of acts and performers (2005). At first Native performers had a prominent role in the Wild West show, with a contingent of about thirty Native actors and performers in 1988. According to Ronny Brown, the large Native component may have had something to do with the fact that they had more funds for the centennial event because of Oklahoma Tourism's involvement (2005). As it stands now, Ronny says, the Ranch can pay only a small honorarium for specialty acts, and depends mainly on volunteers who perform for fun. By 2002 only three Native dancers were part of the cast — A. J. Leading Fox, Josh Leading Fox, and Sly Isaac — and in 2003 only one of the twenty acts included Native participation.²⁷ Advertisements promoted an Indian component in the 2005 Wild West show events, but participation was limited to the Leading Foxes dancing and drumming in two of the three weekend shows, similar to Sheridan's BBD Wild West show.²⁸

As in Sheridan, the Ranch must deal with the complexity of including Native participation in historical re-enactments. Besides the issues of funding and differing priorities discussed above, the notion of authenticity may be another factor influencing participation. Both managers and performers at historical sites and museums are concerned about representation. Jeff Briley (2005) says that some actors are really well organized and top performers, such as the fellow who came with his own complete troupe one year. These performers knew what it was about, he says — their regalia and paint, their attention to detail — they looked great and were very convincing in their roles. But one year they had local performers who were not as enthusiastic; Jeff explains that some actors, both Native and non-Native, understand what it is about, while others do not have a clue. He notes astutely that authenticity is important for museums and historic sites when the aim is historical accuracy for educational purposes, but that Native representation must be important for the Native American participants as well, because even though they are re-enacting the past, they are representing themselves.

Because heritage sites and museums are contested sites of representation involving negotiation of power, I posit that some Native people may consciously have chosen not to play historical roles. For one thing, many Native dancers who would be good candidates for the show are already engaged at other performance venues. The powwow circuit, for instance, is a vibrant and popular series of events, and for many Native people it is a more preferable space for dancing and performing Nateness than Wild West shows and other such spectacles. As outlined in the introductory chapter, scholars have critiqued the appropriation, representation, and commercialization of indigenous peoples in spaces of cultural display and performances, such as tourism, as sites for reproduction of colonial

discourses and relationships. I suggest that Native people may be contesting power and knowledge construction in this space through their absence, what Phillips calls “disappearing acts.” Disappearing acts are post-colonial strategies “intended to disable the axis of knowledge and power that was activated during the colonial period through academic and popular projects of representation” (Phillips 2004a, 78–79). An example of a disappearing act is Native peoples’ requests to remove sacred items from display in museums or to have them returned, which represent their contestation of Western traditions of production and exhibition of knowledge (Phillips 2004a, 56). The removal of Iroquois false-face masks, Phillips argues, is part of a series of “strategic *removals* from and *insertions* into spaces of display that articulate proto-colonial, colonial, and emergent postcolonial phases” in Native–non-Native relations (2004a, 73, emphasis added). Whereas the negotiation of representations and power at Sheridan involved *insertion* by presenting alternative narratives and meanings of Nativeness, the reduced and limited Native participation at Pawnee could be a case of *absence* or “disappearing acts.” Both cases illustrate the negotiation and contestation of representation, power, and colonial relationships.

SUMMARY

The performance of history and identity through re-enactment often leads to construction of partial histories and selective identities. In this chapter I argue that “heritage-making” at Buffalo Bill Days produces the Sheridan Inn as a “valuable site” and generates official metanarratives of Westernness, then solidifies these narratives through re-enactment. In such processes, where heritage is actively constructed, the main issue centres on questions of inclusion and exclusion. While BBD does not commemorate Native history, Native participants present contemporary Native identity as a form of self-representation, demonstrating performative agency within the confines of heritage tourism; Native performers draw on pan-Indian expressions to challenge official metanarratives, contest stereotypes, and make statements of cultural continuity via their performance approach.

Performances at tourist sites are dynamic and have the capacity to generate various meanings — the American West and a traditional Indian at EuroDisney, a Western experience in Pawnee, and Western heritage and contemporary Nativeness in Sheridan. These meanings are negotiated by the various participants and guided by different priorities and agendas. Rather than confront stereotypes and challenge misconceptions, Native performances are excluded from, or disappear from, participation in the historical re-enactments discussed in this chapter. The *performance of history* appears to be a challenging task for historical sites and museums, but museums and heritage sites that engage in historical re-enactments are ideal spaces for a critique of historical relationships and stereotypes (Tivers 2002).

Figure 29: The Sheridan Inn



Figure 30.1: Annie Oakly (Edre Maier) and Calamity Jane (Tammy Burr) in the Parade

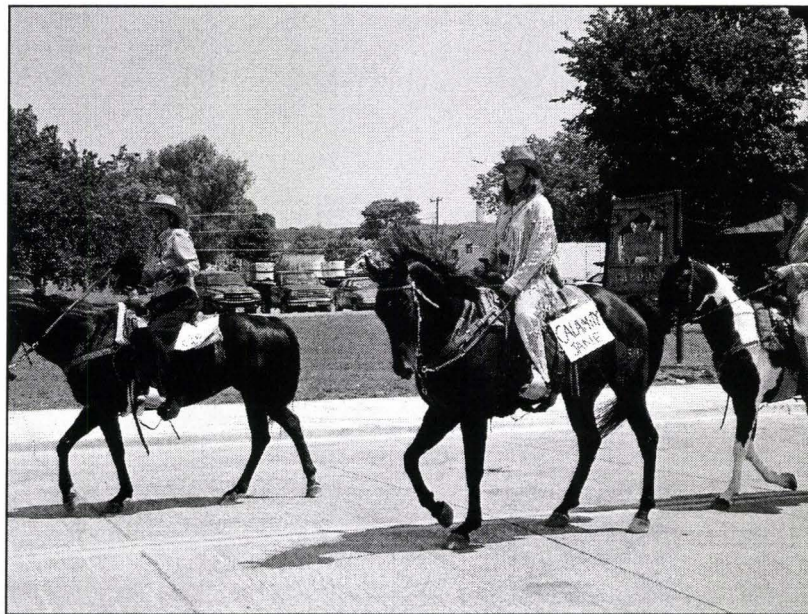


Figure 30.2: Pistol Packin' Paula



Figure 31: The King Saddlery Museum



Figure 32: Lane Jenkins Fancy Dance at the BBD Wild West Show



Figure 33: Brian Hammill Hoop Dance at BBD Wild West Show

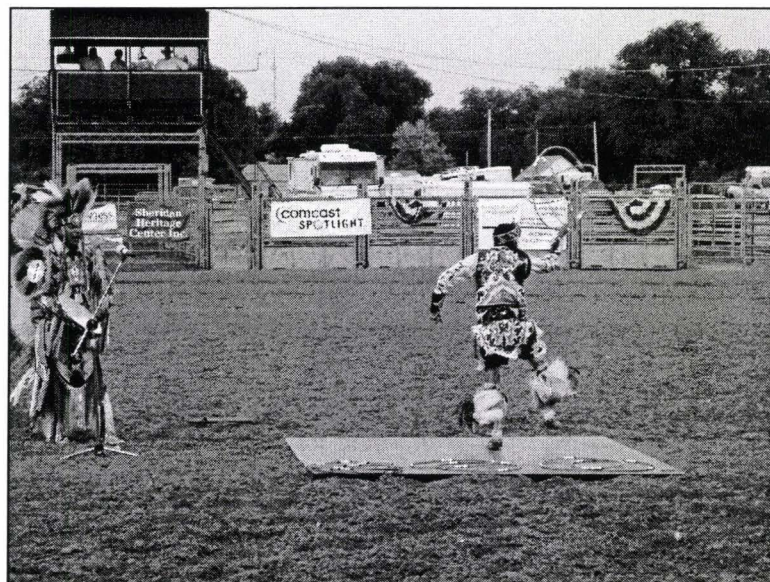


Figure 34: Native Spirit Dancers Lane and Brian, Regalia



Figure 35: Ranch, Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum



CONCLUSIONS

This multi-sited ethnographic, ethnohistorical study moves through space and time and delves into the complexity of Native participation in Wild West shows and spectacles by focusing on Native perspectives and experiences. It follows the stories of Native performers' experiences through the archival record and oral histories to the voices of contemporary performers, revealing additional meanings and alternative interpretations of this experience: narratives of opportunity, success, pride, skill, identity, and variability. A theoretical approach, after Pratt (1992) and Ortner (2006), that considers both socio-political and economic constraints *and* the actions of social actors provides a way to trace power relationships and agency as well as to analyze these additional meanings and interpretations. In this concluding chapter I highlight, through a synthesis of my findings, how my methodological and theoretical approaches enrich our understanding of Native experiences in this context, revisiting the three main objectives of the thesis: to qualify the nature of Native participation in shows, to trace Native performers' agency in this context, and to illuminate the negotiation of Native identity.

Methodology

In this thesis I have discussed in great detail the nature of Native participation in Wild West shows and other performances. To this end I used a multi-method research approach that yielded rich data for the analysis of Native performers' experiences through time, including archival sources, oral histories, fieldwork observations of contemporary Wild West show performances, popular media, and interviews with contemporary performers. However, gaining access to Native voices and perspectives from the archives was challenging, given the nature of what is preserved in the record. "Central records" such as the ones I examined, that is, documents from the dominant society, present one perspective and tend to lend themselves to certain types of analyses. Similarly, analyses of contemporary popular media and of discourses and representations of Native performances tend to generate post-colonial critiques focused on deconstruction of representations and power.

One way to tackle these interpretive challenges (and biases?) and gain access to Native perspectives of this experiences was to use multiple methods and sources of data, such as interviews and oral histories, that offer insight into how Native people have viewed and interpreted their experiences through time. Indeed, the strength of ethnographic research is its capacity to expose the experiences of people on the ground and how they create meaning; oral histories provided insight into Native perspectives of this experience in the past and also led to Native interpretations of archival sources. As Cruikshank argues, oral histories are valuable for "generating different kinds of social analysis, leading to different interpretations of a given event" (1992, 22). Later in this chapter I will

discuss in more detail how oral histories contributed to my analysis of Native experiences.

Theory

A second way to address these interpretive challenges is to apply different theoretical and analytical lenses that provide other ways of thinking about both historical and contemporary data. First, this thesis uses the notion of a Wild West show “contact zone” (Pratt 1992) as an overarching framework for analyzing the complex encounters between non-Native people and Native performers. A contact zone approach considers both the asymmetrical power relationships and the possibility of agency (Pratt 1992, 6). I draw in particular on Pratt’s conception of transculturation (1992) to underscore the negotiations that occur between social actors in different encounters in the Wild West show contact zone. Transculturation calls attention to the fact that Native performers have actively constructed social meaning and Native identity in this space.

Second, Ortnor’s dual-modality view of agency as power and as cultural projects is another productive approach for this study because it offers another way of thinking about Native performers’ experiences in this context. By considering the performers’ cultural projects — that is, their own goals, guided by their own social meanings and relationships, as existing in addition to colonial relationships — I was also able to trace and qualify the various forms of agency. Thus, guided by these two theoretical approaches, I offer a more nuanced analysis that is specific about the form of agency that Native performers could (and still can) exert, whether expressive, communicative, performative, or agency of cultural projects, rather than presenting a black-and-white view that performers either have agency or do not.

Results and Interpretations

In the Wild West contact zone, transculturation involves a process whereby Native performers adopt contact zone encounters and modify and/or assert expressions of Native identity. In historic Wild West shows, Native performers adopted the performance encounter as a space in which to express their warrior identity by modifying war songs, as well as a space for maintaining dance and dress. Performers at BBD similarly utilized the performance encounter, but to contest stereotypical representations by presenting an alternative view of Nateness — a contemporary pan-Indian identity. Viewed from a transculturation perspective, both cases illustrate expressive agency: performers’ ability to express personal visions of Native identity within the Wild West show contact zone. While employed in historic Wild West shows, performers also used the tourist encounter to express their opinions and make statements of entitlement, demonstrating communicative agency. Thus, in this thesis, rather than focusing

solely on the representation of stereotypes, I have highlighted how these encounters involve the process of transculturation, revealing other social meanings and various forms of Native agency.

Even if agency has been limited in form and extent, a cultural projects view of contact zone encounters further illuminates how Native participation in Wild West shows and other spectacles has been more complex than simply a story of exploitation and commercialization. In this thesis I contend that narratives of *opportunity* and *success* represent agency of cultural projects. Native performers had to cope with dire conditions in both the U.S.A. and Canada as a result of colonization and establishment of the reservation/reserve system. Some Native performers recognized the benefits of working in Wild West shows and actively pursued these opportunities as a viable option to their new living conditions, and descendants of Mohawk performers from Kahnawake speak about their families' experiences in these shows in terms of success and pride. Moving through time, the similarities between past and present Native performers' experiences are striking. Given the limited opportunities on reservations/reserves, performers view EuroDisney as a chance to earn income and pursue their career goals as well as other performance opportunities. Proud of their successes, many speak about this opportunity as a matter of survival, and hope that their experiences will inspire their children and Native youth in general to be their own agents and pursue available opportunities. In both past and present, Native performers exert agency in that they have cultural projects, guided by their own goals and social relationships, that are at the same time situated in the socio-political and economic constraints and power relations that structure their lives.

While Wild West shows and other spectacles produced stereotypical images of Nativeness, these shows were in fact diverse. Rather than focusing on the stereotypes constructed in these shows, the oral histories I collected highlight the variety of skills exercised and the successes of the families involved, which, I argue, reflects the performers' cultural projects. Narratives of skill, success, and pride that emerge in the oral histories lend support to the archival evidence of Native performers' cultural projects in the employment encounter. Thus these oral histories from performers' descendants and their interpretations of the archival record were crucial for *revealing* and *substantiating* alternative perspectives of Native experiences in Wild West shows and spectacles. Significantly, I traced these narratives of opportunity, success, and pride in the employment encounter from the archives, through the oral histories of Mohawk performers' experiences, and finally to the interviews with contemporary performers.

A thread that runs through my analyses of Native experiences through time is the link between agency and the representation and performance of Native identity. The representation of Nativeness in this context is part of a dialogical process of construction, negotiation, and incorporation. In other words, while Wild West shows have produced hegemonic representations of histories and identities, performers have also created meaning in this context and have expressed Native identity in other ways as well. In this thesis I argue that

performance in spectacles engenders a space for reflection, assertion, modification, and/or contestation of Native identity through regalia and/or performances of Nativeness.

This thesis considers regalia and performance as sites for expression of Native identity, and thus as important sites for the investigation of agency. My examination of the visual imagery at KOR suggested that some performance regalia did not conform to the stereotypical Plains style thought to be characteristic of Wild West shows. The oral histories, as well as descendants' knowledge of beadwork and their interpretation of the archival record, were essential for illuminating the fact that performance regalia also employed local styles and beadwork, and were thus statements of Mohawk identity. Esther Deer knew the value of highlighting her Nativeness through her pan-Indian regalia in order to advance her career, but she also used local beadwork in her costumes. Hence the representation of Native identity through performance regalia emerged as another example of expressive agency. As stated above, performers from the United States also exerted expressive agency through their warrior songs, traditional dances, and dress, albeit in modified forms and for a different context.

While performers in the nineteenth century asserted their Native identity, performers at EuroDisney reflected on what it means to represent themselves in that context. They negotiate power relationships not by contesting show performances but by challenging the authority to define Nativeness by privileging their lived experiences, skills, and traditional knowledge as sources of authority. In contrast, performers at BBD had control over their participation and therefore more directly contested spectacular performances and meanings of Nativeness, by presenting their own view of Native identity based on powwow culture. Earlier I pointed out that their performances are an example of self-representation and thus demonstrate expressive agency, but they are also an example of performative agency because of their ability to contest and control representations and performances of Nativeness in that context. While still part of an industry that appropriates and consumes Nativeness, these performers, past and present, have reflected on, asserted, and/or contested representations and performances of Native identity; some have had a choice in how they represent themselves, even if in small (and different) ways.

The effects of colonialism are undeniable, yet Native peoples adapt, survive, and thrive.¹ In this thesis I have explored one lens for examining how Native people have negotiated colonial encounters — the Wild West show contact zone. I have demonstrated how Native performers have found ways to negotiate the Wild West show contact zone for their own purposes, their own cultural projects, and ways to maintain, adapt, express, and/or contest Native identity through performances and regalia; they have engaged in this context as social agents. Insights from this study could possibly be applied more broadly to study of other (post-)colonial relationships and contact zone contexts to explore how indigenous peoples have exerted agency, as other studies have done, such as in the Tswana's engagement with missionaries (Comaroff 1991, vol. 1), Sherpas'

participation in mountaineering (Ortner 1999), and Iroquois involvement in tourist arts (Phillips 1998).

This thesis contributes to the literature on Wild West shows and the representation of Native peoples in that it provides additional interpretations of Native experiences in these shows and other spectacles by utilizing additional sources of data and employing other analytical approaches. By considering both socio-cultural structures (political, economic, and performative constraints) and human action (after Ortner), it illustrates how agency has varied in form and extent but is still present in the different contact zone encounters — employment, performance, tourist, and spectacular tourist sites. Focusing on Native perspectives and experiences, this thesis also builds on scholarly works that, using post-colonial approaches, examine the production of American nationalism in Wild West shows in the context of colonialism and the deconstruction of representations. In this thesis I provided a diachronic view of Native participation in shows to reveal additional and alternative interpretations of performers' experiences: opportunity, success, skill, identity, and pride. In these ways, it offers a glimpse into understanding this phenomenon from the perspective of the Native performers.

APPENDIX A:

LIST OF ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS AT LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

- AO: Archives of Ontario in Toronto, Ontario
- BBHC: McCracken Library at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming
- BBMG: Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave in Golden, Colorado
- DPL: Denver Public Library in Denver, Colorado
- Glenbow: Glenbow Museum Archives in Calgary, Alberta
- KOR: Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa, Cultural Center in Kahnawake, Mohawk territory in Quebec
- McCord: McCord Museum Archives and Documentation Centre, Musée McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal, Quebec
- OHS: Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- PBMR: Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum near Pawnee, Oklahoma
- PL: Pompienau Library in Paris, France
- WHC: Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, Norman campus, in Norman, Oklahoma
- WCC: Woodland Cultural Center in Brantford, Ontario
- Whyte: Whyte Museum in Banff, Alberta
- York: York University Archives and Special Collections in Toronto, Ontario. (Quebec Tercentenary Photograph Collection)

APPENDIX B:

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBD	Buffalo Bill Days (in Sheridan, Wyoming)
BBMG	Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave
BBWW	Buffalo Bill's Wild West
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs (United States)
KOR	Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa (Cultural Center)
NSP	Native Spirit Productions (Sheridan, Wyoming)
OHS	Oklahoma Historical Society
PBWW	Pawnee Bill's Wild West
SHC	Sheridan Heritage Center Inc. (Wyoming)

APPENDIX C:

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions and [Prompts] for Collecting Oral Narratives and Interviews:

1. Tell me about your family's experiences as performers in Wild West shows / spectacles.
2. When and where did they perform [travel to]? For how long?
3. How did they become a performer?
4. What did they do as a performer? What roles did they play?
5. Did they have any input into the performances?
6. Did any of the other of the 'actors' have any input? If yes, in what ways? [developing 'persona/roles,' events dramatized, developing the shows, recruitment...]
7. Why did they participate in the Wild West shows and spectacles?
8. How would you describe this experience? [as a job, get money, opportunity to change stereotypes, travel...]
9. What kind of opportunities existed for Native people in the entertainment industry, shows and tourism at that time?
10. What was the best and worst part about being a performer in Wild West show?
11. How many other Native performers were there? Where were they from? Who were they?
12. How was their experience as a performer received by members of your own community? by the audience / tourists and the general public?
13. Do you still perform today? In what context? Would you tell me a bit about this experience in comparison?

Questions and [Prompts] for Contemporary Performers

1. Please start by introducing yourself. Tell me about your experiences as a performer in Wild West shows.
2. How did you become a performer in the Wild West show? When did you start?
3. What do you do as a performer? When and where do you perform [travel to]? For how long?
4. Why did you decide to participate in the Wild West show? Why do you perform in this type of space [contemporary tourism]?
5. What were your expectations about the show before arriving in EuroDisney? What did you think this experience would be like?

6. How would you describe this experience? [as a job, opportunity to change stereotypes, get money, travel...]
7. Do you have any input into the performances? If yes, in what ways? [development of 'persona/roles,' developing the shows, recruitment, training...]
8. What did your "training" consist of?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of performing in tourism / Wild West shows?
10. What kinds of opportunities exist for Native people in tourism / in the entertainment industry?
11. What is the best and worst part about being a performer in the Wild West show / this type of venue/space?
12. What do your friends think about what you do as a performer in tourism? Your family? How is it received by members of your own community? by the audience / tourists and the general public?
13. Do you perform/sing/dance in other contexts as well? If yes – Please tell me a bit more about this experience in comparison.
14. What would you like tourists who see your performance to leave with?
15. How does your performance here contribute to what it means to be a "First Nations tribe X" [create sense of identity at all?]
16. **Recruiter:** What do you look for when recruiting performers? What type of training? What do you want tourists to leave with? What is to goal of the show? How did the show come about? Who developed the program and has it changed at all? What is the most important aspect of the show?

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ *Tatanga! Yeeehaaa!* Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show Color brochure, Eurodisney 2004.

² *Buffalo Bill's Wild West show 1905-2005 Official Program*, Eurodisney 2005 (abridged).

³ See for example Deloria (1998), Ewers (1964), Francis (1992) and Rogers (1983). Francis (1992) coined the term "Imaginary Indian" to refer to a fictional, romantic, and essentialized conception of Indianness constructed by white society based on travel literature, dime novels, performances, and popular images, for example.

⁴ The Provost show operated for three years from 1997-1999 (Notzke 2004, 38).

⁵ "Swedish Pow Wow," *Country Canada* CBC, Season 2005-2006.

⁶ See Ruth Ellen Gruber NYT, "Deep in the heart of Bavaria," *The International Herald Tribune Electronic Edition*, Friday April 16, 2004.

⁷ Wilmeth (1982) discusses the chronological development of outdoor amusements in chapter 2. Rydell (1984), Rydell, Findling, and Peel eds. (2000), and Hinsley (1991) provide exceptional analyses on world's fairs and exhibitions as nation-building projects and as promoting visions of imperialism and consumerism.

⁸ See also Brooklyn Museum (1981) *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*.

⁹ Warren argues that vignettes such as "Attack on the Settler's Cabin" reflected the anxieties caused by threats to the home and family, such as urbanization, increasing slums, labor tensions, and increasing immigration; Warren suggests that progress towards urbanization was perceived as parallel to the expansion of the frontier (2005, 39, 41, 214-16, 238).

¹⁰ See also Said (1979) for an analysis of Orientalism.

¹¹ See Hall's (1992, 280) discussion on the Thomas and Anita Hill case has an example where multiple identities are expressed and contradictory. He describes how people opposed and/or related to Thomas depending on which identity position they took, demonstrating the multiplicity and contradictions of identity; there is no single identity, and one can be outside and inside different subject positions. Hall argues that this illustrates how identity has become "politicized."

¹² It is also adaptive because ethnic identity is a cohesive way of contesting state systems (Hanson 1997, 195).

¹³ See Raibmon (2005) for a Canadian North West Coast example.

¹⁴ Proposed by Congressman Henry Dawes and accepted in 1887, the Dawes Severalty Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, allotted land to individual Indians. It was believed that private property would lead to civilizing the Indian and develop them into full citizens independent of reservations.

¹⁵ Fiske defines pantribalism as the process "by which distinct tribal cultures converge into a more broadly based identity of common Indian values and experience, both on an individual and on group levels" (1977, 258).

¹⁶ Howard maintains his position into the 1980s that pan-Indianism involves the appropriation of elements from a "generalized 'Indian' culture," particularly Plains, and that those who appropriate pan-Indian forms are "unaware of the specific tribal origins of the forms being borrowed" (1983, 72). He also attributes the development of pan-Indianism to increased movement and contact, but distinguishes it from early forms of cross cultural exchange, arguing that pre-reservation culture was more or less "intact" (1983, 71). This implies that there was some original culture that went largely unchanged; it also downplays the significance of pre-reservation intertribal contact and exchange.

¹⁷ My search for recent literature (1990s and 2000s) on pan-Indianism and pan-Indian in library catalogues, dissertations and article databases yielded few results. The concept is dealt with more indirectly in studies on urban Natives, popular culture, Native performance and media, and powwow culture.

¹⁸ Some have hypothesized a connection between Wild West shows and powwows (Ellis 1999; Herle 1994); this may be an avenue for further research.

¹⁹ Pan-Indianism refers to processes of social, cultural, economic and political intertribal and international exchange. Powers argues that original models of pan-Indianism dealt almost exclusively with music, dance, and material culture and suggests that political, economic and social spheres should be addressed differentially (Powers 1990, 97, 107). Perhaps different 'types' of pan-Indianism may be distinguished as analytical categories and reviewed in unique ways (following Hetzberg 1971), but it would be erroneous to conclude that these spheres are not interconnected.

²⁰ There are many genres of performance that scholars use as analytical categories, such as spectacle, festival, sport, and ritual. Still, the line between different genres is blurry. Genres overlap in features, yet they can be distinguished as well. For example, a funeral ritual and a festival may have similar features, formats, even purposes, but one can not be substituted for the other.

²¹ His sites of observation range from wax museums, the Museum of the City of New York, the Getty Museum (Malibu), the Wright's Guggenheim Museum, and the Palace of Living Arts, to Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park (LA), "Hearst's castle," Western ghost towns, Disneyland, and Disney World.

²² See Wright (1998) for a discussion on "old" and "new" conceptions of culture and how the culture concept is used in contemporary politics.

METHODOLOGY

¹ See Scarangella (2005) for my initial findings and thoughts on fieldwork.

² Examples of multi-sited fieldwork that follows the people may be found in diaspora, migration, globalization and transnationalism studies; follow the object in studies on material culture; follow the metaphor include studies on discourse analysis, signs and symbols; and follow the story or biography include studies on narrative and social memory.

³ Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Colorado, being the home of Wild West entrepreneurs such as the Miller brothers, Major Gordon Lillie, and Colonel William F. Cody, held large collections of archival materials, and, being places of historical significance, these states also had contemporary re-enactments and museums related to Wild West shows.

⁴ In the end, I could not stay to see the PBWW show in Pawnee in person because it conflicted with my trip to Sheridan which had already been arranged; however, I viewed a tape of the show, received copies of two scripts, and conducted interviews. The trip to Wisconsin did not materialize. Similarly, even though I had contacted the owners who were open to the project, I could not arrange to see the Great American Wild West show mainly because of cost and time.

⁵ Lane Jenkins won first prize in the Fancy Dance category.

⁶ Fort Phil Kearney, under Lieutenant Colonel William Fetterman, was destroyed by Ogallala Lakota; this event is known as the Fetterman Massacre of 1866 (see Moses 1996, 4, 283).

⁷ Most of the BBD events took place in and around the historic Sheridan Inn; the Wild West show was at the Sheridan Fairgrounds.

⁸ Thanks again to research participants Alex Rice, Barbara Delisle, Billy Two-Rivers, Silvia Trudeau, Conway Jocks, Morgan Phillips, Christel Grevy, Kevin (Kave) Dust, Ferlyn Brass, Kevin (Wiley) Mustus, Tim Bruised-Head, William Jim, Earnest Rangel, Jimeno, Edre Maier, Tammy Burr, Paula, Brian Hammill, Lane Jenkins, Ronny Brown, Erin Brown, Jeff Briley, and Steve Friesen.

⁹ I conducted research at: the *McCracken Library - Buffalo Bill Historical Center* (BBHC) in Cody, Wyoming; the *Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave* (BBMG) in Golden, Colorado; the *Denver Public Library* (DPL), Western History Collection in Colorado; the *Oklahoma Historical Society* (OHS) in Oklahoma City; the *Western History Collection* (WHC) at the University of Oklahoma, Norman campus; the *Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum* (PBRM) near Pawnee, Oklahoma; the *Pompineau Library* in Paris, France; the *Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa* (KOR) in Kahnawake, Quebec; the *McCord Museum Archives and Documentation Centre* in Montreal, Quebec; The

Archives Nationale du Quebec and the *Bibliothèque Nationale du Quebec* in Montreal; the *Woodland Cultural Center* (WCC) in Brantford, Ontario; the *Glenbow Museum Archives* in Calgary, Alberta; the *Whyte Museum* in Banff, Alberta; the *Archives of Ontario* in Toronto, Ontario; and the *York University Archives and Special Collections* in Toronto, Ontario.

¹⁰ Couriers are magazine-style booklets that served as an elaborate form of advertising that contained illustrations, pictures, and stories, as well as the program for the show. The covers were often color lithographs and just as striking as posters and billboards.

¹¹ I also examined programs, couriers, and magazines of the Miller Brothers Wild West show from 1911 and the 1920s as well as PBWW show programs at the WHC.

¹² Programs and couriers also included stories about Native people's and Buffalo Bill's experiences and successes, which were often reprinted in programs of the following years.

¹³ There is enough of a base of photographs taken of Wild West shows to use them as evidence. For example, the BBHC and the DPL combined contain practically the entire collection of programs for BBWW and PBWW shows from 1883 – 1913. The photographic collection database at the DPL Western History Collection has over 900 photographs of BBWW show, McCord has 18 pictures of Sitting Bull, the BBHC has several hundred photographs in the William F. Cody Collection, and the OHS and WCH have binders filled with photographs of the shows and performers.

¹⁴ Beatrice Blackwood was a staff member of the Pitt Rivers Museum of the University of Oxford in England in 1925, where the collection is now held; she took these photographs at the Blood Indian Reserve in southern Alberta, Canada (Brown and Peers 2006, 3). Copies of the photographs were taken back to the Blood Kainai Reserve.

¹⁵ I also became aware of some people from Six Nations in Brantford, Ontario, whose ancestors participated in Wild West shows. The Museum Director of the *Woodland Cultural Centre* at the time, Tom Hill, and I discussed several possible contacts. Many community members were involved in public entertainment, dance, or tourism; these individuals shared wonderful stories about their experiences, for which I am grateful. However, they go beyond the scope of this dissertation. I also searched the WCC archival collections. People who performed in a variety of venues such as exhibitions, film, dance, and pageants include Red Cloud, Oskanonton, Jim Beaver, Jay Silverheels (Henry Smith) and Joseph Stacy. Much of the archival material I found also related to their annual historical pageant, which deserves more analysis and attention than I can give within the scope of this dissertation (see Krieg 1978).

¹⁶ Beauvais (1985) has documented some of this history in his book *Kahnawake: A Mohawk look at Canada and adventures of Big John Canadian 1840-1919*.

¹⁷ I did not code reading material notes, précis, or visual documents, but these have similarly been categorized and organized manually according to theme and topic.

¹⁸ The program allows individual categories to be grouped together into trees or broken up and reorganized, taking the coded data along with it.

¹⁹ I conducted archival research at the community Cultural Center and followed up on some possible leads for interviews with elders who participated in Wild West shows and public entertainment. These interviews are not included in this study, as they pulled me beyond the scope of this dissertation and deserve greater attention than I could give in this dissertation.

²⁰ They did have an ethics board that reviewed scientific (i.e. medical) research.

²¹ Names have been changed for anonymity.

²² On two occasions, oral consent was given.

CHAPTER 1

¹ See Truettner (1979). Catlin exhibited his paintings in America in the late 1830s; he sailed for London in 1839.

² The first exposition, the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, took place in London and occurred during the height of industrialization; the first exhibition in the US was the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876.

³ World's fairs derive from smaller exhibitions and expositions and often occur near centers of production and industry, but they do not sell their goods directly (Benedict 1983, 3). Benedict writes: "world fairs became more than other fairs in that they promulgated a whole view of life" (1983, 5). World fairs are imbued with ideas about race, nature, and progress, and created a cohesive "symbolic universe" of corporate, political and scientific ideologies (Rydell 1984, 2). They reaffirmed national identities and notions of progress, which was equated with material and economic growth (Rydell 1984, 4).

⁴ Press agents came to cities in advance to publicize the show. As part of this publicity, parades gave audiences a glimpse of what they would see, and set a tone of excitement and anticipation.

⁵ For more on Cody's early life and career, see Kasson (2000) and Warren (2005).

⁶ Dime novelist E.Z.C. Judson, also known as Ned Buntline, featured the life and adventures of William Cody in dime novels from 1869. The BBHC (Series X) and the DPL contain extensive collections of dime novels from the era.

⁷ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program 1885*, BBHC, MS6, Series VI:A, FF1/4, Microfilm Roll#1, BBWW Programs 1883-1903.

⁸ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program 1886*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF22

⁹ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program 1886*. Steel Mackay was a famous actor, playwright, and producer (Reddin 1999, 82).

¹⁰ See for example "The Wild West show" *The Era*, April 23, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF37.

¹¹ "Buffalo Bill's Show (By one who has seen it)", *Court and Society*, March 23, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF38.

¹² "Wild West on the Ocean" *The Herald* April 28, 1889, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1889 Scrapbook (microfilm).

¹³ See for example *The Graphic* (6 pages from), BBHC, MS6, Series VI:D, Box 1, FF4; "Buffalo Bill's Show (By one who has seen it)", DPL; "The American Exhibition and the WW show", *Observer*, April 24, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF38; "Mr. Gladstone and the United States" *Daily Telegraph*, April 29, 1889, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF38; "'Red Shirt' on Mr. Gladstone. A Big Indian Battle. The Future of the Red Man." *The Sheffield Leader*, May 3, 1889, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF41; and several articles from the *Evening News*, *Daily News*, and *The Globe*.

¹⁴ For a detailed description of some of these tour dates and how the different countries received and reacted to the show and the Native performers, see Reddin (1999) chapter 4, in particular pp. 96-117.

¹⁵ See *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program 1887*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF22; see also programs from 1893 and 1897 at BBHC, MS6, Series VI:A, Microfilm 1/9 and 1/10.

¹⁶ The BBWW show was not part of the *Columbian Exhibition*. The arena was constructed by the main entrance of the exhibition on land leased by Nate Salsbury (Moses 1996, 134). Moses argues: "To most fair visitors, the Wild West show located near the main entrance appeared as an integral part not to be missed" (1996, 137). Exhibitions and displays of Indians and other ethnic races could also be found in the Anthropological exhibits and the Midway Plaisance section (under the direction of Fredrick Ward Putman) of the fair.

¹⁷ Canadian dates include: 1885 in Ontario and in Montreal August 10th to September 2nd; Quebec and Ontario June 18 to July 17, 1897; the Two Bills show in 1909; and a tour of Western Canada August 22nd to July 29th in 1910. DPL, Series 1, Box 5.

¹⁸ Battle re-enactments were added and removed, such as the additions of the Battle of Tien-Tsin act in 1901 and the Battle of San Juan Hill (1898) act in 1902.

¹⁹ Cody's use of the term Rough Riders alludes to the name used to refer to Roosevelt's calvary, which fought in the Spanish American war in Cuba in 1898.

²⁰ See for example the 1897 *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World Historical Sketches and Programme*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF29; *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World Historical Sketches and Programme*, c. 1901, WHC,

M-360, Box 13, FF4; and *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World Historical Sketches and Programme*, WHC, M-360, Box 13, FF4.

²¹ The BBWW show toured Europe while Bailey and Barnum circus returned from Europe to cover the North American market (Moses 1996, 169).

²² See for example the 1903 *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Historical Sketches and Programme* for London, BBHC, MS62, Series I-G: BBWW, Box 1, FF31; and the 1905 *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World Historical Sketches Programme Officiel* for France, BBHC, MS6, Box 1, Series VI-A, FF2/6 (Micro Roll#2).

²³ The Two Bill's tour in 1909 and 1910 included Canadian dates.

²⁴ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West combined with Pawnee Bill's Far East: Official Program 1909*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF42

²⁵ The 1909 program of 18 acts included a Pony Express display, attack on an emigrant train, a buffalo hunt, the Deadwood stagecoach attack, and a train hold-up by bandits. The battle re-enactment of choice for that year was the Battle of Summit Springs act, complete with an Indian village scene of cooking and dancing followed by an attack on the village where Tall Bull was killed. Ibid.

²⁶ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West combined with Pawnee Bill's Far East: Official Program 1909*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF42.

²⁷ *BB Bids You Good Bye: A Life Story and Book of Brave Deeds. The Farewell Salute. Magazine and Official Review. 1910*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF43; and "Buffalo Bill's Farewell Proclamation," BBHC, MS-6, Series I-B, Box 2, FF2, item 3 (1910).

²⁸ "Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Shows Stopped by Attachment" newspaper article, BBHC, MS6, Series I-B, Box 2, FF2, item #17 and "Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill show Closes, the season came to an abrupt and surprising end at Denver on July 22..." *The Billboard*, August 2, 1913, OHC, Tompkins 88.07, Box 1, Scrapbook #5.

²⁹ Cody's participation with Sells-Floto was limited to an appearance in the parade and a few acts of horse riding. In addition, only six of the twenty-six acts were "wild west type" acts; see *1914-15 Sells-Floto Circus Story Book and Program*, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-A, Box 1, FF3/3 (Micro Roll#2). He then worked with the Miller brothers; the show's theme urged "military preparedness."

³⁰ For more on Gordon Lillie's early life, see Shirley (1993). See also "Interview of Effie May Judy" (Henryette OK), OHS, IPH Vol#32, 14+pp; "Interview with Pawnee Bill," OHS, Oral History Collection, April, # 117; newspaper article "Pawnee Bill to be 80 Years Old This Week," *The Daily Oklahoman*, no date, OHS, Tompkins 88.07, Box 1, FF Pawnee Bill; and *Souvenir of Buffalo Ranch and its Owners* booklet (c. post 1911), WHC, M360, Box 13, FF16.

³¹ PBWW 1890 Canadian tour started in Montreal. He played in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from June 25th to August 24th in 1893, *Pawnee Bills Historic Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book, Season 1893*, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1.

³² Lillie exhausted all his resources to perform at the World's Fair at Antwerp under the invitation by King Leopold of Belgium but recovered in Holland; however, he left France for the U.S.A. without profit (Shirley 1993, 141-44).

³³ *Season 1898 Official Route Book of the Pawnee Bill Wild West show*, WHC, M360, Box 13, FF1.

³⁴ *Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book, Season 1893*, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1. The Mountain Meadows Massacre act is a re-creation of the 1857 attack on a wagon train in Utah (Moses 1996, 183).

³⁵ *Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West Official Program*, no date (c.1904-8), WHC, M360, Box 13, FF6. See also *Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book*, Season c.1893, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1. He also included an act that featured Prince Lucca with his Cossacks and Japanese warriors in a re-enactment of the Russo-Japanese War.

³⁶ *Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book*, Season c.1893, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1.

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- ³⁷ Season 1898 *Official Route Book of the Pawnee Bill Wild West show*, WHC, M360, Box 13, FF1.
- ³⁸ 1901 Program *Pawnee Bill's Wild West: America's National Entertainment*, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF2.
- ³⁹ Pawnee Bill Program 1904, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF5.
- ⁴⁰ Pawnee Bill Program 1904, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF5.
- ⁴¹ Program section "The Owners of the 101 Ranch" in 1911 *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Magazine and Daily Review*, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF14.
- ⁴² Bulldogging was the term used for steer wrestling. It was invented by Bill Pickett, who also bulldogged at the 101 Ranch Wild West show in Mexico in 1908.
- ⁴³ See Gleach (2003) for more on the Wild West show at the 1907 Jamestown Exhibition.
- ⁴⁴ Advertisement in *Victoria Daily Times* May 27, 1912, BBHC, MS-6, Series VI:G, Box 1, FF 15.
- ⁴⁵ Advertisement in *Victoria Daily Times* May 27, 1912, BBHC, MS-6, Series VI:G, Box 1, FF 15.
- ⁴⁶ *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Magazine and Daily Review*, 1911 Program, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF14.
- ⁴⁷ Advertisement in *Victoria Daily Times* May 27, 1912, BBHC, MS-6, Series VI:G, Box 1, FF 15, emphasis mine.
- ⁴⁸ List of rough-riding categories as they appeared in different advertisements and programs. Advertisement in *Victoria Daily Times*.
- ⁴⁹ The connection between Wild West shows and the growth of the rodeo requires further investigation; however, I suspect that Wild West shows played a significant part in the development of early rodeos, which combined spectacle, entertainment, and cowboy contests.
- ⁵⁰ *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Magazine and Daily Review* 1911 Program, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF14. The Grand Entry and Introduction acts also included Indians; it is not specified if Indians attacked the pony express rider, as was the tradition in most Wild West shows. In this version, the stagecoach was attacked by Mexican bandits.
- ⁵¹ See for example cover of 1925 Newspaper Bill which depicts a sketch of an Indian in full headdress holding a tomahawk, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF11. The predominant image in the center of a 1912 advertisement contains a sketch of an Indian on horseback holding a spear, BBHC, MS6, Series VI:G, Box 1, FF15. The 1928 large size paper program includes pictures of Crazy Bear, White Cloud, Eagle Eye, Julia Little Snake, White calf, Flying Hawk, Eagle Elk Chief Creeping Bear, Black Wolf and others, WHC, M470, Outsize, Scrapbooks Box 1, Black Newspaper Clippings – large. The 1926 Program contains a story about "Real Primitive Indians of the Wigwam" complete with pictures of Standing Elk, a teepee, Indian women, and the 101 Ranch Indian encampment. In this program, another section describes the Osage and their land while yet another section describes the "Famous Warriors of the Indian Camp"; WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF16.
- ⁵² The Millers and their agents hired more Sioux and Apache after 1925 (Roth 1965-66, 425).
- ⁵³ The Americans considered the possibility of war in Europe (on the brinks of WWI) and with Mexico after Francisco "Pancho" Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico.
- ⁵⁴ *Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Real Wild West Official Review and History of the Great Wild West*, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF16. *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Magazine and Daily Review*, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF16.
- ⁵⁵ *Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show Daily Review*, 1929 Magazine Program, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF 14.
- ⁵⁶ Zack Miller took charge of the show after the death Joe Miller in 1927.
- ⁵⁷ See also *Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West and Great Far East* 1925 Newspaper Bill, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF11.
- ⁵⁸ *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Magazine and Daily Review* 1926-7, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF16. "The Covered Wagon" scene reproduced the Mountain Meadow massacre with an attack by Indians while the stagecoach is attacked by Mexican bandits. Only two acts in

1926-7 were Indian vignettes: the buffalo hunt and dancers from Sioux and Cheyenne reservations.

⁵⁹ See *Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show Daily Review*, 1929 Magazine Program, WHC, M407, Box 95, FF 14. The 1929 program expanded to twenty-two acts and nine “after show” acts.

⁶⁰ Cody gave a copy of the film to the Department of the Interior and War Department for future education; “Buffalo Bill to Feature in Historical Moving Pictures,” BBHC, MS6, Series IX, Box 22, Scarpbooks 1914.

⁶¹ The Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Film Company also produced the one-reel film *Life of Buffalo Bill* in 1912, which featured Cody’s life and career as a scout and actor (Kasson 2000, 256).

⁶² The film included re-enactments of: the battle of Summit Springs with general Eugene A. Carr on June 11, 1869, which resulting in the death of Tall Bull; the War Bonnet Creek battle on July 17, 1876, with general Wesley Merritt (Custer campaign) and Cody’s duel with Yellow Hand (“first scalp” for Custer); the battles of Wounded Knee and the Mission battle of December 1890 with general James Forsyth and the 7th cavalry as well as the Ghost Dance war of 1891 (Ghost Dance massacres and death of Sitting Bull). Film Program “*First Public Presentation at the Columbia Theatre of “Last Indian Battles” and Final Surrender to Nelson Miles or “Wars for Civilization,*” Washington DC February 27, 1914, BBHC, MS6, Series I:D, Box 3, FF1. See also newspaper article “Real Soldiers, Real Indians, Real Heroes March, Fight, Die, in Great War Films,” BBHC, MS6, Series IX, Box 22 (1914).

⁶³ Cody wrote to Honorable Lindley W Garrison (secretary of war) for permission to film at Pine Ridge. Letter from Cody to Garrison August 24, 1913, BBHC, MS6, Series I-A, Box 2, FF24. According to the film program, the last part of the film illustrated Indians at work and adopting the industries of white man.

⁶⁴ *Pawnee Bill’s Pioneer Days* lithograph and program; film produced by Pawnee Bills Buffalo Ranch Feature Film Company. The cover of the film program resembles show program covers. WHC, M360, Box 13, FF17.

⁶⁵ Brochures advertising the films produced by Pawnee Bill’s Buffalo Ranch Feature Film Company from WHC, M360, Box 13, FF18.

⁶⁶ I could not find any record of how audiences received these films, but Lillie declared that his films were a great success and an “innovation in Western Entertainment.” *Pawnee Bill’s Pioneer Days* lithograph and program, WHC, M360, Box 13, FF17.

⁶⁷ Film reels included: *Bucking Bronchos*, *Home Life of 101 Ranch*, and *The Indian Buffalo Hunt*. Letter from Turnbull to Millers October 1st 1912, WCH, M-407, Box 2, FF8. The Miller’s also produced three reels of their Wild West show in Europe; see correspondence between P.A. Powers and Joe Miller September 1915, WHC, M-407, Box 3, FF4. The film *On With the Show* depicted life in the arena and behind the scenes at the Millers’ 101 wild west show, including a scene of mad runaway steers; 1925 Route book “*Miller Bros 101 Ranch Real Wild West and Great Far East,*” WHC, M-407, Box 91, FF5.

⁶⁸ Letter JMC to Kinemacolor Co of America October 4, 1913, WHC, M-407, Box 3, FF3. See also Wallis (1999) chapter 32.

⁶⁹ While the 101 Ranch did not make a profit in the moving pictures industry, many of their cowboys and cowgirls, such as Tom Mix, Will Rogers, Hoot Gibson, Buck Jones, Ken Maynard, Mabel Normand, and Helen Gibson, made the leap into early Western films (Wallis 1999, 6; Reddin 1999, 186-87).

CHAPTER 2

¹ “Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them” by Harriet Quimby, *Leslie’s Weekly*, July 23, 1908, pp 87-90; BBHC, MS62, Series I:G, Box 1, FF16.

² Small time operations hired Natives for local events or short term exhibitions such as games of lacrosse (Letter from J Basye to “Sir” February 14, 1882, OHS, Indian Agency Files (IAF), Quapaw Agency – Indians, shows and exhibitons microfilm QA-17-151882), to travel on lecture tours with exhibits of Indian relics (Letter from Mrs. Jason Halloway to Agent J D Miles March

20, 1880, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne and Arapahoes Agency – Indians with shows and Exhibitions, March 20, 1880 – June 13, 1931, microfilm C&A-46-4), to play in Indian boy music bands (Letter June 17, 1891, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency - Indians with Shows & Exhibitions 7/30/1879 to 2/9/1923, Microfilm KA-47, 1875-1924), appear with medicine shows (Letter July 28, 1891 to Anadarko Indian Agent, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency), and in fairs where the public could “study the Red Man as he was” (Letter C. Thornbury to “Sir” November 1894, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency), or baseball game exhibitions (Letter from D. M. Browning to Baldwin December 24, 1896 in regards to a letter from Henderson to recruit Kiowa Indians and letter from Browning to Baldwin February 12, 1897 giving permission for Indians under \$5000 bond and contract and return arrangements; OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency), to name a few.

³ “Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them”

⁴ Moses bases this on Standing Bear’s comment: “While all the Indians belonged to the Sioux tribe, we were supposed to represent four different tribes, each tribe to ride animals of one color.” (Standing Bear 1975, 252). However, Standing Bear later states that “In all my experience in the show business I have met many Indians of various tribes” (1975, 261). Black Elk also recounts how there were Pawnee Indians at the Hippodrome in New York (DeMallie 1984, 246). While Moses correctly points out that Lakota were hired to play other tribes (1996, 170), this was not solely a Lakota-Sioux experience.

⁵ A letter from the Commissioner of DI to Myers, Indian Agent at Kiowa Agency in May 1889, discusses Thompson’s desire to recruit Indians. Another letter from the DI to Doc Carver dated May 10, 1889, outlines the conditions for hiring Natives for Doc Carver’s European tour. OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

⁶ Major Gordon W Lillie’s (Pawnee Bill) Own Story, n.d., p9. WHC, M-360, Box 10, FF1.

⁷ See “How to Secure Long-Haired Indians,” Pawnee Bill Program, 1893; DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1. Also, in a letter from the Commission of DI to Myers, the Commissioner gives permission to William J Thompson to have twenty Comanche Indians for Exhibition; in subsequent letters the conditions are stated: reasonable pay for time and service, to be fed, clothed, and cared for in case of sickness, and will be returned to reservation. OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency. See also Letter from DI to Doc Carver May 10, 1889, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency. The DI granted Doc Carver permission for twenty five Indians for a European exhibition, dependant on the same type of conditions granted Adam Forepaugh: fair pay; compensation for time and services; fed and clothed; return arranged if sick, disabled, and at end of contract; report of name and pay of each Indian, who must agree and sign contact; bond to be arranged before they leave; and they must hire someone to accompany and look after the welfare of the Indians.

⁸ The earliest reference I have found of these conditions is in an 1884 letter from Cody to Captain Penny about arranging such bonds and contracts. Letter Cody to Captain Penny (Agent Pine Ridge), February 25, 1884, DPL, FF6, Series 1, Copies Box 1, #91.

⁹ Lillie advised that the best and most legitimate way to recruit Indians is to go to Washington DC and request a review with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (see “How to secure long-haired Indians”). Most recruiters, local organizers, and entrepreneurs, however, went directly to Indian Agents on reservations. The BIA office in Washington was to make the final decision, but at times recruiters went ahead with the Indian Agent’s permission.

¹⁰ For example, in a letter from Acting Commissioner [Fassabee?] to the Superintendent of Cantonment School in Oklahoma, April 21, 1906, the Commissioner wrote that the DI discourages Indians from leaving reservations for show purposes unless with a reputable company like Cody’s. He further stated that recruiters for the 101 Ranch under “the Parker Amusement Company” were of very low character. OHS, IAF, Cheyenne and Arapahoes Agency.

¹¹ Letter from Commissioner Atkins to Indian Agent Jesse Lee Hall, March 28, 1887, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

¹² OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See for example letter from Commissioner Morgan to George [?] June 14, 1892, where he denies a request for Indians, stating that it is more useful and beneficial for Indians to remain home farming to improve the comfort of his family; OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

¹⁵ "Buffalo Bill is Home Again," *The Herald*, November 19, 1890, BBHC, MS6, Cody 1905 Scrapbook France and BBMG Research Files. For more details about the case, see Moses (1996, 92-105).

¹⁶ Other cases included the grievance against the Sells-Floto circus in 1913 initiated by Iron Cloud, who provided a list of performers' names and the amounts that they were due (Letter from Cody to Col. John Brennan August 23, 1913; BBMG Research Files) and the "Scapula" case. Cliff Pierce and Frank Charcoal of Scapula, Okalahoma, who previously worked as show agents for the Miller Brothers, took Natives from the reservation for a show in Springfield Missouri in 1927 and left seven Indians stranded there without pay. An alleged amount of \$4000 was owed and settled upon. (See Letter from Geo. W. H. Stouch Superintendent and SDA to Josefy McIntyre receiver Cummins Wild West March 10, 1905; letter from L.S. Bonnin (Supt.) to Mr. Cliff Pierce July 20, 1927; and letter from Bonnin to Mr. Frank Charcoal August 3, 1927. All from OHS, IAF, Cheyenne and Arapahoes Agency).

¹⁷ Letter from Geo. W. H. Stouch Superintendent and SDA to Josefy McIntyre receiver Cummins Wild West March 10, 1905, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne and Arapahoes Agency.

¹⁸ See for example letter to Col. Randlett (Attorney) which stated that sixteen Indians with the Mulhall show were dissatisfied and wanted to return home, but had no means to do so; OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

¹⁹ See letter from Mack Haay, Coyote, Red Cloud and Frank Hill to Indian Agent November 22, 1910, OHS, Cheyenne and Arapahoes Agency. The Indians wrote that they met with McNeill, who told them that he had met with the Indian Agent beforehand and said that he would see that they were returned home. Apparently, this was not the case.

²⁰ Letter from Sam Mayson to Indian Agent, Darlington, Oklahoma, November 25, 1910, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency.

²¹ See for example letter from Cody to Capt. G. Leroy Brown August 30, 1892, DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF6, item #93 and letter from Cody to Major John R. Brennen (Pine Ridge Agent) May 27, 1904, DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #95. In the latter letter, Cody notified Pine Ridge Indian Agent John Brennen that he was sending home Sitting Bull Jr. and Jones Specler[?] with lung problems, but that "The rest are well and happy. I will take good care of them." John Long Bull was sent home with consumption; letter from Cody to Brennen September 3, 1908, DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #99. In the summer of 1908, Cody sent home at least seven Native people due to health issues; four were not fit for duty and two had sick family members (letter from Cody to Brennen July 8, 1908, underline original, DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #99). Lone Bear was similarly sent home in 1907 to take care of his sick wife (letter from Cody to Brennen June 20, 1907, DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #97).

²² Illness and infections also spread quickly because people were living in close quarters. A Cheyenne performer at the Jamestown Exhibition wrote that the 101 Ranch Wild West show was too big for the exposition, and that there was much sickness everywhere. Following the death of Cheyenne Nocomiata due to typhoid pneumonia, the 101 management split the show and sent all the Cheyennes and part of the Sioux to Coney Island. Letter from Richard Davis to Mr. Homer J Bibb July 2, 1907, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency.

²³ With the exception of letters from Walter Battice, performer with the Millers' 101 show from the Sac and Fox agency, who wrote frequently about his positive experiences. See OHS, IAF, Sac & Fox Agency – Indian history, shows, and exhibitions File 36-6.

²⁴ Moreover, drinking and gambling was not restricted to Native performers.

²⁵ See for example Starita (1995) and Standing Bear (1975), both who discuss these issues.

²⁶ Warren bases his numbers on the conclusions of the Merriam Report of 1928 cited in Philip Weeks Ed. *The American Indian Experience* (1988, 240). In 1894, 285 Native people died on the Pine Ridge reservation of 8000, a death rate of 3.6 percent (Starita 1995, 161).

²⁷ For example, ceremonies were banned for the Lakota-Sioux in 1883, and land allotment occurred with the Dawes Act of 1887 and the allotment bill of 1889 (Warren 2005, 363, 375). The Dawes Act attempted to force allotment on the Lakota, and the allotment bill of 1889 split the reservation into six smaller reservations (Warren 2005, 375).

²⁸ Carlisle was established by William Henry Pratt in 1879.

²⁹ *Indian Helper*, May 25, 1888, BBMG, Research Files.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ “Iron Tail,” *Indian Helper*, August 13, 1897, BBMG Research Files. The article refers to Iron Tail as “a noble red man” yet “weak and helpless in many ways.” In the article, Iron Tail represents the ‘old Indian’ because he has no education, cannot speak English, and has no experience that would fit him for life in the outside (white) world.

³² “Iron Tail”

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Indian Helper*, August 6, 1897, BBMG Research Files. Emphasis added, capitals original.

³⁷ On rare occasions, even Indian Agents endorsed the idea that Native people would benefit from working in Wild West shows, stating that such employment gave “...Indians a chance to earn money and to see something of civilization.” Letter from Commissioner Browning to Acting Indian Agent Capt. F. D. Baldwin, December 24, 1896, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency files.

³⁸ See newspaper article “Buffalo Bill is Home Again,” *The Herald*, November 19, ca. 1890, BBHC, MS6, Cody 1905 Scrapbook, France and BBMG Research Files.

³⁹ “Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them.” The fact that Cody employed a massive number of Natives is also evident in visual record; cast pictures such as the ones found in the DPL digital image catalogue depict the size of the Native contingency.

⁴⁰ The first Wild West show was Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in 1884. Col Tim McCoy’s Real Wild West and Rough Riders of the World was one of the last, playing into 1938. The Miller brothers consistently produced shows from 1907 to 1916 and from 1925 to 1931, but also produced shows with various entrepreneurs periodically in 1933, 1945, 1946 and 1949. See Russell (1970, 121-7) for a list of shows.

⁴¹ Estimates are based on programs and correspondences in the archival record: *Cummins Indian Spectacular Congress and Life on the Plains. Wild West Indian Congress and Rough Riders of the World Program*, 1904, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF14; *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: daily programme*, London: Gale & Polden, 14pps, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, microform #003107.163.6; and *Official Review and History of the Great Wild West. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West*, “Official Program, 1926, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF16. See also Russell (1970, 72).

Note: in his 1904 European tour, Cody employed seventy Natives and wished to hire forty more. “Buffalo Bill is Home Again,” *The Herald*, November 19, ca. 1890, BBHC, MS6, Cody 1905 Scrapbook and letter from Cody to Liddiard, July 2, 1904, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #70. The Millers claimed that their 1905 show included 1000 Indians (Reddin 1999, 161), but on average they hired about 100 Native performers every year. But their Wild West show and Indian village at the Jamestown Exhibition in 1907 featured “some 500 Indians, cowboys, cowgirls, Mexicans...” (Gleach 2003, 425); Native performers numbered in the range of eighty to one hundred (letter from High Chief Cheyenne to Mr. Charles Shell Superintendent May 12, 1907, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency). Exact numbers are unclear. In this letter he wrote that the Jamestown Exhibition had forty-six Cheyennes and forty Sioux, but in another letter he said that 110 Sioux and Cheyenne were there. In a letter to Mr. Kohlenburg received May 6, 1907, Walter Battice wrote that the Millers Brothers 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show was making a success of the show with 165 Indians.

⁴² Warren supports these estimates, stating that more than a thousand Native people worked with the BBWW show over the course of thirty-three years (2005, 359).

⁴³ I did not find any letters to Cody requesting employment. One possible reason for this is that Cody made his recruitment requests mainly through his Indian Agent connections and personal connections with Native performers. On the other hand, Native people lived and/or worked near or on the Millers' and Lillie's ranch and hence had this unique connection with them. Hence Native people could inquiry directly to them about employment opportunities. The Millers brothers leased and purchased land from the Ponca, Otoe, Pawnee and Osage Indians (Reddin 1999, 158-9; Collins 1971, 50). Similarly Pawnee Bill's ranch on Blue Hawk Peak was leased from the Pawnee Indians. Native people would inquiry directly to them about employment opportunities.

⁴⁴ Letter from Sells Brothers to D. B. Dryer December 20, 1880, underline original, OHS, Quapaw Agency. See also letter from Commissioner D.M. Browning to acting Indian Agent Baldwin, which refers to Joseph W. Hunter's ('Apache Indian') desire to take with him twelve Apaches from Kiowa and Comanche for "song and dance." OHS, Kiowa Agency.

⁴⁵ See for example letter from Michael Brahm to Millers Brothers, December 26, 1912 saying he is a first class bronco rider (WHC, M-407, Box 1); letter from J Miller to Miss Hazel December 7, 1912, from Montreal about joining the show "at the lowest price" (WHC, M-407, Box 2, FF7); and letter from Bear Runs in Wood about employment with the show (WHC, M-407, Box 1, FF4). I counted twenty-one letters from the 1909 to 1911 files and eleven letters in 1912 alone; WHC, M-407.

⁴⁶ Letter from Chas. Black Horse Sr. to Mr. Miller, November[?] 15, 1920, WHC, M-407, Box 5, FF1.

⁴⁷ Letter from Creeping Bear to Joe Miller, March 11, 1926, WHC, M-407, Box 38, FF2. (Letter typed by Seger Indian Agency with Creeping Bear's signature).

⁴⁸ Letter from Millers to John R Brennan Superintendent Pine Ridge Agency, July 19, 1913, WHC, M-407, Box 3, FF2. He wrote that several of the Indians got tired of show business and went home. He also said that they picked up some Indians in Michigan and at Rose Bud.

⁴⁹ Letter from Henry Papocsul[?] and Henry P. to Col. Blackman Indian Agent, Dallas Texas, April 14, 1906, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency.

⁵⁰ Black Elk said that he and three other men got lost in Manchester just before the BBWW show was to leave in 1887; he found work with Mexican Joe's show to earn his way back (DeMallie 1984, 251-2).

⁵¹ In a letter from the Sells Brothers to Indian Agent D.B Dryer on December 20, 1880, he wrote that an Indian (name illegible) had one month pay of \$20 owing him when he left the show; OHS, IAF, Quapaw Agency. Indian Schools claimed that Native performers made anywhere from \$20-30 or even \$50 a month; see "Iron Tail," *Indian Helper*, August 13, 1897, BBMG, Research Files. In the 1908 article "Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them," Quimby wrote that the salary was \$30 a month. High Chief Cheyenne made \$8 per week (which is about \$32 per month) while his wife made \$3 per week and his children \$1 and \$2 per week; letter from High Chief Cheyenne to Mr. Charles Shell Superintendent May 12, 1907, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency Files. Bill Weadick only paid \$15-20 per month plus board and transportation for a show; letter from Cheyenne Bill Weadick to Major Stouw[?] Indian Agent December 26, 1907, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency Files. Henry Papocsul [?] wrote in a letter to Indian Agent Col Blackman Indian that Comanche boys get paid \$1 per day, OHS, IAF, Kiowa Agency. Margaret Horse[?] Road wrote in a letter dated June 16, 1925, that men and women in Canada were paid \$3 and \$2 instead of \$7 and \$5.50 (respectively); OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency Files. But in a letter from Ghost Dog to Mr. J.C. Miller December 3, 1926, Ghost Dog wrote that his salary is \$70.00 per month; WHC, M-407, Box 38, FF2. Later he wrote that his salary was \$1.07 per day, his wife's 0.71, older boy 0.35, and younger boy 0.35. Most contracts stipulated that Native performers be paid from day of departure to day returned to reservation. At times, the rate was less for 'travel' days in comparison to 'show' days.

⁵² "Small Boys Happy; Wild West Here. Buffalo Bill, Cowboys and Indians Gave Realistic Show," *Washington Eve Star*, April 11, 1911, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, Box 21 (1911). The article

notes that President Taft visited the show with some cabinet members. Story repeats in *Baltimore Star*, April 19, 1911, and includes a picture of Short Boy with caption 'A real Indian brave.'

⁵³ *Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book*, Season 1893, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1.

⁵⁴ Cody said that Indians sent home \$15-20 dollars every month; "Buffalo Bill is Home Again." In a letter from Cody to Capt. Geo. Le Roy Brown (Pine Ridge), he wrote about Indians sending money home and that the Indians should be sure to also write for whom the money is intended; DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF6, item #93.

⁵⁵ "Buffalo Bill is Home Again."

⁵⁶ The top paying cowboy with the Millers Brothers was paid \$160 while the top cowgirl was paid \$100 per month. The "boss cowboy" was also paid \$160. The average cowboy pay was about \$80 while the rest of the cowgirl troupe was paid \$40. Of the seventeen cowboys and twelve cowgirls on this list, four were also husband and wife. "List of cowboys and cowgirls with skills, duties and pay," n.d., WHC, M-407, Box 91, FF3.

⁵⁷ A payroll report from 1928 reveals that cowboys were paid on average \$25, cowgirls \$20, while Indians were only paid \$10. Specialty acts, like the Mexicans and Albert Hodgini Troupe, however, were paid even more than the cowboys. The report does not specify if the wages were for the week or the month. "Wild West & Great Far East Show Co. Inc. Season 1928 analysis of final payroll #23 1928," WHC M-407, Box 91, FF1.

⁵⁸ Ibid. The Native superintendent of the Indian troupe received \$35. But performers Red Bird, his wife and child were paid a total of \$19.75 while Fools Crow, his wife and two girls were paid only \$14.75, and Clinton Pawpau received a mere \$7.50. The highest paid performer, Indian Eye, received \$15, still \$10 less than a cowboy.

⁵⁹ There is some evidence that wages varied amongst Native performers with the BBWW show as well. In a letter to Brennen, Cody compared the wages received by the Brules and the Ogallalas: "These Brules haven't got the get up and go that the Ogalallas [sic] have but they do fairly well and they work for about half the wages. We paid the Ogalallas which accounts to a big lot of money on the season. Please remember me to Iron Tail or any of my red brothers." Letter from Cody to Brennen, n.d., DPL, Series 1, Copies Box 1, FF7, item #101. It is also possible that in this case, the Ogallala were more experienced in show business, which necessitated higher wages, or that they demanded more pay.

⁶⁰ Such pay differentiation may have led to tensions among the Native performers. In 1925, thirty-eight "young Indians" wrote to the Miller brothers asking for equal pay for equal work: "We are aware that some of the older Indians are drawing about twice as much as we are; it is no wonder that they are perfectly contented." Some of the performers who signed the letter include Dan Sitting Bull, Morgan Little Elk, Laura Little Elk, Louse Sutton, Bearhead, Ernest Makes Life and Noah Blackhorse. Letter to Miller Brothers, June 30, 1925, WHC, M-407, Box 36, FF4.

⁶¹ "Engaging Indian Actors and How the Shows Secure Them."

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Figure 2.1 "Indians walking around tepees at Wild West Show," WHC, Miller Brothers 101, Nesbitt/Lenders Collection #611; and Figure 2.2 "Indian Dancers at Wild West Show," WHC, Miller Brothers 101, Nesbitt/Lenders Collection #2317.

⁶⁴ See Shirley (1993, 134-5) and PBWW show Route Book and Program, 1893, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF1.

⁶⁵ Letter from High Chief Cheyenne to Mr. Charles Shell Superintendent, Darlington OK, May 12, 1907, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency.

⁶⁶ Letter from Ghost Dog to Mr. J.C. Miller December 3, 1926, enclosed with letter from JCM to Jermark (Pine Ridge Indian Agency), December 11, 1926 and check of \$115.52 for wages owed and travel expenses incurred for their return trip from New York to Pine Ridge; WHC, M-407, Box 38, FF2.

⁶⁷ Letter from Mr. B Freer to Joseph Miller, March 22, 1911, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency. The letter says that this girl would have opportunities not available to other Indian girls if

she stayed in school, and also that he should not employ Julia because she has three children to look after.

⁶⁸ Letter from Hauke to Mr. Freer, April 24, 1912, OHS, IAF, Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency. These minors stayed to work with Bison Moving Pictures Co. even though transport had been arranged to return them to the reservation.

⁶⁹ “Sioux, Apache, and Navajo braves” group picture from the Red Man Golden West Exhibition at Earls Court dated 1909 includes Mr. and Mrs. Spotted Weasel, Frank C. Goings and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Owns Many Horses; DPL, online Photography Collection, call number X-32148.

⁷⁰ Warren writes that the Sioux became dependant on rations for survival; in addition, a reduction in rations in the 1890s left many in debt (2005, 364, 375). Rations continued to decrease among the Sioux after 1890.

CHAPTER 3

¹ “‘The Yankeries’ and Buffalo Bill Thames[?],” *Gazette*, April 20, 1889, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF45. The 1909 Two Bills program advertised their show as an opportunity to see “authenticated, genuine people of different races.” *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West combined with Pawnee Bill’s Far East: Official Program*, 1909, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF42. The Millers also declared that all their Indians were “pure bloods.” *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Program*, 1910, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-C, Box 1, FF3.

² Sitting Bull paraded in the 1885 BBWW show, where audiences could heckle or cheer him for his part in the battle of Little Big Horn. Charlie-Owns-the-Dog, Standing Cloud, and Long Bull were also witnesses of the Custer massacre; *Miller Brothers 1910 Program*, BBHC, MS6, Series VI:C, Box 1, FF3.

For the 1891-2 season in Europe, Cody engaged a total of twenty-three Ghost Dance prisoners from Fort Sheridan who could bear testimony to the tragic events at the battle at Wounded Knee in 1890, the last of the Indian Wars (Kasson 2000, 191). Chief Bull Bear led the re-enactment of the Pat Hennesey massacre, which refers to the “1876 attack on a wagon train in the Indian Territory” (Moses 1996, 183); see also Roth (1965-66, 425) and “*Official Review and History of the Great Wild West. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West*” *Official Program*, 1926, WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF16. Veterans of the 6th regiment of the US cavalry, for example, were also a mainstay with the BBWW show; see for example BBWW show programs of 1897, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1905, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-A. For other examples, see “Wild West Show is Here” in St. John NB, *Daily Sun*, August 21, 1893, BBHC, Series VI-G, Box 1, FF15 and *Pawnee Bill’s Wild West and Great Far East Courier* c.1908-9, WHC, M360, Box 13, FF17.

³ A reporter writes about how the knowledge of frontiersmen like Cody was crucial for the conquest of the west: “These are brave hunters, initiated to the customs and the language of the Indians. Only men of that caliber and possessing this knowledge could provide the American army with scouts without which the conquest of this huge territory...would have been impossible.” *L’Illustration*, June 8, 1889, p. 492, *Pompeineau Library* (Paris, France). Translated from French.

⁴ See for example Schwartz (1998).

⁵ Cowboy skills in particular interested French audiences. See for example newspaper articles “La Première de Buffalo-Bill,” *Le Petite Journal*, May 20, 1889, p. 2; “Le Gala de Buffalo Bill,” *Le Figaro*, April 2, 1905, p. 1, col. 2-3; and “Arrivée au Havre. De Buffalo-Bill,” *Le Petite Journal*, May 13, 1889. *Pompeineau Library*.

⁶ *L’Illustration*, June 8, 1889, p. 492, *Pompeineau Library*. Translated from French.

⁷ For example, in 1893, the BBWW show featured the Battle of Little Big Horn or Custer’s Last Stand acts while the PBWW show toured with their reproduction of the Mountain Meadows massacre. *Pawnee Bill’s Historical Wild West and Mexican Hippodrome Official Route Book, Season 1893*, DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 1, FF1 and Moses (1996, 147-8). The PBWW show’s finale, “Trapper Tom’s Cabin” included scenes such as an attack by Indians, a massacre of white settlers, and the burning of the cabin. *Pawnee Bill’s Historical Wild West Official Program*, n.d. (c.1904-8), WHC, M-360, Box 13, FF6. See also newspaper article “Pawnee Bill’s Show,”

Morning Chronicle (Halifax, Nova Scotia), August 12, 1893, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-G, Box 1, FF15; and 1898[?] Route Book of PBWW show, WHC, M-360, Box 13, FF4.

⁸ The cowboys also camped in tents outside the arena. Native people, cowboys, and the animals were on display for visitors before the show.

⁹ "The American Exhibition," *The Morning Post*, May 5 [1887?], DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF40. The Millers likewise invited the public to visit the encampment and talk with Indians through interpreters. 1910 Program section "Miller Bros & Edw. Arlington vast and conglomerate array of Indians," BBHC, MS6, Series VI:C, Box 1, FF3.

¹⁰ Cody first developed more elaborate couriers in 1886 (Slotkin 1981, 33); other Wild West shows quickly followed suit.

¹¹ See for example the more than seventy page Buffalo Bill 1901 program, WHC, M360, Box 13, FF4; the sixty four page BBWW show 1887 Courier, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF22; the 1893 BBWW show Program, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-A, microfilm 1/10; and the 1909 BBWW combined with PBFE Courier Program, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF40 and FF42.

¹² See for example *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Courier Program 1885*, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF19 and the BBWW combined with PBFE Courier Program 1909, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF40 and FF42.

¹³ See also Goldie (1989) for a discussion on the production of this dichotomy in literature.

¹⁴ "The Wild West at Beacon Park," *Evening Transcript*, July 28, 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, volume 1, microfilm 18, reel 1.

¹⁵ "Mr. Gladstone and the United States," *Daily Telegraph*, April 29, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF8.

¹⁶ "Buffalo Bill's Show (By one who has seen it)," *Court and Society* section of newspaper article, source unknown, March 23, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, F38. See also *Evening News*, April 28, 1887, and other articles from the *Daily News* and the *Globe*.

¹⁷ "Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent of the Great Sioux Chief - He Talks About the Campaign Against His People," *The Evening Leader*, September 13, 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, volume 1, microfilm 18, reel 1.

¹⁸ "The Reasons of the Sioux Revolt," *The Herald*, January 3, 1891, BBHC, Series VI-E, OS1 Green/Brown Scrapbook c1890-1891. Significantly, this article was written during the Sioux uprisings and revolts of the Ghost Dance.

¹⁹ See for example "Redskins at St. Paul's," *The Herald* (London), October 25, 1891, BBMG, Research Files.

²⁰ See for example "A Touch of Nature," *London Abbertiser*, July 10 [?], BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1897 Scrapbook (microfilm).

²¹ "Opening of the Wild West Show," *Daily Dispatch*, April 14, 1903, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1903 Scrapbook (microfilm).

²² "The Wild West show. Buffalo Bill and his Band of Indians," no source, (Montreal, Quebec), [1885?], DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

²³ "Buffalo Bill á Paris," *Le Petite Journal*, May 14, 1889, p. 2; *Pompineau Library*. Translated from French.

²⁴ See for example BBWW 1893 Show Program/Booklet, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-A, microfilm 1/10, and *Buffalo Bill's Wild West combined with Pawnee Bill's Far East Magazine of wonders and daily review*, Program, 1909. See also newspaper articles in Canada, the US and London:

"The 101 Ranch Wild West," *Victoria Daily Times*, May 27, 1912, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-G, Box 1, FF15; "101 Ranch Wild West show," advertisement, *Lethbridge Herald* (Brandon, Alberta), June 24, 1912, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-G, Box 1, FF15.

²⁵ "Pawnee Bill's Show," *Morning Chronicle* (Halifax, Nova Scotia), August 12, 1893, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-G. Box 1, FF15 and 1898[?] Route Book of the PBWW show, WHC, M-360, Box 13, FF4.

²⁶ "101 Ranch Wild West show," advertisement, 1912.

²⁷ See *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Courier Program*, 1885, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF19 and *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program*, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF22, which includes additional illustrations on "Indian Religion" and an "Indians at Home" section providing a detailed description of setting up camp. This program also includes a "Ghost Dance" section with individual Indian profiles. The *Cummins Indian Congress and Rough Riders* 1904 program includes essays on "Indian Dances" such as the Ghost Dance, Buffalo Dance, War Dance, and Devil Dance; DPL, Series 6, Copies Box 5, FF14.

²⁸ BBWW Show Program/Booklet, 1893; BBHC, Series VI-A, microfilm 1/10.

²⁹ "Dog Feast at White City," newspaper article, no source, n.d., WHC, M-407, Outsize Scrapbook Box 1, Large Black scrapbook of news clippings.

³⁰ The number of articles and programs containing these references are numerous; here I list only a select few. "The Wild West," no source, (Brantford, Ontario), July 16, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1897 Scrapbook (microfilm); "The Red Indian. A Premier Attraction at the Wild West Show," [Daily?] *Dispatch*, April 15, 1903, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1903 Scrapbook (microfilm); "Opening of the Wild West Show," *Daily Dispatch*, April 14, 1904, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1903 Scrapbook (microfilm).

³¹ The war dance became the generic name for all the dances or ceremonies performed, as the public could not distinguish one dance from another.

³² In fact, although Indians were presented as savages who lost the battle, some historical reenactments (Custer's Last Stand, Pat Hennessey's Massacre, even attacks on cabins and stagecoaches) could be read as examples of Native opposition and resistance.

³³ "A Hereditary Chief. Death of Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horse. His Life and Character. How he came to be Friendly to the Whites....," July 23, 1893, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, Box 8, 1893 Scrapbook.

³⁴ "Buffalo Bill's Blarney," newspaper article, n.d., BBHC, MS6, Series I:A, Box 1, FF3.

³⁵ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Courier Program* 1885, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 2, FF19.

³⁶ Some Native performers in this category with the BBWW show included Sitting Bull, Crow Eagle, Iron Tail, American Horse, Rocky Bear, Red Shirt, Red Cloud, and Short Bull. The Millers 101 Ranch had their fair share of well known warriors such as Crazy Bear, White Cloud, Eagle Elk, and Black Wolf.

³⁷ "Redskins at St. Paul's."

³⁸ *Official Review and History of the Great Wild West. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West* Program, 1926, in the section titled "Famous Warriors of the Indian Camp." WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF16.

³⁹ "Sitting Bull in Camp. Interview with one of Gen Custer's Murderers," *Evening Journal* (Detroit), September 5 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

⁴⁰ *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Program*, 1885, BBHC, Series VI:A, FF1/4, microroll #1. See also newspaper clippings in DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, volume 1 that say Sitting Bull lead the war dance and corn dance.

⁴¹ BBWW 1887 show program, BBHC, MS62, Series I:G, Box 1, FF27 and *L'Ouest Sauvage de Buffalo Bill* Handbill Program, 1889, BBHC, MS6, Series VI:A, Box1/FF9 (microroll#1) translated from French.

⁴² *Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Real Wild West Program*, 1910, BBHC, MS6, Series VI:C, Box 1, FF2.

⁴³ See for example BBMG Canadian clippings, DPL Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, and BBHC Series IX: Scrapbooks. See also "Official Review and History of the Great Wild West. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West 1926 program, which stated that dance was the most dominant feature in Indian life and a draw for audiences; WHC, M-407, Box 95, FF16.

⁴⁴ *Official Review and History of the Great Wild West. Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West* program, 1926.

⁴⁵ "Amusements – the Wild West," *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette*, August 13 1885, BBMG Canadian Clippings File.

⁴⁶ An interesting quote in Miller brothers' 1910 program acknowledges that they had many Chiefs with the show who maintained their old customs "in spite of government and in spite of education." *Miller Brothers and Arlington Program*, 1910, section titled "Miller Bros & Edw. Arlington vast and conglomerate array of Indians," BBHC, MS6, Series VI-C, Box 1, FF3.

⁴⁷ Dr. Oronhyatekha (also known as Peter Martin) was from Six Nations (near Brantford, Ontario) and was the first Aboriginal medical doctor in Canada, as well as an author, office holder, and administrator for the Independent Order of Foresters. In 1860, he was chosen by the chiefs to deliver an address of welcome to the visiting Prince of Wales, after when he became well known for his public life. For more on Dr. Oronhyatekha, see Nicks (1996) and the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?Bioid=41098>.

⁴⁸ "Sitting Bull in Camp. Interview with one of Gen Custer's Murderers."

⁴⁹ "Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent of the Great Sioux Chief."

CHAPTER 4

¹ In terms of Native performers with Wild West shows as tourists, in this analysis, I consider both their travels beyond the reservations and overseas as 'abroad.'

² The McCord Museum in Montreal contains an extensive collection of Notman photographs, including the Buffalo Bill – Sitting Bull series. There are twenty-two photographs of Sitting Bull, eight of Sitting Bull and Cody, eight of Cody, seven of Crow Eagle, and one with Crow Eagle, Cody, William H. H. Murray, Buck Taylor, Sitting Bull, Johnny Baker and interpreter William Halsey. McCord Museum, Notman Photographic Archives, group photo number II-94132.

³ McCord Museum, Notman Photographic Archives, II-83924(-B).

⁴ McCord Museum, Notman Photographic Archives, II-83129.

⁵ "Cow-boys and Indians," *The Times* (Philadelphia), June 7, 1886, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

⁶ "A Hereditary Chief. Death of Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horse. His Life and Character. How he came to be Friendly to the Whites...", July 23, 1893, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, Box 8, 1893 Scrapbook.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Major James Morrow Walsh was commissioned in 1875 by the North-West Mounted Police to establish a fort near Cypress Hill, Saskatchewan, which he named after himself, Fort Walsh. Part of his jurisdiction was the Wood Mountain area, where Sitting Bull and 5000 Sioux sought refuge after the battle at Little Bighorn.

⁹ "The Wild West Show. Buffalo Bill and his Band of Indians," [Montreal 1885?], DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1

¹⁰ "A BBQ at Beacon Park: Eating Roast Ox with Sharp Sticks as Guests of Sitting Bull," *Boston Daily Globe*, July 31, 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

¹¹ "A BBQ at Beacon Park: Eating Roast Ox with Sharp Sticks as Guests of Sitting Bull."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Red Cloud Comes to Town. The Great Sioux Warrior Visits his friend Long Hair," *The Sun* (New York), May 7, 1897, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 16, reel 1, volume 6.

¹⁴ "'Red Shirt' on Mr. Gladstone. A Big Indian Battle. The Future of the Red Man," *The Sheffield Leader*, May 3, [1887?], DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF41.

¹⁵ "Chief Red Shirt," n.d., WHC, M-407, Outsize Scrapbook Box 1, large black news clipping scrapbook.

¹⁶ "Great Scout Outlives Redskins Who Sought His Scalp," [*The Eagle*?] (Wichita, KS), July[?] 25, reprinted in *Omaha Sunday Bee*, August 13, 1911, BBHC, Series IV, Box 21 - Johnny Baker scrapbook.

¹⁷ *Pawnee Bill's Wild West and Great Far East Courier*, ca.1908-9, WHC, M-360, Box 13, FF17. Although the WHC lists this as ca.1908-9, it must be pre-1908, because it is not a program for the Two Bills combined show.

¹⁸ "'Red Shirt' on Mr. Gladstone." Emphasis added.

¹⁹ “Red Cloud Comes to Town.”

²⁰ “Red Cloud Comes to Town.”

²¹ “The American Exhibition and the WW show,” *Observer*, April 24, 1887, DPL, Series 2, Copies Box 3, FF8.

²² “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West center of local interest today,” *The Constitution* (Atlanta), October 7, 1907, BBHC, Series IX, Box 20, Season 1907 Scrapbook (grey with burgundy trim).

²³ “A Great Red Indian Fight,” *Millaud Daily Telegraph Coventry*, February 28, 1903, BBHC, MS6, Series IX, 1903-4 Scrapbook (microfilm).

²⁴ “A Great Red Indian Fight”

²⁵ “Strange Experiences of Indian Chief and Squaw in the ‘Wild East.’ – Pleased by the Novelties...”, *Sunday Globe* [1897], DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 16, reel 1, volume 6 (April-Oct 1897).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ There is no heading for this article. It is possibly a continuation of the article on the same page as “Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent of the Great Sioux Chief-He Talks About the Campaign Against His People,” *The Evening Leader*, September 13, 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

²⁸ Winifred Black, “A Red-Skinned Citizen from Pine Ridge Gives His Impressions of New York and of Some Things of Human Interest,” *New York Journal*, n.d., DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 16, reel 1, volume 6 (April-Oct 1897).

²⁹ “Chief Last Man, Sioux, thinks city folks Crazy,” *101 Ranch News*, n.d., WHC, M-407, Posters#169-24. The article also states that the Chief had not been on the Pine Ridge Reserve since Wounded Knee, when he joined the 101 Ranch show. He’s never in a hurry, writes the author of the Chief, except in warfare, as he did when leading warriors into the [Wild West] arena. The article includes a picture of Last Man and three other Indians presenting a tomahawk to Captain George Metcalf, then eighty six years old.

³⁰ “Wild West Calls on Wild East. Indian and Cowboy see the Things that make New York Life Interesting, and Describe Their Impressions of Them,” *The World*, May 2, 1897, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 16, reel 1, volume 6 (April-Oct 1897).

³¹ “Rain-in-the-Face Kisses the Blarney Stone, Which He Termed the White Man’s Idol. Marvelled at the Dudeen.” No source; DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 16, reel 1, volume 6 (April-Oct 1897).

³² “Rain-in-the-Face Kisses the Blarney Stone.”

³³ However, some Native performers before, during, and after their careers were politically active and/or spokespeople. The connection between their performance careers and political life requires further research.

³⁴ “Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent of the Great Sioux Chief-He Talks About the Campaign Against His People,” *Evening Leader*, September 13, 1885, DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “The Wild West Show. Buffalo Bill and his Band of Indians,” [Montreal 1885?], DPL, Nate Salsbury Scrapbooks, microfilm 18, reel 1, volume 1.

³⁷ “The Wild West Show. Buffalo Bill and his Band of Indians.”

³⁸ “Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent.”

³⁹ “Sitting Bull. A Half Hour in the Tent.”

⁴⁰ Winifred Black, “A Red-Skinned Citizen from Pine Ridge Gives His Impressions of New York.”

⁴¹ “‘Red Shirt’ on Mr. Gladstone.”

CHAPTER 5

¹ See Beauvais (1985) for a summary on the history of Kahnawake’s participation in entertainment, including examples of displays of lacrosse, river guides, wrestlers, vaudeville, and

the tourist industry in general. Nicks also provides a summary in her 1999 book chapter and in Nicks (n.d.). Blanchard (1984) outlines the participation of Mohawks, in particular the Deer family, in Wild West shows and exhibitions while King (1991) discusses Mohawk participation in exhibitions at Earl's Court in 1905 and the Coronation Exhibition at White City in 1911. Nicks and Phillips (2007) provide one of the first detailed explorations of Princess White Deer's career in vaudeville and commemorative events. See Nelles (1999) for a discussion on Mohawk participation in pageants at the Quebec Tercentenary and Brydon (1993) for a discussion on Hiawatha pageants. Jasen (1993-94) describes the history of the tourist industry and Native participation in Ontario more broadly. Baillargeon and Tepper (1998) examine Native participation in rodeos. Bara (1996), Lounsbury (2000), and Skidmore (2003) discuss BBWW show in Canada.

² See also McCord photographs MP-1973-.14 of Mohawk group taken at Kahnawake in 1869 and M2000.21.7.11 "Caugnawaga Indian, European Team, 1876"; McCord Museum. Beauvais writes that "fifteen performers went on tour in 1867, including Taiaiake Rice's lacrosse team; and in 1876, fifteen lacrosse players, led by Big John Canadien, completed a tour of the British Isles" (1985, 136).

³ Billy is an elder from Kahnawake; his Mohawk name is Kaientarankwen, which means "where the wood is gathered for the meeting, the council meeting." Billy was immersed in the entertainment industry in the 1950s as a wrestler and traveled extensively.

⁴ Akwiranoron was born in 1872 and died c.1913

⁵ It is probable that Akwiranoron also participated in the 1909 Champlain Lake Celebrations that took place in the states of New York and Vermont.

⁶ Photograph #897 (donor Agnus Beauvais), KOR, Photographic Project – Entertainment. The boy standing to the right may be a step son or son from another marriage; he is referred to as "brother James/Jim Beauvais"

⁷ Photograph #103B and #104, KOR, Photographic Project – Entertainment. According to the accession notes for photograph #103B dated "before 1931," Akwiranoron played the uncle of Hiawatha in a play in Philadelphia; the bottom of the photograph reads "Pau-pau-kee-wis."

⁸ Personal communication with Conway Jocks August 26, 2004.

If these photographs are indeed stills from a Hiawatha film, they may be from a 1909 film produced by Carl Laemmle, Independent Motion Pictures (IMP) that runs fifteen minutes. A silent film produced in Canada in 1903, directed by Joe Rostenthal, may be another possibility. Also, a third Hiawatha film was produced by the Fort Defiance Film Company in 1913, which included an Indian cast of 150 from N.Y., Canada, and the Dakotas; it was filmed in New York State near Lake Superior (Library of Congress). This is the only film for which I was able to confirm a Native cast.

⁹ For more details on the pageant contents, see Nelles (1999). For a colorful detailed account of the pageants, see "Most Impressive will be the Pageant: Description of the Different Scenes," *Quebec Chronicle*, July 5, 1908. See also the historic souvenir book (NBC 1908); newspaper article "Performers Were Chosen in Pageants. The Indians," *The Quebec Chronicle*, July 29, 1908, Archives of Ontario, F1068 Mu2365, Scrapbook, Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908; and newspaper article "The meaning of the pageant," July, 1908, *Canadian Pictorial*, Archives of Ontario, F1068 MU2356.

¹⁰ In fact, Native people were the only paid actors in the pageant (Nelles 1999, 174). Iroquois actors from Kahnawake, Ojibway from Sault St. Marie, and Huron from Ancien Lorrette, played various Native roles.

¹¹ See digital images McCord M14372 and M14373 of American Horse's regalia, as well as the magazine cover of *The Canadian Courier*, 1908. American Horse's Indian name was Té-wa-ni-ta-né-ke (meaning Two Moons); his English name was Angus Montour (b. 1850 - d. 1928).

¹² Stereo card 1995-009/001(99), York University Archives, Quebec Tercentenary Photographic Collection, F0112, Box 1.

¹³ Stereo card 1995-009/001(105), York University Archives, Quebec Tercentenary Photographic Collection, F0112, Box 1.

¹⁴ Consisting of feathers standing up on end rather than an abundance of cascading feathers, the headdress could be of eastern origin. Also, different types of feathers were used, not necessarily eagle. Some Plains groups, such as the Blackfoot, similarly wore this type of headdress; this style is also associated with older Plains headdresses used for ceremonial purposes. But the fact remains that the public does not associate this style with Plains Indians; that is, it does not meet their expectations.

¹⁵ Some of the stereo cards show Scar Face and American Horse, “chiefs of the Iroquois,” and their “braves” in front of a row of teepees, supporting the fact that a large Native contingent traveled to Quebec City (see for example McCord Museum, stereo card MP1987.17.2 and VIEW-8839). It is therefore possible that Native participants also camped near the site of the pageants, and that the row of teepees in the stereo card depicts the encampment. A newspaper article mentions that seeing the decoration on teepees was a good reason to visit the *Indian village*; “Performers Were Chosen in Pageants. The Indians,” Archives of Ontario, F1068 Mu2365, Scrap Book, Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908. The encampment would have provided another opportunity, aside from the pageants, for white audiences to gaze upon Native people. Newspaper descriptions and the visual record of the pageant (stereocards, postcards, and newspaper images) primarily show men, but there is evidence that entire families came to Quebec together. For example, one stereo card of Kahanawake Natives depicts several children (see also picture in Nelles 1999, 180). Because the pageants primarily focused on male warriors, it is not clear if women or children participated in the pageants to any great extent beyond minor background roles.

¹⁶ Photograph #055, KOR, Photographic Project – Entertainment. This picture was likely taken at Earl’s Court, London, in 1905.

¹⁷ Doxtator (1992) and Berkhofer (1978) also provide a discussion on Indian stereotypes and images.

¹⁸ See Greci Green (2001), who begins to address this issue in chapter 7 with a review of Lakota Dress, and in chapter 8 with an analysis on the use of trade goods.

¹⁹ “Redskins at Earl’s Court,” BBHC, MS6, VI:D, Box 1, FF4.

²⁰ Photograph #052, KOR, Photographic Project – Entertainment.

²¹ Photograph #056a, KOR, Photographic Project – Entertainment. See also photograph #108 and #896.

²² Iroquoian style headdresses consisted of a cap with some feathers; see page two of Gabor for illustration. See also endnote 14.

²³ Barbara jokingly added that the bear probably scared him and he fell and scratched his face.

²⁴ Barbara owns some pieces of regalia from her great grandmother Jawitson, such as her skirt, belt, and headband (Figure 13), which are also pictured in the photographs from Earl’s Court (Figure 11), as well as her gold lame bikini and dress that she wore in performances when she went to England. Barbara also has Scar Face’s pouch, hat, and a necklace.

²⁵ Photograph by author.

²⁶ The exchange of design elements occurred inter-tribally outside of the entertainment context as well (c.f. Hail 1993).

²⁷ For a fascinating and comprehensive discussion on the life and career of Molly Spotted Elk, see McBride (1995).

²⁸ KOR, PWD Collection.

²⁹ Photographs by author. PWD’s short skirt has a beaded waistband of teepees, and is made with ermine skins; KOR, PWD Collection, Regalia Box #3. Figure 17 from KOR, PWD Collection, Regalia no Box#.

³⁰ They could also watch a game of tug-of-war at this site; *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: daily programme*, London: Gale & Polden, 14pps, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, microform #003107.163.6.

³¹ *Illustrated London News*, May 6, 1905, p. 635, York University Library and Archives.

³² “Redskins at Earl’s Court.”

³³ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: official guide and catalogue*, London: Gale & Polden, 1905, 166pps, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, microform #003107.163.5, p142.

³⁴ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: official guide and catalogue*, p142.

³⁵ “Redskins at Earl’s Court” and the *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: daily programme*. The Abemihi [sic] tribe listed in the article probably refers to the Abenaki, as listed in the program.

³⁶ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: official guide and catalogue*.

³⁷ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: official guide and catalogue*, p. 143.

³⁸ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: daily programme*.

³⁹ Ibid. A newspaper article about the Native performers at the Quebec celebrations in 1908 also praised Akwiranoron’s archery skills; “Performers Were Chosen in Pageants. The Indians.”

⁴⁰ *Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: daily programme and Naval, Shipping and Fisheries Exhibition, 1905, Earl’s Court: official guide and catalogue*, p143.

⁴¹ Esther’s grandfather Chief (John) Running Deer was born in 1834 and died at the age of ninety in 1924. Her grandmother Esther Loft (Ka-nas-ta-ge) was a descendent of Joseph Brant. Their son, Esther’s father, James Deer was born on the St. Regis Reservation in 1866 and died in 1939 at the age of seventy nine. His Native name Ar-ha-ken-kia-ka means “Cutting of the Forest.” His wife, Esther’s mother, was Georgette Osborne. James, John Jr. Ta-ka-lo-lus Deer (b. 1834?), and George A-na-ta-kari-as Deer (1884-1913), were cousins of Dr. Oron-hy-atok-ka. Esther’s aunt Mary (Wari-sa-ta-yiu-kio) Williams, was the sister of James, John, and George. Mary married George W. Williams and had a son Mitchell, Sylvia Trudeau’s uncle.

⁴² For example, newspaper articles state that Chief Running Deer exhibited with P.T. Barnum and toured with BBWW show; “John Running Deer Dies,” n.d., KOR, PWD collection. See also typed document by Princess White Deer, “An Explanation of the Wampum Belt,” KOR, PWD collection. In addition, James Deer reportedly worked with a variety of Wild West shows and circuses, such as Forepaugh Barnum & Bailey, Col. Cummings Wild West show, Oklahoma Wild West, Texas Jack Circus, and their own Deer Family show; “The Final Curtain,” *Obituaries*, April 20, 1940, KOR, PWD collection. In 1901, the family was part of Colonial Cummins Wild West show at the Buffalo exposition. Newspaper articles note the daring and skillful trick riding of James Deer, who injured his hand in the performance. Esther is billed as Princess Esteeda; the family traveled with special regalia and prized possessions, which were reportedly stolen. Cummins offered a \$200 reward for a stolen wampum necklace, \$100 for a parchment and other articles stolen from Princess Esteeda’s trunk. According to the article, the necklace was over 100 years old and was first given to the Navajo Indians by Jesuit fathers. “Reward Offered by Manager Cummins. \$300 will be paid for return of stolen articles of value,” no source, n.d., KOR, PWD collection.

⁴³ “Texas Jack’s Circus,” newspaper clipping, no source, n.d., and “Texas Jack Show,” newspaper clipping, no source, n.d., KOR, PWD collection.

⁴⁴ “Texas Jack’s Circus.”

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ “Texas Jack’s Circus,” and “Texas Jack’s Great Combined Shows,” newspaper clipping of advertisement, KOR, PWD collection.

⁴⁷ “Texas Jack’s Circus.”

⁴⁸ Information about their tour dates and places are not fully known. Based on newspaper articles and performance programs, bills, and advertisements found in the PWD collection at KOR, some of the tours included the United Kingdom in 1905, Germany in 1906, Germany and England in 1907, a more broad tour of the UK in 1908 and a return trip to Germany in 1909 and 1910. Esther also traveled to Russia, the Ukraine and Poland in 1911 and Paris in 1928.

⁴⁹ “Alhambra - Theatre of Varieties,” advertisement (Edinburgh, Scotland), April 20, 1908, and newspaper clipping, 1910; KOR, PWD collection.

⁵⁰ Newspaper clipping, 1910, KOR, PWD collection.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid. The cakewalk is an African America dance that emerged during slavery. The dance is meant to be a satirical parody of formal European ballroom dances.

⁵³ It is difficult to know for certain whether the tone of the Deer Family show was different than that of the Texas Jack show or whether the newspaper accounts of the show more so represented the public’s perception and expectations of Nativeness instead.

⁵⁴ KOR, PWD Collection. It is unknown who took these photographs, but we do know that most of the pictures have been collected by Esther herself and then donated (photocopies were made) by her niece Sylvia Trudeau, who received Esther’s collection upon her passing. Although the KOR PWD collection is perhaps partial, it is a representative corpus as it contains a large mass of materials, which record her career and significant experiences in her life. Some photographs in the collection have been donated by others from Kahnawake.

⁵⁵ Photocopies of newspaper clippings and photographs along with some of Esther’s regalia have been donated to KOR and form the Princess White Deer (PWD) Collection. This research depends on a review of the collection at KOR, as well as an examination of the original photographs and clippings together with Sylvia in her home in Lachine, Quebec.

⁵⁶ For a more detailed biography of Princess White Deer, see Nicks and Phillips (2007).

⁵⁷ Vaudeville is an American form of variety entertainment that appealed to a broader, middle class audience, including women and children; it consisted of a variety of acts such as acrobats and jugglers, song and dance, music, and comedy, which tended to present racial stereotypes (Kennedy 2003, 1400-1). For more on women in vaudeville and issues of gender and cultural reproduction, see Alison (1999). Esther played at upscale vaudeville venues such as the Palace Theatre, The Grand, Liberty Theatre, Bijou Theatre, NYC New Amsterdam Theatre, the Hippodrome, and the Majestic Theatre in Buffalo.

⁵⁸ See also Sylvia’s interview in “Princes White Deer Today,” *The Paposse*, May 1981, KOR, PWD collection.

⁵⁹ See also “Princes White Deer Today.”

⁶⁰ “B.F. Keith’s Bill and Grand Scores Heavily,” no source, n.d. [ca. 1920], KOR, PWD collection.

⁶¹ “A New ‘9 o’Clock Revue,” n.d., KOR, PWD collection.

⁶² “‘Tip Top’ Has Just About Everything Anybody Needs,” *New York Tribune*, October 6, 1920, KOR, PWD collection.

⁶³ Letter from Robert Redmond for James Drain to Esther Deer, March 26, 1925, KOR, PWD collection.

⁶⁴ “Princes White Deer Says Fred Stone Would Have Made Might War Chief,” *New York Tribune*, ca. 1920, KOR, PWD collection. Sylvia also said in our interview that they were always referring to her as daughter of the last hereditary chief and so forth.

⁶⁵ “Princes White Deer Says Fred Stone Would Have Made Mighty War Chief”; “To Enact Historic Role” *The Daily Item* (Port Chester), August 8, 1933; and “Chief Deer Will Take Part in White Plains Celebration,” n.d. All clippings from KOR, PWD collection. Joseph Brant (b. 1743 d.1807) was a Mohawk leader known for his role in 1176 in the American Revolution, but better known for establishing the Western Confederacy and traveling to London to request compensation for their losses as a result of the war, and to ask for assistance to protect them from the Americans in the 1780s. See endnote n47, chapter 3, for basic information on Dr. Oron-hy-atek-kha.

⁶⁶ KOR, PWD Collection.

⁶⁷ Photograph by author. Figure 18 illustrates a wide array of performance regalia accessories including headbands, beaded cap, leather armbands, knee jingles, bags, and beaded yoke; KOR, PWD collection, Regalia Box #38.

⁶⁸ Photographs by author. KOR, PWD Collection, Regalia Box#18 and #19.

⁶⁹ Mitchell Williams was the brother-in-law of James Deer.

⁷⁰ “‘Tip Top’ Has Just About Everything Anybody Needs.” The Buck and Wing dance is a style of tap dancing combining steps of the Irish jig and British clogging, which was popularized first by African Americans.

⁷¹ “Princess White Deer (2) Dancing. 17 mins.: One and Full State Special. Hippodrome,” *New York Variety*, January 21, 1925, KOR, PWD collection.

⁷² “Princess White Deer (2) Dancing. 17 mins.: One and Full State Special. Hippodrome.”

⁷³ *National Tribute to General John J Pershing by The American Legion, April 25th 1925 11:30 pm*, Program, KOR, PWD collection. According to the program, the Revue was conceived by Mark Leuscher.

CHAPTER 6

¹ Lainsbury (2000) discusses how Eurodisney became a reality despite economic instability and the controversy surrounding its construction.

² Upon exiting the train station at Eurodisney, visitors may enter the enclosed themed areas of *Disneyland Park* to the right or *Walt Disney Studio Parks* straight ahead. Once through the main gates of *Disneyland Park*, one can see Sleeping Beauty’s Castle rising beyond *Main Street U.S.A.* Town Square and Central Plaza. *Disneyland Park* consists of four different themed ‘lands’ – *Discoveryland*, *Fantasyland*, *Adventureland* and *Frontierland* – which offer rides and reproductions of imaginary and ‘real’ worlds.

³ Bryam defines themeing as the “clothing of institutions or objects in a narrative that is largely unrelated...such as a casino or restaurant with a Wild West narrative” (2004, 2).

⁴ There are also many Disney shops to address your souvenir needs.

⁵ The show’s Director, Robert Carsen, worked with many people to create the show: Jean Luc Choplin (producer), Ian Burton (script), George Fendel (music), Mario Luraschi (animal coordinator), Andrew Bridge (special effects), and Christel Grevel (lighting) to name a few; *Press Information*, Eurodisney Press Kit, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, 2004, Press Relations, Karine Moral, and personal communication with Christel Grevel. Robert Carsen continues to direct the show, Christel is now the Artistic Director and Nick Rodgers is currently the head of the show and supervises all technical aspects of the show, from horse coordination to reservations, kitchen, service, and marketing; Christel Grevel, September 27, 2004, personal communication. The BBWW show was one of the original attractions of Disney Village when Eurodisney opened to the public in 1992.

⁶ *Press Information*, Eurodisney Press Kit, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, 2004, Press Relations, Karine Moral

⁷ Initial historical research for the Eurodisney BBWW show was done with the assistance of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

⁸ Photograph by author, 2004.

⁹ My description of the 1905 show in this chapter is based on the historical program, BBHC, MS6, Series VI-A, micro roll#2.

¹⁰ Sitting Bull only performed with the BBWW show in 1885. According to the 1905 program (France), Indians that year included Brule, Cheyenne, Ogallala and Arapaho. While cowboys and Indians made up much of the cast, Arabs, Japanese, Mexicans, Cossacks, and Zouves also displayed skills of horsemanship. Johnny Baker was also with the show at the time.

¹¹ Photograph by author, 2004.

¹² Photograph by author, 2005.

¹³ Photograph by author, 2005.

¹⁴ In the historical Buffalo Bill Wild West shows, audience members were also sometimes selected to ride in the stage coach. At the American Exhibition in London in 1887, Buffalo Bill, the Prince of Wales, and the kings of Denmark, Greece, Belgium, and Saxony, rode around the arena together in the Deadwood stagecoach, which was then attacked by Indians.

¹⁵ *Press Information*.

¹⁶ This selective censorship suggests that the BBWW show creative team perhaps recognized the force of such performances to perpetuate stereotypes. Christel Grevy said that these acts were removed for “obvious reasons,” but did not elaborate what she meant by this. It would be safe to say that presenting these vignettes would be controversial for the stereotypes and selective view of history they imply, as well as possible bad publicity. Christel Grevy, personal communication, September 27, 2004 and August 23, 2005.

¹⁷ The vignette is simply referred to as “The Deadwood Stagecoach” in the new historical reproduction program for 2005; *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show* program, 2005, Eurodisney.

¹⁸ In the 2005 show, producers added a barrel racing game to the rodeo portion of the show where Indians and cowboys compete together.

¹⁹ Photograph by author, 2004.

²⁰ *Press Information*. Photographs by author, 2005.

²¹ It is authentic according to the creative director of the show; interview with Christel Grevy September 27, 2004 and August 23, 2005. Claims of authenticity are also made in their Press Kit, *Press Information*, p. 5 in a section called “Authenticity, the Recipe for Success.”

²² Their choice of Buffalo Bill over other spectacular possibilities such as the legend of Zorro had something to do with Europe’s enduring fascination with Native people. This fascination has been well documented by scholarly research on hobbyist groups (e.g. Carlson 2002; Deloria 1998; Dubois 1993; Powers 1978).

²³ They also bring in buffalo from North America; *Press Information*.

²⁴ In another article, Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett distinguish authenticity from tourist realism: “Authenticity speaks in the language of copies and originals, the spurious and the genuine. Tourist realism is better understood in relation to virtuality and its effects” (1994, 459). Handler and Saxton found that living-history sites similarly defined authenticity in terms of historical accuracy and the *exact simulation* of a place or event (1988, 243, emphasis mine).

²⁵ *Press Information*.

²⁶ Also Steve Friesen, personal communication, June 5, 2005, BBMG.

²⁷ Photograph by author, 2005.

²⁸ Fieldnotes, October 1, 2004, Eurodisney.

²⁹ See Bryam for a discussion on “performative labor,” where work is seen as a theatrical performance; moreover, workers are considered actors on stage and are required to convey particular emotions (2004, 103, 104). This often involves standards of dress and behavior, which is strictly monitored by service managers in Disney and other service industries (Bryam 2004, 125-6).

³⁰ Carter Yellowbird is also a talent scout for movies and has a base of performer contacts that have rodeo and dancing skills, for example.

³¹ His family (Pat Provost and Jenny Bruised Head) also had their own horse show called the Wild Horse Show and Buffalo Chase on their reserve, near Brocket, Alberta.

³² Native performers demonstrate amazing riding skills and stunts in the show. Even though these performers are highly skilled riders and professionals, it is dangerous work, and there is risk of injury. Wiley said that he has been attacked by buffalo twice and has fallen off during his roman-riding stunt, sixteen hoofs flying around him (Mustus 2004). Ferlyn also injured his knee while performing (2004, pers. comm.). Ernest summarized some of the dangers and risks of the show: “The horses are going so fast you know you’re just standing on it and one slip you can fall down there, and there’s no way you can stop the team.... and you know you’re counting on the horse you have....something always goes wrong, nobody is there to tell you do this, you’ve got to make a quick decision, do it right, and try to avoid all the accidents. The horses are already trained; they’re on cue, [so] you can’t really do anything” (Rangel 2005).

³³ This interview was recorded by handwritten notes; for this reason, quotation marks are not used. Kave received a copy of the interview for verification and feedback.

³⁴ Eurodisney also seeks Native people with excellent horsemanship skills and the ability to work in a team environment, according to *the Canadian Auditions Poster, 2004* and the *Disneyland Paris Audition Poster, 1998* (Canadian auditions).

³⁵ Photograph by author, 2005.

³⁶ Also Carter Yellowbird, personal communication, June 9, 2004, Edmonton (AB).

³⁷ Kave was referring to how his collaboration with Blu Claire Productions for another film went bad.

CHAPTER 7

¹ Fieldnotes, June 23, 2005, Cody (WY).

² My discussion on the history of establishing BBD is based on my fieldnotes; Edre Maier, personal communication, June 24, 2005. Figure 29 photograph by author.

³ Although Buffalo Bill is present, the birthday celebration at BBD is for the opening of the Sheridan Inn.

⁴ Photograph by author.

⁵ <http://www.sheridaninn.com/index.htm>.

⁶ Photograph by author.

⁷ In 2005, the Fort Kearney's Frontier Regulars and Volunteers were in the parade and ended the Wild West show with a bang, literally, with their canon demonstration.

⁸ "Celebrate 112 Years," *A Special Advertising Section of the Billings Gazette*, June 19, 2005, p. 2.

⁹ The announcer carefully explains the historical context of the pony express and stagecoach attack. The announcer plays a crucial role in linking the Wild West re-enactments the audience witnesses with the historical Wild West shows that they are commemorating.

¹⁰ She further writes that Native peoples' responses to these events vary from participation to ambivalence.

¹¹ Native Spirit Productions is based out of Phoenix, Arizona. For a description of their services and products, see their website <http://www.nativespiritproduction.com/>. Since conducting this research NSP has updated their website, but the text remains essentially the same.

¹² Photographs by author.

¹³ Photograph by author.

¹⁴ www.nativespiritproduction.com/dancing.htm

¹⁵ Compare with Bramadat's (2001) examination of cultural spectacles in Canada as spaces for "dialogical self-definition," where participants attempt to construct representations of themselves; these representations often involve education about their ethnic identity.

¹⁶ NSP website, http://www.nativespiritproduction.com/about_brian.htm

¹⁷ NSP provides a variety of dances as part of their show presentations such as the hoop dance, eagle dance, traditional dance, grass dance, fancy dance, jingle dress dance, and fancy shawl dabce. At the Wild West show in Sheridan, Lane performed a fancy dance and hoop dance. See their website for more on their presentations and products <http://www.nativespiritproduction.com/>.

¹⁸ www.nativespiritproduction.com/dancing.htm

¹⁹ <http://www.nativespiritproduction.com/home.htm>

²⁰ www.nativespiritproduction.com/dancing.htm

²¹ www.nativespiritproduction.com/dancing.htm

²² The Ranch presents their Wild West show events on three consecutive Saturdays in June.

Photograph Figure 35 of Pawnee Bill's ranch taken by author.

²³ *Pawnee Oklahoma Visitor Guide 2005* and *Pawnee Bill Wild West Show 2005-06*, brochure. In the past, the PBWW show re-enactment consisted of an assortment of characters and thrilling acts, such as trick shooting, trick roping and riding, drill team, fancy drill (like square dancing on horses), whip acts, chariot races, a re-enactment of a longhorn cattle drive, a stagecoach robbery, Native American dancing, Cossacks (Ivan the Terrible does trick riding), lance target throwing, sword tricks, Annie Oakley, the pony express, and of course Pawnee Bill and Mae Lillie;

sometimes there was even a hanging of the horse thief. Erin Brown, personal communication, May 28, 2005.

²⁴ However, the brochure does state that a visit to the Ranch and the PBWW show is a chance to “celebrate the American spirit.”

²⁵ The Ranch’s friends group is called the Pawnee Bill Ranch Association.

²⁶ Nevertheless, Ronny and Erin affirm that the script is based on historical programs of the PBWW show.

²⁷ *The Original Pawnee Bill’s Wild West show 2002 Souvenir Program* and *Pawnee Bill Wild West Show 2003 (Final Show) Script*; PBRM. In 2003, Indian dancers performed for seven minutes out of a two hour show while Miss Ponca, curator of the White Hair Memorial in Osage county, explained each costume and dance.

²⁸ Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to interview the Native performers.

CONCLUSIONS

¹ See Vizenor (1994) and his notion of survivance.

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