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Author

Hawker, Ronald W.

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Transformed or Transformative? Two Northwest Coast Artists in the Era of Assimilation

RONALD W. HAWKER

The article examines the work of two First Nations artists active along the Northwest Coast during the assimilation era (1867–1951): Frederick Alexie and Mathias Joe. Although they were by no means the only Northwest Coast artists active during this period, I have selected them specifically because they are not normally discussed in the plethora of books and articles on Northwest Coast art published since 1947. Neither, for example, appear in the pivotal 1980 catalogue *The Legacy*,¹ the who's who of historic and contemporary Northwest Coast artists. They did, however, receive Euro-Canadian attention during their lives and shared a willingness to produce work drawing on what might be called non-traditional sources of inspiration. Through their creations, these men also addressed Native and non-Native publics about the central issues of land, education, and First Nations status in Canadian society. In these ways, they disrupt the paradigm commonly applied to Northwest Coast art that privileges objects produced solely for ceremonial use and sees the history of Northwest Coast art as one of a "classic" mid-nineteenth-century climax, early-twentieth-century "decline," and mid-twentieth-century "renaissance."² This outdated, European-derived model fails to account for the complex political and social circumstances that informed both the production and reception of Northwest Coast objects during the era of assimilation and undervalues the ways in which indigenous arts contributed to the public assertion of and debate over Indian policy in Canada.

BACKGROUND

At the onset of colonialism, there was little perceived disjuncture between tradition and change among many Northwest Coast people. Margaret Blackman

Ronald W. Hawker received a doctorate in First Nations art history from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is currently an assistant professor in the College of Arts and Science at Zayed University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

clearly demonstrated in her 1976 article, "Creativity in Acculturation," that early in the nineteenth century imported ideas and forms from European society were integrated into the established worldviews of Northwest Coast societies.³

Beginning with the foundation of Canada in 1867, however, assimilation formed the main thrust of government policy toward indigenous peoples. Similar to Natives in the United States under the Dawes Act, Canadian First Nations peoples were expected to abandon tradition for full participation in a homogenous, "modern" lifestyle based on Euro-American economic, social, and religious values. Until a renewed institutional interest in constructing a uniquely Canadian identity surfaced following the Second World War, the non-Native political and economic status quo in Canada advocated a national identity founded on British ideals and modes of behavior. Well-known legislated amendments to the Indian Act, like the ban on potlaches and Sun Dances,⁴ were written to actively encourage First Nations peoples to abandon all traditional activities and embrace a complete British worldview. Concern that institutional aggression would achieve its objectives, early anthropologists like Franz Boas, focused on recording traditional aspects of indigenous societies before they disappeared.

Because of the interdependencies among social structure, political organization, economic management, and creative expression, the indeed far-reaching effects of this legislative attack extended into the realm of visual arts. For one, the pressure to assimilate and become "English" on one hand, and the desire to assert indigenous identities, laws, and customs on the other, were reflected in a syncretistic tendency in the arts that combined British and indigenous aesthetics and functions, creating new categories of production.

The post-World War II growth in government-sponsored programs aimed at promoting traditional individual artists and subsequently shifting governmental policy away from assimilation, obscuring the contributions of artists associated with the assimilation period. Seen as transformed by assimilation, their work has been viewed in conventional formalist Native American art historical discourses—built in part on the records of Boas and his contemporaries—as inauthentic. More recent cultural theory, pioneered by writers like James Clifford, has brought the notion of authenticity into question. My decision to examine and discuss these artists thus responds to the "challenges of contemporary anthropology and art history," identified by Aldona Jonaitis, and seeks an "understanding of the active and affirmative responses that cultures [or, more specifically, individuals] make to their historical conditions in the modern world, [deconstructing] . . . our past biases which blinded us to those Native initiatives."⁵ I see these artists not as passively *transformed* by assimilation, but rather actively *transformative* in their use of creative strategies to respond to and reshape the world in which they lived.

A reexamination of assimilation arts in the Northwest Coast is thus not based solely on filling in blank discursive spaces, but asks as well for a reevaluation of what has been written about Northwest Coast art since 1947 and why. Generally speaking, the majority of these texts is powerfully influenced by an interpretation of modernism that stresses the universality of form and its ability to transcend cultural and political differences. For this reason and

because the university and museum programs of the 1950s and 1960s were consciously aimed at attracting non-Native people to Native art, political divisiveness has been downplayed in non-Native accounts of Native art history.

Museums led in the creation of a popular market for Northwest Coast art among non-Native Canadians that emphasized aesthetics over both political and social assertion. Depoliticizing Native American art made it nonthreatening and therefore safe for non-Native consumption. Of course, this does not mean political conflict between Native and non-Native societies did not exist and was not played out in the arts. In fact, the ways in which it affected artistic production constitutes a rich vein for interpretive analysis and deserves further exploration.

In this way, artists like Alexie and Joe demonstrate some of the pitfalls of Native art history. In particular, anthropologists from earlier in the twentieth century built a corpus of textual material that is now invaluable. Yet this corpus also reflects both the practical and epistemic limitations of the period in which the anthropologists worked, which focused on recording and publishing what was viewed as traditional and therefore vulnerable to extinction.

Frederick Alexie is among the best documented historic Northwest Coast artists. Both anthropologists Marius Barbeau and Viola Garfield, who concentrated much of their study on the Tsimshian- and Nisga'a-speaking peoples of the Skeena and Nass rivers, interviewed Alexie. Quebec-born Barbeau, noting that Alexie received the traditional spiritual training for object production, was especially active in promoting Alexie's painting in Ottawa as it served his objective of presenting modern Canadian culture as a synthesis of a variety of past cultural forms, including Native and French-Canadian.

This contrasts sharply with the information available on Joe, where the predominance of text comes from popular media sources. Not coincidentally, Joe and a number of his contemporaries, including Nuu-chah-nulth painter George Clutesi, were either ignored by anthropologists or were active at a time when there was little funding available for the museum acquisitions and anthropological investigation that would have otherwise promoted them in the non-Native community.

Furthermore, although Barbeau was on staff at the National Museum throughout his career, he also acted as a private dealer in Native arts, often working as a freelance purchaser for both public and private collectors while he was in the field on National Museum business. He operated informally as a consultant, suggesting likely sources for acquisition among the communities with which he was most familiar. Barbeau's attention raised the value of Alexie's work and thus Alexie's carvings and paintings commonly appear among private collections donated to museums in Victoria and Vancouver. For these reasons, it is easier to find work identified as Alexie's in museum collections across Canada than it is to find works by Joe.⁶

FREDERICK ALEXIE

Identified by Barbeau as "an old Tsimshian half-breed,"⁷ Alexie (1853–circa 1940) was born in Port Simpson, a central trading post in Coast Tsimshian

territory on the northern coast of the British Columbian mainland. Alexie's father was part of a small group of Iroquois brought to the Pacific Coast in the 1830s by the Hudson's Bay Company. His mother was a Coast Tsimshian, thus Alexie belonged to the *gispawadwada* clan of the Giludzar Tsimshian. According to Barbeau, he was trained as a *haláit* carver and was responsible for the production of *naxnox*, or secret society paraphernalia.⁸ He was described by anthropologist Viola Garfield in a 1934 unpublished manuscript as "a good natured, highly volatile and imaginative person" with "little formal training in painting and drawing, either by white or native teachers," and his paintings "are done in a stilted manner with very little regard for perspective. . . ."⁹

Alexie's work appears in museum collections throughout Canada. In fact, he was the first named and living First Nations artist to have his work featured in an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. Along with anonymous, so-called traditional carvings and paintings from the Northwest Coast collections of the National Museum of Canada (now known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization) and the Royal Ontario Museum and modernist Canadian paintings by contemporary non-Native artists like A. Y. Jackson and Emily Carr, Alexie's landscape paintings appeared in the 1927 and 1928 exhibition *Canadian West Coast Art Native and Modern*.¹⁰ The show opened at the National Gallery in Ottawa in late 1927, then traveled to McGill University in Montreal and the University of Toronto in January 1928. The exhibition is best remembered as an important showcase for Carr, who subsequently became a monumental figure in Canadian landscape painting. In addition to three paintings by Alexie, the curators for the *West Coast* show also included argillite carvings by another assimilation-era artist, Charles Edenshaw, although he had passed away seven years earlier.¹¹ Aldona Jonaitis argues that Edenshaw contributed to the stylistic paradigm for "classic" Haida art¹² and that his work was an important model for the recently deceased contemporary Haida artist Bill Reid.¹³ The *West Coast* show thus featured Native and non-Native artists who continue to play prominent roles in Canadian art history.

Carr and Edenshaw are better known than Alexie. Carr was clearly promoted in the accompanying catalogues as the star of the show and Edenshaw, through examinations of his work by Jonaitis, Franz Boas, and Bill Holm,¹⁴ has a higher profile in Northwest Coast art history than Alexie. Yet by the standards of most Northwest Coast artists, a considerable amount has been written on Alexie. Barbeau published a small monograph on Alexie in 1945¹⁵ and George MacDonald cited Alexie's paintings as the earliest representations of Coast Tsimshian housefront painting in 1984.¹⁶ Alexie's art and its reception was discussed in more general terms by both Diedre Simmons¹⁷ and me¹⁸ in the early 1990s. A baptistery attributed to Alexie (fig. 1) now in the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology appeared in Audrey Hawthorn's 1967 *Art of the Kwakiutl*¹⁹ and served as an important conceptual focal point in an influential essay on museum display strategies by James Clifford.²⁰

Apart from the solitary illustration of Alexie's baptistery in Hawthorn's 1967 text, there is a forty-five-year gap between serious examinations of Alexie's work. The key to this uneven attention, and indeed to the recent, relative paucity of work from the assimilation period in general, lies in the kinds of



FIGURE 1. *Frederick Alexie Baptistery (University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology).*

formal strategies Alexie and other artists of his time employed and their intersection with the academic agendas of art historians and anthropologists.

Alexie experimented with European form. His efforts were not always successful according to the criteria of those trained in the European illusionary traditions. The emphasis in Northwest Coast arts-related discourses since 1947 has been on objects that adhere to conventional Northwest Coast stylistic forms and do not overtly display European influences. Although the reasons for this emphasis are diverse, a major rhetorical justification for state funding of supportive arts programs in the 1940s and 1950s was the cultivation of employment opportunities specific to First Nations peoples. The concentration on Northwest Coast tradition was one way of securing a monopoly in the arts market free from Euro-Canadian competition.²¹ Because Alexie's carvings and paintings straddle the line participating curators and scholars drew between modern and traditional Tsimshian societies, between authentic

and inauthentic forms of expression, he has been in equal parts embraced and rejected by non-Native academics.

My interest, like that of Simmons and Barbeau, was spurred on by the syncretistic qualities of his carving, especially evident in the baptistery and in two similar carvings now in Prince Rupert's Museum of Northern British Columbia and illustrated in Barbeau's 1945 article. I drew connections between Alexie's carvings and another, often-ignored category of object production from the period: Tsimshian gravestone carving, which draws on a mix of Christian, British, and Tsimshian forms and functions.

While it is easy to simply say that the arrival of evangelical missionaries heralded the replacement of traditional indigenous worldviews with Anglican and Methodist Christianity, the gravestones demonstrate the complex ways in which these different worldviews were negotiated, balanced, and creatively utilized.²² First, the gravestones advertise clan and lineage position through the inclusion of ranked names in epitaphs and carved clan crests in the monument decoration.²³ Second, they also indicate Christian thought through

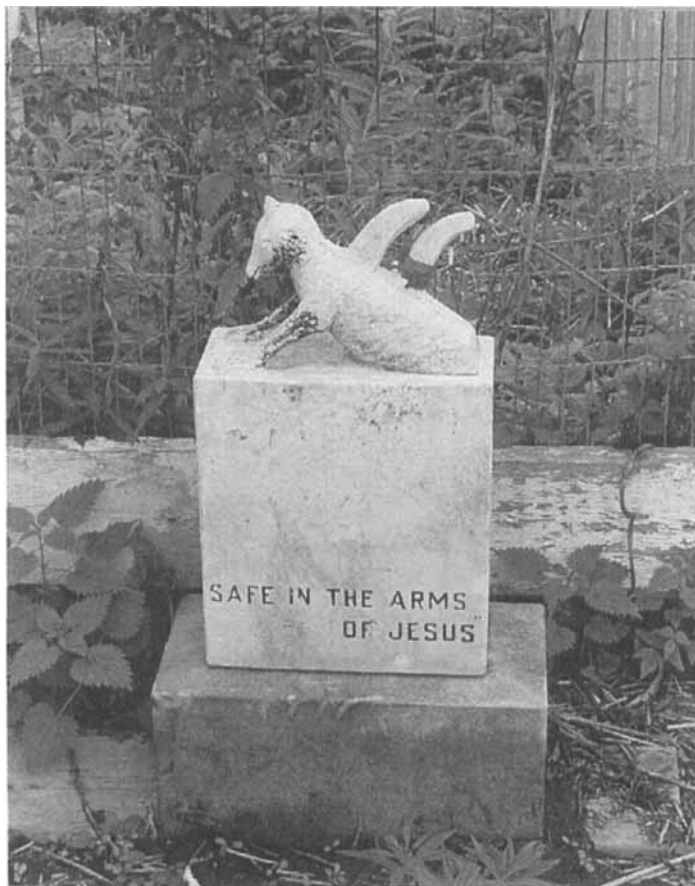


FIGURE 2. *Gitksan Gravestone* (photo by John Veillette, Royal British Columbia Provincial Museum).

their explicit references to Christian iconography. Thus, a double-finned wolf rises like a surfacing killer whale from a base bearing the inscription “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” (fig. 2). While at first glance these sorts of monuments seem to be jarring cross-cultural juxtapositions, they demonstrate the possibility of being both Tsimshian *and* Christian.

The combinations of different styles and iconography signify a complicated and profound historical process in which missionaries were forced to compromise in order to maintain their congregation’s membership in the church. As Clifford suggests, “It used to be assumed . . . that conversion to Christianity . . . would lead to the extinction of indigenous cultures rather than to their transformation. Something more ambiguous and historically complex has occurred, requiring that we perceive *both* the end of certain orders of diversity and the creation or translation of others.”²⁴ The gravestones are thus part of the diversity of expression evident in assimilation-era arts. Furthermore, they indicate both a tolerance toward previously existing means of displaying social status on behalf of the missionaries and an insistence on behalf of the Tsimshian leadership structure in both continuing the assertion of rank through the traditional crest indicators²⁵ and adopting Victorian British symbols of status in the size, style, iconography, and expense of the grave monuments.²⁶

Alexie’s church carvings are closely related to this category of expression. Like the gravestones, Alexie’s carving style follows well-established Coast Tsimshian models: flat, angular planes distinguish the face, the Northwest Coast pinched eye motif is linearly defined, and the wide mouth and feeling of tautly pulled skin is represented.²⁷ At least with his church carvings, Alexie also obviously drew on Christian subject matter, which brings up a number of interesting observations, if we can accept Barbeau’s assertion that Alexie was trained in producing *naxnox* objects—paraphernalia used in demonstrations of spiritual power by the senior-ranking chiefs and members of secret societies. Early missionaries, like Anglican lay missionary and founder of Metlakatla William Duncan,²⁸ exercised a limited tolerance of what they perceived to be the secular celebrations of Tsimshian social structure in the *ya.kw* potlatch ceremonies. At the same time, they carried out an all-out attack on what they saw as overtly religious *haláit* demonstration ceremonies.²⁹ While contemporary scholars argue that the two are interconnected, the evangelical missionaries sought to usurp and replace the Tsimshian religious system and cultivate a political relationship with the existing leadership structure. To do so, they were by and large forced to accept the visual manifestation of the crest system in the carvings and paintings. Duncan specifically prohibited *haláit* ceremonies at Metlakatla, which he called “Indian devilry,”³⁰ but allowed the erection of crest poles flanking the altar in the first church, the use of crest symbols on gravestones, and the production and sale of miniature totem poles to tourists.

While now impossible to prove conclusively, the understanding of church art as new *haláit* production cultivated by missionaries among the Tsimshian is further hinted at in museum records that state that Alexie’s baptistery carving was removed from the church because it scared the local children. It is

important here not to confuse why contemporary (especially non-Native) school children might be scared by the carving with why late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Tsimshian school children would be frightened. First of all, Tsimshian *naxnox* are objects of fearful power that must be controlled by someone with appropriate knowledge, pedigree, and personal strength. Second, they are only shown in specific and highly controlled contexts. Barbeau went so far as to state that *gitsonk*, those responsible for the objects' production, would suffer death if the objects were accidentally shown outside the related ceremony.³¹ These sorts of concepts would have invested the baptistery carving with a power not likely foreseen by the missionary responsible for its commission.

In addition to his church carvings, Alexie also participated in the curio industry actively encouraged by missionaries and Department of Indian Affairs officials as a legitimate economic pursuit prior to the First World War. The economic rewards for curio carving, however, were limited prior to the late 1960s and many of those who were active in the market on a full-time basis participated because they were unable to find work in the more financially rewarding resource-based industries like fishing and logging. This meant that many artists did not invest a great deal of time in the objects they produced for the tourist market and curio items represent a much maligned form of production. They became one of the examples cited for the need to regulate and institutionalize First Nations art production using quality, "classic" museum examples as teaching devices beginning in the 1930s.³²

Alexie's curio carvings are generally crude in comparison to the more monumental Coast Tsimshian examples known from the same period. Alexie's carving is shallow and his line quick and spontaneous (see figures 3 and 4). His work belongs to the Coast/Lower Skeena sub-tradition emerging in Port Simpson in 1900 identified by Peter Macnair, who writes that the sub-tradition's "proponents displayed a limited repertoire, producing spoons, ladles, walking canes, bowls, napkin rings, model canoes, and the occasional model pole."³³ In addition, Alexie produced model houses as well: "These artifacts are consistently well-finished," comments Macnair, continuing the post-1947 discursive bias against nontraditional objects, "but they lack the vitality of the older school."³⁴

Yet like the Christian carvings, the Alexie curio objects pose interesting sociological questions. Well-documented examples of art produced for trans-cultural sale earlier in the nineteenth century are dominated by the Haida argillite pipes and figures. This is a corpus of objects that includes a disproportionate number of representations of Europeans. By the 1890s, the subject matter of Haida argillite carvings became increasingly Haida in character: shaman figures, model poles, houses, and canoes³⁵—a shift in content matched in the emergence of Alexie and Macnair's Coast/Lower Skeena sub-tradition. The European presence in the 1840s and 1850s, when the Haida European figures were being produced, was limited and transitory. In the 1890s, when European settlement had intensified and conflict over land was becoming increasingly present, Northwest Coast curios center almost exclusively on specifically indigenous themes. The change in content can be partly

explained as the result of consumer demands for “authentic” subjects in their souvenirs. Why this desire for authenticity did not exist only a few decades earlier has not been satisfactorily explained. Given the ownership of visual crests in Northwest Coast society, First Nations willingness to participate in the sale of crest or crest-like representations³⁶ may have then involved the assertion of Indianness in response to the expanding European presence.

My research into Alexie’s carvings as a means of documenting these larger historical processes brought me into contact with his paintings and I find myself agreeing with Barbeau’s assertion that, “This blend of two cultures in Alexie’s carvings is a rare accident at the frontiers of two worlds. It makes his paintings and carvings exceptional, fascinating, significant.”³⁷ Barbeau had a specifically nationalistic agenda in mind in his promotion of Alexie, however, and this is where our opinions begin to diverge.

First, Barbeau was instrumental in having Alexie’s paintings included in the 1927 and 1928 *West Coast* exhibition, which was designed in part to advertise the newly nationalized Canadian National Railway (CNR). The CNR line ran through Kitwanga and the other Gitksan villages of the upper Skeena River Valley, which housed a large number of totem poles untouched by American museum collectors and easily accessible to railway tourists. Kitwanga had been described as “next to Niagara Falls, the most photographed spot in Canada”³⁸ and the CNR and the federal government were anxious to use the exhibition to encourage the industrial development of the northwestern corridor from Prince Rupert to Edmonton.³⁹ Barbeau, in addition, saw the utility of these poles and the other paintings and carvings from the valley in promoting a uniquely Canadian identity.

At a time when the political and cultural distance between Canada and the United Kingdom was becoming a debate of increasing significance, Barbeau felt that Canadian identity could be based on the country’s multicultural makeup and the contributions of peripheral Canadian subcultures could be appropriated and fused into a cohesive national expression. For this reason, Barbeau brought noted nationalist landscape painter A. Y. Jackson to accompany him on his fieldwork in the Skeena. For this reason as well, Barbeau introduced Emily Carr and her paintings of totem poles to National Gallery curator Eric Brown.⁴⁰ Perhaps not terribly original, this culling of difference to promote unity reemerges continuously throughout Canadian cultural history and persists as an issue of passionate national debate. Alexie, through Barbeau, was at the beginning of this institutionalization in the *West Coast* exhibit.

This debate over Canadian unity, especially in British Columbia, is tainted with irony, as has been pointed out by Tsimshian/Haida writer Marcia Crosby and others.⁴¹ While Euro-Canadian intellectuals called for the use of First Nations images and iconography in their depiction of the land, the resulting paintings were being used to promote the industrial exploitation of clan- and lineage-owned territories that had been expropriated without treaty. Furthermore, the potlatch had been banned in 1885 and the *West Coast* exhibition, which featured objects normally displayed in potlatch contexts, came

only five years after the infamous conviction and imprisonment of twenty-two Kwakwaka'wakw participants in the 1921 Cranmer potlatch.

By exercising control over whether or not a First Nations person could hire a solicitor, the Canadian government kept First Nations people out of the courtroom. This ban was the direct result of government officials' annoyance at the hiring of "white agitators" to help pursue land claims in the court, preventing any formal action against land claims until this section of the Indian Act was dropped in the 1951 revision. Canadian government officials were anxious to monopolize the use of totem poles. They were especially concerned that the collecting efforts of major metropolitan American museums would strip the province of what poles were left before a Canadian infrastructure was in place to properly utilize them in the tourist and culture industries. An amendment to the Indian Act in 1925 gave the federal Department of Indian Affairs full control over to whom totem poles could be sold.⁴²

These issues of land and its ownership, settlement, and use are of course at the heart of the relationship between Native and non-Native peoples in



FIGURE 3. *Curio by Frederick Alexie (Vancouver Museum).*



FIGURE 4. *Lantern slide painting by Frederick Alexie (Vancouver Museum).*

Canada. For this reason, I suggest that the significance of recording the land should not be interpreted as a universal response to its sense of the picturesque. In other words, the meaning of what Alexie was depicting changes according to the audience viewing it. Most of his paintings are concerned with historical subjects: the landscape around Port Simpson, the community's first horse, the meeting of chiefs, an indigenous attack on the early Hudson's Bay trading post, a crest-like image of a bear biting a copper (see figs. 3 and 4).

For Euro-Canadians these charted the historical changes brought on by the European presence and the quaint customs of a time gone by. They demonstrated the transformation of life under the emergence of a modern Canadian nation-state within a framework of nostalgic Romanticism. For First Nations peoples, these images also demonstrated a historical presence. They are, after all, representations of the parents and grandparents of the audience members. The recitation of family histories was conventionally part of the assertion of position and, through the rightful inheritance of position, allowed access to resources gained by ancestral encounters with the spirit world. History in this sense was replete with politically and socially meaningful significance. The images could thus operate as reminders of a historical legitimacy to First Nations claims to the land, such as the land around Port Simpson which was also a constant theme in Alexie's paintings. Images of historic



FIGURE 5. *Model house by Frederick Alexie (Vancouver Museum).*

personages set against the land, the old plank houses set in a wider landscape (see fig. 5), aerial views of the village, pole-raising and potlatch preparations, the meeting of two chiefs, and the use of eagle down to greet ceremonial guests are all part of a linked cultural continuum kept alive and re-celebrated in Alexie's paintings. Like the gravestones, and perhaps like Alexie's carvings, the adaptation of the new did not signify an absolute rejection of the old, just as participation in the Euro-Canadian systems—economic, religious, artistic, or otherwise—did not preclude the continuing assertion of aboriginal rights, particularly in terms of access to land and maritime resources.

This is a seemingly radical interpretation of what otherwise appears to be an innocuous body of paintings, but it is rooted in the main social and political debates of Alexie's day. It is logical to suggest that since Alexie was active among first and second generation Christian Tsimshian before the era of mass communication, that their interpretation of his work would be informed more by Tsimshian worldview than by the intellectual currents of Ottawa, London, or New York.

MATHIAS JOE

Mathias Joe (1885–1966) is another artist whose work can be interpreted as emphasizing a historical indigenous presence in the land. He was a Squamish (Coast Salish) carver from the Capilano Reserve on Vancouver's north shore. Joe was frequently photographed and featured in local newspapers and used his status as local celebrity to draw attention to First Nations issues, including what he considered an unsatisfactory payment (\$25,000) by the city of Vancouver for two acres of the Kitsilano Reserve lands on the south end of Burrard Bridge. Vancouver newspapers also reported that he was an official guest at two coronations and, along with his wife Ellen, the first First Nations person to cast a ballot in the 1949 election after provincial enfranchisement.⁴³ His best known work was a totem pole (fig. 6) raised in Vancouver's equivalent to New York's Central Park, Stanley Park, in 1936.

Joe was active at a time when opportunities for Native people were increasingly few and far between. Most of the work that we can identify comes after the onset of the Great Depression. His work, then, must be seen partially as a response to this influential and traumatic event, particularly as the forest and fishery industries, mainstays of employment for Native people in British Columbia in the previous twenty years, collapsed. What few unemployment benefits available were distributed unevenly among affected Native and non-Native communities. Things were bad for non-Natives and worse for Natives.

Joe's work then must be seen as motivated by the economic situation and by the politics of poverty in Depression-era Canada. The situation in British Columbia was exacerbated by repressive governmental policies that struck at the old indigenous economy, including the ban of the potlatch and the new regulated approach to controlling access to marine resources. There was also increasing pressure to isolate Native people to reservations that were much smaller than what Native people consistently claimed as traditional lands. The reservations were continually threatened by the possibility of reduction through federal expropriation, which had previously occurred for rail construction in British Columbia.

Joe's 1936 pole was raised as part of the city's Golden Jubilee, which, in response to the Great Depression, was aimed primarily at



FIGURE 6. Totem pole by Mathias Joe (Vancouver City Archives).

drumming up business: local, dominion, international, or otherwise. American warships, industrial exhibitions, an aviation week, symphonies, choirs, strolling singers, military tattoos, and the erection of four crest poles went together "to make known to the world the natural beauty and advantages of Vancouver as a great city and a great port in the British Empire."⁴⁴

A local cultural organization had raised four poles eleven years earlier in Stanley Park, and at least two of these had been carved by yet another assimilation-era artist, the then living Kwakwaka'wakw carver Charlie James.⁴⁵ Totem poles were generally perceived by the Euro-Canadian public as relics of a vaguely defined pre-European past and James was not identified as the hand behind the poles until long after his death. The erection of a pole by Joe for this jubilee celebration, however, made headlines in the Vancouver newspapers and therefore represents a watershed in the recognition of individual First Nations artists in British Columbia. This was a crucial, if now unrecognized, moment in Northwest Coast history.

Three of the poles for the 1936 celebration were erected at the Lumberman's Arch site in Stanley Park, alongside the four poles from 1925. These three were touted as anonymous relics. The fourth pole, intended to symbolize the Squamish's historical significance to the city, was newly carved by Joe and erected separately at Prospect Point, also in Stanley Park. Local newspapers covering the event identified Joe as the carver and quoted his explanations of the iconography and its significance.

Joe was exploring new waters for the Squamish. According to ethnographic descriptions, Coast Salish people did not normally raise the multifigure, freestanding poles common among the more northern peoples, like the Kwakwaka'wakw, the Haida, and the Tsimshian. The Squamish people had objected to the raising of Kwakwaka'wakw poles at Lumberman's Arch, a Squamish village site known as XwayXway, in 1925. The reduction of the diverse First Nations populations on the British Columbian coast to one generalized and poorly understood totem-pole culture allowed non-Native Canadians to gloss over the historical specificity of highly localized claims to natural resources. Yet the council of the Squamish band voted unanimously in April 1936 to accept Joe's pole as "representing the Squamish Tribe, and commemorative of the meeting of the Squamish people with Captain Vancouver in Burrard Inlet off the Capilano River on June 13th, 1792."⁴⁶

Here, as with Alexie's paintings, the issue of indigenous claims to the land profoundly affected the meanings projected through the pole. The reason for the council's endorsement was that it was useful to the Squamish to reassert themselves on the city's landscape and maintain a historical link that surpassed a European presence. A number of land claim issues were (and are still) unresolved, including compensation for Stanley Park itself.⁴⁷ Prospect Point, like Lumberman's Arch, had been occupied by Squamish people. It was known as "Chay-thoos," (the clearing, (meaning 'high bank')).⁴⁸ The recognition of Squamish claims to the point were thus asserted through Joe's pole.

The point overlooked Lions Gate, the entrance into Burrard Narrows and Vancouver's main port facilities. A Squamish pole located there was also a symbolic statement of their historic presence for all passenger and commercial

boat traffic in and out of Vancouver. Joe's pole at Prospect Point quickly took on added significance with the construction of the Lions Gate bridge connecting Stanley Park and Vancouver through Squamish land to the Guinness-owned British Pacific Properties housing development on the city's north shore in 1938.⁴⁹ Once again, any symbolic reminder of the Squamish claims to lands around Burrard Inlet might contribute to either control over valuable real estate or significant financial compensation.

Despite Squamish interests, the Golden Jubilee was really intended to attract investment to Vancouver. In this context, it was further essential to assert First Nations' land ownership. Joe's pole provided the opportunity to gently remind the general public of a historic Squamish presence in an atmosphere hostile to the idea of indigenous land claims. And yet the notion of direct claims to land was never made explicit in the monument itself. Barbeau, quoting George Raley, describes the pole iconography as follows:

The topmost figure is *Swi-ve-lus*, whose highly ornamented body depicts many things. For instance, on his chest is the creator of the world, the wide open eye signifying daylight and work—the sightless eye, night, moon, stars, rest and sleep. The wing feathers symbolize rain, snow, hail and wind, while fire is seen under the great beak.

The right leg shows the eye of the sea monster, who is both father and mother of all the sea people, or fish, while the eye on the left is that leg of the land monster, who produces human beings, animals and birds.

The left side of the tail shows the water marks of the high and low tides, while the right side symbolizes the flow and drip of mountain water which makes lakes and rivers.

The second figure, *Kah-mi*, controls the storms of rain, snow, sleet, hail and wind.

The third figure, *Tsa-itch*, concerns herself especially with the season's growth of grass, herbs and trees.

The fourth, *Great Thunderbird*, hiding in the clouds, blinks his eye and shoots forth lightning; a gentle shaking of his feathers produces little disturbance, but when he flaps his wings there is violent thunder and forked lightning. When he is angry with the people of the earth he makes the lightning and sets fire to the forests, and at times warns his own crest people of approaching death.

The fifth figure on the pole is somewhat shrouded in mystery. He is called the great dragon or the giant lizard, *Tchain-koo*. This amphibian is supposed to be the principal food of the Thunderbird. He is of a bright color and his fins and scales are of gold. The scales are worn as a charm by anybody who has the good fortune to find them when they are shed.⁵⁰

According to S. W. A. Gunn, the pole, which he calls the "Thunderbird Dynasty Totem,"⁵¹ tells the "story of the Creation by Thunderbird."⁵² Together "[t]hese honored personalities rule the universe, control the elements and

create life. They are supernaturals, but like mortals, they live and eat.”⁵³ In Gunn’s version, Tzain-koo “the Giant Dragon, sea monster and huge lizard in one, is the main food of Thunderbird.”⁵⁴ Raley characterized the pole in similar romanticized terms as illustrating “the striving of the primitive imagination to interpret the universe, to solve the problem of life, and to account for natural phenomena.”⁵⁵

Gunn continued, stating that “[i]t is appropriate that this totem should tell the story of the Creation. For what it commemorates—the meeting of the Indians and the white man—opened an entirely new world for both.”⁵⁶ More to the point, “[u]nlike the other totem poles, this is an example of the art of the Indians in our immediate vicinity. . . . Crowning Prospect Point, it is the only pole that stands at the original site it was raised and appropriately constitutes one of the most memorable landmarks of the City of Vancouver.”⁵⁷

The pole, like the Tsimshian gravestones and Alexie’s church carvings, functioned unconventionally. While origin myths of local kin groups or of secret societies frequently referred to ancestral encounters with spirit beings, the depiction of multiple figures, presumably references to the different villages amalgamated after contact and settled on the Squamish Reserve (following the explanation that these figures represent the Squamish peoples), did not occur in one composition since they represented distinct social groups. The idea of representing the various origins of the Squamish peoples in one object, like the concept of the Squamish as a united nation, was an innovation partly the result of the external pressures of European and Euro-Canadian colonialism.

Wayne Suttles argues that “while some Central Coast Salish art may have been purely decorative, much of it can be related to four sources of power and prestige—the vision, the ritual word, the ancestors and wealth.”⁵⁸ In response to Bill Reid’s suggestion that the aesthetic accomplishments of the Coast Salish were uneven,⁵⁹ Suttles countered that the representations of visions or guardian spirits were constrained by the notion that “it was dangerous to reveal too much about it,”⁶⁰ that with “art related to the power of the ritual word, . . . its efficacy depends not on the private experience of a vision but the private knowledge of ritual words that have inherent power,”⁶¹ and that ambiguity in “the portrayal of ancestors”⁶² may have been motivated by “fear of ridicule.”⁶³

Suttles’s characterization of the Central-Coast-Salish approach to representation in objects as cautious might explain the vagueness in the iconography of Joe’s pole. Joe, and the Squamish through him, implied a historical legitimacy to their claims to Stanley Park by referencing a body of stories that were never explicitly explained in the public press. The references to these stories was also likely directed to the same large audience that read the works of popular writers like E. Pauline Johnson, an author of mixed parentage who wrote stories about regional locales using Native motifs. In the end, how these “origin” myths may have delineated Squamish history was perhaps tangential to the pole’s role as a reminder to visitors and residents alike of the historical Squamish presence in Vancouver and thus to their claims to land, water, and other resources.

Joe is also important in contributing to non-Native acceptance of contemporary Native art and artists. Joe’s pole is not a reconfigured ceremonial

object, like the Kwakwaka'wakw poles at Lumberman's Arch, but rather a monument intended to say something of the Squamish directly and specifically to Vancouver's non-Native population. Although the thunderbird is indeed a personage appearing in Salish mythology, Joe's choice of it for the subject of his pole may be a reference to the popular relocated house posts carved by Charlie James in order to reinforce through formal familiarity the Euro-Canadian acceptance of the pole at Prospect Point. Here is monumental public art whose meaning is constructed outside the limited publicness of the potlatch. It is transcultural and yet it clearly implies historicity. These themes evident in the Prospect Point pole grew in importance in the 1950s and 1960s as a market for Native art was carefully cultivated. And in this market lies the tension, seen first in Joe's art, between making something for multiple modern audiences that is not necessarily legitimized within the potlatch context and that efficiently communicates a sense of tradition and history at the heart of much of the argument for self-government and land claims.

The totem pole previously demonstrated family history and status through references to stories of ancestral encounters, the details of which were only open to the family and more specifically to those assuming the lineage positions at events that included the raising of a pole. The stories were recited at that event and the acceptance of the gifts provided by the families and individuals raising the pole indicated the audience's acceptance of the claims and assertions that were the main business of the affair. Normally, these events were open to those invited from within the clan, community, or village. The negotiation of resources and position continued and perhaps even accelerated in importance after Canadian confederation, although now the circle of those concerned had to be widened to include the non-Native immigrants who crowded the new cities. The public raising of poles, like Joe's, represents the ongoing engagement of an amorphous public in the negotiation of land and resources. The adaptation made by artists like Joe was critical to the widening of the circle.

Joe's pole commanded attention by virtue of its location in the city's most important tourist site and was almost immediately seen as a significant city landmark. A thunderbird pole in combination with Joe's colorful tendency to dress up for public events in full feather bonnet and buckskin captured the local public imagination. Although he made it into the local newspapers as an expert in Indian lore and (like Alexie) a carver of model poles as early as 1932, Joe received a number of significant commissions through the 1940s and early 1950s in direct response to the Stanley Park pole. Many of these commissions were from companies cashing in on the postwar natural-resource boom and sought publicity evocative of their connection to the natural environment. Joe carved a thirty-foot pole for a resort in Princess Louise Inlet at the head of Jervis Inlet in 1941; a thirty-foot copy of the Stanley Park pole for presentation to the Governor of Texas plus several more carved during a six-week carving demonstration tour of the state in 1948; twenty poles at \$200 each for the distributor of British Columbia Shingles in Texas and sponsor of Joe's demonstration tour, Maurice Angly; a twenty-foot pole for Gerhard Fisher in West Vancouver in 1954; a thirty-foot pole for Davis

Lumber Company in Saint Catherine's, Ontario, in 1955; and an assortment of model poles for various visiting luminaries, including one in 1951 for the then Princess Elizabeth.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Joe used the spotlight created in part by the Stanley Park pole and in part by his own performances for the media.⁶⁵ Joe announced in 1953 that he was setting up a tipi on Marine Drive in North Vancouver to protest the city's offer to purchase more Squamish land for the construction of a second bridge connecting the city center to its North Vancouver suburb. "I'll build a fire there, do my cooking and the traffic will flow past on either side of me,"⁶⁶ he was reported as saying in an article accompanied by a photograph of Joe and his tipi with the Lion's Gate Bridge in the background. "From my teepee headquarters I shall pass out leaflets telling all about the big steal. We are offered the ridiculous price of \$750 an acre when we should be getting at least \$5000."⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

The objectification of First Nations cultures in general, in addition to the discursive absence of "inauthentic" arts, fulfilled specific ideological desires within Euro-America. First, in anthropological terms, Franz Boas, in his attempts to disrupt dominant social evolutionist ideologies, conceived of culture as autonomous, operating according to its own internal logic. This has led to an overemphasis on an image of culture in isolation. Thus, art, particularly First Nations art, that displays either conceptual or aesthetic influence from Europe and European North America is seen as indicative of a breakdown of this internal logic and thus of the culture's "decline." Museum collecting policies, informed by what some have called the salvage paradigm, consequently have focused primarily on "authenticity"; that is to say art that seems to derive from First Nations cultures before the "breakdown" of their cultural systems.

Second, the aesthetic interest of institutional Canada in First Nations art especially in the 1950s through to the mid-1970s hinged on an understanding of "traditional"—looking at art as part of the past. According to this myth, the meaning systems that informed "traditional" art were dead and it was no longer necessary to acknowledge the system of inherited social prerogatives that controlled its production. The material could be reconfigured and held out as Canada's first contribution to the world of fine art.

Third, when Canadian academic institutions first began to acknowledge the continuity of art production in First Nations communities in the late 1940s, they sought to promote the art as a solution to the economic difficulties facing Canadian reservations. Museum and other institutional educational programs focused on already established collections of "authentic" art. Public taste in the art market was molded to the expectations of ethnicity derived from the ideas of the salvage paradigm. Museum programs then focused on delineating the characteristics of "authentic" form based on the modernist paradigm that form transcends cultural and political boundaries. The emphasis on form over meaning tacitly encouraged a depoliticization of the art and helped make it palatable for non-Native markets.

Ironically, the emphasis on economic aid was linked to a broader and yet highly political social reform movement that pressured for legislative amendments to replace assimilation as government policy. While the shift toward integration posited so-called traditional form as a closed and therefore safe market for indigenous art producers, an over-enthusiastic desire to right the wrongs of the assimilation era contributed to the rejection of assimilation-era artists like Alexie and Joe, who on closer examination visually expressed some of the many ways in which assimilation was subverted, contested, negotiated, and resisted.

Alexie came from a generation that experienced rapid European immigration and settlement and their impact on indigenous social systems, including art. Alexie exemplifies how artists tried to respond to the period's expansion of patrons, simultaneously producing art for the curio market, the emerging fine-arts market, the church, and the existing indigenous leadership. Rather than suggesting that his lack of control over the orthodox form-line system represents a deterioration in technique associated with assimilation, I prefer a more positive approach. The flood of new information and stimuli influenced his choice in form and he demonstrated the widening interest among his generation of artists in using different and varied sources of inspiration, including those from outside and within the Northwest Coast tradition. His use of formline-like motifs maintained continuity with the past, and the adaptation of spatial illusionism in his painting aligned his art with contemporary non-Native Canadian landscape painting. In this way, he set precedents for later Northwest Coast artists like Bill Reid, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and David Neel.

The academic interest in Alexie is associated with the last gasp of anthropological research into Tsimshian society before the Great Depression and the collapse of public funding for research into Northwest Coast culture. In particular, Barbeau's interest in Alexie is a product of Barbeau's own participation in the promotion of multiculturalism as a model for Canadian cultural identity. Alexie's use of different traditions in his art paralleled the efforts of non-Native Canadian painters like A. Y. Jackson and Emily Carr and his work was exhibited with theirs. In other words, Alexie's balance between old and new forms is a product of his life experiences and the external promotion of his art was closely linked to the notion that syncretistic art mirrored the cultural mix of Canadian society.

It is an extremely important, if somewhat obvious, point that Alexie was exhibited because his work supported non-Native intellectual trends. Contrary to the bulk of what has been written about Northwest Coast art, it did not continue in a tradition-bound vacuum, let alone die out, but instead responded to and was shaped by broader social developments shared with other ethnic groups in Canada. This point is further supported by the carving of Mathias Joe, who used his art to talk to the same audiences who read E. Pauline Johnson and shared an interest in Native myth. He took non-Native perceptions about what constituted Native art and invented a new form of Salish art that corresponded to these expectations in order to reassert a Salish historical presence on land that was claimed by them. The political use of this new form is subtle and implicit, but nonetheless important.

Furthermore, little is known about Joe, despite the fact that his pole was a popular landmark in Vancouver. He was active during the Great Depression when there was no available funding to promote Native culture and was overlooked by museum authorities in the 1940s and 1950s when they instead sought artists who specialized in making art for traditional contexts. The best known artist of the 1950s was undoubtedly Joe's contemporary Mungo Martin, who had been producing work for the underground Kwakwaka'wakw potlatches between 1922 and 1951. Martin was preferable to the new generation of scholars because the cultural balance and compromise—even if it was disingenuous compromise—evident the art of Alexie and Joe was associated with assimilation. This kind of art did not support the growing ideology of relativism and thus no longer adequately served non-Native purposes. Such art was therefore reassigned to the obscurity of the museums' back shelves.

NOTES

1. Peter L. Macnair, Alan L. Hoover, and Kevin Neary, *The Legacy: Continuing Traditions of Canadian Northwest Coast Indian Art* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1980).

2. See, for example, Wilson Duff, "Contexts of Northwest Coast Art," in *Arts of the Raven: Masterworks of the Northwest Coast Indian* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1965); Joan Vastokas, "Bill Reid and the Native Renaissance," in *Stone, Bones, and Skin: Ritual and Shamanic Art*, eds. Anne Trueblood Bordzky, Rose Danesewich, and Nick Johnson (Toronto: Society for Art Publications, 1977); Edwin S. Hall, Margaret B. Blackman, and Vincent Rickard, *Northwest Coast Indian Graphics: An Introduction to Silk Screen Prints* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981); and Peter Macnair, "Trends in Northwest Coast Indian Art 1880–1959: Decline and Expansion," in *In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art*, ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization (Ottawa: Canadian Ethnology Service Mercury Series Paper 124, 1993).

3. Margaret Blackman, "Creativity in Acculturation: Art, Architecture and Ceremony from the Northwest Coast," *Ethnohistory* 23, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 387–413.

4. For overviews of the prohibition of indigenous ceremonies in Canada, see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990); Daisy Sewid-Smith, *Persecution or Prosecution* (Cape Mudge, BC: Nu-Yum-Balees, 1979); and Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994).

5. Aldona Jonaitis, "Traders of Tradition: The History of Haida Art," in *Robert Davidson: Eagle of the Dawn*, ed. Ian M. Thom (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 14.

6. The new institutions of Canada in 1947, like the University of British Columbia and their new Anthropology Department (staffed by anthropologist Harry Hawthorn, newly hired from New Zealand) went to old-timers like Barbeau for advice on "authentic" purchases. In contrast to Joe, the best documented artist from this era is Mungo Martin, a Kwakwaka'wakw sculptor, who only rose to prominence in the Euro-Canadian community when he was in his sixties. Martin was selected for documentation and promotion by non-Native anthropologists, particularly Hawthorn and

his colleague (and former student) from the British Columbia Provincial Museum Wilson Duff, after 1947 because his monumental carvings were clearly closer to their expectations of authenticity than carvings by Joe. Although Martin is an extraordinarily talented and important artist in his own right, he also better served the objectives of the museums and other institutions that the anthropologists worked for than his less traditional contemporaries. Toward the end of his life, Martin worked very closely with museum staffs in the urban southern British Columbian centers as both artist and anthropological informant.

7. Marius Barbeau, "Frederick Alexie: A Primitive," *Canadian Review of Music and Art* 3, nos. 11 and 12 (1945): 19–22. Barbeau received his information in a letter from William Benyon dated November 17, 1944, and now found in the Barbeau Northwest Coast Files at the Centre for the Study of Canadian Folklore, Canadian Museum of Civilization (Reference: B-F-159.4).

8. *Ibid.*

9. Viola Garfield, "Wood Carving and Painting," unpublished manuscript (August/September 1934), 102. Copy on file with author.

10. National Gallery of Canada, *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art—Native and Modern* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1928).

11. Bill Holm, "Will the Real Charles Edenshaw Please Stand Up? The Problem of Attribution in Northwest Coast Indian Art," in *The World as Sharp as a Knife: An Anthology in Honour of Wilson Duff*, ed. Donald Abbott (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1981), 177.

12. Aldona Jonaitis, "Franz Boas, John Swanton, and the New Haida Sculpture at the American Museum of Natural History," in *The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting*, ed. Janet Catherine Berlo (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), 22–61.

13. Doris Shadbolt writes that "he [Reid] found in Edenshaw the quintessential statement of Haida artistic form, that style in which 'each object becomes a frozen universe, filled with latent energy.' During the 1950s Edenshaw became central to Reid's patient and thorough studies; borrowing [from] and copying him as necessary, he gradually acquired the theoretical understanding of the style and the ability to express that understanding in his own increasingly ambitious and masterly jewelry pieces" (Doris Shadbolt, *Bill Reid* [Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1986], 29).

14. Boas used Edenshaw drawings as illustrations in his seminal work *Primitive Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), and Holm called Edenshaw "a highly competent, imaginative artist with absolute mastery of the tradition in which he worked" (Holm, "The Real Charles Edenshaw," 182) and based his stylistic analysis of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Haida artists on objects in museums attributed to Edenshaw for comparison.

15. Barbeau, "Frederick Alexie."

16. George F. MacDonald, "Painted Houses and Woven Blankets: Symbols of Wealth in Tsimshian Art and Myth," in *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors of the North Pacific Coast*, eds. Jay Miller and Carol M. Eastman (Seattle: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

17. Deidre Simmons, "A History for Contemporary Canadian Indian Art," *European Review of Native American Studies* 5, no. 1 (1991).

18. Ronald W. Hawker, "Frederick Alexie: Euro-Canadian Discussions of a First Nations' Artist," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 2 (1991): 229–252.

19. Audrey Hawthorn, *Art of the Kwakiutl Indians and Other Northwest Coast Tribes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967).

20. James Clifford, "Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

21. The focus on late nineteenth century form also legitimized the authority of museums and universities staffed almost exclusively by Euro-Canadians and obscured the role of the federal and provincial governments in the concerted attempt at cultural genocide that assimilation represented (see Ronald W. Hawker, "Accumulated Labours: First Nations Art in British Columbia," 1922–1961 [Ph.D. diss., University of Victoria, 1998]).

22. See Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Poles: Tsimshian Gravestones, 1879–1930" (master's thesis, University of Victoria, 1988); Ronald W. Hawker, "In the Way of the White Man's Totem Poles: Stone Monuments Among Canada's Tsimshian Indians, 1879-1910," *Markers VII* (1990): 213–232; Ronald W. Hawker, "A Faith of Stone: The Role of the Missionary in the Introduction of Gravestones Among British Columbia's Tsimshian Indians," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 80–99.

23. The stones were often faithfully based on carved wooden models provided by Tsimshian clients to the Euro-Canadian masons based in Victoria to the south or were catalogue stock-ordered monuments recarved upon their arrival in the Tsimshian villages.

24. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 16.

25. The historic negotiation of new British practices introduced by evangelical missionaries and older, traditional Tsimshian customs is described in: Viola E. Garfield, "Tsimshian Clan and Society," *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology* 7, no. 3 (February 1939); E. Palmer Patterson, *Mission on the Nass: The Evangelization of the Nishga, 1860–1890* (Waterloo, Ontario: Eulachon Press, 1982); E. Palmer Patterson, "Kincolith, B.C.: Leadership Continuity in a Native Christian Village, 1867–1887," *Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (Fall 1982); Jay Miller, "Moieties and Cultural America: Manipulation of Knowledge in a Pacific Northwest Coast Native Community," *Arctic Anthropology* 18, no. 1 (1981); and Clarence R. Bolt, "The Conversion of the Port Simpson Tsimshian: Indian Control or Missionary Manipulation," *BC Studies* 57 (Spring 1983).

26. Similar points have been made with regard to postmissionary Haida burial practices by Margaret Blackman, "Totems to Tombstones: Culture Change as Viewed through the Haida Mortuary Complex, 1877–1971," *Ethnology* VII, no. 1 (January 1973), and to Tlingit gravestones by Sergei Kan, "Memory Eternal: Russian Orthodox Christianity and the Tlingit Mortuary Complex," *Arctic Anthropology* 24, no. 1.

27. See Macnair et al., *Legacy*; Bill Holm, "Art," in *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles, vol. 7 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 616; and Paul S. Wingert, "Tsimshian Sculpture," *The Tsimshian: Their Arts and Music* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1951).

28. The Britain-based Anglican evangelical organization, the Church Missionary Society, sent lay missionary William Duncan to Port Simpson in 1857. There, Duncan

learned the Coast Tsimshian language, but reported limited success in conversion. In 1862 he founded the utopic Christian village Metlakatla at a traditional village site not far from Port Simpson. Metlakatla proved to be a successful endeavor in terms of both religious conversion and economic production. In response, a number of Coast Tsimshian residents at Port Simpson, including hereditary chief Alfred Dudoward, invited Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby to their village. From this date on, Metlakatla and Port Simpson became the centers through which British Protestantism was diffused in northern British Columbia and southern Alaska.

29. Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man Publications in History Number 5, 1974). For a description of Tsimshian worldview and ceremonial cycles, see: Marjorie Halpin, "The Structure of Tsimshian Totemism," in *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors of the North Pacific Coast*, eds. Jay Miller and Carol M. Eastman (Seattle: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Marjorie Halpin and Margaret Seguin, "Tsimshian Peoples: Southern Tsimshian, Coast Tsimshian, Nishga, and Gitksan," in Suttles, *Northwest Coast*; Marjorie Halpin, "'Seeing' in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks," in *The World as Sharp as a Knife: An Anthology in Honour of Wilson Duff*, ed. Donald Abbott (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1981); Marie-Francoise Guedon, "An Introduction to Tsimshian World View and Its Practitioners," in *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past, Views for the Present*, ed. Margaret Seguin (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Marie-Francoise Guedon, "Tsimshian Shamanic Images," in Seguin, *The Tsimshian*; George F. MacDonald, "Painted Houses and Woven Blankets: Symbols of Wealth in Tsimshian Art and Myth," in Miller and Eastman, *The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors*; Audrey Shane, "Power in Their Hands: The Gitsontk," in Seguin, *The Tsimshian*.

30. William Duncan, quoted in Forrest E. Lavolette, *The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 31.

31. C. Marius Barbeau, *Medicine-men of the North Pacific Coast* (Ottawa: Anthropological Series 42, National Museum of Canada Bulletin 152, 1958).

32. The call for regulation and institutionalization initially came in the 1930s from social reform arts and crafts organizations often founded by educators working with First Nations children. Harlan Smith at the National Museum of Canada and Reverend George Raley of Colqualeetza School made some lobbying attempts. The most influential organization emerging at this time was the British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society (BCIAWS) founded in Victoria by Alice Ravenhill in 1939. The BCIAWS became closely associated with the British Columbia Provincial Museum, a government institution, opening an office in the museum's building. At one point, Ravenhill sought funds from the federal government to create and distribute a series of wall charts based on the museum collection to reservation schools in order to encourage the production of "authentic" First Nations art. Ravenhill also operated docent and lecture programs for the museum throughout the 1940s. The rigidity of these institutional calls for "authenticity" was questioned by Native artists of the time. Kwakwaka'wakw woman carver Ellen Neel stated unequivocally in 1947: "To me, this idea is one of the great fallacies where the art of my people is concerned. For if our art is dead, then it is fit only to be mummified, packed into mortuary boxes and tucked away into museums . . . if the art of my people is to take its rightful place alongside

other Canadian art, it must be a living medium of expression. We, the Indian artists, must be allowed to create!" (from H. B. Hawthorn, ed., *Report of Conference on Native Indian Affairs* [Victoria: British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society, 1948], 12–14).

33. Macnair, "Trends in Northwest Coast Indian Art," 56.

34. *Ibid.*

35. The chronological development of Haida argillite carving is most rigorously developed in Peter L. Macnair and Alan L. Hoover, *The Magic [L]eaves: A History of Haida Argillite Carving* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum Special Publication 7, 1984).

36. Two of Alexie's works—a small carving of a bear biting a copper (fig. 3) and a lantern slide painting of the same subject (fig. 4)—are probably commonly owned crests from Alexie's lineage. There are a number of objects in the Canadian Museum of Civilization collected by Barbeau from a relatively unknown carver identified as Txahoget that also appear to represent low-status or commonly owned lineage crests.

37. Barbeau, "Frederick Alexie," 22.

38. *Montreal Gazette*, quoted in Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985), 272.

39. This is discussed in detail in Ann Morrison, "Canadian Art and Cultural Appropriation: Emily Carr and the Exhibition of West Coast Art—Native and Modern" (master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1991).

40. Brown, in agreement with Barbeau, wrote of Northwest Coast art in the *West Coast* catalogue: "Enough . . . remains of the old arts to provide an invaluable mine of decorative design which is available to the student for a host of different purposes and possessing for the Canadian artist in particular the unique quality of being entirely national in its origin and character" (p. 3). Here Brown foreshadows a similar assertion and nationalist construction made by Frederic Douglas and Rene d'Harnoncourt fourteen years later in the *Indian Art of the United States* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York: "Indian art from coast to coast actually recreates the land, America, in every one of its countless variations. . . . Indian art not only has a place but actually fills a concrete need in the United States today. Its close relationship to America, the land, and its unexplored wealth of forms offer a valuable contribution to Modern American art and life" (Frederic H. Douglas and Rene d'Harnoncourt, *Indian Art of the United States* [New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1941], 15).

41. See especially Marcia Crosby, "Construction of the Imaginary Indian," in *The Vancouver Anthology*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1991), and id., "Indian Art/Aboriginal Title" (master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1994).

42. For a more comprehensive summation of Indian policy in British Columbia, see Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849–1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

43. Golden Jubilee Committee Clippings Book, Vancouver City Archives Add. Mss. 177, Volume 6.

44. Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Golden Jubilee Committee, Vancouver City Archives AM 177, Volume 1, File 6, G. G. McGeer, Mayor and Chairman, Vancouver Golden Jubilee Committee (VGJC), to Charles E. Thompson, Deputy Chairman, VGJC.

45. These poles specifically, and James's career generally, are discussed in Phil Nuytten, *The Totem Carvers: Charlie James, Ellen Neel and Mungo Martin* (Vancouver:

Panorama Publications, 1982). James's house posts from Stanley Park had also been used as part of the set for Edward Curtis's film, *In the Land of the War Canoes*, and are discussed as well in Bill Holm and George Irving Quimby, *Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes: A Pioneer Cinematographer in the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1980).

46. F. C. Ball, Indian Agent, to G. H. Raley, Indian Committee, Golden Jubilee Committee, Raley Papers PABC HD R13 B77.

47. Stanley Park is subject to the overlapping claims of the Squamish and Musqueam peoples, who both come under the anthropological taxonomic term *Coast Salish*.

48. Major J. S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 1932–1954* (Vancouver: Vancouver City Archives, 1955), 32.

49. Raymond Hull, Gordon Soules, and Christine Soules, *Vancouver's Past* (Vancouver: Gordon Soules Economic and Marketing Research, 1974), 81.

50. Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 163.

51. S. W. A. Gunn, *A Complete Guide to the Totem Poles in Stanley Park, Vancouver, B.C.* (Vancouver: W. E. G. MacDonald, 1965), 22.

52. *Ibid.*, 22.

53. *Ibid.*, 23.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Raley, *Our Totem Poles*, 8.

56. Gunn, *Totem Poles in Stanley Park*, 23.

57. *Ibid.*, 22.

58. Wayne Suttles, "Productivity and its Constraints: A Coast Salish Case," in *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 104.

59. Bill Holm and Bill Reid, *Form and Freedom: A Dialogue on Northwest Coast Indian Art* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1975), 58–61.

60. Suttles, "Productivity and Its Constraints," 131.

61. *Ibid.*, 132.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*

65. An example of what now seems to be Joe's campy yet subversive sense of humor appears in a newspaper report dated July 11, 1936 found in a Vancouver City Archives clippings book: "Those who conducted the ceremonies which inducted Mayor G. G. McGeer as a chief of the Squamish tribe may have committed a linguistic faux pas, it was revealed at the city hall this morning." The mayor was given the name Tlassala, translated at the time to "Sun Rising in the East." Typed in the margin next to the clipping by J. S. Matthews, city archivist, and dated Oct. 1936 is: "August Jack Haatsalano [*sic*] says the name given 'Tlassala' means in the Squamish tongue, 'a cloud,' and in the language of the Fort Rupert Indians a 'mink' (small, furred animal). In narrating the details of the incident of making his Worship a chief, he (August Jack Khatsahlano, a member of the Musqueam nation) was very much amused and said 'don't tell anybody, or it will spoil it all.'" (Vancouver City Archives Add. Mss. 177, Volume 6)

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*