

# The Currency of Consultation and Collaboration\*

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*Abstract: Since the 1980s, American museums have increasingly sought Native people's assistance in exhibitions and other projects. While others often present their success stories, I draw on my museum experiences and examine how cultural misunderstandings about the issue of money and payments can undermine such consultations. Drawing on the literature of gifts, exchanges, and commodities, I suggest that better understanding of the dynamics of payments, reciprocity, and traditional knowledge, values, and exchanges can strengthen collaborative projects for both museums and communities. Simultaneously, I examine what is at stake for indigenous participants and museums, and what instrumental purposes their involvement serves. [Keywords: consultation, collaboration, economics, exchange, museum authority]*

## The Post-Modern Museum: An Unfinished Edifice

*The burden of description, saying what others are saying, is not so easily shed.*  
- Clifford Geertz, "Making Experiences, Authoring Selves"

Today, in many cultural museums, anthropology's postmodern turn often takes the form of consultations and collaborations with indigenous people, variously referred to as source communities, communities of origin, and descent communities. This movement is not new, but has been slower in coming to North American museums than academic anthropology, where postmodernism has brought rejection of metanarratives of colonialism, cultural hierarchies, and objective knowledge and given way to interdisciplinary interpretation, redefinitions of knowledge and truth, and emphasis on local rather than world orders (Clifford 1988; Fox 1991; Lyotard 1984; Seidman 1994). With anthropology's shift from its "savage slot" (Trouillot 1991) and "a science of disappearing societies" (Fabian 1991:193) to a focus on contextualizing today's multicultural and hybrid societies, museums—as public educational institutions—bear a special burden in bringing theoretical and disciplinary advances to wider audiences.<sup>1</sup> Thus, as anthropology has become post-colonial, so have many museum endeavors, but museums' often ponderous institutional infrastructures have been slower to change than individual researchers.<sup>2</sup>

Museums' move toward post-coloniality and postmodernism has not been driven solely by changes in anthropology, and may instead stem from indigenous challenges, especially in terms of relevance and self-representation. Vine Deloria's plea for relevance in *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969; Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; Lurie 1976) was certainly heard in museums, as was the rising tide of Maori calls for sovereignty in the 1960s (Gorbey 1991; Mahuika 1991). Altogether, heightened awareness of indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and desires for

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self-representation have shaped museum projects, with de facto recognition of these issues most apparent in the work of the late Michael Ames (1990, 1992, 1994).<sup>3</sup>

The effects of pluralism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism on museums' work with subject populations have been slow, sometimes occurring in halting and misguided baby-steps. When calls for change began after 1960, museums were almost exclusively staffed by members of majority, settler societies who represented their own views on nature, culture, society, and near and distant Others (Bennett 1988; Lavine and Karp 1991; Pearce 1992; Price 1989; Sherman and Rogoff 1994; Simpson 2001). In the United States, museums occasionally employed Native people as exhibit consultants.<sup>4</sup> By the 1980s, debates over pluralism and multiculturalism brought a rise in Hispanic and African-American exhibitions but these were largely outsider representations (Lavine and Karp 1991). Some museums touted their contextualized interpretations of Others but created them without apparent contact with contemporary representatives (e.g., Lightfoot 1983; Lumley 1987). The 1984 *Te Maori* exhibition, which began with consultation about transporting objects out of New Zealand, ultimately led to Maori control over interpreting their own heritage (Lavine and Karp 1991).

Despite these changes, many museums responded to Native challenges simply by employing indigenous people as performers or crafts demonstrators (Hill 2000; Simpson 2001), but such displays continued to separate Others from self-representation within exhibition and publication canons.<sup>5</sup> By the late 1980s, museums found new ways to consult, engaging individual Native advisors, advisory committees, and guest curators (Ames 2000; Fisher and Johnson 1988; Hill 2000; Jones 1993; Kahn 2000; Krech 1994; Phillips 2003; Simpson 2001) and moved toward "speaking about" subject peoples rather than for them (Ames 1992; Clifford 1997a, 2004; Hedlund 1994). In the United States, critiques of archaeology and museums came to a head with the 1990 passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which forced museums and Native people into dialogue and increased the level and frequency of exhibit and other consultations (Hill 2000; Krech 1994; Kreps 2003; Simpson 2001).

From the 1990s onward, indigenous consultations became relatively commonplace (Clifford 2004; Fienup-Riordan 1999; Kahn 2000), and multivocality, "voice" (Ames 1994; Lavine 1991; W. West 1994), and allowing museum subjects to "speak for themselves" as experts became watchwords for sensitized museum practice (Ames 1990, 1992; Clifford 1997b; Hedlund 1994; Kreps 2003; Phillips 2003; West 1993, 1994).<sup>6</sup> Few problematized these activities, although Ann Lane Hedlund (1994) acknowledged that "voice" was complicated by museum practices that seldom identified non-Native authors and that indigenous involvement did not necessarily entail collaboration. David Penney (2000) and James Clifford (1997b) also described projects that engaged Native consultants after museum agendas were set, thus limiting their contributions. Miriam Kahn cautioned that "museums cannot simply add multiple voices" (2000:71), stressing the complex issues underlying consultations and recognition of changes in museum authority structures they entail.<sup>7</sup>

These situations have been further complicated by the shift from involving Native individuals to working with "communities" in ways overseen or approved by tribal governments. The differences between museum work with Native communities rather than individuals are considerable—in what is gained and the processes involved—and is too large a subject to

approach here. However, individuals' motivations often involve their personal status with respect to tradition and developing relationships with museum staff members. Work with communities—especially where tribal approval is sought, representatives are tribally appointed, and the results face review by tribal councils—is far more complex. Community processes can bring forward multiple bodies of knowledge represented by different community members (Blume 2006) and simultaneously necessitate rationalizing conflicting viewpoints within the community since no single voice can be expected to represent community perspectives.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the fact that collaborative projects take longer and cost more than those undertaken solely by museum staff (Phillips 2003), museums' work with indigenous constituencies has largely moved from extractive practices—such as using individuals as informants or simply eliciting information about collections objects—to involving Native communities or their representatives as project participants or partners (Clifford 1997b, 2004; Conaty 2003; Jonaitis and Inglis 1994; Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2003; West 1993). Indigenous advisors have rightly been suspicious of consultation agendas that address only development of specific, temporary exhibitions and promise little overt change in museums structures (Ames 1994; Clifford 1997b; Phillips 2003). However, in some arenas, diversification of museum staff and trustees has led to more encompassing changes in museum operations and potentially museums' relationships with their entire constituencies (Lavine 1992; Phillips 2003).

Despite the collaborative strides taken, accounts of work with indigenous people in museum settings tend to focus on the products of consultation rather than the process itself, although many acknowledge that because there is no single model for such work, process is as important as product (Phillips 2003).<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, accounts of such projects—usually told by museum employees—are overwhelmingly warm and fuzzy descriptions of the museum's attempt to be inclusive, the resulting exhibit's success, the celebratory nature of the exhibit opening, and community members' pride in the outcome. More than anything else, such accounts seem to serve the museum's image and public relations efforts. To some extent, improving the museum's image may be an explicit goal: Ames (1994) and Ruth B. Phillips (2003) acknowledge that collaborative museum projects with indigenous people can be used in museums' self-promotions, and Cornel West (1994) suggests that individuals and organizations align themselves with the disadvantaged to feel better about themselves and their own privileged social position. Phillips also ponders whether collaborative exhibits are simply a form of “symbolic restitution” (2003:158).

To return to the question of process, not all collaborative projects end with resounding successes and museums occasionally undertake internal “postmortems” to better understand what went wrong and how they might have done better. These self-analyses are sometimes shared with colleagues but, as Kahn (2000) suggests, few have gone on record about consultations that went wrong or articulated what they learned from problems they encountered on the road to a collaborative project.<sup>10</sup> The reasons why are undoubtedly legion, but may include individuals' reluctance to contradict their museum's self-established and self-congratulatory account, the natural tendency to avoid making oneself look bad, unwillingness to criticize indigenous partners or publicize the difficulties of working with specific communities, or a simple lack of time.

As an exception to this established pattern, I will draw on my experiences in museum work with Native individuals and communities since 1990 as well as one example from another museum project with which I was not involved. My goal in telling these stories is to illustrate the contexts of consultations, provide examples that others should not emulate, and connect a rarely discussed facet of collaborative museum projects to larger anthropological discourses. By doing so, I attempt a meta-anthropology and provide an example of how museum anthropologists can and should integrate what they often maintain as discrete skill sets and mentalities—anthropologist and “museum person”—and analyze the contexts of their own work. As museum people, we may chose to present “warm and fuzzy” descriptions of our work, but as anthropologists, we have a wider obligation to provide more critical self-analyses. The examples that I provide involve working with North American Indian people because this is the area of my greatest familiarity. I leave judgment about their applicability to museums, indigenous collaborators, and other parts of the world to those who will carry on such work.

### **The Currency of Consultation and Collaboration**

*The diverse values put on things depend specifically on barriers to their interchange, on the incontrovertibility of goods from different spheres.*

- Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*

One of the least warm and fuzzy things about how museums operate during consultations and collaborations—and which rarely gets mentioned in colleagues’ accounts—is money: cold, hard cash. Money’s invisibility may result from museums’ traditional reticence to expose things’ cost or value or from the suspicion that money, with all of its soiled associations, should not enter into a subject as noble as how exhibit content—as an intellectual product—is created. Over decades, museums’ economic dealings with indigenous people have changed and become more transparent, and this is as true of consultations as it is for purchase of objects from Native hands.

For early consultations, museums often asked Native people to volunteer their time: the museum could not pay or did not consider what it gained worth paying for. When identified, these contributions were lumped with other “donations” in acknowledgment texts. Museum consultation then—Native or non-Native—was not what it is today, and few museums had the funds or could rationalize the costs and benefits of Native consultations. Today, museums commonly engage and pay Native consultants, and this is only fair since museums obviously pay non-Native consultants. This transition has been facilitated by changes in grant funding—such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, state humanities agencies, and the National Science Foundation—since costs for Native or non-Native “subject-matter experts” can be included in grants and where such participation is almost a requirement.<sup>11</sup> However, including consultation costs in museum planning and budgets does not make such work easy.

My first story begins in 1990, with my initial venture into museum consultations with Native people. At that point, I was a consultant myself: as a graduate student, I worked with Brown University’s Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, which had received a grant for an exhibit on southern New England Native lives and histories, including funds to pay me as a guest curator and to support an advisory committee with members from Indian communities in Rhode Island,

Massachusetts, and Connecticut.<sup>12</sup> The Native Advisory Committee, which met intermittently for five months in 1991 to 1992, included 15 individuals (mostly selected by the museum) representing eight local Native communities (McMullen 1996). Committee members were paid a flat fee for each meeting they attended and reimbursed for travel costs. Since meetings were held in the evenings at the museum in Bristol, Rhode Island, many came straight from work and meals were provided by the Museum. This was the Haffenreffer Museum's first such endeavor and, as with any project like this, some of the early meetings were difficult. We began, not with discussion about the proposed exhibit's content, but instead about process. Committee members came with very hard questions and many of them revolved around money.

First, some committee members wanted assurance that their contributions were valued, and sought this guarantee by verifying that I—as a non-Native consultant—was not paid more than they were at an hourly rate. The next question—which one member posed to the others—was how they could accept payment for what they themselves had freely been given by their elders? They asked themselves how a price could be put on their heritage and how they could accept payment for traditional knowledge. Ultimately, we asked committee members to accept the payments as compensation for time they spent with us and not for information they provided. All agreed to do so, but some remained ambivalent about the possibility that knowledge was being exchanged for money.<sup>13</sup>

What underlay these discussions but remained unsaid, and which is clear only in hindsight, is that money complicated things because it simultaneously functioned in different ways. Our contributions were obviously unequal, but calling all of us “consultants” made it seem as if what the museum asked of Native advisors was the same as what it asked of me. However, what I offered the museum was my services as a commodity and while I was asked to draw on my experience and background, that did not include protected information. I remain unsure whether the understanding that I was selling my rights to what I produced complicated these matters: we never discussed the radically different ways that knowledge and experience factored into our differential participation. As a curator, my agenda was to gather information and re-circulate it to the museum's public, but the Native advisors had no such obligation: I suspect that theirs was more to safeguard traditional knowledge and to share it in more closely circumscribed situations.

This is not to suggest that indigenous ideas about money's relation to knowledge are universal; but understanding traditional knowledge's potential resistance to commodification (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986) via payments made by museums is vitally important.<sup>14</sup> In planning work with indigenous communities, museums must recognize the possibilities for misunderstanding and develop sufficient background knowledge, understand community expectations about what will transpire, and feelings about traditional knowledge. Those embarking on collaborative projects also need to know community specifics about reciprocity, how traditional knowledge might be owned and shared, and exactly what traditional payments might entail.<sup>15</sup> My second story illustrates this point as well as the notion that introducing money into cultural situations can sometimes radically affect the value politics of traditional knowledge.

During the National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) preparations for its inaugural *Our Peoples: Giving Voice to Our Histories* exhibition, we worked with eight indigenous communities, gathering traditional historical narratives for exhibit presentations.<sup>16</sup> Work with

Huichol (Wixarika) people entailed bringing community representatives to NMAI and visiting them in rural Mexico. Two NMAI curators, Ramiro Matos and Carmen Arellano, spent time in Mexico recording Huichol narratives that document how their divine ancestors' travels created Huichol territory. NMAI curators made arrangements to pay community members for their time as well as an upfront fee the community required, specifically animals for a sacrifice.

Our curators duly purchased a goat and a couple of chickens and continued their work, returning home with narratives that they had collected. NMAI's work with communities was relatively drawn out and, almost two years later, we invited Huichol community members to return to NMAI to consult on their exhibit's organization and design. We made arrangements for them to travel to a coastal town, rendezvous with an anthropologist they knew—whom we had engaged as an escort and translator—and travel to Mexico City to get passports and visas and then to the United States. But when our Huichol friends left their community to travel to the coast, it began to rain and storm; this was so severe that the roads were washed out and they had to return home.

Several weeks later, they finally made it to Washington, D.C. and began our discussions by explaining that the storms that had delayed their arrival—as well as other troubles their community had suffered since beginning work with NMAI—signified the anger of the deity *Takutsi Nakawe* (Grandmother Growth), who controls both benevolent and destructive aspects of nature, including storms. They explained that community leaders interpreted recent misfortunes as resulting from a ritual transgression: our curators had heard and recorded a series of Huichol flood narratives, thus angering Nakawe. The goat and chickens our curators had provided to the community—along with individual fees for people's time—were insufficient: our debt was not to the Huichol themselves, but to Nakawe. We had to fulfill our debt to her through the sacrifice of a bull so she would stop punishing Huichol lands and people with destructive storms.

Ultimately we sealed a bond with our Huichol guests by presenting them with a written promise to community leaders and a small gift signifying the bull we would deliver. I will not go into the difficulties we faced to satisfy this requirement except to say that a bull, when delivered two years late, has to be truly fabulous.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, we finished the exhibit, but what happened, and what lessons did we learn? Had NMAI curators seriously misgauged both the significance of the oral traditions they requested and traditional payment for them? Admittedly, we had never worked with the Huichol before, but nothing in the available literature suggested that the appropriate traditional payment for hearing flood narratives was the timely sacrifice of a bull to Nakawe. And if the bull represented a traditional payment for hearing the flood narratives, why were the curators not told this during their initial work?

The explanation lies in recognizing that museums' entrée into traditional systems of knowledge and value may present unprecedented problems and sometimes require innovative community resolutions. While outsiders have certainly heard and published Huichol flood narratives, a series of misfortunes in the Huichol community required explanation, and their self-interrogation identified work with NMAI, and specifically the lack of appropriate sacrifice, as the source of their troubles.<sup>18</sup> Presupposing that traditional social and economic systems can automatically be applied to all situations, including novel ones such as those introduced by museums, is clearly naïve, and while we should obviously credit Native people with the ability to adjust culture and

tradition to new circumstances, we must also acknowledge that negotiating these adjustments may take considerable time.

A second lesson to be drawn from my Huichol story is that museum and community economies can be radically different and, when working with communities, museums may need to abandon preconceptions about *what makes things work*. Although NMAI self-consciously attempted to fit research practices to community values, we could not envision that this would require a payment two years after the fact or that such a payment was actually owed to a goddess. And in terms of economy, I am not referring only to calculated value differences between community members' time, dollars, and bulls: instead, I mean one of economy's most basic definitions: organizations' and communities' *management of resources with a view to their own productivity* including how they manage their cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). Under this definition, we should not be surprised that difficulties arise during museum consultations: museums rely on money and time as resources to create exhibits and programs while communities use their resources—at least in part—to ensure development of socially and culturally fit future generations. Museums may do what they feel is necessary while trying to satisfy community needs and vice versa, but museums' and communities' goals are often very far apart.

This lesson is also illustrated by my last story, one not based on my own experiences but which is provocative in terms of cultural capital, trade-offs, and decision-making. In 1998, the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the Euchee (Yuchi) tribe collaborated on the *Children of the Sun: Euchee Indian Culture and Tradition* exhibition. Despite any questions posed here, both the museum and the community were satisfied with their work together (Grounds 1999; Jackson 2000).<sup>19</sup> The exhibit was a success, which pleased the museum, and most community members were happy as well. Euchee participation in this project and others is strategically aimed at increasing community visibility and contributing toward federal recognition as a tribe with their own distinct cultural traditions (Gray 1997; Grounds 2003; Jackson 2000; Muiga 1997). Along with participation in anthropological projects, the exhibit helped the community increase its visibility and elders had opportunities to share traditions and be paid for participation. However, questions arose about what “returns” the museum might make. Euchee tribal members concerned with language survival asked the museum to create a computer program to help younger community members practice language skills or donate exhibit computers to the tribal community center for that purpose (Grounds 1999). The museum considered these options, but community leaders could not agree and, in the end, nothing happened.<sup>20</sup>

Since then, tribal member Richard Grounds (1999, 2003)—while acknowledging that Eucheese have gained visibility through the exhibit and other anthropological projects—has questioned whether tribal participation has been worth the investment. With almost all traditional knowledge held by very few elders, he suggested that work on the exhibit hurt younger members by depriving them of time with those elders. While criticizing the presentation and publication of potentially sensitive information, he also suggested that sharing traditional culture publicly made it less special and less concrete within their community. Ultimately, Grounds concluded that in working with the museum to get out the message about survival of their traditions, the Euchee had made a deal that cost them more than they had expected.

Grounds' critique (2003) is not solely about Euchee work on the *Children of the Sun* exhibit, but encompasses academic work with them since the 1990s. In so doing, he suggests that the Euchee are trading their cultural future and privacy for visibility in the present and the opportunity for federal acknowledgment. Grounds acknowledges that Euchees involved in working with museums and anthropologists represent the majority of those he describes as "culturally active" (2003:306). Based on this statement, it appears that Euchee people, individually and collectively, have determined that it is in their best interest to invest cultural capital in academic and public projects that aid their perception as a living, distinct people. However, this does not mean that such a decision was easy to make, that all tribal members agree with it, or that they will continue to support it if—as Grounds suggests—it threatens the cultural integrity of future generations. Euchee participation in museum and other projects can be seen as a means to an end, and their continued participation will likely hinge on self-evaluation of their success.

### **Museum Tensions and Problems of Power**

*To trade, the first condition was to be able to lay aside the spear.*  
- Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*

Tensions involving differential values, meanings, and understandings are characteristic of museum work with indigenous people and often exist on both sides of the museum-community divide. Following Mauss (1990), laying aside past animosities is a necessary first step, but we must also acknowledge the sources of discomfort and mistrust that have shaped relations between museums and Native people and, in some cases, continue to do so. Anthropology's and museums' long history with indigenous people—including exploitive and extractive practices—is not something quickly undone and increased self-awareness may only begin to address longstanding difficulties.

To most outsiders, the museum remains an unfamiliar edifice with its own organizational structures, politics, and dynamics of power and authority. Each museum manifests this idiosyncratically, and the same is true of each of us as "museum people." Our own life histories in museums and academe structure how we think about our own authority vis-à-vis our colleagues and those whose lives and histories we purport to represent (Kahn 2000; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Pearce 1992). As above, museums as institutions have often been slower to change than some of the individuals involved and this stems from our daily work conditions. Change is hard and often slow because museums seldom account for the time and effort needed to re-enculturate *all* members of the institutional edifice to uniformly support inclusiveness, a step which is necessary if we are to make postmodern museums a reality.<sup>21</sup>

It is always easier to follow familiar processes, and museums are no different than other organizations. In beginning to engage indigenous people, museums employed them in areas marginal to interpretation such as performances and craft demonstrations, where they offered few challenges to museum authority structures, including curatorial interpretation. Movement away from this canon has been as difficult for museums as it has been for academic anthropology, where specific kinds of products are expected and produced (Fox 1991; Trouillot



1991). Similarly, museums still tend to feel most comfortable with “businesslike” Native advisors and consultants who provide products that the museum itself defines as necessary and in conventional formats that museums expect (Hedlund 1994; Peers and Brown 2003).<sup>22</sup>

But what happens when indigenous advisors and consultants do not accept roles assigned to them by museums and their infrastructures, when community agendas differ from those of museums (Clifford 1997b; Peers and Brown 2003), and when museums and consultants speak radically different languages in terms of frames of reference and what is at stake (Penney 2000)?<sup>23</sup> The issue is not solely about what gets taught and who has the right to teach it (Thomas 2000), but also about *why* it may be important for indigenous people to collaborate with museums and how it fits into their vision of themselves and long-term goals for cultural persistence.<sup>24</sup>

As with my example of Euchee participation in the *Children of the Sun* exhibition, communities may face difficult questions when choosing to work on museum projects. These include: What are the consequences of spending time on a museum project? What compensates for the absence of elders’ time and attention or how resources are drawn away from other community members? What is the cost to communities and what is the payoff in community and cultural terms?<sup>25</sup> Simultaneously, work with museums may create new stresses and conflicts within communities, such as the identification of individuals who have the greatest obligation or responsibility to share cultural capital and, and as in the story of the Huichol bull, who deliberates over and creates new rules for conduct and sharing knowledge outside the community.

These questions, and their answers, are not solely of concern for Native people: museums need to understand these issues when engaging with communities. Obviously, museums spend a great deal on exhibits and programs, but how often does money, effort, or investment directly serve community needs? How often do museums consider what they contribute—financially and in service to communities—as part of collaborations? How can museum projects be as useful to communities as they are to museums (Peers and Brown 2003; Phillips 2003)? And can museums afford to join projects identified by communities as priorities as opposed to always beginning with what museums need? My point is to suggest that although continuing museum-community tensions stem from the dynamics of representation and self-representation, they also involve what is exchanged during museums’ work with communities. Although empowered self-representation via tribal museums is increasing, tribes still often depend on non-Native museums to reach other audiences and must balance gains against opportunity costs.

### **Disconnected Regimes of Value: Trading in Relationships**

*[In] transactions across cultural boundaries...despite a vast universe of shared understandings, a specific exchange is based on deeply divergent perceptions of the value of the objects being exchanged.*

- Arjun Appadurai, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*

In keeping with my suggestion that museums’ and communities’ divergent economies make goal-sharing almost impossible, how are we to reconcile what happens between the vastly

different “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986) that separate museums and indigenous peoples and their societies? Can collaborative interactions somehow satisfy both parties?

Situated in their own regimes of value, museums operate within their own economies and depend on indigenous peoples’ comprehension of the same. This does not mean that Native people fail to understand how money functions in museums nor should it conjure up mythic transactions such as the exchange of \$24 worth of beads and trinkets for the invaluable real estate called Manhattan. But I do mean to suggest, as I did in discussing the Haffenreffer Museum’s Native advisory committee, that money—as a fully objectified commodity (Appadurai 1986; Keane 2001; Kopytoff 1986)—cannot be the focal point of exchanges between museums and indigenous people, nor can we assume that money, as a symbol, has similar value on both sides of the transaction. Further, while museums may presume that consultations involve commodity exchanges of money for services, what occurs is far more complex and potentially more durable.

At the risk of revisiting ancient and modern discussions within anthropology, literature on gifts and exchanges deserves attention in understanding museums’ interactions with indigenous people. I am not suggesting that indigenous societies remain focused on gift- rather than commodity-exchange. However, museum-community transactions can be understood as building social relationships and meanings through specific kinds of gifts and exchanges. While these transactions may begin with, and appear to be about, money, they involve different non-cash economies even while both museums and communities are concerned with their own production and reproduction. What remains unexplored are the differential expectations each party brings and how they work, consciously or unconsciously, to fulfill their own needs.

Mauss (1990) and others have stressed interconnected obligations to give, receive, and repay, and how reciprocal gifts and exchanges build social relationships that facilitate exchanges of other kinds, including intangibles such as respect, courtesy, and good will (Firth 1967; Kopytoff 1986; Myers 2001; Thomas 1991; Weiner 1985, 1992). In principle and in effectiveness, gift exchanges differ from payments and commodity purchases where things of agreed-upon, equal values—including money—are exchanged with no expectation of social relationships or obligations (Appadurai 1986; Firth 1967; Kopytoff 1986). Following Claude Levi-Strauss, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) emphasized exchange’s importance as more than the totality of its individual transactions. Webb Keane (2001:75) noted that exchanges require “relentless work,” while Annette Weiner (1980) emphasized that exchange relationships’ efficacy and durability could often be judged only over time. Clifford, describing a difficult consultation between Portland Art Museum staff and Tlingit elders, hints at exchange’s relevance by identifying an “uneven reciprocity” (1997b:193) and highlights conflicts inherent in museums’ “contact zones.”<sup>26</sup> Probing this point, and the nature and longevity of the relationships created, is key to understanding difficulties attendant on museums’ work with indigenous people and communities.

If money and related transactions are not the foundation of museums’ work with Native communities, what exactly is being exchanged? Moira G. Simpson (2001) suggests that museums are increasingly returning indigenous information through “visual repatriations” (Fienup-Riordan 1999) and other means, but this is not what is at issue in Native participation in museum exhibit development.<sup>27</sup> Instead, what seems to be exchanged—through a reciprocal

“lending” of specifically constituted authorities—is credibility and legitimacy: museums give space and potentially their prestige as cultural institutions while communities lend the authenticity of local knowledges and often their own voices. Simultaneously, Native people—both individuals and tribes—often gain prestige through association with museums, which in turn grow their credibility by collaborating with Native people as sources of authority. Thus, as Clifford (1997b) suggests in his discussion of contact zones, *mutual exploitation can occur*. Within collaborative projects, I suggest that museums and communities tacitly agree to allow themselves, their resources, and their cultural prestige and reputations to be appropriated, at least temporarily.

Within Mauss’ conception of exchange (1990), with its dependence on developing relationships between entities such as museums and communities, the transaction described above would constitute a bond. But how durable are such relationships, can museums afford to invest in them, and how conscious are they of the obligations they entail? Does such a relationship outlive the exhibit it creates or is it akin to a “marriage of convenience” to be dissolved when no longer of use? In terms of gifting and exchange, museum-community relationships often start with a museum’s invitation to the community, but what does this mean and what does it involve? As with any invitation to engage in a relationship, one thing is offered and another expected, but what are museums seen to offer through their initial invitation and what is its longevity? As Laura Peers and Alison Brown (2003; see also Peers 2003) suggest, the temporary nature of such relationships—or museums’ inability to commit long-term—can be misunderstood: a museum may start a community relationship for a defined project while community members assume that that relationship, once built, will continue past the exhibit’s end. Ultimately, the museum “takes back” its venue, but how can it completely return the local cultural knowledge it solicited and received? If we accept that museums can learn from their collaborative experiences, we should recognize that communities will do so as well and use the knowledge gained to decide whether to accept future invitations and on what terms.

### **Small Sacrifices: Objectification and Trading in the Inalienable**

*As everyone knows, priceless things have their price.*  
- Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”

Collaborative exchanges between museums and indigenous communities involve creation of tangible things such as exhibits, but each brings to the trading table individually negotiated sets of intangibles that they are willing to share. Museum prestige and indigenous knowledge may seem to represent different orders of value, but tacit agreement to exchange them suggests that on each side, these intangibles have been objectified to the extent that they can be exchanged (Appadurai 1986, following Georg Simmel). And, although it may require faith in the outcome, communities and museums act as if the respective benefits of the relationship are sufficiently equivalent to allow both parties to feel that they are being treated fairly.<sup>28</sup>

Objectification of culture has its own long history within anthropology (Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus, eds. 1986; Geertz 1973; Kuper 1999; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Ortner 1999; Wagner 1981; Wolf 1984). However, as a term, “culture” is not the property of anthropology,

nor do continued anthropological redefinitions necessarily penetrate other domains and usages. Today, many indigenous people have adopted the term “culture” and use it as a convenient gloss for cultural traditions, lifeways, and identity, whether lived in the present or not (Jackson 1989; Kahn 2000; Keesing 1989; Kuper 1999; Sahlins 1993). As Wagner (1981) suggested that culture was a self-conscious product and symbol of anthropology, indigenous use of the term seems no less self-conscious in how it objectifies a fluid and sometimes messy reality.<sup>29</sup>

Culture’s objectification—and its change in properties and meanings (Dominguez 1994; Miller 1987; Myers 2001; Thomas 1991)—is also linked to the growing notion of culture and knowledge as forms of “property.” Increasingly, culture, heritage, identity, and tradition are seen as property owned by indigenous people who also accept the obligation to safeguard those resources (Ames 1992; Brown 2003; United Nations 2008). Culture and knowledge as property is implicit in increasing use of terms such as “cultural property rights” encompassing both the tangible and intangible (West 2006), indigenous anxiety over losing control of information, and calls for “return” of publicly circulated knowledge akin to demands for physical repatriation (Brown 2003). Objectification does not necessarily mean that culture is commodified and exchangeable for money, but instead that culture can be separated from individual participants (Dominguez 1994; Miller 1987).

Notions of culture, heritage, and knowledge as objectified property, along with their potential repatriation as tribal patrimony, are also linked to their perception as inalienable (Brown 2003), which stems partly from their gravity, association with, and inheritance from past “owners,” i.e., ancestors (Weiner 1985). Loss of the inalienable, or any major part of it, is detrimental to identity and posterity, while maintaining control and potential circulation of the inalienable is essential to maintaining its value for continued identity production and cultural power (Kramer 2006; Myers 2001; Weiner 1985, 1992, 1994). Following Weiner’s “paradox of keeping-while-giving” (1992), if culture is indeed inalienable, it must maintain some circulation to retain or increase in value. Simultaneously, because culture is considered “priceless,” its caretakers must resist all attempts to move it into arenas where it might be treated as an alienable commodity and traded for money or equally mundane things (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986). Fear of commodification and appropriation—putting culture to inappropriate uses—creates a tension that demands that heritage and tradition be shared only in culturally acceptable, limited ways.<sup>30</sup>

### **Cultivating Mystique: Culture-Making and What is At Stake**

*Modernization is a process of self-fashioning, of directed transformation that makes culture the object of its planning and evaluation.*

- Fred R. Myers, in *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*

In attempting to prove the existence and worth of culture, indigenous people face the dilemma of making a body of intangibles visible and intelligible and simultaneously safe from total consumption and appropriation. Despite public perceptions of “deculturation” resulting from colonialism, the shift from dominant anthropological master narratives of “acculturation” and “assimilation” to “resistance,” “cultural survival,” and indigenous nationalism after 1970 (Bruner 1986) provided invaluable assistance, proclaiming indigenous cultures’ survival even where their

integrity might be questioned. The contemporary necessity of re-explaining indigenous people—formerly distanced in time and space (Fabian 1983; Kuper 1988)—provides new opportunities and challenges (Myers 2001), including replacement of “paradigmatic knowledge” with “local knowledges” (Shelton 2003:184; Geertz 1983). Earlier exoticizing of indigenous people and cultures—through world’s fairs or Native people’s own actions in feeding the sentimental tourist gaze—has given way to new opportunities for Native people to cultivate a mystique of culture by revealing tantalizing fragments while keeping the remainder out of bounds.<sup>31</sup>

To return to economy, and managing resources with an eye toward productivity, transformations in perceptions of indigenous people since the 1970s have provided them with empowering opportunities to control their own images and representations (Ames 1992). Furthermore, representation per se involves visibility, and indigenous cultural performances provide a means to create believable, tangible culture: this “culture-making” (Myers 1994) is integral to Native involvement with museums today. Contrasted with anthropological literature’s relatively limited distribution and consumption, museums provide indigenous people with ample opportunity for self-presentation and building public belief in their survival (Simpson 2001). Although continued involvement in museum productions that capitalize on exoticism may seem complicit, Native people’s active engagement is proof of their own agency in image-making and self-representation (Myers 1994, 2001) and provides ways to narrate nationhood (Bhabha 1990).<sup>32</sup>

For all its opportunities, indigenous peoples’ work with museums, and its culture-making possibilities, is still fraught with risks. While attempting to safeguard culture, Native people must also offer it up for recognition and acceptance, neither of which is guaranteed. In doing so, they must make small sacrifices of local knowledge to attempt to enhance its value and that of culture and promote their descendants’ collective good. Past histories, especially with museums, suggest that this has always been risky. Release of the precious and inalienable—cast as “culture”—can be both a threat and promise to identity and may be possible only when indigenous people feel they are building relationships with museums they use as sites for culture-making and not simply when money changes hands. Through continued negotiations, the alienable and inalienable are continually defined and redefined as knowledge and information are shared and, in some cases, covered up again.

For museums, the stakes are rather different. If museums accept that straightforward payments may not adequately recompense individuals and communities’ priceless contributions of time, resources, and human and cultural capital, the question of what museums provide in return remains salient. What communities offer—and perhaps expect—is not a well-defined, finite service, but instead the opportunity to forge relationships based on exchange of different, often intangible things. But if museums accept relationships offered by indigenous people and partner in joint endeavors, can they accept that what serves museum goals or the public may not serve community needs and desires in terms of culture-making, identity production, or cultural survival? At considerable risk, communities may parlay with their most precious possession—namely culture—but museums’ commitment to reciprocity and relationships created through exchange remains in question. Museums issue invitations as a means of symbolic restitution (Phillips 2003) or to collaborate because indigenous input may be needed for an exhibit—the museum’s current prestige project—and communities accept or decline based on whether the

museum is needed as a site for culture-making. But if value is created by need, how long does the museum need the community and vice-versa?

A larger question about the loan or exchange of authority remains. Moving from their historic purpose of providing encompassing ideological and cultural narratives for non-indigenous settler constituencies, museums are now challenged to serve subject populations' needs while simultaneously attempting to serve those of other, non-Native museum consumers, and this can be a predicament. If museums lend their authority to communities for selected exhibits and projects and gain prestige as collaborative institutions under those circumstances, can they succeed in maintaining authority in other arenas and other subjects? The postmodern crisis of representation affecting museums presenting cultural subjects does not apply uniformly to all disciplines, including history, art, and biology, and museums that present diverse subjects may appear self-contradictory when they yield authority in one area while remaining "objective" in others.

Despite postmodern and post-colonial changes in museum representations of indigenous peoples, museum audiences retain their fondness for older metanarratives and exhibits that reflect them.<sup>33</sup> Newer presentations that contradict visitors' self-perceptions of their place in the world can be confounding and, if perspectival shifts are left unexplained, museums risk outright rejection. I have suggested elsewhere that museums' authority, while in flux, remains relatively strong (McMullen n.d.), but in museums, as in tribal contexts, authority and knowledge are becoming objectified, and the master narrative of museum authority faces transformation from its taken-for-granted state into something alienable or of questionable value. Compared to museums, indigenous peoples, as political and cultural agents, seem better poised to understand risks and rewards inherent in collaboration: they consciously engage museums in ways beneficial to indigenous identity and presentation. However, lest we throw out the baby of museum authority with the bathwater of our colonial heritage, museums must become more self-aware of the long-term consequences of changes in authority politics to formulate a future place for themselves. Unlike tribal communities—which capitalize on sharing fragments to protect the whole of culture and heritage and keep internal mechanisms out of sight—museums cannot afford to obscure their processes. If they are to remain relevant to all their constituencies, museums must articulate how knowledge is created, what other "voices" mean to museum interpretation, and how they may occasionally lend themselves to presentation of other perspectives.

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for additional readings. All misunderstandings of postmodernism and the complexities of gifting and exchange are my own.

## Notes

1. In North America, museums have shared this burden with archaeology, which has become more accountable as a result of challenges over collections and interpretation, spawning analyses of archaeologists' relationships with Native people, archaeology's relevance to indigenous people, and collaborative projects involving "sharing of power" (Biolsi and Zimmerman, eds. 1997; Dongoske et al., eds. 2000; Kerber, ed. 2006; Swidler et al., eds. 1997; Thomas 2000; Watkins 2000). An anonymous reviewer noted that outside the United States, museum anthropologists have often outstripped academic colleagues in implementing more collaborative methodologies. Because such work has been driven by the specific indigenous and political contexts of different regions and countries, this process has not been uniform in scope or in the timing of its spread. This article focuses largely on North American museum practice in non-tribal museums.

2. Development of a "post-colonial morality" (Ames 1994; see also Brown 2003) has had differential impacts on disciplines' ethics and museum practice. Anthropological ethics statements now call on practitioners to be more sensitive to communities' needs and desires (Fluehr-Lobban, ed. 2003; Lassiter 2005), while the UK-based Museum Ethnographers Group has incorporated concerns for indigenous communities into its ethics statement (Museum Ethnographers Group 2003). Michael M. Ames, citing the 1992 joint Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association's "Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples," articulates the need for museums and First Peoples to "work together to correct inequities" and "accept the philosophy of co-management and co-responsibility" (2000:74), while Michael F. Brown (2003) points to the Australian government policy of "Reconciliation" as a driving force behind museums' and others' attitudes toward indigenous cultural property. Others have cited the United Nations' *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2008) as indicative of the moral precepts applicable to museums and others working with indigenous people.

3. Self-determination has been defined as "the right of a distinct and identifiable group of people or a separate political state to set the standards and mores of what constitutes its traditional culture and how it will honor and practice that culture" (Miller 2005:123). For further discussion of sovereignty and self determination, see Alfred 2005; Barker 2005; and Smith 1999. Barker (2005) makes important distinctions between sovereign Native nations and "ethnic peoples," including the necessity of differentiating their treatment in multicultural situations.

4. Employment of Native people as exhibit consultants may have occasionally occurred in the 1970s (Lurie 1976), but specifics are generally unavailable. The earliest example of a Native person working in museum education may be Ishi's public demonstrations at the University of California Museum of Anthropology (later the Lowie Museum of Anthropology and now the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology) before 1916 (Kroeber 1961). Before 1930, Native people occasionally demonstrated crafts at the Brooklyn Museum (Diana Fane, letter to author, December 8, 1993) and Clara Endicott Sears invited Native people to participate in

scripted pageants at her Fruitlands Museum complex in Harvard, Massachusetts, in the 1930s (Hail 1999). Rudolf Haffenreffer, at the Haffenreffer Museum in Bristol, Rhode Island, may have had the most consistent early Native interpreter: Ousa Mekin (LeRoy C. Perry, a Wampanoag) led visitor tours between about 1930 and 1933 (McMullen 1994).

5. Throughout this article, I use the term “museums” as if they have their own agency, but I intend it simply as reference for “museum staff members” since they—individually and collectively—are responsible for how institutional policies and practices are carried out.

6. The movement toward self-representation is obviously not confined to museums or indigenous people: Cornel West (1994) makes clear that the Black Power movement was spurred by African-Americans’ recognition that they could and should speak for themselves. How self-representation becomes important seems linked to a subject’s emotional value, as Paul Boyer (1996) points out in his discussion of the *Enola Gay* exhibit controversy: academic opinions are deemed relatively harmless unless the subject is emotionally charged.

7. Kahn (2000) does not go this far in her analysis, but her description of some museums’ inclusion of Native voices is analogous to early and sometimes banal gender studies that operated according to the principle of “add women and stir.”

8. For general background on community projects outside museums, see Harrison 2001.

9. Those involved in collaborative anthropological and archaeological projects outside museums also insist that no single model exists (Harrison 2001; Kerber, ed. 2006; Lassiter 2005).

10. Frank discussions about collaborations that encountered difficulties have come from staff of the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology, including Fisher and Johnson (1988), Ames (2003), and Johnson (2002). Kahn (2000) also delves into the situations that underlay museum success stories in consultations and Laura Peers (2003) describes an attempted consultation that did not go as planned while articulating the difficulty of such work where painful memories remain at the surface. Peers and Alison Brown (2003) acknowledge that few accounts of consultations have been written by Native participants. Also, the warmth and fuzziness of accounts of collaborative projects is not confined to museum work: in 1995, commenting on reports of such projects in the *Society for American Archaeology Bulletin*, Kurt Dongoske used the same phrase and called on authors to be more self-critical (cited in Aldenderfer 2000:xiv). For frank descriptions of the problems and prospects of archaeological consultations, see Kerber, ed. 2006.

11. The situation is somewhat different in Canada: in his description of collaborative work on an archaeological exhibit, Ames (2003) notes that letters of support from First Nations leaders must accompany applications to many funding agencies. An anonymous reviewer noted that funding applications to the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for “Aboriginal Research Grants” require approval by an SSHRC Aboriginal review committee before they can be considered for funding.



12. The exhibit, *Entering the Circle: Native Traditions in Southeastern New England*, was intended as a Columbian Quincentenary offering and was funded largely by the Haffenreffer Family Fund and the Rhode Island Committee on the Humanities. Krech (1994) briefly discusses the work of this advisory committee, pointing out that when individual consultants are selected by museums, they are expected to represent community rather individual interests (see also Kahn 2000). Additionally, individuals chosen by the museum—and potentially the lineages or tribal factions that they represent—may gain significant validation as cultural authorities based on their selection. Where intra- and intertribal frictions exist, as in situations in southeastern New England where groups lacking federal acknowledgment as “tribes” vie with those who have achieved that status to be heard and involved, being asked to the museum table is a significant validation. I am indebted to Dan Odess for reminding me of this point. For the struggles of unrecognized tribes to be heard in archaeological consultations, see Kerber, ed. 2006.

13. Museums should avoid the inference that they are paying for what can be considered protected, collective knowledge and cultural patrimony since this harkens back to earlier anthropology and its extractive tendencies. Whether it involves objects or information, the term “selling out” entails trading privileged, local knowledge for personal gain and abandoning one’s values. In NMAI’s work with communities, payments are made not only for the eight-hour work day that individuals spend with staff but may also provide compensation for being away from jobs, farms, or ranches. Payment for individuals’ services is also not a universally accepted concept: some may request a collective payment to be put toward community needs. NMAI has also begun to use contracts and memoranda of understanding to spell out mutual expectations, with payments made to communities for the participation of individual members. For similar partnerships, see Conaty 2003.

14. In his comments on an earlier draft of this paper, Bruce Bernstein highlighted the difference between Native attitudes about money in the United States and Latin America, where performance of cultural acts for money has far fewer negative connotations. He explains this as a matter of everyday versus occasional participation in culture. (For an alternate view on cultural performance for pay in Venezuela, see Briggs 1996.) Like anything else, money’s import relies on its meaning and contextualization within larger social settings and the extent of indigenous self-consciousness of the potential hazards of commercializing culture. Even within the United States and Canada, attitudes are not universal. In his comments on the same draft, Paul Chaat Smith noted the tendency of some “professional Indians” to capitalize on the market for consulting and advisory services. Their notoriety is similar to that of legal “expert witnesses” and they are so often called upon that they are sometimes referred to as “Rolodex Indians.”

15. Study of traditional knowledge systems is a vast field, but few have studied it in relation to museums. Phillips (2003) identifies the necessity of understanding such systems, and Conaty (2003) discusses lessons learned on a collaborative Blackfeet exhibit, including proposed use of restricted iconography in the exhibit’s graphic design. Isaac (2005) discusses traditional Zuni ways of transferring and presenting knowledge and differentiation of public and private knowledge in their own museum. Generally, museum practitioners must understand that some traditional knowledge can be delivered only under specific conditions: because some oral traditions are only told at night or during a particular season, asking to record them at other times can lead to serious misunderstanding. “Traditional knowledge” can be expansive and its proper

“delivery” can also encompass use in museums: in the 1990s, while I was curator at the Milwaukee Public Museum, we were asked to alter the soundtrack of a permanent Hopi exhibit to play songs appropriate to winter only during those months.

16. As lead curator of the *Our Peoples* exhibit from 2001 to 2004, I worked with Huichol community curators and others following initial fieldwork. Luke Lassiter (2005:143) briefly describes NMAI’s work on *Our Peoples* and other exhibits.

17. Within our overall budget, \$500 for the bull was a relatively minor expense, but since the annual cash income of several Huichol families or perhaps even their entire community might not be enough to buy such a bull, we understood its significance.

18. Without this analysis, the NMAI story of a bull for Nakawe would be as warm and fuzzy as those I have critiqued, and—in its first public telling during the conference presentation this article is based on—I related it solely as an example of how NMAI overcame adversity in this situation. I owe my current understanding of the emergence of a transaction value for Huichol flood narratives to Paul Liffman, who both participated in some of the 2001 NMAI–Huichol discussions and corrected my initial readings of the bull as a standard traditional payment.

19. This account is based on a presentation by Richard Grounds (1999) and relies largely on my notes, as well as brief discussions with exhibit curator Jason Baird Jackson in October 1999, who also described the exhibit consultation process and its results (Jackson 1999, 2000). Aside from Grounds’ discussion, I am not aware of publicized Euchee views on the exhibit and other anthropological projects, although tribal members perceived a Euchee Heritage Festival that complemented the *Children of the Sun* exhibition as a resounding success (Gray 1997; Muiga 1997).

20. Although Grounds (1999) referred to “exhibit computers,” *Children of the Sun* was a small and relatively brief exhibit (August 8 through October 25, 1998) and descriptions of it do not mention interactive programs that would have required computers (Anonymous 1998). Little information is available on Euchee decision-making, although Jackson (2000) describes the long collaborative process between the Gilcrease Museum and members of E.U.C.H.E.E. (Euchees United Cultural, Historical, and Education Effort, based in Sapulpa, Oklahoma) and makes clear that Euchee participation was not guaranteed at the outset.

21. Difficulty stems in part from the very different backgrounds of individuals working in museums and the efforts needed to inculcate philosophical or mission-related changes in such diverse individuals. For example, a museum I once worked with successfully engaged Native consultants on exhibits and special programs and attempted to effect change in their school education program by hiring a Native woman to join their non-Native educators and volunteers. However, problems arose with the volunteer docents, many of whom had worked for the museum for decades and had entrenched ideas about their own “qualifications.” During weekly meetings where they made assignments for scheduled school programs, the docents claimed lectures and substantive presentations for themselves and, when asked about the craft activity that was part of every program, their response was “We’ll let the Indian do that.” Despite the best intentions of staff at the highest levels, the young woman was relegated to craft instruction,

thus replicating patterns that excluded Native people from professional museum work, and the museum never succeeded in changing its educational programs.

22. This is analogous to what Alfred defines as “internal colonization”: “the historical process and political reality defined in the structures and techniques of government that consolidate the domination of indigenous peoples by a foreign yet sovereign settler state” (2005:33).

23. The use and import of terms such as “advisors” and “advisory committees” are seldom lost on Native participants, who recognize that museums can choose to ignore their suggestions. Only situations where Native community members have rights of approval (Ames 2003) or wield power equal to the museum are considered truly collaborative.

24. Beyond difficulties between museums and communities about authority, conflicts about who is authorized to speak within and for communities also exist and can fuel internal disagreements that spill over into work with museums (Kahn 2000; Isaac 2005; McDonald 1999; Salvador 1994; Simpson 2001).

25. Speaking about museum projects in Alaska, Dombrowski notes: “All culture projects have social costs that go far beyond the direct costs of putting on shows, moving them around, and financing their catalogues. The former, though often invisible, are generally far more substantial than the latter and almost always unevenly distributed *within* the communities” (2004: 23).

26. The awkwardness of some consultations, especially where parties are unacquainted, can stem from lack of mutual understanding of cultural proprieties, aesthetics of behavior, or misinterpretation of the value of exchanges. For example, Warren D’Azevedo (1958) describes receiving a gift of papayas—ordinarily a thing of little value—that were transformed into a significant token of regard and prestige by their manner of presentation and the speeches that accompanied them. Without understanding the nature of gifted items, appropriate reciprocal exchange cannot be made. I am indebted to Bruce Bernstein for directing me to D’Azevedo’s work.

27. For an example of non-Native consultations, see Dunstan 1999, where the author also questions what intangible benefits an exhibit might have for cultural consultants. Kreps (2003) makes the important point that in many situations, indigenous people may collaborate with museums to gain access to object collections, which are themselves a form of cultural capital.

28. However, as in the discussion of Euchee work on museum projects, not all community members may value participation and its benefits equally.

29. Those familiar with the literature on American Indian art will have heard the rejoinder that Native languages have no word for “art.” I suspect the same may be true of “culture.”

30. Kramer (2006) provides an excellent case-study on Nuxalk art as indigenous cultural property and its strategic use in self-objectification and cultural sovereignty.

31. The extent to which postmodernism itself has played a role in creating this mystique appears to be formidable. Foucault's "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (1980:81; see also Lyotard 1984) seems to presuppose that such knowledges have completely survived their subjugation or accurately record a "historical knowledge of struggles" (Foucault 1980:83). However, one of the quandaries of postmodernism may be that in elevating local knowledges, it simultaneously devalues all knowledge products resulting from outsider viewpoints and makes it almost impossible to say anything without the imprimatur of insider approval. A tempered postmodernism might entail co-existence or synthesis of narratives rather than the replacement of one with the other (Rosaldo 1989).

32. "Culture-making" is equally relevant to non-museum contexts, and many discussions have focused on alternatives to identifying contemporary indigenous practice as "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds. 1983) and instead articulated indigenous self-consciousness and strategic use of "culture." This is a very wide-ranging literature and employs a variety of terms, including "heritage work" and "self-marketing" (Clifford 2004); "self-objectification" (Kramer 2006); and "heritage politics" (Appadurai 1990) among others. (See also Briggs 1996; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Hanson 1989; Jackson 1989, 1995; Keesing 1989; Linnekin 1983; McMullen 2004; Thomas 1992; and Turner 1991).

33. Native exhibit collaborators often want to emulate "old-fashioned" exhibit models, especially when their goal is to represent themselves as equal to tribes already represented in older museum exhibits (Jackson 2000).

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