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TAMMI JO HANAWALT

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BY

Dr. W. Jackson Rushing III, Chair

Dr. Robert Bailey

Dr. Alison Fields

Dr. Kenneth Haltman

Dr. Misha Klein

Mr. Byron Price

Dr. David Wrobel

For Aidan and Chris, my inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

Raven, Nanobozho, Wakdjunkaga, Ishtinke, and Coyote were a part of Native North American cultures long before anthropologists began to record their stories in the nineteenth century. Perplexed and captivated by these beings of diverse mythic origin, which they clustered together and identified as “tricksters,” anthropologists set out to impose meaning, variously drawing on ethnographic, structuralist, and psychoanalytic approaches. With the rise of identity politics in the last half of the twentieth century, indigenous artists, authors, and playwrights seized tricksters’ essence as a means of connecting to their cultural history without being locked into colonialist stereotypes about Native Americans. In this dissertation I examine the complexity and illusiveness of tricksters as a visual presence, approaching “trickster discourse” on a level that intertwines the disciplines of American art history, Native American studies, and cultural anthropology. Crossing previously unexplored territory between these disciplinary boundaries, I problematize current discourse that has adopted the term “trickster” as an identifier in Native American art theories, and, with consideration for North American tricksters in their historic and cultural contexts, I offer alternative interpretations that center on a more paradoxical reading of their contemporary functions in art.

Introduction: Understanding Trickster

Trickster was a comparative term first used by American anthropologists in the late nineteenth century that most closely described a wide variety of paradoxical beings frequently found in the oral stories of indigenous people. Native Americans and First Nations people called them by names such as Nanobozho (Rabbit), Raven, Coyote, and Saynday. The former are among some of the most well known so-named trickster figures, and amongst those I address here, but there are many others. In this dissertation I propose to present a fuller understanding of what North American tricksters were and what they have become.

Tricksters and Nineteenth Century Anthropology

Anthropologist Paul Radin described the Winnebago trickster Wakdjunkaga as “inchoate being of undetermined proportions,” an ambiguous figure that was merely a shadow of humanity.¹ This psychoanalytical postulation related to the trickster as archetype, a level of development in the human psyche that first garnered attention in the mid-twentieth century, but such a grouping accounted for only certain qualities and overlooked the complexity of the figures and their functions as they existed throughout diverse Native North American cultures over the course of centuries. Daniel Garrison Brinton was the first to refer to the term trickster to with regard to North American mythologies in his 1885 essay, “The Chief God of the Algonkins [sic] in His Character as a Cheat and Liar.” Cultural stories, however, were collected much earlier. I have identified publications and

imagery that indicate the presence of appalling, but appealing, tricky characters to the 1830s, when interest in the study of Native cultures increased. Unfortunately, primary material, such as stories recorded in their original Native American and First Nation languages, is minimal. Much of what is known of North American tricksters exists in the multitude of stories that were collected, translated, and published by non-Native anthropologists, followed by nearly a century of subsequent trickster discourse. It is through the writings of these anthropologists that I construct an understanding of Native North American tricksters. Pointing to inconsistencies and biases in the literature, I demonstrate the ways in which the figures and their stories were appropriated away from their original sources and reconfigured into something that was better suited for broader public consumption.

Native American artists, however, rarely represented tricksters visually before the mid-twentieth century, with perhaps the exception of Raven, who is addressed at greater length in chapter two. Given the paucity of scholarship regarding the visual history of North American tricksters, in this dissertation I consider some of the following: (1) perhaps tricksters were too difficult, or dangerous to depict, as characters were created from, or caused, chaos; (2) tricksters may or may not have been viewed as sacred; if they were not (which seems likely), they would not have been represented on ritual objects; (3) some tricksters stories were grotesque and pornographic and did not translate well visually; (4) tricksters were only embodied in performance, so their physical appearance was ephemeral; (4) tricksters, as Radin suggested, had no identifiable

form; (5) or images representing trickster figures, for whatever reasons, were destroyed.

Thus, I begin chapter one with the examination of how Native North American trickster figures and their stories, as oral traditions, were collected in the last decades of the nineteenth century. This involves an in-depth study of ethnographic texts recorded by anthropologist in Bureau of American Ethnology Reports (BAE) from the nineteenth century, the investigation of existing imagery by Native and non-Native artists, and a close reading of analyses written by the anthropologists Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and James Mooney. Here, I also question if individual trickster tales were written as cycles, examine how stories were disseminated between cultures, and investigate the anthropological debates that focused on the figure known as Nanobozho, a trickster figure that has most often been associated with rabbits or hares.

A portion of chapter one is devoted to the artwork of Kiowa artist Silver Horn, who was one of only two artists that depicted trickster figures in the nineteenth century. In *Silver Horn: Master Illustrator* (2001), anthropologist and curator Candace Green explains that Silver Horn's images of Saynday were created during the time he served in the military at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, where he was recruited in 1891.² Although Silver Horn's Saynday images were overlooked for more than a century, the Saynday stories themselves appear to have garnered a great deal of attention from anthropologists. Saynday stories were recorded and published in BAE reports in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and were further collected by anthropologist Alice Marriott between 1934-36. In

Winter-Telling Stories (1947) and *Saynday's People: The Kiowa Indians and the Stories they Told* (1962) Marriott included a small sampling of Saynday stories from the hundreds that she claimed existed. Included in Marriott's collections are the stories about how Saynday brings sunlight to the world, creates death, and saves the Kiowa from smallpox (she reported that the "pornographic" stories were omitted).

In chapter two begins with a discussion of Franz Boas and depictions of Raven created by artists from the Northwest Coast, with particular attention given to the nineteenth century Haida carver Charles Edenshaw. Boas and his students conducted some of the most extensive studies on Native American tricksters to date. Boas compiled many trickster stories from Northwest Coast tribes and contributed his own theories about the characters. In 1898, for example, Boas debated the ideas expressed previously by Brinton, with the opinion that tricksters were complex characters, who evolved from archaic mythological beings that were never benevolent and did not shape the world with "altruistic motives."

Anthropologists collected stories to the best of their ability, but there were misunderstandings, and they were not above changing the content and context, as did their Native informants.³ Systematically collected and archived ethnographic records helped to expose trickster stories to a non-Native audience. Translations of the stories into English or other European languages also changed their meaning; moreover, recording and collecting also helped to remove figures from their stories, as seen with Raven and Coyote in the twentieth century. Perhaps the reason tricksters were seldom seen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries refers back to protocols set in place about where, when, and by whom the stories should be told. But evidence suggests that trickster stories were not told in linear sequences, or in cycles, which meant that a trickster figure could be brought into a story at any intermittent point in their career, and trickster stories, as Schoolcraft mentioned, were told throughout the year. It is more likely that the suppression and exploitation of particular Native ceremonies and traditions limited tricksters' exposure outside of their respective communities.

Because ethnographic documentation by anthropologists was so readily available, it played an important role in preserving and distributing knowledge of tricksters in the twentieth century. However, as I have explained, anthropologists also contributed to the reshaping of the mythology. They may have misinterpreted their informants connotations, left out portions of the stories that they did not understand, or omitted parts that they deemed unfit to document, such as references to sex, cannibalism, human excrement, and sometimes murder. After 1920 anthropological collecting of North American trickster stories waned, which can be attributed to the significant changes that continued to occur in indigenous cultures in the twentieth century. Native people could no longer be considered "primitives," but still their traditions and belief systems were continually suppressed. Although the more vulgar and terrifying trickster stories were maintained in Native cultures, those that matriculated into North American mainstream society were adapted to suit prevailing puritanical attitudes.

On the Northwest Coast, tribal potlatch dances that featured trickster figures, such as Raven, had been banned since the 1880s. Tribes, however,

continued to practice the ceremonies in secret. In 1921 the Canadian government decided to crackdown on the “underground” dances and raided a large potlatch ceremony that was hosted by Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Dan Cranmer. Forty-eight people, including Cranmer, were arrested for their involvement and at least twenty-six members of the tribe spent time in jail. Ceremonial masks and regalia, as well as gifts from the potlatch were confiscated and expropriated from the community, and institutionalized in museum collections. Boas, who had worked with the Kwakwaka'wakw for several decades, wrote letters of support for Cranmer and further protested the law that prohibited the dances. However, Boas' supportive efforts proved inadequate and the ban on holding potlatches was not lifted until 1951.⁴

I address a similar “dance ban” that had to do with Pueblo clowns in the Southwest and occurred in the 1920s concurrent with the crackdown on potlatches. Pueblo clowns, performers who represent social order in Pueblo dances and possible trickster embodiments worth considering in this dissertation, were subjected not only to governmental scrutiny, but also became central to a debate between female social reformers and first wave feminists. Data about the clowns activities, which included mimetic copulation, among other “atrocities,” had been recorded in a “Secret Dance” file, which helped support the reformers' case against what they viewed as the loose sexual mores of the Pueblo people.⁵ The clowns' “tricksterish” performance of lewd acts, which were eventually used to ridicule whites and their sexuality, were used as evidence in the effort to ban dances in Pueblo communities. However, what needs to be addressed further here

is how Pueblo people perceived clowns. Similar to tricksters, clowns possess a certain ambiguity; they are not admired, and they are not entirely ostracized either. Anthropologist Barbara Babcock-Abrahams asserts that clowns, as well as tricksters, occupy a space of “marginality,” somewhere outside the culture, but still an accepted part of the social structure.⁶

It is interesting to note that in the 1930s, shortly after the Pueblo dance controversy, a movement supporting the education of Indian artists was developing in Santa Fe. In *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas* (1968), Dorothy Dunn explained that some Native students were reluctant to paint “Indian” subject matter; rightfully, many student thought when they arrived at the Santa Fe Indian School that they would be taught contemporary art techniques. But Dunn persisted in encouraging her students to depict indigenous daily activities, ceremonies, and mythologies. She helped to accomplish this through trips to the Laboratory of Anthropology and the Museum of New Mexico, where students were expected to learn about their heritage.⁷ Although several students depicted traditional cosmology and mythology, few represented trickster figures. The most obvious representations of trickster stories from the southwest show up in the paintings of the Navajo artists Andrew Tsinajinnie and Narciso Abeyta (Ha-So-De), both of whom depicted the Coyote story of “Changing Bear Woman” between 1950 and 1970 (Figure 8). This trickster tale demonstrates the more evil aspects of the trickster Coyote, who, among the Southwest, was also associated with witchcraft.⁸

In chapter three I explore how trickster stories circulated in popular culture in the twentieth century in the form of Warner Brothers cartoons. Bugs Bunny most certainly reflects aspects of Nanobozho, along with traits displayed by other tricksters, including Harris' character Br'er Rabbit. Bugs Bunny was developed in the 1930s and first appeared in the 1940 short film, *A Wild Hare*. Subsequent cartoons featuring the anthropomorphic bunny became widely popular in the United States as children's entertainment. With respect to the trickster Coyote, the Wile E. Coyote cartoons, which began in 1949, might parallel some of the more buffoonish stories of Native North American origin. Satire and irony, which dealt with historic and political issues, were unquestionably presented (as were stereotypes that reflected racism) through the sly actions of the "rascal rabbit," (and other characters) as directed by his creators, writers, and animators. Considering that these cartoons were produced until 1964 and shown in broadcast syndication until the 1980s suggests that for over forty years innumerable children would have been exposed to societal lessons taught, as it were, by Bugs Bunny and his animated colleagues.

By the 1950s and 1960s anthropologists, psychologists, and theorists began to value trickster traits as theoretical frameworks for their analyses concerning indigenous cultures and development of the human psyche. In 1955, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss posed his much examined question: "Why is it that throughout North America [the trickster] role is assigned practically every where to either coyote or raven?"⁹ Lévi-Strauss' subsequent structural analysis was based on the assumption that both of these creatures were carrion eaters,

animals that eat putrefying flesh, intermediaries between herbivorous and carnivorous. Which, according to Lévi-Strauss, in North American mythology represented the space between nature and culture, and an interstice between life and death. His analysis had to do more with understanding how myths function, a fact that most scholars disregard in their theoretical analyses.

Anthropologist Paul Radin's, *The Trickster: A Study of North American Mythology* (1956), which became a standard text, includes his translation of his informant Sam Blowsnake's myth cycles; his summary of the Assiniboiné and Tlingit trickster mythologies; and his analysis of North American myths in general compared to the Winnebago specifically. It also contains the essay, "The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology," by Karl Kerényi, and Carl Gustav Jung's essay, "On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure." In the All of which provided theoretical perspectives that assisted in reviving and reinventing North American tricksters from the 1940s to 1970s.

The question remains as to why Coyote, over Raven and Nanobozho, became North American animal trickster-par-excellence in the twentieth century. Most likely the stories began to circulate between indigenous and Euro-Americans during Western settlement, a time when coyotes as a species were nearly exterminated. As we know, the animals did not succumb to human expansion. They survived and thrived and even today they continue to expand their territory. In chapter three I also consider the paintings of Harry Fonseca, whose first image of the trickster, *Coyote #1*, appeared in 1975. Fonseca's first encounter with Coyote was an embodiment of the trickster by a Maidu dancer, as he was a dancer himself,

the experience contributed to his creation of the iconic Coyote, which haunted his art the rest of his life.¹⁰ His work is key to a better understanding of the significance of tricksters as a cultural tradition as well as their importance in contemporary Native art.

Contemporary Artists and Tricksters

Chapters four and five are devoted to contemporary Native North American artists who either depict trickster figures, and, or perhaps employ trickster strategies in their artworks. Although there are many contemporary indigenous artists who currently depict trickster figures in their artwork, in chapter four I consider the work of five contemporary Native artists who engage tricksters through very different approaches. Minneapolis based artist Julie Buffalohead, for example, whose paintings helped inspire my dissertation research, uses a multitude of storybook-looking tricksters to address issues of identity, racism, sexism, and colonization. Another Minneapolis artist, Jim Denomie, who grew up on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation near Hayward, Wisconsin, paints white rabbits that may represent Nanobozho, which sometimes appear in his complex, humorous, and extraordinary visual narratives that serve as political commentary. The West Coast artist Rick Bartow's work reflects his Wiyot and Yurok heritage through sophisticated mixed media creations, which respond to various flavors of expressionism. Some of Bartow's most notable artworks include the trickster Raven. Shawn Hunt, based in Vancouver, redefines images of the trickster Raven, as depicted in Northwest Coast traditional carvings, with a pop art edge that considers the mass production and commercialization of Northwest Coast art styles.

I direct attention back to trickster Coyote through the work of Phoenix based artist Steven Yazzie, who satirically refers to trickster traditions of the Southwest, specifically the popularity of Coyote. By sporadically inserting the animal, mythic or not, into his art at given intervals, Yazzie illustrates the typical modus of all tricksters, which involves never knowing when, or how, they will appear and what lessons they will provide.

In the final chapter I speak to the use of critical frameworks to identify indigenous artists themselves as tricksters. Writing about North American tricksters in contemporary art and literature began to appear most abundantly in the 1990s and often focused on the comedic nature of the figures outside of the context of their original mythologies. In *Indi'n Humor* (1993), for example, Kenneth Lincoln situated poetry, novels, and visual art by Native Americans in relation to trickster mythologies, with an attempt to provide a greater understanding of indigenous humor. With further consideration of visual art, Allen Ryan suggested in his book, *The Trickster Shift* (1999), that certain satirical artworks created by indigenous artists were similar to the humor and irony found in trickster stories. With Lincoln and Ryan's writing in mind I will further discuss the "tricky" methodologies implemented by the artists Jimmie Durham, James Luna, and Kent Monkman. Jimmie Durham is a performer, writer of prose and poetry, and sculptor as *bricoleur*, who writes himself into myths of his own creation, which refer not only to Native histories, but also the lasting effects of colonization in modernity. James Luna himself became a trickster in performance artworks such as his pivotal *Artifact Piece* (1987), in which he challenged the practice of displaying of Indian

culture by turning his own body into an artifact. Kent Monkman invented his own version of trickster through his “campy” character, “Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle” who he performs, photographs, sculpts, and paints into scenarios that subvert past perceptions of Native/European encounters that took place during the settlement of the American West, specifically colonizing strategies that objectified Indian bodies and exploited Native sexuality.

Mythology and Meaning

Trying to find the proper language to use when describing Native American and First Nations oral histories is not an easy task; therefore, I want to clarify my use of “mythology” in this dissertation, as the use of the term is troublesome with regard to the study of cultural traditions. “Mythology” has garnered negative associations in North America through its application by nineteenth century European and Euro-American anthropologists, who observed that the belief systems of outside cultures as “primitive,” or “false” from their own cultural perspectives. But looking past Eurocentric judgments of superiority we find that mythologies have always been supported by cultural truths. Franchot Ballinger wrote in *Living Sideways: Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions* (2004), of his own use of the word “myth” that “*myth* is not a judgment of a story’s truth or lack thereof.”¹¹ Ballinger also commented further on the truth of myths by quoting Jarold Ramsey, who stated: “Myths are sacred traditional stories whose shaping function is to tell the people who know them who they are, through what origins and transformations, they have come to possess their particular world; and how they should live in that world, and with each other.”¹² Mythology as it is used here

indicates the stories that maintained cultural histories, those told during ceremonies, and those more secularly, in ways that not only to entertain, but also to teach and to heal.

Gerald Vizenor asserts that tricksters cannot be locked into a “method,” or theory, because “methods are the death of the imagination and the end of the trickster. The trickster is a communal voice in a comic worldview, not a tragic method in the social sciences.”¹³ Therefore, why do another study on Native North American tricksters? Since the 1950s in particular, scholars have attempted to define the multifarious nature of the creatures and the significance of trickster mythology— with mixed results. I consider the use of tricksters by Native American artists as a response to what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has called specular alterity, a form of mimicry in which one perpetually mirrors back their otherness. The use of trickster figures in their imagined form, established by hegemonic structures, interrupts the continuum of Othering by reflecting the trickster figure back as an absurdity — Fonseca’s coyote dancing in a tuxedo, for example — and in such a reversal, trickster becomes a subtle, but powerful, satirical tool. In this dissertation I consider the complexity of Native North American tricksters past to better understand how they have been reconfigured in contemporary art to both recognize indigenous histories and subvert the related colonization that first empowered trickster mythology outside of its original context.

¹ Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), Prefatory Note, xxiv.

² Candace S. Greene, *Silver Horn: Master Illustrator of the Kiowas* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 67.

³ In his research Schoolcraft makes note of how Native people “concealed” parts of their traditions. A classic example resides in the relationship between Paul Radin and his “unreliable” informant Sam Blowsnake. See, *Crashing Thunder; the Autobiography of an American Indian* (New York, London, DAppleton and Company, 1926). See also, Michelle Burnham, “‘I Lied All the Time’: Trickster Discourse and Ethnographic Authority in ‘Crashing Thunder,’” *American Indian Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (October 1, 1998).

⁴ Several secondary sources that I consider that discuss how Raven was handled in the early twentieth century. For information on Boas and Cranmer see Joseph Masco, “‘It Is a Strict Law That Bids Us Dance’: Cosmologies, Colonialism, Death, and Ritual Authority in the Kwakwaka’wakw Potlatch, 1849 to 1922,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 41–75.

⁵ “Immoral Dances Among the Pueblo Indians” was submitted in 1915 to the BIA by P.T Lonergan, superintendent of the Pueblo Day School. It was the first entry in what would be known as the “Secret Dance file.” See Margaret D. Jacobs, “Making Savages of Us All: White Women, Pueblo Indians, and the Controversy over Indian Dances in the 1920s,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 1996), 179.

⁶ In her analysis on tricksters, Barbara Babcock-Abrahams suggests that clowns and tricksters survive in a common space of “marginality.” Beyond the boundaries of what is considered acceptable social structures, clowns (and tricksters) create chaos out of “order,” which promotes conformity and speculation about “the way things should be.” However, Babcock-Abrahams’ analysis lacks specific information about how Pueblo people historically viewed clowns and tricksters. See Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, “‘A Tolerated Margin of Mess’: The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11, no. 3 (March 1, 1975): 147–86, doi:10.2307/3813932. See also Babcock-Abrahams, “Arrange me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning” in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Jon MacAloon, ed. (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Is, 1984), 122.

⁷ Dorothy Dunn, *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas* (The University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 262.

⁸ In fact many tricksters demonstrate witch-like behavior, but Coyote in particular possesses an evil side. For Pueblo Coyote stories see Franchot Ballinger, *Living Sideways Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 55.

⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (October 1, 1955), 440.

¹⁰ Kenneth Lincoln, *Indi’n Humor : Bicultural Play in Native America: Bicultural Play in Native America* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 139.

¹¹ Ballinger, Franchot, *Living Sideways Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions*. (University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 10.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gerald Robert Vizenor, *The Trickster of Liberty: Native Heirs to a Wild Baronage* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), xvii.

Chapter 1

The Art and Science of Trickery: Trickster as Anthropological Subject

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many explorers, settlers, and missionaries were indifferent, or in direct opposition to the belief practices of the indigenous North American populations. Yet, there were those who recorded what was unfamiliar and retold in writing the oral stories that they learned from the indigene. Stories that explained natural phenomena, provided lessons, and entertained and were illuminated by a multitude of anthropomorphic deities. But the Europeans that retold the stories in translations, undoubtedly inflicted upon the tales and the characters biases and concepts that directly related to their own histories and ideologies. Translations, sometimes colored by misinterpretations, misunderstandings, or puritanical mores, conformed more to Judeo-Christian philosophies than they did indigenous spirituality. The stories were labeled myths and Native gods were designated either as good — creators and heroes — or evil — demons, witches, and devils. But the trickiest of characters, called hideous and abominable, and considered malevolent by outsiders, were simultaneously thought of as creators and even ancestors in some tribes.

A Confusing Deity in Pictures and Words

The purpose of this chapter is to identify when concepts of trickster began in North America and how they were disseminated in the nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1830s, before the advent of American anthropology, I explore how North American tricksters and their mythologies were collected, categorized

and transformed in the nineteenth century primarily through the work of anthropologists; those who sought most to save them.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was notably one of the earliest ethnographers to write of a trickster-like figure, as found in the stories he collected from the Chippewa people living near Lake Superior, where he worked as an Agent of for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. His first wife was Chippewa, and her mother was said to have taught him Algonquin, the language of the people now known as Anishinaabe, who inhabited the northern United States and into Canada. Schoolcraft claimed to have initially heard stories of a character known by either the name “Nenabozhoo,” or “Menabozhoo,” a being who he understood to be the creator, in 1822.

Schoolcraft lived among the Chippewa for over ten years before he published *Algic Researches* (1939), his first comprehensive collection of Indian oral mythologies. In the first volume of this collection Schoolcraft included a condensed version of several stories concerning Manabozho, which he, along with the help of his wife and her family, had translated from their original Algonquin into English. The materials included in *Algic Researches* centered on a variety of mythologies, but it was the stories of Manabozho that garnered the most attention and he wrote further of the character in his extensive government commissioned study, *Information Respecting the History Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (1847).¹ In volume five of this report, Schoolcraft assessed that the trickster-like character he wrote of in *Algic Researches*, Manabozho, was not the supreme being of the Chippewa, but was instead a “demi god,” who was

responsible for “repeopling” the earth and remaking the sun and the moon.

Manabozho’s reestablishment of the earth and its inhabitants occurred only after “bad spirits” had destroyed the original world, indicating that he was a benevolent and powerful helper, a lesser being, who was not the original creator.

The being known as Manabozho became even more complicated to Schoolcraft as he recognized that there was a strong connection between characters who were known by similar, although different, names, and they possessed both good and evil traits. Nenabozhoo, who reestablished the earth, for example, was also identified as “Manabosho,” was a magical being, who appeared in “a thousand forms;” was always considered a god, but was “often put to the lowest shifts of a man.”² Manabosho had the power to transform “birds and quadrupeds into men,” he was frequently hungry, and, driven by the insatiable urge to quench his desires, he resorted to “*tricks of the lowest kind*” (my italics).³ Manabozho’s adventures and subsequent mishaps were, according to Schoolcraft, amusingly “grotesque,” which made them highly entertaining and most desirable during the “season of tales” (the winter months).⁴

The conflict of good and evil traits bound to the single character Manabosho, or Manabozho (the name for the character on which Schoolcraft evidently settled)⁵ bewildered him and further left him to question if his lack of understanding was the result of insufficient information. Many tribes, he stated, were “much in the habit of employing allegories, and symbols, under which we may suspect that they have concealed part of their historical traditions and beliefs.”⁶ And indeed, it is known that indigenous people hid many traditions in an

attempt to protect and preserve their power, not only from non-Native people, but other tribes as well. Still, as later anthropological collections will show, chaos and confusion were inherent to tricksters' identity; moreover, the stories and figures changed continually, making it extremely difficult to identify the relationship of multifarious traits to particular characters, or individual tribes. Similar stories were collected from different tribes across the North American continent in which one figure was replaced by another, meaning that the character transformed or was changed completely, perhaps to suit the demands of the storyteller, or for the fluctuating demands of their audience. Coyote, for example, might encounter the same obstacles or enact adventures comparable to those of Manabozho.

While the idea of Manabozho perplexed Schoolcraft, the character also captivated him and his ethnographic work was preeminent in propagating Manabozho's mythology. In 1855 Longfellow introduced the character to the greater public in his *Song of Hiawatha*. The protagonist in Longfellow's epic poem was based on Schoolcraft's depiction of Manabozho in the condensed version of stories included in volume one of *Algonquin Researches*. Here, it is important to note that Schoolcraft's first wife, Jane Johnson Schoolcraft, was acknowledged for her contributions to the text, yet there is no way of knowing which of the stories she transcribed from Algonquin to English. Schoolcraft's writing method, as in *Algonquin Researches*, for example, removed the voice of his indigenous collaborators altogether (the stories were collected from a variety of tribes, most of which spoke Algonquin). Thus, the interpretations, at times lacking cultural specificity and the intent of an individual storyteller's performance, became ahistorical and took on

an entirely new meaning. However, according to Jane Johnson's biographer, Dale Parker, Schoolcraft relied on his wife, her mother, other family members, and the Ojibwe (Chippewa) people more than previous scholars have understood.⁷ Although it is difficult to locate what sections of *Algonic Researches* Schoolcraft revised, some can be traced specifically to Jane and her brother William, who first transcribed the story of "Manabozho."⁸

The two volumes of *Algonic Researches* together incorporated some forty-six Indian "tales and legends" from Chippewa mythologies and include the sequential earthly arrival and departure of Manabozho. The ninth story in volume one tells of Manabozho's magical birth, his recreation of the earth, his days of wanderlust, and his final resting place in the farthest northern regions, where he still directs the tempests of winter. This compilation of Manabozho's life, Schoolcraft asserted, was much more systematic than the Chippewa's stories. To the Chippewa people the character's time on the earth was irrelevant and fragments of Manabozho's tales persisted widely apart from any established cycle of stories. Manabozho, according to Schoolcraft, was evoked episodically when he was needed, tricking his way through the most powerful dangers and devastating disasters; his adventures were heroic and comically entertaining, and his sufferings bore the burden for what, at times, was humanly unbearable.⁹

In stories collected by Schoolcraft, Manabozho was identified as human in form, but there are instances where he was magically transformed into a variety of beings, including a wolf, a serpent, and a tree stump. This generally happened when there was a need for disguise, as a manner of trickery used for obtaining

information. However, in Schoolcraft's 1947 Report there exists a curious series of pictographic images, titled "Manabosho's Devices" (figures 1, 2, 3, and 4), which perhaps visually depict the trickster Manabozho. The five pages of pictographs drawn by Seth Eastman, whom Schoolcraft had hired as an illustrator, were copied from drawings found on strips of birch, or "betula" bark, which the Chippewa believed had been created by Manabozho himself.¹⁰ Found and collected near the shores of Lake Superior by Chippewa hunters, the drawings on the papery birch bark served as a diagram and a history of successful hunting practices, which Schoolcraft suggested were a form of "occult knowledge" that demonstrated the wisdom and power of Manabozho.¹¹

Eastman's reproductions, consisting of some 225 individual pictographs representing human and animal forms, and other symbols, are displayed in five lines on each page, with a combined total of 25 lines. From Schoolcraft's accompany may indicate that the human figures represents Manabozho, or perhaps a hunter, and when put together in certain sequences, the imagery demonstrates hunting methods. Yet, Schoolcraft provided no indication in the accompanying text as to whether or not Eastman copied the pictographs in the same configuration as the original bark drawings, nor was any information provided as to how the images should be read. Perhaps Eastman arranged the imagery as lines of text, as a picture narrative that was to be read from the top of the page to the bottom and from left to right (crosses, or addition symbols were drawn between particular figures, perhaps to give some indication of possible character groupings and to help provide a narrative pathway). Nonetheless,

whatever the arrangement, the imagery would have held little meaning for those other than the Chippewa hunters, who were the intended audience. Pictographic images, Schoolcraft explained in volume two of the same report, were a “distinctive symbol language” that could not be translated into words. Rather, he said, the pictures were a way of recording “concrete ideas” that were to be interpreted through layers of intrinsic meaning.¹²

In volume II of his government report, Schoolcraft explained several pictographic images drawn by the “Dahcota” that were similarly drawn on birchbark, or the smooth face of boulders. He wrote, for example, that the image of a bear first evoked the value of the quadruped, which might include things such as its fat and its fur. Further, the image intimated habits inherent to the animal’s nature — what foods it ate and its habitat — and the inclusion of a heart drawn in the center of the animal with a line to its mouth, as found in Eastman’s reproductions, was indicative of the bear’s life force (see for example, character seven, line two, in figure 1). An image when drawn by a hunter as such and coupled with chanting, or song, Schoolcraft reported, became a powerful “necromantic” device with which to insure the successful capture of the animal. When comparing the images of these “Dahcota” pictographs with *Manabosho’s Devices*, it can be determined that the images, as copied by Eastman, served as didactic tools that demonstrate how to attain the power to control animal’s movements, as well as their desires; moreover, Eastman’s reproductions leave us with the impression that it was Manabozho who taught the Chippewa people how to hunt.

In *Algic Researches*, Schoolcraft told of a story in which Manabozho procures his hunting powers. The tale begins on the shores of “a great lake,” where Manabozho encounters an old magician in the form of a wolf. Desiring to improve his hunting skills, he requests that the old magician transform him also into a wolf so that he might learn from the animal’s perspective. Once transformed, Manabozho, through a series of mishaps, and lessons, is taught and develops hunting skills superior to even the cleverest human hunter. Satisfied with his progress and tiring of his “tricks,” the old magician disenchanted Manabozho and consequently the trickster took on his human form once again. After a time of feeling sorrowful and dejected, Manabozho resumed his “wonton air of cheerfulness” and continued on to his next adventure.¹³

What might be understood from the preceding story is that the pictographs, which first were drawn by Manabozho, demonstrate a way in which Manabozho brought the cultural benefit of hunting to the Chippewa people. Still, there is little information as to why Eastman made copies of the images and why Schoolcraft chose to include these considerably cryptic images in his report with little textual explanation. Some clarification can be found in *Algic Researches*, where Schoolcraft clarified that was necessary to “examine the mythology of the tribes as a means of acquiring insight to their thinking and reasoning, the source of their fears and hopes, and the probable origin of the opinions and institutions.”¹⁴ And while he considered the pictographs “primitive” in nature, he also wrote that they were “striking illustrations” of a tribes “intellectual efforts.”¹⁵ They exhibited, he said, “evidences of that desire, implanted in the minds of all men, to convey their

histories and transmit to posterity the prominent facts of their history and attainments.” But what Schoolcraft and subsequent scholars have overlooked is that the human figure in the pictographs may refer to human hunters or Manabozho in human form. In either instance, Eastman’s reproductions represent the earliest visual references to trickster figures and their mythology, whether drawn by the Chippewa people, or Manabozho himself.

George Catlin and the Devil

Algic Researches served to establish Schoolcraft as one of the earliest Euro-American authorities on North American tribal knowledge, which undoubtedly led to governmental support, as he endeavored to complete the first comprehensive scientific record of Native North American people. Among his contemporaries seeking ethnographic preeminence in the early half of the nineteenth century were the German explorer and ethnographer Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied, and the American born painter and writer George Catlin. Biographies of both Schoolcraft and Catlin indicate that they were competitive counterparts. In 1842 Schoolcraft had first sought out Catlin, over Eastman, to request his assistance in the illustration of his government subsidized *Conditions and Prospects of American Indians*. Catlin, of course, declined Schoolcraft’s request that they jointly create the greatest comprehensive “Indian Book,” stating that he had already placed a considerable amount of labor and expense into a publication of his own.¹⁶

Catlin reported to have traveled among the tribes of North America for eight years, in which time he visited 48 different tribes, painted 310 portraits, and produced some 200 paintings of their “villages — their wigwams — their games

and religious ceremonies.” In all, he completed over 3,000 full-length figures of indigenous North American people. He published the narrative of his travels, accompanied by engravings, in his two-volume *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* (1841).¹⁷ It was in letter 22 of his text that he first described the *O-ke-pa* ceremony, a ritual executed by the Mandan that insured the plentitude of buffalo and the general welfare of the tribe. Although most of what occurred in the ceremony horrified him, he wrote and depicted in great detail what he witnessed. In his account he told of the performance of a character he referred to as O-ke-hee-de, the “Evil Spirit” (also known as the owl spirit).¹⁸ Unbeknownst to Catlin, the bizarre and frightful figure of which he wrote and depicted was, in all likelihood, the trickster figure of the Mandan people, a demon, by Catlin’s interpretation, who entered in the O-ke-pa ceremony at an anticipated moment, with the sole intent of creating chaos.

O-ke-hee-de performed naked and was painted entirely black, with the exception of white circles of “about an inch in diameter” that were drawn all around his body on top of the initial shiny black coal and buffalo grease covering. White painted indentations around his mouth that resembled “canine teeth” enhanced the character’s gruesome appearance (figure 5).¹⁹ O-ke-hee-de wore an enormous faux phallus carved of wood, which protruded from a cluster of buffalo hair that covered his pelvis and was supported by a leather string tied around his waist. The phallus was painted black like his body, save for the glans that was painted a deep vermilion, all of which helped to emphasize O-ke-hee-de’s obsessive lustfulness. He carried “a wand, or staff of eight or nine feet in length,

with a red ball at the end of it” that he “slid on the ground” in front of him as he ran (figure 6).²⁰ Added to his “unearthly” sight, Catlin wrote, was the manner in which this “devil” ran “in zig-zag course,” shrieking wildly as he approached a group of females (figure 7), who in turn screamed for help. It was at this moment that the one named “*O-Kee-pa-ká-se-ka* (the master of ceremonies)” stepped before the frightful creature with the intent to avert the creature’s attention.²¹

The mood of the crowd then changed and shrieks of fear turned to laughter when the master of ceremonies, persisting in his confrontation with the Evil Spirit, “thrust his medicine pipe before the hideous monster, and, looking him full in the eyes, held him motionless under its charm, until the women and children had withdrawn from his reach.”²² Thwarted in his attempt to attack the women, O-ke-hee-de then ran into the circle of buffalo dancers, and, as Catlin shows in one depiction, he pretended to mount several of them (figure 8). He continued until he appeared exhausted and drained of his power completely. In his sad state, Catlin wrote, O-ke-hee-de became the “butt of the women, who were no longer afraid.”²³ Grouping around him, they teased him, and an older woman stole up behind him and threw yellow dirt into “his face and eyes, and all over him” and seizing his wand she broke it to pieces and proclaimed to have attained the “power of creation and life and death over them.”²⁴ At this O-ke-hee-de began to cry, and, exemplified in another of Catlin’s renderings, the Evil Spirit was, in a final act, chased away from the village by the women (figure 9).

Although Catlin was the perhaps the only ethnographer to witness the O-ke-pa ceremony, there were others, such as Prince Maximilian, who recorded in

1833-34 that the Mandan Indians near Fort Clark told of the supernatural being "*Ochkih-Hadda*," who appeared "in their [Mandan] traditions as kind of a devil, said to have once come to their villages and taught them many things. They are afraid of him, offer sacrifices to him, and have in their villages a hideous figure representing him."²⁵ The "hideous figure," of which Maximilian wrote, was presented as an effigy of the so-called devil, which was placed atop of a high pole in the center of the village. It was made of wood and skins with a face painted black and white, which corresponded to performance of O-ke-hee-de as witnessed by Catlin. Both Catlin and Maximilian's artist, Karl Bodmer, visually recorded this effigy in more than one depiction, and, as evidenced in their drawings and paintings, more than one effigy was placed in the central space of the village (see figure 7).

Catlin's detailed text and imagery of O-ke-hee-de's dramatic entrance, his comical appearance, and chaotic antics in this portion of the O-ke-pa ceremony, provided strong evidence that the Mandan "Evil Spirit" was also an oversexed, buffoonish clown — identifiable trickster traits. And although Catlin recorded in detail O-ke-hee-de's performance, his text shows indisputably that he was more fascinated by the rite of passage ritual called the *pohk-hung*, in which young men endured the practice of being cut and hung from skewers placed in their skin. This ceremony took place in the medicine lodge directly after O-ke-hee-de's arrival and departure. Nevertheless, Catlin's text and images do provide information that suggested more than the threat of evil, O-ke-hee-de provided levity through his violation of what very well may have been a solemn and sacred act. And this interruption was critical. Anthropologist Barbra Babcock has written that

tricksters, as well as clowns, or fools, were viewed as a necessity within cultures, their primary purpose being to reinforce unity and reestablish societal order.²⁶ As witnessed in trickster stories, the removal of said figures (and tricksters are usually chased away) can be, as in the case of the O-ke-pa ceremony, a demonstration of tribal unity and triumph over chaos. To the Mandan, O-ke-hee-de was perhaps not particularly evil nor was he good, but rather he was a purposeful violator of sacred space, a trickster, who suffered the consequences of his own misconduct.

A Trickster By Any Other Name

In 1867 Catlin produced a publication specifically on the O-kee-pa ceremony, but he provided no further analysis of any of the characters, including O-ke-hee-de. He instead chose to “leave it for the world to decide whether it bears any resemblance to any known customs of savage or civilized races in other parts of the world.”²⁷ Conversely, Schoolcraft published widely on the character Manabozho, even dedicating a publication of his mythologies to Longfellow soon after *Song of Hiawatha* became a celebrated literary work. But, in general, both ethnographers lacked an understanding of the significance of either Manabozho or O-ke-hee-de to their respective cultures, as both characters were viewed variously as “devils,” which corresponded with evil in Christianity. Had the two ethnographers consulted with each other they may have recognized that although the figures maintained distinct cultural differences, they also performed similarly complex functions. It was not until the advent of anthropology as a scientific discipline in the later eighteenth that century Native American spiritual beliefs

were considered outside of European dogmas and the differences that existed between tribal epistemologies were recognized. Still, in the process of trying to come to terms with European and Native North American cultural differences, anthropologists made further mistakes and assumptions, and in the burgeoning discourse, trickster figures and their mythologies were changed, and the significance of their functions continually dismissed in the process.

The term trickster as applied in association with Native North American mythology is commonly attributed to the American anthropologist Daniel Garrison Brinton. In his 1885 essay, "The Hero-God of the Algonkin's as a Cheat and Liar," Brinton cited an entry from Father Albert Lacombe's *Dictionarie de la Langue des Cris* (1878), in which Lacombe wrote that the name of the Cree figure Wisakketjak (Wesucechak) in Cree meant "the trickster, the deceiver."²⁸ Wisakketjak, Brinton said, coincided with the Chippewa's (as found in Schoolcraft's text) "Nenaboj, Nanabojo, and Nanaboshoo, "the Cheat," who was also known by the names "Manabozho, Michabo, and Messou."²⁹ This character, identified by whatever name, was, in Brinton's understanding, the "highest divinity" of the "Algonkian" speaking people, a "Hero-God, like all American culture heroes." This "reputed savior" conquered his enemies with "craft and ruses, by transforming himself into unsuspected shapes,"³⁰ an idea that perhaps explained why Manabozho, or Nanobozho, was thought to take the form of a rabbit. Briton reasoned, however, that the perception of the trickster as a rabbit coincided with a misunderstanding in the translation of the character's Algonquin name. Apparently Manabozho/Wisaka (Nanabozhoo or Nanabush) was thought originally to be the

deity of light and in the Algonquin language the word for “light” and “white rabbit” are similar.³¹ Eventually, although it is not known exactly when, Nanobozho, along with other tricksters, became more frequently associated with animals.

Brinton’s assertion that the “Hero-God,” or Manabozho (who Brinton refers to as Michabo), was “a Cheat and a Liar,” did not correspond, of course, with all perceptions of Native North American tricksters. Across tribal mythologies trickster traits were depicted as more complex, they were culture heroes who possessed more or less the traits of a divine beings, who were at the same time mischievous, foolish — and in other instances more methodically devious. Brinton himself explained that the original assumptions about the figures were assessed under Christian ideologies, and when analyzed in their proper context, with consideration for indigenous epistemologies, the stories and their characters took on entirely new meanings.³² Still, Brinton’s comparison of Manabozho to Ulysses (Greek) and Reynard the Fox (northwestern Europe) nearly missed the importance that these so-named trickster figures and their mythologies held in indigenous North American cultures.

Stories of Manabozho, Schoolcraft wrote, were told continually among the Chippewa: “There is scarcely a prominent lake, mountain precipice, or stream in the northern part of America, which is not hallowed in Indian story by his fabled deeds . . . He was everywhere present where danger presented itself, power was required, or mischief was going forward.”³³ Although his appearance and actions were capricious, Manabozho’s ubiquity showed that he performed a significant function in the Chippewa culture. Brinton agreed that the issue with the figures he

identified as tricksters was their ambiguity, as their changeability made their identification problematic, but what but what Briton missed in his analysis was the fact that these figures were important. Manabozho was a creator, of sorts, who performed good deeds, but he was also at the source of some heinous activities, hence the confusion in ethnographic research. Tricksters did not fall under the Christian binary of good and evil and their magical abilities as well as their human status might change to suit whatever situation they were presented with. Tricksters were not exactly human and neither were they worshipped as gods. Tricksters by nature reflected human failings, which in the stories provided for their empathy towards humanity. North American tricksters more often lived in the midst of humans and were known to steal from gods to bring them cultural benefits, as in the popular North West Coast story of how Raven stole the sun and gave it to the people.

The Great White Rabbit

In the late nineteenth century, shortly after Brinton's "trickster" hypothesis was published, anthropological data concerning North American tribes grew immensely, and innumerable trickster stories were recorded in Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) reports. The anthropologist James Mooney was among the first to identify in such reports specific characters from Native North American stories as "tricksters." In his paper "The Myths of the Cherokee," published the 19th Annual BAE Report (1901), Mooney suggested that oral narrative traditions could be divided among four categories, which included: "sacred myths, animal stories, local legends, and historical traditions."³⁴ Tricksters were of the second

and lesser category of animal stories and, according to Mooney, “the Rabbit was the messenger to carry all public announcements, and usually led the dance besides. He was also the great trickster and mischief maker...”³⁵ He further stated that the Rabbit held great prominence and “the Great White Rabbit” was the “hero-god, trickster, and wonderworker of all the tribes east of the Mississippi from Hudson bay to the Gulf.”³⁶

In agreement with Brinton, Mooney recognized that the Algonquin name for rabbit “*wabos*,” had been confused with “*waban*,” the term for the dawn, but from this point his conclusive analysis departs from Brinton’s. Drawing upon the misinterpretation, Mooney concluded that the Great White Rabbit had become a manifestation of the eastern dawn. The figure chased away the “dark shadows” that “held the world in chains” and thus brought daily the gift of light, a cultural benefit, to human beings. The rabbit, Mooney wrote, in particular was appealing because the animal was a “fitting type of defenseless weakness protected and made safe by constantly alert vigilance, and with the disposition, moreover, for turning up at unexpected moments.”³⁷ Yet, missing in Mooney’s cross-cultural comparative analysis was that the misunderstanding between rabbit and the dawn had occurred in English translations of the Algonquin language, and the character Manabozho, or Nanobozho, was not necessarily known among the Cherokee. That is not to say that the Cherokee did not come into contact with Algonquin speakers, as mythologies were transferred between tribes throughout the continent. Mooney himself recognized that indigenous cultures were not static. He commented in the same report that stories transferred between tribes via extensive trade routes that

allowed intertribal commerce and animal stories in particular were told in friendly exchanges between Native peoples. “Indians,” he wrote, are great wanderers” and it was customary for “large parties, sometimes a whole band, or village, to make long visits to other tribes, dancing, feasting, and exchanging stories with their friends for months or weeks at a time.”³⁸

Mooney, unlike Schoolcraft, more fully acknowledged his Native collaborators. Previously, in the 7th Annual BAE Report (1891) he identified the process by which he obtained the “sacred formulas” of the Cherokee and further he recognizes the tribal members who provided him with information on which he based his “Myths of the Cherokee” from the 19th Annual Report. Mooney introduced those who he referred to as “informants” through brief biographies and photographs, acknowledging their status and their contributions to his text, thus giving them voice. In the later BAE Report he points out two of the most edifying of his Cherokee consultants, A’yûñ’inĩ, identified as “Swimmer,” and Ităgû’năhĩ, known as John Ax, neither of whom spoke English (figures 10 and 11). A’yûñ’inĩ, born shortly before the Indian removal act forced the Cherokee to relocate in Indian Territory, had been trained as a “priest, doctor, and keeper of tradition.” He was respected as a storyteller and, according to Mooney, “a genuine aboriginal antiquarian and patriot.”³⁹ A’yûñ’inĩ was knowledgeable in the histories of his band and was also a skilled performer whose melodic inflections and imaginative imitations of birds and beasts were captivating to anyone who listened, even those who did not know a word of the Cherokee language. A’yûñ’inĩ was also Mooney’s most valuable consultant. As explained in 6th BAE Report, it was revealed that after

some rather coercive persuasion, A'yûñ'inĩ supplied Mooney with a document, half filled with Cherokee characters, which held sacred prayers and songs, and various cures for diseases and afflictions. To Mooney, the 240 pages, written in a small daybook, provided much of the secret information he had been working to obtain — “a ritual and pharmacopoeia,” — which after being purchased, was promptly deposited in the BAE library.⁴⁰ A'yûñ'inĩ died shortly before Mooney's essay concerning Cherokee myths (1901) was published.

Ităgû'năhĩ was the oldest of the storytellers and although he had not been trained as a doctor or priest, he was considered an authority on Cherokee traditions. He was a proficient maker of rattles and other ceremonial paraphernalia and was described as having an “imaginative and poetic temperament.”⁴¹ As a boy Ităgû'năhĩ had been privileged to listen to stories told around the night fires, where he had gained much of his knowledge. Of the storytellers, Ităgû'năhĩ cared most about conveying the sensational stories, those concerning “the giant Tsul'kálu or the great Uktena of the invisible spirit people.” But, as Mooney wrote, he also had a great fondness for telling humorous animal stories.⁴²

Despite the fact that Mooney identified his collaborators and held an obvious respect for their knowledge, he, along with other anthropologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, centered interpretations on the primitive aspects of Indian mythologies, which lead to the disregard of the varied levels significance of trickster figures and the associated mythologies between North American tribes. Moreover, in order to classify data, Mooney and his colleagues,

referred to comparable elements found in mythologies from other world cultures, thereby leaving much to be disputed. This point is best demonstrated through Mooney's explanation of how stories of Rabbit were disseminated between the Cherokee tribe and African slaves.

First it must be explained that in his system of classification Mooney regarded animal stories, those with anthropomorphic characters, secondary to sacred myths, which he had ostensibly never been privy to hear. He asserted that animal stories had traces of sacred myths that had been reduced in form primarily by untrained storytellers who had transformed and dispersed the stories as entertainment that helped to distract from the routineness of everyday life. He argued that these animal tales were simple explanations of why things were — the reason skunks have white stripes for example. Amusing and sometimes vulgar, they held no relation to the occult, as Schoolcraft alleged, and they were told among all Native American tribes. Mooney also maintained that the characteristics of rabbit, as mentioned above, appealed to, in his words, “the primitive mind of the negro”⁴³ And the adoption of myths was most natural between the “two races,” as they “worked side by side until the time of the Revolution,” and intermarried, to the point, he asserted, that the southeastern Cherokee “finally lost their identity.”⁴⁴ However, Mooney also recognized that cultures were not static and Cherokee mythologies had undoubtedly been touched by outside influences, at least those from other American Indian tribes. He disagreed, however, that the animal stories, particularly those pertaining to Rabbit, resembled European trickster tales; nor did they completely originate in Africa, as Chandler Harris claimed in his collective

book of tales, *Nights With Uncle Remus* (1881), and A. Gerber supported in his 1893 essay, "Uncle Remus Traced to the New World."⁴⁵

The origin of a tale of particular and curious debate was that entitled the "Tar Baby," by Harris and named "The Rabbit and the Tar Wolf" by Mooney. Harris claimed that the story was "unquestionably" of African American origin, whereas Mooney countered, stating that stories of African decent had "undoubtedly have absorbed much from the Indian."⁴⁶ Mooney perceived that "the Indian" had such "pride and contempt for a subject race" that it was unlikely that they would have adopted stories from such outside sources. And the famous "Tar Baby" myth, he said, could be found in variants in nearly every tribe who used pine gum from "Nova Scotia to the Pacific."⁴⁷ Mooney published two versions of the story, as they involved other animals apprehending Rabbit in the act of stealing water in the midst of a drought. Of the two, the first was undated, and the second variant was reprinted from the *Cherokee Advocate*, December 18, 1845, which was adopted from a version of the tale found in the *Missionary Harold* from 1927. Harris' "Br'er Rabbit and the Tar Baby," as told by the character Uncle Remus, a former African slave, was not published until 1881.⁴⁸ Still, there is no way of tracing where the exact origins of story, or even portions of a story, began.

Certainly, stories were told not only between indigenous peoples, but parts of those stories may have come from African, or even European stories, as the groups came into contact with one another. Mooney observed that animal stories sprang up in any "primitive" culture (here he was also alluding to African cultures) that was accustomed to observing a religious system where animals and humans

were related in all but their form. He also asserted that Cherokee myths, compared to those from other tribes, were “clean.” Meaning that the stories exhibited only traditions from American Indian cultures. The confusion that rabbit myths were thought to have originated in Africa or even Europe, particularly those collected by Harris, Mooney said, was in “the mistaken notion that the Indian has no sense of humor.”⁴⁹ To which Harris had formerly asserted that both “races” had particular temperaments and their ideas of humor varied widely.

Disputes as to the origins of Rabbit as trickster, whether Native American or African, however, provides more insight to differences in ethnographic practices than demonstrates the difference, or significance to the people of the cultures that told them. The stories involving characters deemed tricksters by anthropologists were part of the social interactions within a tribe and between tribes; however, what Mooney failed to address was that in some areas tricksters functioned on different levels in individual tribes. Indeed, the stories were entertaining and some were simple humorous tales, such as the anecdote of why ducks have flat behinds, but there were more somber tales that told of tricksters killing and creating death, and the stories, such as that of “Changeable Bear Woman,” showed that the trickster Coyote was at times considered evil.⁵⁰

Perhaps, as the anthropologist Paul Radin later insisted in *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (1956), there were tribes that once told trickster stories cyclically, only in the winter months and at night, when there was need for entertainment, but to the Cherokee, Mooney wrote, “all times are alike” and “animal stories” were told when laboring, or socializing, at any time of the day,

or year. Trickster mythologies were appealing because they were familiar, entertaining, and instructive, often involving a cautionary lesson.⁵¹ More importantly, the stories were adaptable, and such ambiguity allowed for change, which helps to explain how the myths and the figures transformed and were disseminated more broadly in North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, tricksters were exceedingly more complex than Mooney recognized in his report. Although he suggested that trickster stories among the Cherokee contained fragments of sacred stories, he generalized the role of tricksters cross-culturally and in his classification of animal stories he diminished the diverse significance of tricksters between individual tribes, a topic that was much deliberated and discussed among his fellow anthropologists. Not only had Brinton previously stated that tricksters appeared in stories as creators, helpers, and culture heroes, but Mooney's colleague, Franz Boas, demonstrated that trickster animal protagonists, particularly the prankish and sometimes lewd Raven, also brought benefits to humanity. Mooney's overarching structural analysis, based on Cherokee mythology, was flawed in that tricksters were impossible to categorize, especially when considering the diversity of oral traditions throughout all of North American tribal groups.

The Kiowa Trickster Saynday

Mooney's assertion that trickster figures were animals also did not coincide with representations of all indigenous tricksters and his principal classification system did not completely correspond with his own knowledge of trickster figures from other regions. This would include Mooney's knowledge the trickster figure

Saynday of the Kiowa, whom he had referred to as “Sindi,” in a note in the 19th BAE Report. The point here being that Mooney was aware that the trickster Saynday appeared in Kiowa stories in human form and he was most certainly aware that Saynday stories held prominence in Kiowa cosmology. Mooney began working extensively with the Kiowa tribe in 1891, and initially concentrated more on their tribal histories than on their mythologies, as evidenced in his “Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians,” published in the 17th Annual BAE Report (1898). Yet, considering that “Myths of the Cherokee” showed up one year later in the 19th Annual Report, it is odd that Mooney did not recognize the inaccuracy of his categorical theory concerning the order of myths. Particularly, when his research among the Kiowa appeared to overlap his research with the Comanche. Moreover, there is imagery indicating that he had seen depictions of Saynday, specifically in the drawings of the Kiowa artist Silver Horn, or Haungooah, who both Mooney and Lieutenant Hugh Scott would commission for innumerable drawings.

Silver Horn was a prolific nineteenth century artist and one of the only known Kiowa artists to ever produce visual narratives featuring Saynday; however, four drawings in the Smithsonian’s National Anthropological Archives indicate that at least one other Kiowa artist illustrated Saynday stories. The four existing pages, drawn in sequential narrative by an unknown Kiowa artist, represents the much-retold story of “Saynday and the Prairie Dogs,” also later published under the title “How Saynday Ran a Foot Race with Coyote,”⁵² in which the always-hungry Saynday tricks his way to a meal of fat prairie dogs.

The figures are drawn stiff and flat, in profile, outlined and filled with blocks of limited color, stylistic conventions typically found in Plains hide and ledger drawings from the nineteenth century, which served as a method of storytelling and ultimately as a form of historic documentation. Most interesting is the way in which a narrative is conveyed in consecutive drawings, or otherwise condensed onto a single page. The first of the four drawings shows Saynday holding a club and standing in the center of a circle of dancing prairie dogs, who were so intent on what they are doing that they have closed their eyes (figure 12). In the second drawing the artist depicted a circle of dead prairie dogs, after they were clubbed to death by Saynday, and to the left of the circle Saynday is seen running after a single prairie dog, the only one to escape the trickster's club (figure 13). The next page continues the progression of the narrative in two segments. The left half of the page shows Saynday cooking his prairie dog meal, and Coyote enters at the left side of the picture plane. On the right side of the page, the artist has illustrated the two tricksters engaged in a gambling bet, a race in which the winner takes the meal (figure 14). The fourth and final drawing conveys the ending of the story, where undoubtedly one trickster's attempt to outdo the other. In the final picture Coyote is located on the far right and it is unclear as to whether he is lying on his side, or if he is running. His tracks, which dot across the lower portion of the drawing indicate that he has been to the area of Saynday's fire, where he had been roasting prairie dogs. Saynday is depicted in the foreground and he appears to be running, as he follows the footprints left by Coyote (figure 15).

Although the artist and date for these drawings are unknown, they depict the trickster Saynday in the same narrative style commonly used by the Kiowa artist Silver Horn and retold for children and that she undoubtedly restructured for those living outside of the Kiowa society. In the 1963 reprinting of this publication, *Saynday's People: The Kiowa Indians and the Stories they Told*, Ro explains in the forward that she had omitted some of the more vulgar stories and those that were outright pornographic so that the collection might be more suitable for her intended audience.⁵³ In 1993 Green curated an exhibition centered on Silver Horn's depictions of Saynday, which was accompanied by a small book featuring photographs of Silver Horn's drawings and retellings of the stories by Frederick J. Russ. This exhibition, like Marriot's book, was created primarily for an audience of children; however, Green provides a more in-depth analysis of Silver Horn's Saynday representations in her subsequent book.⁵⁴

Green explains that it was Scott who first commissioned Silver Horn to document Kiowa mythologies, which he drew in a discarded Target Record Book that was shared with others while Silver Horn was enlisted at Fort Sill. His earliest depictions of Saynday are found in this book. The most interesting aspect of these images is that Silver Horn draws a literal representation of Saynday in sequential illustrations, which helps to provide a better understanding not only of how Saynday may have been envisioned, but also they help to explain how the stories may have been told. The drawings served to reinforce oral descriptions and established a visual manifestation of a mythical being at the hands of a Native American artist, presumably where none existed before. There is relatively little

information indicating that drawings of Saynday were created before the nineteenth century when indigenous Plains artists, and specifically Silver Horn, began to collaborate with anthropologists.

Scott was first a military officer, but became an amateur ethnologist and wrote down many of the Kiowa stories, but beyond the written records Silver Horn's cleverly rendered images evoke the storyteller's performance. In "Saynday and the Tight Tree" (figure 16), for example, Silver Horn compressed a complex narrative that he might have drawn over several pages into one picture, employing various sized footprints to delineate the actions of multiple characters. The largest footprints, drawn with toes and seen nearest in the foreground, represent the bear that Saynday had tricked into entering the large oven depicted to the right. Flames rising out of the oven's chimney indicate heat, while the stack of bones under what looks to be a bear's head indicate what happened to the bear. Saynday's footprints, the longer dashed lines, move from the stove, to the bear, and lead up to the crook of the tree, where Saynday was trapped by Coyote's magic. Coyote, drawn near to the stove, entered from outside of the picture plane, as denoted by the more delicate footprints that run down the page to Coyote. Lightly penciled wavy lines that extend outward from each of the character's mouths show the verbal exchange between the two.

Another variant of the above story was featured in Marriott's 1947 publication, and in it Roland Whitehorse depicted a more modern and westernized version of Saynday, which included the unfortunate choice of bright red as color of his skin (figure 17); yet, even in his updated condition the character's basic

physiognomy reflected the depictions created by Silver Horn decades earlier.

Perhaps Whitehorse had been inspired by Silver Horn's artwork, but this seems unlikely, as Green writes that Silver Horn's Saynday drawings had been overlooked for most of the twentieth century. Moreover, Saynday's appearance is considerably different in Silver Horn's later drawings as he incorporated the Western styles and techniques to which he was exposed. Silver Horn experimented with naturalistic depictions, adding more details to his figures, and he expanded his landscapes. But even with the changes in his style Silver Horn maintained certain conventions, such as the footprints, and he remained a diligent storyteller.

One of Silver Horn's finest renderings of Saynday are found in a hide painting referred to as *The Kiowa Pantheon* (figure 18). The painting, commissioned by Mooney in 1904, has no apparent continuous narrative; instead, Silver Horn represented a peculiar mixture of ritual objects along with characters from Kiowa mythology, including those identified by Green as the "Red Winged Horse," the ogre "Sapoul," and the "Thunderbird." Central to the curious assemblage is Saynday, tall and thin, dressed in a fringed leather breechclout, a red quiver flung across one shoulder, and positioned as if he is walking on the underwater horned serpent, "Zemaguani."⁵⁵ Some years later, around 1910, Silver Horn painted another hide with as many as ten separate Kiowa story narratives that represent a variety of mythologies, which are also arranged in no apparent order (figure 19). In the upper left Silver Horn depicted Saynday with his head caught in a bison skull, a tale that refers to the consequences of meddling in the

affairs of others, and was told featuring an assortment of trickster figures in Native North American communities.⁵⁶

Remarkably, Saynday mythologies never became known more broadly. Silver Horn's artwork concerning the figure was neglected after Scott failed to publish his collection of mythologies and Marriott's book, although printed twice in the twentieth century (the second printing without illustrations), failed to launch Saynday to a broader audience outside of the Kiowa society. Variations of Cherokee Rabbit stories, however, were found in newspapers across North America from the nineteen into the twentieth century. Perhaps the image of a skinny human with an exaggerated phallus was less appealing than an anthropomorphic bunny; yet, Longfellow's romanticized Manabozho created a sensation of a trickster in human form as early as 1856, although later in the twentieth Nanobozho becomes associated with the hare or rabbit. But then Saynday would have appeared at a time when the trickster Br'er Rabbit (1879), Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit (1893), and even Warner Brother's Bugs Bunny (1940) were already well known. Mooney's research assisted with the appropriation of Rabbit stories outside of indigenous North American cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth century, but Harris's Br'er Rabbit, written for popular culture, prompted the connection of trickster rabbit to African origins. In the twentieth century the figures of Native North American mythologies become generally associated with animals, specifically Raven and Coyote, largely due to the anthropological fieldwork of Franz Boas and his students.

¹ Schoolcraft identifies the same character by several different English spellings, of which he explains: "The Eastern Chippewa used the sound of *m* instead of *n*, in these words." See Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States : Collected and Prepared under the Direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs per Act of Congress of March 3rd, 1847* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1851), 418.

² Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *The American Indians Their History, Condition and Prospects, from Original Notes and Manuscripts* (Buffalo: George H. Derby and Co., 1851), 150.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Different spellings for the same character are confusing. Schoolcraft most often refers to the character with the spelling Manabozho; therefore, I will continue to use spelling when referring to his text.

⁶ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *The American Indians*, 205.

⁷ Schoolcraft claimed to have discovered the mythologies of the Chippewa people; however, he was indebted unquestionably to his first wife Jane Johnson Schoolcraft. She and her family not only introduced Schoolcraft to some of the stories that he published in *Algic Researches*, but also greatly assisted in the their translation. Overall, Jane Johnson Schoolcraft's importance as a literary figure has been tremendously overlooked and only recently were her collected works published. See Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky : The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft*, Dale Parker, Ed.(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 60.

⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁹ Part of Manabozho's attraction to the Chippewa people, and undoubtedly to anthropologists, was his ambiguity. While he possessed magical powers, he was not a god and suffered what Schoolcraft identified as "the paradox of being mortal." In the stories he endured the consequences of his impulsive actions and the character, among other trickster figures, was not above experiencing loss and great sorrow. See Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches: Comprising Inquiries Respecting the Mental Characteristics of the North American Indians. First Series. Indian Tales and Legends* (Harper, 1839), 173.

¹⁰ Beginning in 1841 Seth Eastman was stationed as an officer at Fort Snelling, near Lake Superior where Schoolcraft collected much of his information about the Chippewa. Eastman visually recorded information concerning the Dakota and the Ojibwa people and his second wife Mary recorded their stories. For one of her most significant works see Mary Eastman 1818 Mary H. (Mary Henderson), *Dahcotah, Or, Life and Legends of the Sioux around Fort Snelling* (New York: J. Wiley, 1849).

¹¹ Schoolcraft, *The American Indians Their History, Condition and Prospects, from Original Notes and Manuscript (Volume V)*, 205.

¹² Ibid, (Volume II).

¹³ Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches*, 162.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Historian Brian Dippie writes that Catlin and Schoolcraft were intensely competitive concerning their studies on North American tribes and it was Schoolcraft who suggested that Catlin include his paintings in the report that Schoolcraft published in 1847. See Brian W. Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries: The Politics of Patronage* (University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 80.

¹⁷ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*. (New-York, Wiley and Putnam, 1842), 4.

¹⁸ Catlin exclaimed at the beginning of letter 22: "Oh! 'Horribile visu — et mirabile dictu!' Thank God, it is over, that I have seen it, and am able to tell the world." Ibid., 155.

¹⁹ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 1841., 166.

²⁰ Ibid., 167.

²¹ Ibid.

²² George Catlin, *O-Kee-Pa : A Religious Ceremony; and Other Customs of the Mandans* (Philadelphia : J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), 23.

²³ Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 168.

²⁴ Catlin, *O-Kee-Pa*, 23.

²⁵ Maximilian Wied, *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied* [Volume 3], (1833-34), (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 187.

²⁶ Speaking of what she referred to as the "marginal figure" in relation to tricksters, Babcock writes: "Symbolically he certainly interferes, and again and again one is confronted with the paradox that that which is socially peripheral of marginal is symbolically central and predominant." See Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, "'A Tolerated Margin of Mess': The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11, no. 3 (March 1, 1975), 155.

²⁷ Catlin, *O-Kee-Pa*, 42.

²⁸ Brinton's 1885 essay was originally published in *American Antiquarian* (May 1885). See the reprint in Daniel Garrison Brinton, *Essays of an Americanist: I. Ethnologic and Archaeologic*. (Cornell University Library, 2009), 130-135.

²⁹ Ibid., 133.

³⁰ Ibid., 134.

³¹ Brinton suggests that Schoolcraft might have been confused about Manabozho's singular identity and the figure may have in fact been two separate beings. See Daniel Garrison Brinton, *American Hero-Myths: A Study in the Native Religions of the Western Continent* (H.C. Watts & Company, 1882).

³² Brinton criticizes the writings of missionaries who failed to acknowledge the symbolism of Native American stories outside of Christianity. Using the example of Manabozho's battle with a serpent, he explains that rather than a dangerous "master of magic," the serpent, "typical of sinuous lightning," symbolized storms. See Brinton, *Essays of an Americanist*, 133.

³³ Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches*, 149.

³⁴ James Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteen Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1897-98 (Part I)(Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 229-30.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 235.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴⁰ Mooney, "Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology," 312.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴² Mooney, "Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology," 330, 337.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Less discussed concerning the history of slavery is that Cherokee prisoners had been taken for work on plantations in the southern colonies, particularly the Carolinas, Mooney notes, as "early as 1693" when the tribe complained about people being kidnapped by slave hunters. In Louisiana prisoners of war were used for the same purposes as late as 1776.

⁴⁵ See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (Boston: Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1911), xxviii. See also A. Gerber, "Uncle Remus Traced to the Old World," *The Journal of American Folklore* 6, no. 23 (1893): 245-57.

⁴⁶ See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus*, xxvii; see also Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," 234.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ There are many printings of Harris' Uncle Remus stories and several illustrators have contributed to the depiction of Br'er Rabbit. Possibly one of the most well known versions of "The Tar Baby" appears in the Disney movie *Song of the South* (1946).

⁴⁹ Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," 234.

⁵⁰ In *Albic Researches* Schoolcraft describes how Manabozho kicks a duck, leaving it with a flat bottom. This story was also told among the Cherokee. For the Coyote story see Berard Haile, *Navajo Coyote Tales: The Curly Tó Aheedlínii Version*, *American Tribal Religions*, v. 8 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 83-84.

⁵¹ Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," 232.

⁵² Alice Marriott, *Saynday's People: The Kiowa Indians and the Stories They Told* (University of Nebraska, 1962), 52-58.

⁵³ See Alice Marriott, *Saynday's People: The Kiowa Indians and the Stories they Told* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1963).

⁵⁴ For the references to Silver Horn's artwork I am indebted to the thorough investigative work that Candace Green has compiled in her publications, including: *Saynday was Coming Along . . .* (1995); *Silver Horn: Master Illustrator* (2001); *One Hundred Summers: A Kiowa Calendar Record* (2009).

⁵⁵ Greene, *Silver Horn*, 154.

⁵⁶ Ibid.,157. See also Marriot, *Winter Telling Stories*, 45-50; Wakdjunkaga, the Winnebago trickster, similarly gets his head stuck in an elk skull. See Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), 23-33.

Chapter 2

Killing Culture: Confiscating and Confining Tricksters

For the purposes of this dissertation it is important to address the enormous cultural upheaval that Native North American cultures experienced in the nineteenth century, with significant and changes that occurring in relatively short amount of time. As European colonization swept across the North American continent, indigenous peoples were dispossessed their from land and the course of their histories were disrupted. In 1837 a devastating small pox epidemic killed approximately ninety percent of the Mandan tribe that George Catlin had studied.¹ Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act in 1830 began the forced migration of several eastern tribes the brutal relocation of much of the Cherokee tribe, including some of the people who Mooney had consulted with, to the "unsettled" area known as Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma). The Indian Appropriations Act of 1851 lead to the confinement of Anishinaabe people, including some of the Chippewa people with whom Schoolcraft had collaborated, onto reservations, which created a significant break in their inherent tribal organization.² And in the 1870s, the Kiowa tribe, to which Silver Horn belonged, surrendered to the United States military, primarily due to the lack of available game animals. Faced with starvation, the majority of the Kiowa were compelled to move onto reservation land near to Fort Sill, Oklahoma where they, with other tribes, came to depend on government rations for their survival.

Of course, there are far more lives to consider and far more stories to tell concerning two centuries of North American cultural chaos than can be addressed

in the pages of this dissertation; the above serves as only a brief reminder of the drastic and tumultuous circumstances under which Native tricksters and their stories survived. In this chapter I try to better understand what becomes of a culture's stories — their oral histories — in times of profound cultural change. What becomes of the clowns, the culture heroes, the gods, and the animals — the tricksters — in the midst of such a cultural clash? In this chapter I discuss how the American anthropologists, those who wanted most to save tricksters and their respective cultures, transformed them. I then contemplate as to what parts remained and what parts died, as trickster stories traveled through time and translations, and the collecting of Native American mythologies increased during the development of anthropology as a discipline in the United States. Focus in this chapter then turns towards the influential work of Franz Boas, his association with Haida carver Charles Edenshaw, and the spread of the Northwest Coast trickster Raven to a broader public.

Language and Mythology in American Anthropology

The vast undeveloped landscape of the American West was no doubt promising for European expansion, but it was also where large diverse populations of indigenous people already lived. Geological surveys first established that there was ethnographic interest in North American peoples, as noted in publications by those such as Schoolcraft and Catlin, but there had been no combined organization of the anthropological data collected previously in the nineteenth century. The Bureau of Ethnology was created in 1879 (American was not added to the title until 1890) and emerged largely as a result of the methods developed and the

ethnographic materials collected by the “Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region (1877).”³ John Wesley Powell, the Bureau’s founder, stated that the Bureau of Ethnology would serve in “inciting and guiding” the systematic research of all North American anthropology.⁴ Although he was trained as a geologist and not an anthropologist, he stressed the urgency in studying indigenous populations as they progressed from savagery to civilization. In the first Annual Report Powell laid out his plan to continue with the ethnographic research that had begun with the Rocky Mountain Survey. With governmental support he could recruit scholars and specialists that would support all forms of North American anthropological endeavors. Powell stressed that the foundation of all “sound” anthropological investigations began with language. “Customs, laws, governments, institutions, mythologies, religions and even arts,” he wrote, “can not be understood without a fundamental knowledge of the languages which express the ideas and thoughts embodied therein.”⁵ Powell reported that there were more than five hundred languages spoken in North America and he was an ardent proponent of their study. He was equally passionate about the collection of tribal mythologies, of which he claimed animal stories were the oldest and most sacred.

In this same paper Powell also wrote that every tribe maintained a significant body of lore, which he purported were the “sayings and doings of the gods.”⁶ Correspondingly, every tribe had one or more persons skilled in the performance of these stories. Referred to as “preachers” by Powell, these were the storytellers, the “great actors,” who captivated audiences in the evenings of winter, the time allegedly set aside for telling myths. Each knew a manner of “sign

language” that was understood by all and so skilled were they in the language of their body that they “spoke” through the amplification of their facial features, through the increase of muscle tension, and through the movement of their hands and feet.⁷ And although he described them with the use of Christian metaphors, Powell stressed the significance of the storytellers and their particular language. “Preaching,” he claimed, was “one of the most important institutions of savagery” and “the whole body of myths current in a tribe is the total of their lore.” Myths contained a tribes’ history, laws, philosophy, and their traditions. Myths, he said, were “their unwritten bible.”⁸

Powell was somewhat of an actor himself and even more of a storyteller. His writing, although replete with nineteenth century discriminatory ideologies, was impassioned with his genuine concern for the welfare of Native American cultures and their relations with the American government. Unfortunately, his theoretical philosophies were biased by nineteenth century scientific theories and lacked clear, substantiated data. Biographies about Powell reveal that between 1868 and 1873 he conducted ethnographic research among the Ute, Paiute, and Kiabab tribes. He consulted with tribal members, learned their languages, and recorded various aspects of their vocabulary, histories, and mythologies. In his later years he began photographing the indigenous people with whom he consulted, and took to wearing indigenous styled clothing of fringed buckskin. As seen in one photograph, where he poses next to a Paiute woman identified as Tauruv, who wears a highly adorned fringed buckskin dress (figure 20). Standing side by side, the two appear to be consulting an object, perhaps a book, while Powell

situated the right side of his body away from the camera (Powell had lost his right arm). It is difficult to determine if he is looking at the object or the photographer. The scene was most certainly staged, as Powell was known to sell the photographs in the East.⁹

Despite his concerns for indigenous peoples in the first BAE Report Powell does not identify his Native consultants, nor does he identify what tribes his collection of stories came from. Moreover, his translations more closely followed the formulaic structure of European folktales. Meaning that, not only were the stories written in English, they were also organized and progressed in linear sequence, focused on an individual hero, and ended with an orderly resolution,¹⁰ which was a departure from the way in which the stories would have been originally told in indigenous cultures. Powell includes examples of stories such as the tale of a boy who is split in two and becomes twins. Together they avenge their father's death and by destroying the dreadful enemy Tûm-pwî-nai'ro-gwî-nump (one who wears stone shirt).¹¹ Another story featured Ta-vwots', a malicious little rabbit who seeks revenge on the sun and caused a great flood.

Powell and other anthropologists of the period claimed that mythologies, such as those contained in this first BAE report, demonstrated levels of cultural development.¹² Drawing on a system of categorization established by American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan in 1877, Powell concluded that most North American tribes were at "higher stages of savagery, or the lower stages of barbarism."¹³ He asserted that "zoötheism," the belief of animal gods, was at the lowest stage of development and "monotheism," based on the system of empire,

was at the highest stage. Every culture, Powell wrote, began with a belief system where animals acted as supreme gods and en route to monotheism a culture's mythology continually changed, until finally their animal gods were forgotten.¹⁴

Like other anthropologists, Powell failed to consider was that the animal figures, such as Raven, Coyote, and Rabbit, were not exactly animals. Not only did these creatures possess human characteristics, they also had the magical powers equal to that of any god. And while Powell stated that mythologies were individual to the cultures and languages in which they were told, he continually generalized indigenous peoples belief systems and used European models in his comparative methods of analysis. His philosophy on savagery and civilization demonstrated the inconsistencies of his scholarship, as he inserted randomly odd analogies, and, corresponding with the views of the period, he went so far as to say that Indian epistemologies were "childish."¹⁵ The first BAE report clearly demonstrated that Powell's anthropological theories lacked substantiated research and theories and in future publications he left the critical analysis as well as the collection of data to other anthropologists he hired. Despite shortcomings in his research, Powell's administrative talents and his evident passion for the study of indigenous language and mythology, for better or worse, helped to open the door for new methods of ethnographic study.

Raven the Trickster meets Franz Boas and His Students

Powell laid the groundwork perhaps for anthropological collecting in North America; however, no one contributed more to the advancement of modern anthropology and the study of American indigenous people than German born

anthropologist Franz Boas. Like Powell, Boas was trained as a geologist (he earned his Ph.D. in physics), but early in his career he evidenced his interests in ethnology and the role that the human element played within the environment. He was a meticulous researcher and a prolific scholar, who held a deep desire to become famous in the sciences and unquestionably his work was pivotal in the development of modern methods of anthropological analysis.¹⁶ In 1883 Boas conducted his first significant anthropological research among the Inuit who lived in the harsh arctic climate on Qikiqtaaluk, Baffin Land, known today as Baffin Island. His approach to studying the Inuit people was essentially to live as if he were an Inuit himself. In the year he spent on Baffin Island he learned Inuktitut, donned on sealskin boots and a fur parka, and accomplished most of his research traveling via dog sled. Subsequent studio photographs of Boas posing in Inuit clothing and performing Inuit tasks were used for drawings that were included in his later BAE texts (figure 21,22). Through his efforts Boas collected a wide range of in-depth information, which in turn provided him a deeper understanding of the Inuit culture, as he stated in an article for the German newspaper, *Berliner Tageblatt*, in 1883:

Having lived among them as one of them, I could gain a rather satisfying insight into their religious beliefs, customs, and mores and collect something of the immensely rich treasure of the tales possessed by this people who not only struggle with the desolate nature for their livelihood, but also understand to embellish their existence by cheerful company, music, and dance.¹⁷

Boas' English publication of "The Central Eskimo" appeared in 1888 in the 6th Annual BAE Report, and it was in this paper that he introduced to American audiences some of what would become the core methodologies of anthropology. In

fact, some of Boas and Powell's concepts showed a great deal of similarity.

Although Boas eschewed theories that involved cultural evolutionism (savagery to barbarism to civilization), which made his and Powell's scholarship discernibly different, both scientists agreed, for example, that cultural relativism, the idea that an individual's values must be understood from the perspective of the culture, was essential to collecting and processing ethnographic research. Moreover, they both recognized the necessity for the study of language and that the collection of mythologies was imperative to understanding a culture's beliefs, social structure, and the moral attitudes therein. Key to this discussion, however, is that Boas, along with several of his students, compiled the most extensive studies on Native North American mythologies, particularly trickster mythologies, to date.

Perhaps because his research among the Inuit was completed before Brinton or any other anthropologist addressed the topic of tricksters was the reason that Boas did not identify any characters as tricksters in "The Central Eskimo," but in the twenty-six pages he dedicated to Inuit mythologies he related what was ostensibly a "trickster story." In his translation of the story he labeled "Kiviung," Boas describes the character called Kiviung as a kind and powerful "anakoq" (shaman) who finds himself in, and only narrowly escapes, perilous predicaments, some of which include: nearly being captured by bears; almost losing his head to cannibal sorceress; and the narrow avoidance of a spider woman who ate her own body parts.¹⁸ Contemporary Inuit scholar Ingo Hessel has compared Kiviung to Homer's Greek hero Odysseus, and while he may be immortal and heroic, Kiviung (or Kiviuk) possesses very human failings, his escapes are

mere luck, and impulse most often dictates his actions.¹⁹ Characteristically, Kiviung's adventures reflect patterns found in other trickster epics; yet, Boas never commented on the association. By the time "The Central Eskimo" appeared Boas had already begun his research among the tribes of the Northwest Coast.

Boas published widely on his field research concerning the Inuit and the Arctic in Germany and those publications that were translated into English gained him notoriety in the scientific community in North America. He immigrated to America in 1886, perhaps to escape some of the limitations and persecution he felt as a Jew in Germany, which, Ludger Müller-Willie suggests, may have influenced his anthropological practices and ultimately led to his efforts in cultural activism.²⁰ In 1896 he debated, in "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," popular beliefs of the time that supported the superiority of certain races to others and theories that advocated the notion that all cultures develop everywhere in the same manner. He proposed that anthropologists needed to abandon generalized comparative method for studying cultures and approached each culture individually. This, Boas asserted, would determine the "historical causes that led to the formation of the customs in question and to the psychological processes that were at work in their development."²¹ In his own work Boas transitioned away from earlier scientific approaches and began to concentrate more on the historical dimensions of culture, which precipitated his advocacy for cultural equality. In the same year he immigrated to the United States, Boas was inspired to focus his ethnographical, geographical, and sociological studies on the tribes from the Northwest Coast in British Columbia. He dedicated a

great deal of his life's work toward the study of the Kwakwaka'wakw, who by the late nineteenth century had become familiar with and unquestionably wary of meddling outsiders. Their opposition to intrusion was what appealed to Boas. The Kwakwaka'wakw's desire for privacy meant that their traditional practices were more likely to have remained historically intact and unadulterated by Euro American influence, which was an ideal situation for anthropological research.

By whatever means, Boas gained the trust of the Kwakwaka'wakw and he and his students, John Swanton in particular, collected a great amount Northwest Coast mythologies. Boas, of course, contributed to the discourse his own theories about trickster mythologies. He also helped introduce to a non-Native audience the character of Raven, a figure that would later become one of the two primary tricksters associated with indigenous North American traditions (the other being Coyote) in the larger scope of trickster discourse. In the introduction to "Traditions of the Thomson Indians of British Columbia" (mythologies recorded by anthropologist James Teit, 1898), Boas expanded on ideas that had been expressed previously by Brinton, with the opinion that tricksters were indeed complex characters, who had evolved from archaic mythological beings. They were not, however, primary creators and should be considered "transformers," that were more or less "powerful beings" that helped to shape the world — generally only incidentally.²² In other words, tricksters felt no empathy for humanity, and whatever cultural gifts they bestowed occurred while they were fixed in their own selfish pursuits. This, Boas reasoned, was why tricksters were not worshiped as sacred beings. Boas asserted that perceptions of trickster varied between tribes;

moreover, “Indians,” he said, had different viewpoints than the colonists about the motives of their mythological characters and about the divisions of good and evil.²³

Boas, however, occasionally succumbed to comparisons as he endeavored to explain the variable significance and functionality of tricksters between tribes. “Coyote (along with the three brothers Hogfennel and the Old Man),” he said, were characters that possessed characteristics comparable to that of the “so-called ‘Culture Hero,’ who killed monsters that infested the land, and gave man the arts that made life worth living.”²⁴ These “Culture Hero” stories, Boas asserted, were the most common among North American tribes. But at the same time this “great benevolent being” and helper appears “in other groups of tales as the sly trickster” who is pompous and selfish to the greatest extreme. “No method of warfare is too mean for him, if it promises his victory; no trick is too low to be resorted to, if it helps him to reach his end.”²⁵ Boas surmised in the following:

When he overcomes his enemies, the result of his labors must accrue to the benefit of his fellow beings or of later generations, while wherever he fails, he necessarily often appears as a foolish trickster, we have a condition corresponding almost exactly to the attitude of mediaeval Christendom to the devil.²⁶

While the above statement may resonate as sound, Boas failed to acknowledge that ancient writings also depict the Christian God as somewhat of a trickster (consider the story of Job). Perhaps Boas used Christian comparatives to a broader audience; however, there was, and is, much to be said when comparing tricksters solely within North American cultures, those confined to a region, or even within a single tribe.

Raven, for example, acted deplorably, but to some in many Northwest Coast

tribes he was considered the creator of human beings and he made elements of the natural world, and common to several communities was the story of how Raven introduced daylight to human beings. According to Boas, Raven was a primary trickster in only the Northwest Coast (Raven stories, however, do show up in other cultures) and he often refers to the character Raven in his analyses. Boas' student Swanton collected the most detailed stories of Raven. Some of the most referenced are those he collected from the Tlingit, who lived in Sitka and Wrangell, Alaska near the turn of the twentieth century.²⁷ Both communities considered Raven to be a principal deity and although the stories varied, all demonstrated the tricky, impulsive nature of Raven. Yet, they also confirmed that Raven's trickery was, at times, diabolical. It is with the story of Raven stealing the sun that Swanton begins "Tlingit mythologies."

Briefly stated, both versions of the sun-stealing story begin with Raven desiring to bring light to some, or all humans. He makes a plan to do this by stealing daylight from a rich man, or a powerful chief, or as described in the Wrangell version, the deity Nâs-ca'kî-yêł, who owns the box that contains the sun. The tale from Sitka explicates how Raven captures and releases the moon and the stars, but in both versions he steals the sun by impregnating the daughter of the "sun keeper" with none other than himself (which in itself was a tricky feat).²⁸ Raven, born through the daughter presumably in a form other than a bird, was so loved by Nâs-ca'kî-yêł (or other important deity) that he is given the sun to play with. As soon as Raven had possession of the sun, he returned to the shape of a bird and flew away through the smoke hole, which undoubtedly had ritualistic

significance, as more than once Raven is said to have used the smoke hole as an avenue of escape.²⁹

Initially, Raven does not release the sun, but keeps it hidden, perhaps in a cedar wood box, and then, like any good trickster, he continues to wander, keeping the sun close. At this point in the story it is made apparent that humans lived in darkness and they had only heard tell of daylight. They knew it would arrive some day and they were terrified of it. The apex of this story occurs when Raven encounters humans who were fishing for echelon, in the dark of course, at the head of the Nass River, where at one time all people lived. The people were making a great amount of noise and Raven threatened them to stop, or he would break daylight on them. But the people did not believe that Raven was the one foretold to bring the sun and they continued to make noise. Thus, Raven flashed a threatening beam of light, like lightning, which frightened the human beings and only caused them to make more noise. Infuriated, Raven finally opened the box and released the sun into the sky. This was how Raven created daylight. But were his actions out of spite, or compassion? Perhaps this story only confirms, as Boas asserted, that tricksters have no empathy for humans and only through their own irrational actions, spurred by their desires do tricksters tend to the needs of the people.

Stories of Raven, including the above, however, posed another set of questions for the anthropologists who tried to rationalize tricksters' purposes. Boas first explained that tricksters, or what he called transformers, such as Raven, were perceived on a variety of levels. The tribe, the storyteller, and the situation that was being explained, all help to determine an individual story and characters

development. But in the stories there were many other characters that might be perceived as tricksters, such as, Blue Jay and Mink, so why then were not all mythic characters viewed as tricksters? How and why were stories featuring Raven disseminated to a broader audience? What roles did American anthropologists play in creating Raven's popularity? Moreover, why has the character Raven persisted as one of the most recognized North American tricksters? These questions are considered in the following pages, where I explore the prevalence of Raven in First Nations artwork from the Pacific Northwest, with particular attention to the work of Haida carver Charles Edenshaw.

Tricksters in Northwest Coast Art

Even today Raven plays an integral role in many Northwest Coast communities and it is also clear that Raven has become a symbol associated with tribal art from Canada and the northwestern United States. This is evidenced in the contemporary artwork featuring Raven that fills museums and art galleries, along with kitsch objects that line the shelves in souvenir and curio shops from Seattle to Vancouver and into Alaska. In the nineteenth century, when anthropologists began working with tribes such as the Kwakwaka'wakw, Tlingit, and Haida, Raven was there to greet them. The trickster was depicted (along with other animal deities) on totem poles, cedar wood boxes, and on the walls of longhouses. Images of Raven were viewed as heraldic crests that identified clan association and Raven masked dancers performed the dances that told the stories of cultural histories of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Tlingit, Haida, and others.

By the late 1880s, the tribes of the Northwest Coast had been in contact

with Europeans for a century, or more. Some tribes had adopted Christianity, and although there were those who had retained their traditions, European influence was apparent throughout the various cultures. American anthropologists were disappointed by the amount of acculturation that they saw in the Pacific Northwest and they feared that much of what was “authentic” about the tribes of the area was already lost. While still in Germany, Boas had become enthralled with a shipment of artifacts from British Columbia and the Arctic that he helped to catalogue at Berlin’s Royal Ethnology Museum in 1885. He was further impressed by a troupe of Nuxalk, who had been brought to Europe in 1886 by self-proclaimed anthropologists, Adrian and Phillip Jacobson, to perform ceremonial dances, just prior to Boas’ immigration to the United States.³⁰ The Nuxal’s music, carved masks, decorated clothing, and dance movements captivated Boas, and between 1895 to 1905, during his time as curator of the American Museum of Natural History, he initiated and amassed a large collection of material culture and data from the Northwest Coast. He accomplished this with the aid of George Hunt, “a half-Tligit, half-Eurocanadian raised in Fort Rupert as Kwakwaka’wakw,”³¹ who help Boas acquire the artifacts, which were shipped to New York. Hunt’s collaboration with Boas has been criticized for the number of objects he helped to confiscate from the Kwakwaka’wakw; yet, he has also been praised for his cultural conservation efforts.³² Hunt’s grandson became a master carver for the Kwakwaka’wakw and his great grandsons carried down a legacy of carving that continues. Hunt is important to this discussion first, because he introduced Boas to the potlatch ceremony and later, because he acted as a consultant for the photographer Edward

Curtis concerning his film, *Land of the Head Hunters* (1914). Both the ceremony and the film featured dancers depicting Raven, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Raven and Edenshaw

The decorative and performance arts of the Northwest Coast peoples became such an integral part of Boas anthropological research that in 1927 he dedicated the majority of his book, *Primitive Art*, specifically to the discussion of Northwest Coast design. He also included analyses on language, music, and dance. Boas' primary consultant for this book was Haida carver Charles Edenshaw.

Swanton's "Haida Texts and Myths" was published in 1905 but records inform that a devastating smallpox epidemic swept through the Haida tribe in 1862 that reduced their numbers from 30,000 to less 600.³³ Accompanying this devastating loss of human life undoubtedly was the loss of important aspects of Haida culture. We can never fully know how much cultural history vanished with the deaths of so many people, especially the orators, those who possessed and handed down centuries worth of knowledge. Edenshaw and his wife, Isabella, were among those who survived the epidemic; moreover, they were trained and talented artists. Together they created an exceptional body of artwork that reflected Haida beliefs and traditions, which today serves as an enduring and spectacular visual history.

Edenshaw became a carver through his lineage and as Haida protocol dictated, his uncle, a master carver in the community, was responsible for his development and training. Edenshaw learned to carve house poles, he designed

dance masks, and painted hats that were woven by Isabella, all for Haida use; nevertheless, many of his carvings that are known today were made for tourist trade. In the late nineteenth century when the Haida were struggling to maintain their cultural identity, Edenshaw found a means of generating income through his production of intricately carved miniature totem poles, boxes, and platters made of argillite, and spoons and jewelry made of silver, on all of which he represented Haida stories. The items were created for and sold to non-Haida customers, which, as described by Nika Collison, “demonstrated [Edenshaw’s] ability to adapt and innovate,”³⁴ which ultimately contributed to the tribe’s survival. Changes in the Haida economy had surely lead to the inclusion of their artwork in a global context, but what were the implications when the stories were disseminated to the non-Haida world? None of Edenshaw’s patrons are still living. Therefore, we can only guess that the “exoticism” and aesthetics were enough to satisfy their interest, these artworks were, after all, like nothing else. During Edenshaw’s lifetime the Haida formline style came to be admired worldwide and in the late nineteenth century the collecting of small ephemera, especially model totem poles, had become quite popular in Europe and North America. Perhaps those who purchased the objects recognized certain characters in depictions, such as Raven, but most outsiders were removed from the cultural and spiritual values of the Haida people; thus, what was Edenshaw’s purpose in depicting story narratives and sending them away from the Haida culture? The above can be best addressed through the examination of the narrative crafted by Edenshaw on three argillite plates that feature his visual interpretation of: “How Raven Gave Females their tsaw.”

Edenshaw was exemplary in carving continuous narratives drawn from Haida beliefs and histories. Perhaps having lived through such a devastating period for the Haida people stirred in him an urgency to record the stories that he knew were in danger of disappearing in their oral form.³⁵ Edenshaw's clients, however, were most likely clueless to what story was depicted, and had little concern for the story's importance in Haida culture. Since Edenshaw worked closely with anthropologists it is plausible that, like Silver Horn, he had been requested, or commissioned to create artworks that depicted the Haida mythologies. Moreover, Edenshaw's medium, as well as his artistic style, was unique to the Northwest Coast. The argillite, the black carbonaceous shale on which he recounted many Haida myths, was found only on Haida Gwaii (formally known as the Queen Charlotte Islands) and was made popular initially through carvings made by Haida artists for tourists. Market demands also had something to do with what Edenshaw chose to illustrate. Raven, seemingly a favorite character outside of the culture, is featured on many of his carvings and his depiction of "How Raven gave Females their tsaw" was thought to be the second part of what some anthropologists referred to as the "Raven cycle, which told of the Haida creation, and was recorded by Swanton near to the turn of the twentieth century."³⁶ Edenshaw featured the story on three separate argillite plates that were sold in the late nineteenth century as tourist objects; however, it is difficult to tell if Edenshaw designed three separate illustrations of the same story, or if he meant for the images on the platters to be sequential. Haida lawyer, singer, and historian Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson writes that the platters represent the

chronological transition of the characters — Raven, Fungus Man, and the anthropomorphic “tsaw sgaanagwaay (the spirit of tsaw)” — first, as they begin their journey, then in mid-progression, and the final platter exhibiting the moment before Raven goes onto the Island (figures 23,24,25). With this it appears that the platters were crafted as a set; yet, scholars of Northwest Coast art have determined that they were created and sold between sometime between 1894 and 1895. Today the platters are located in the collections of three separate museums that including the Field Museum, the National Museum of Ireland, and the Seattle Art Museum. Each plate is exceptionally rendered with Edenshaw’s clever visual interpretation of how Raven created the female sex.

The story, also recorded and translated by Swanton in the 29th BAE Report (1905), is quite funny and somewhat sentimental. Edenshaw’s depiction of the story demonstrates that it was a part of Haida oral history that features Raven as a creator/hero, and, contrary to Boas’ theory, the trickster acted with compassion for human beings. A brief description, compiled from Swanton’s nineteenth century collection and a contemporary translation by Williams-Davidson, helps to interpret Edenshaw’s narrative.

At one time female humans possessed no genitalia. Therefore, Raven took it upon himself to help his sister and his wife (Eagle Woman and Raven Woman) retrieve for genitalia from “tsaw gwaayaay” (which translates literally to “Vagina Island”).³⁷ In preparation, Raven procures a canoe, gathers a spear and other weapons, and looks for friends to help him on his quest. Snowbird tries first to assist Raven, and then Blue-Jay; however, both failed. When they were only a few

feet from the shore they “became sweet” from the power of tsaw gwaayaay and they fell from the canoe. Galaga snaanga (Fungus man), however, was able to wedge himself into the canoe and although the power of tsaw gwaayaay was strong, together the friends managed to reach the island where the tsaw lay upon the shore. Raven quickly ran from the canoe, speared two tsaw, a larger and a smaller one, to take back to the women. Raven and Fungus Man made a hasty retreat from the Island and its power. Upon their return, one of women ran to him and immediately grabbed the larger tsaw, this saddened the remaining woman, to whom Raven replied: “but yours will be safe.” This story demonstrated the power of female sexuality and was often told before the influence of missionaries tried to suppress the sexual content therein.³⁸

The three illustrated platters represent only a small portion of Edenshaw’s oeuvre; yet, they make apparent the care with which he portrayed Haida oral histories. Knowing the story allows for a better understanding of the more subtle details of the artwork; but regardless of this, the pieces alone can be appreciated for their intricate designs, the depictions of abstract and naturalized figures, and the skillful use of space. In the earliest platter Edenshaw rendered Raven half human and half bird in form and sitting at the prow of a canoe. Fungus man, drawn with an oversized round head, is sitting in the canoe’s stern holding an oar with a salmon trout head design. Looking carefully at Raven reveals that he is wearing a conical hat that perhaps refers to a killer whale, as seen in the dorsal fin shape that curves around the round edge of the platter, the single round eye, and the gapping mouth filled with teeth. Raven’s face, carved in composite view, contains both a

beak and a human mouth. His body is mostly human, save for the fingers that look more like claws, or talons, while his wings are abstracted in formline design. Both characters sit within the canoe, on which Edenshaw skillfully employed Northwest coastal, two-dimensional formline, a style consisting of both negative and positive areas that work together through various layers of grids. The resulting design appears as if in motion, forms flowing from one being to another through interconnected abstractions. Looking at one object only directs the eye to another shape, to another part of the design. Elements such as ovoids, u-forms splits, fluting, and crosshatching,³⁹ come together to create abstracted but discernable characters, such as the Haida Thunderbird, killer whales, sea wolfs and sea monsters.

Designs rendered on the canoe and below on all three platters exemplify Edenshaw's knowledge of classic Haida formline designs and his ability to make them his own. Visible at the prow of the canoe is a head with large teeth, which may represent the sea wolf known as "Wasco" in Haida tradition.⁴⁰ Moving down to the base of the canoe in the first platter we see claws near to the base and in the center is a split-U that breaks up some of the negative space and looks much like a fin. In the same platter, two tapered eyes stare out at the viewer, one near to the prow and another situated farther to the back. These eyes might belong to the sea wolf or refer to another character all together. Eyes are used as specific identifiers in Northwest Coast art, as artist and historian Bill Holm indicates, that Edenshaw's "superficially" represented a style used by other Northwest Coast artists, but his unique variations become more evident when considering the platters as a

progression of events.

Perhaps the most interesting characters outside of the canoe are the sea monsters that occupy the entire lower section of the plate. On the first platter Edenshaw depicted two monsters, or one two-headed sea monster, the combination creating a phallic-looking body with clawed feet, with one mouth positioned to take a bite from the canoe and the other set of open jaws on the tail end of the beast. When the platters are placed side-by-side the character transformations seem to unfold before your eyes. In the second and third platters Raven, now standing on top of the canoe (figures 24 and 25), sprouts more realistic feathers, his bird beak elongated, the human mouth has been removed and replaced with a human nose. Fungus Man appears overcome with the power of *tsaw*, his transfixed state illustrated through his raised hands, the increasing sharpness of his facial features, and the lines around his face that, on the third platter, appear wavy, alluding to swaying or vibration. On the second and third platters Edenshaw split the formline design into three panels and on each a different transformation becomes apparent. An abstracted portrait of Raven appears in the center of the second plate, which seamlessly morphs into the figure of a sea wolf or sea bear on the third. On the side panels of the canoe on both the second and third platters more toothy heads were added. At the bottom section the sinisterly grinning personified *tsaw sqaanagwaay* seems to float, claws that are seen clearly in the second plate, become more representational in Edenshaw's third illustration.

The locations of these three platters today reveals that Edenshaw's

carvings moved throughout the world, and of the three, only the second platter remains even close to where it was created. It is currently exhibited in one gallery of the Seattle Art Museum, with very little didactic text, among the work of other Northwest Coast artists.⁴¹ Although there are many examples of Edenshaw's carvings extant, undoubtedly, some artworks were lost, misattributed, or destroyed. But those that remain most recently received attention in 2014 when the Vancouver Art Gallery hosted the exhibit, *Charles Edenshaw*, a retrospective of his accomplishments that featured the three platters, and a small silver cane ferrule that also represented "How Raven Gave Females Their Saw (figure 26)."

In the exhibition catalogue Hoover writes that Edenshaw liked most often to depict themes that included Wasgo and the Haida creation stories and, as stated above, the carved platters refer only to the second episode in a two-part chronicle. In the first episode Raven created humans, the narrative of which Edenshaw eloquently depicted on an argillite chest that is currently located at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria (figure 27). On the lid of the chest sits a carved three-dimensional Raven in the process of transforming from human to bird form. This is made evident through a raven's beak protruding from the abdomen of a human figure and from the talons that nearly cover its feet.⁴² Raven stands on top of a cockleshell, from which human beings, with only their heads visible, are emerging. Depicted in Raven's arms is the body of a dying human child, indicating that Raven, like his trickster colleagues Nanobozho and Coyote, also created death.

There are, of course, still more of Edenshaw's artworks in which he

interpreted Haida stories and more that feature Raven. There are even more details to consider on just the three platters discussed above. Edenshaw's carvings most certainly demonstrate that Raven was an important part of Haida culture, but the question still remains as to why Edenshaw chose to represent, and so carefully illustrate, a portion of Haida oral history on an object that was meant for tourist trade? Perhaps he did recognize that Haida oral histories might someday disappear, thus the stories he carved on argillite, cedar, and silver provided a more permanent method of preservation. Still, there was no way that Edenshaw could know what happened to the objects after he released them into the world.

Contemporary scholars of Haida culture very clearly delineate that Edenshaw was trained as a Haida artist, a responsibility he undertook with a sense of rigorous commitment. And indeed, his attention to detail can be seen in the carvings he created for use both inside and outside of the Haida culture. In 1897, Boas, recognizing Edenshaw's skill, hired him to help identify objects and create drawings that illustrated the Haida oral histories. Edenshaw was accustomed to carving, reconfiguring Haida designs into his narratives, but apparently, he had never really drawn on paper.⁴³ Boas was largely interested in having Edenshaw visually "completing the stories about Raven;" however, his two-dimensional pictures did not translate as well as his three-dimensional carvings, and he made only a few.⁴⁴ European and Asian artwork had also begun to influence his aesthetic choices, which helped in marketing his artwork to non-Haida clients, as he found a way to make a living and a place for Haida traditions in a modern world.⁴⁵ I like to think of Edenshaw's images of Raven retrieving the tsaw on the three platters as

an inside joke, a method of continuing traditional stories of his choosing, especially those that featured typical trickster antics, such as sex and other amoral acts, that Christian missionaries sought to eradicate.

Performing Raven

This chapter began with a discussion of American anthropology to demonstrate how anthropologists viewed Native North American tricksters and their significance to indigenous peoples beliefs, social structures, and values. Powell understood that cultural stories were the important to a culture's survival, as was the study of language and he developed the BAE to foster research in these areas. He also recognized that storytellers performed the critical function of maintaining cultural histories. Boas and his students also saw the importance of cultural stories and they contributed greatly to the recording of indigenous traditions and languages and they rallied against theories of cultural superiority. Yet, these early anthropologists were also participants in the salvage paradigm, which justified the removal of many cultural objects that were significant to ritual and considered sacred by their respective tribes. Moreover, beginning in the last decade of the nineteenth century the Canadian government intervened in First Nation's ceremonial practices and began prohibiting dance performances all along the Northwest Coast.

It is imperative here to stress that these dances hold vital meanings to the tribes that live along the pacific coast from Washington state, into British Columbia, and upwards into Alaska, including the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka), Coast Salish, Chinook and Kwakwaka'wakw, to

name but a few. The dances are connected with both spiritual and secular meaning and through music, movement, and masks participants open their audience to other worlds and time periods. They are visual and sensory interpretations of the creation, histories, and struggles of the people, and importantly, they teach about what it means to be human.

Potlatches are perhaps the most well known ceremonials of the Northwest Coast. In a broader sense they were the winter feasts where the peoples stories were told. But they also commemorated “social changes such as birth, marriage, name giving, standing up a new chief and death.”⁴⁶ Potlatches were once the primary economic system and they often involved a leader relinquishing his inheritance (including land, names, and dances) to his offspring. During this transfer of power the host would gift the bulk of his wealth to the members of tribe, which demonstrated the chief’s ability to protect and care for his people.⁴⁷ Boas illuminated the sequence and underscored significance of the potlatch ceremonial in *The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1895) and Ruth Benedict provided her critical observation of the potlatch’s function in her comparative study, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), both volumes drew the attention of non-Native audiences to the spiritual practices of Northwest Coast tribes. Central to the Kwakwaka’wakw potlatch, as described by Boas, was the Hamat’sa (Hā’mats’a), or Cannibal Dance. Hamat’sa dancers are initiates who perform their coming-of-age through a series of dances. The initiate is confronted by obstacles, which he must overcome, such as ogres, monsters, and other harms, all of which culminates in a confrontation with the frightful

Baxbaxwalanuksiwe, a flesh-eating giant who lives at the “North End of the World.” Some of the most spectacular visuals are represented by the Hamat’sa birds (figure 28), the flesh-eating servants of the giant cannibal that include: Raven, Gwaxw gwakwalanuksiwe’; Crooked-Beak, Galuxwadzuwus; and the crane Huxhukw, who is said to crack human skulls with its beak. In the Kwakwāḱa’wakw potlatch these birds are represented through large spectacularly carved cedar wood masks that are painted black, red, and white (figure 29). Beaks on some Hamat’sa bird masks can reach over six feet and when manipulated by a dancer they make an ominously loud cracking noise (figure 30) Anthropologists and collectors alike sought to possess these remarkable artworks; however, the masks were revered and few left the Kwakwāḱa’wakw. That is until the late nineteenth century when the Canadian government interceded in tribal activities. Thus, the masks came to symbolically represent a long-term struggle by First Nation’s people to maintain their cultural and historical identity.

Masks are central to art, material culture, and performance of the Native North American people living along the Northwest Coast. From their very creation, involving the carving of red cedar wood into the recognizably distinctive forms, often passed down through several generations of carvers, the masks take on a life of their own. When they are not in use the masks are cared for as living beings, carefully and secretly protected in private homes, or in communal houses where the dances are performed. Performers, who bring Raven, Huxhukw, Crooked Beak, and others to life, practice in secret for months. In their transformations performers blur the lines between ethereal and earthly realms, as well as the lines

between animals, humans, and spirits. Interlinking these worlds through their embodiments, the dancers acknowledge tribal histories and pay homage to ancestors to unite participants in a powerful storytelling drama.⁴⁸

In 1885 the Canadian government outlawed potlatch ceremonials. Initially missionaries had attempted to transform the belief systems among Northwest Coast populations, and although the potlatches had changed in the wake of colonization, some tribes, such as the Kwakwaka'wakw, continued their ceremonial dances, which were considered essential by their respective communities. Missionaries felt that the potlatches were wasteful and immoral, and they, along with some civil servants, pressed the government to inflict a ban on all dances. In 1884, holding and participating in a potlatch was deemed a misdemeanor. The original amendment to Canada's Indian Act read as follows:

Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in a jail or other place of confinement. Any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment.⁴⁹

The law, however, was virtually ignored and the practice of potlatching continued; meanwhile, the law was reworded so that it became more inclusive. In 1921 H.M. Halliday, the Indian agent for the Kwakwaka'wakw territories, launched an aggressive offensive against the potlatches that reached an apex in Alert Bay with the raid of a large potlatch ceremony hosted by Kwakwaka'wakw Chief Daniel Cranmer.⁵⁰ Forty-eight people, including Cranmer, were arrested for their

involvement and at least twenty-six members of the tribe spent time in jail.⁵¹ To avoid imprisonment, many individuals surrendered dance masks, regalia, and ritual objects to the Canadian government. The objects were subsequently removed from the community and institutionalized in museum collections.⁵²

At the Royal British Columbia Museum there are over twenty photographs that stand as record of the confiscation of objects from the Cranmer potlatch (figure 31). Halliday displayed the masks and other regalia at the Anglican Parish Hall at Yalis (Alert Bay), where tourists were allowed to photograph the contents taken from the Cranmer family (figure 31). Halliday further intervened by selling 33 of the masks to George Heye, of New York, who later founded the Museum of the American Indian. Halliday claimed that his self-imposed undertaking was a way of securing money for the tribe (figure 32). The Indian agency immediately reprimanded “Halliday’s unwarranted action.”⁵³ Many of the masks that were confiscated from the Cranmer Potlatch were returned to the Kwakwaka'wakw and are now held (and displayed) in the collections of the U'mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada (figure 33). However, private collectors purchased some masks, regalia, and other sacred objects. Without the support of the Canadian government, these items had very little chance of ever being returned to the tribe.

By the time of the Cranmer potlatch in 1921, enforcement of the potlatch banning law involved more than the right of First Nations tribes to hold of ceremonial dances. There were some small concerns over cannibalism and desecration of corpses, which in the later Boas’ associate Hunt was said to have

participated. However, implementation of the law, more or less, arose from Kwakwaka'wakw marriage customs and economic exchanges that were influenced by European contact that by the twentieth century involved more than the gifting of coppers and blankets. Cranmer reported receiving cash payments, property, as well as coppers, as repayments of loans; in turn he potlached such things as pool tables, boats, clothing, violins, guitars, cash, and blankets (and more).⁵⁴ Boas, along with other anthropologists, recognizing the importance of the trade structure, warned that abolishment of the potlatches would destroy the Native credit system and cause ““greatest difficulty for the Indians.””⁵⁵

Moreover, there was something to be said about the ceremonial practice itself, which involved all manners of customs related to ““birth, marriage, family life, and death.””⁵⁶ But the anthropologists' efforts were of no avail and the laws banning potlatches remained in place for nearly thirty more years. Regardless of the law, Indigenous people from the Northwest Coast continued, through the 1930s 1940s, to hold dances “underground.” It was not until 1953, over seventy years since the law was instated, when Chief Mungo Martin held the first legalized potlatch ceremony. This ceremony constituted the first step towards revitalization of the dances in all Northwest Coast communities.⁵⁷ The long-contested repeal of the law demonstrates the enduring determination of the Kwakwaka'wakw people, as well as also the unequivocal importance of the dances to the community.

Tricksters?

In 1914 photographer Edward Curtis, perhaps best known for his epic twenty volume series *The North American Indian* (1906), produced the film *In the*

Land of the Headhunters (1914), a melodrama which featured Kwakwaka'wakw traditions, as well as Kwakwaka'wakw actors. The film was set in the mid-1700s and given the name, it would appear that Curtis pandered to sensationalized propaganda circulated in the early twentieth century concerning the practice of cannibalism in Northwest Coast dances. Despite its creation during the time when dances were outlawed, Curtis, largely assisted by the Kwakwaka'wakw, preserved on film many of the ceremonial aspects that might otherwise have been lost. One frame shows the actors entering into a longhouse through the open beak of Raven (figure 34). Another famous photograph shows a group of dancers and perhaps the most striking of the performers are the masked Hamat'sa birds (figure 35).

Raven's uniqueness among tricksters clearly resides in his ubiquitous visual presence in artwork from the Northwest Coast. In the nineteenth century, as I have previously explained, Native artists rarely depicted tricksters; thus, Raven historically was somewhat of an anomaly among North American tricksters. Which poses the question — why Raven? Perhaps Raven's depictions have something to do with the biological animal, whose traits compare to that of the trickster, and they are, after all, interesting and intelligent birds. They are known to steal (as in the story of Raven's retrieval of the sun) food and other objects, they are incorrigible and can be quite deceitful. Ravens are distinctly larger than crows, and they travel alone; moreover, they can fly, a magical trait from a human viewpoint (biological ravens will be further addressed in chapter 3). Some cultures associate ravens with death, which correlates to Raven's function in the Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa dance, but does not explain his appearances as culture hero and

otherwise in the artwork of other Northwest Coast tribes. Raven serves many functions.

In the nineteenth century anthropologists feverishly recorded the stories, songs, languages, and traditions of the peoples they thought were destined to acculturate. In doing so did they change tricksters in the process? BAE papers and other documents show that North American trickster stories were not necessarily sacred, or cyclical. Stories featuring Nanobozho and Saynday, for example, were told continually. Boas also confirmed that the stories, including those of Raven, traveled between tribes.⁵⁸ This leads me to believe that trickster stories served more secular and social purposes than the sacred, or ritualistic functions that contemporary scholars project. Tricksters' ambiguity, ubiquity, and especially their amorality was attractive to anthropologists and missionaries, as well as governments, who hoped to give them deeper meaning, or contain and destroy them. In the twentieth century North American tricksters were further demonized, subverted, appropriated, and scrutinized. By the 1940s they appeared in popular culture manipulated and transformed.

¹ Francis Chardon describes the many deaths that occurred. See Francis A. Chardon, *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839; descriptive of Life on the Upper Missouri; of a Fur Trader's Experiences among the Mandans, Gros Ventres and Their Neighbors; of the Ravages of the Small-Pox Epidemic of 1837*, ed. Annie Abel-Henderson (Pierre, S.D., 1932), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b3625047>, 127-141.

² W.J. Hoffman wrote that the Ojibwa were organized according to the totemic system, a means by which kinship was identified through totems, usually in the form of an animal, adopted by a family or clan. Each family unit developed and adhered to their individual traditions and beliefs, and as Hoffman explained, representatives from "various totems" were placed together on one reservation. This undoubtedly involved some conflict and also changed the dynamics as to how groups socialized and practiced spirituality. See W.J. Hoffman, *Seventh Annual*

Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80 (Washington, D.C: Govt. print. off., 1881), 149-50.

³ John Wesley Powell, *First Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80* (Washington, D.C: Govt. print. off., 1881), XI.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XIV.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XV.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Powell photographed his Native friends from the Paiute, Ute, Kiabab tribes. Undoubtedly he made a profit, but he paid his sitters. See Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers from the Mississippi to the Continental Divide: A Biographical Dictionary, 1839-1865* (Stanford University Press, 2005), 657.

¹⁰ See Victor Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). Victor Propp first wrote an analysis of Russian folktales in 1929, which was not translated into English until 1960. In his analysis Propp hypothesized that mythologies "morphed" in a specific sequence; whereas, in 1955 Claude Lévi-Strass provided an alternative analysis to Propp's in which he asserted the elements of a myth, like elements of a painting, might be taken out of order and regrouped to provide more latent than apparent content, which helped to better explain the sequence in Native North American mythologies.

¹¹ Most likely Powell collected this story from the Utes, but there are similar stories of twins, or one boy becoming twins and killing and saving their people from the most feared enemies, who are usually referred to as monsters.

¹² Powell, *First Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80*, 39.

¹³ Powell comments that Morgan had a good knowledge of Iroquois mythology and he also believed that Morgan was "America's greatest anthropologist." See Powell, *First Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80*, 39.. Powell aligned Morgan's three stages of social evolution (savagery, barbarism, and civilization) with his own theories on Native North American religion.

¹⁴ Morgan did not consider language an important component in his classification system. See Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 41.

¹⁵ Powell, *First Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80*, 23.

¹⁶ Ludger Müller-Wille writes in his book concerning Boas' early scholarship that at the age of seventeen Boas expressed his ambitions in a letter to his older sister Antonie, in which he stated: "I tell you, if I shall not really become hugely famous later on, I would not know what I should do. It seems terrible to me to have to spend my life unknown and unnoticed by people." See Ludger Müller-Wille, *The Franz Boas Enigma: Inuit, Arctic, and Sciences* (Montréal: Baraka Books, 2014), 43.

¹⁷ Reprinted in Müller-Wille, *The Franz Boas Enigma*, 68.

¹⁸ Boas, "The Central Eskimo," in *Sixth Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, 1879-'80* (Washington, D.C: Govt. print. off., 1881), 621-625.

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- ¹⁹ Ingo Hessel and Dieter Hessel, *Inuit Art* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 57.
- ²⁰ Müller-Wille, *The Franz Boas Enigma*, 30.
- ²¹ Franz Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology" (1896), in *Race, Language and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), 276.
- ²² Franz Boas, "Introduction to James Teit, 'The Traditions of the Thompson Indians of British Columbia' " (1898), in *Race, Language and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), 411.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 407.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 408.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 411.
- ²⁷ John Reed Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts* (Washington, Govt. print. off., 1909), 3 and 80.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 4. Variations to the sun story include a chief, or a wealthy man who owns daylight. He has a daughter and she eats, or drinks, dirt, or a pine needle, which is Raven in disguise. In both cases a male child is born, who is Raven. At the end of the story from Sitka the wealthy man remarks: " That old manuring Raven has gotten all of my things."
- ²⁹ Ibid., 5.
- ³⁰ Aldona Jonaitis, *The Totem Pole: An Intercultural History* (Seattle : Vancouver: University of Washington Press ; Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 49.
- ³¹ Ibid. Information regarding the Jacobson brothers tells that they brought other Native peoples to Europe to perform. Prior to the Nuxalk, the brothers had brought a group of Inuit to Europe from Greenland and all of the performers died of smallpox. The Nuxalk performed throughout Europe for thirteen months.
- ³² Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman, "'The Foundation of All Future Researches': Franz Boas, George Hunt, Native American Texts, and the Construction of Modernity," *American Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1999), 480.
- ³³ These numbers are questionable, as other sources tell. See Nika Collison, "Creating for Culture: Edenshaw's Haida Roots and Cultural Transformations," in *Charles Edenshaw*, Dana Augaitis, Jim Hart, and Robin K. Wright, eds., (London UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2013), 21.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Alan L. Hoover, "Charles Edenshaw and the Creation of Human Beings," *American Indian Art* 8, no. 3 (Summer, 1983), 67.
- ³⁶ Ibid. In 1983 Hoover wrote that Edenshaw was referring to the second segment in the two-part Haida creation story.
- ³⁷ Williams-Davidson, in *Charles Edenshaw*, 61.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Bill Holm, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*, (Seattle: Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Coast Art, Burke Museum, in association with University of Washington Press, 2015). In the 1960s the artist Bill Holm first gave the name "formline" to the designs found in carvings along the Northwest Coast.

He has studied and worked closely with artists from the area ever since, and was a key consultant in identifying individual artists styles including the identification of objects made by Edenshaw.

⁴⁰ Robert Charles Davidson, "D.A. Xiigang, Charles Edenshaw, 'Master Carpenter,'" in *Charles Edenshaw*, 107-111.

⁴¹ I am thankful to curator Barbara Brotherton for providing me with background information on the platter located at the Seattle Art Museum. Noted per our conversation, the Coast Salish living in and around Seattle do not think of Raven as a culture hero.

⁴² This state of partial transformation, Williams Davidson asserts, teaches that sometimes humans need to simultaneously be in the spirit and human realm "to achieve our goals." See Williams Davidson, "The Power of Narrative," *Charles Edenshaw*, 43.

⁴³ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁴ Franz Boas, *Primitive Art*, Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning. [Publikationer] Ser. B: Skrifter, VIII (Oslo, Cambridge: Haschehoug & Co; Harvard University Press, 1927), 158.

⁴⁵ Alan Hoover, "Charles Edenshaw and the Development of Narrative Structure in the Nineteenth-century in *Charles Edenshaw*, 70.

⁴⁶ From: A strict law bid us dance. "U'mista Cultural Society - Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada," accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.umista.ca/exhibits/index.php>.

⁴⁷ See Aldona Jonaitis, *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch* (Seattle : New York: University of Washington Press ; American Museum of Natural History, 1991).

⁴⁸ See Sarah Bryant Bertail, "Old Spirits in a New Word, Pacific Northwest Performance: Identity, Authority, Theatricality," in S. E. Wilmer, ed. *Native American Performance and Representation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 50-53.

⁴⁹ Reprinting on the U'mista Cultural Society website. "U'mista Cultural Society - Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada," accessed January 20, 2017.

⁵⁰ Douglas Cole, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver : Seattle, Wash., Vancouver : Seattle, Wash.: Douglas & McIntyre ; University of Washington Press, 1990), 113-114.

⁵¹ Joseph Masco, "'It Is a Strict Law That Bids Us Dance': Cosmologies, Colonialism, Death, and Ritual Authority in the Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch, 1849 to 1922," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (January 1, 1995), 68.

⁵² In 2016 the U'mista Cultural Center created the online museum exhibit: "Living Tradition: The Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatch on the Northwest Coast." Included in the exhibit is a quote from James Charles King, who was only a child when he witnessed the confiscation of sacred items from the Cranmer potlatch: "And my uncle took me to the Parish Hall, where the Chiefs were gathered. Oḁan picked up a rattle and spoke, 'We have come to say goodbye to our life,' then he began to sing his sacred song. All of the Chiefs, standing in a circle around their regalia were weeping, as if someone had died." (James Charles King, at Alert Bay, 1977).

⁵³ "U'mista Cultural Society - Alert Bay, British Columbia, Canada," accessed January 20, 2017.

⁵⁴ The Kwakwaka'wakw made potlatching their priority and, as Cole and Chaikin explain, because potlatching was of central importance many invested all of their resources to its success. Mrs. Jane Cook, a half Kwakwaka'wakw woman, was one of the largest supporters of the banning law. She stated that potlatching was a system that took the devotion of every "man, woman, and child," that kept the Kwakwaka'wakw "from progressing." Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand upon the People*, 118-122.

⁵⁵ Ibid, quote by Boas (1921), 130.

⁵⁶ Ibid, quote by Edward Sapir (1921), 131.

⁵⁷ Martin and Chief Assu recorded traditional songs for anthropologist Ida Halpern. By 1951 the few of the Kwakwaka'wakw youth seemed interested in retaining ritual practices and elders, such as Martin feared that the songs and even the language would die with them. However, there was a dramatic change in attitudes after the law was repealed, as potlatching and other ceremonial and artistic endeavors increased greatly within communities of coastal British Columbia. See Cole and Chaikin, *An Iron Hand upon the People* 170-172. Masco, "It Is a Strict Law That Bids Us Dance," 71.

⁵⁸ Boas commented that tales of Raven were found in the more Northern regions of Vancouver Island and they mysteriously disappear in the southern tribes, including the southern Kwakwaka'wakw. Therefore, he reasoned that language and geography were not necessarily tied to how the stories were disseminated. I believe their movement had more to do with performance. See Franz Boas, "The Growth of Indian Mythologies," in *Race, Language and Culture*, 427.

Chapter 3

Archetype to Stereotype: Conceptualizing Trickster in the Twentieth Century

Despite anthropologists' failed interventions and the forbidding law, dances among the Northwest Coast tribes continued into the 1950s. But they were never as they once were. In 1930 Boas revisited the Southern Kwakwaka'wakw, and was disturbed by how the ceremonials had changed; yet, he had contributed to that change. Decades earlier he had participated in the collection and removal of artifacts connected with the same dances, including at least one Hamat'sa bird mask. The large Raven's mask to which I am referring was purchased by Boas at Fort Rupert in 1894, near to when he first witnessed the Hamat'sa dance, and it was published in *The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (figure 36).¹ In one passage Boas explained that the Raven mask was given to the Hamat'sa and was the first mask to enter the ceremonial. In the photograph the dancer is positioned as if he were participating in the Hamat'sa performance, which was how the mask was displayed for some seventy years, after Boas accessioned it at the National Museum (Museum of Natural History) in 1895.²

Raven, as exemplified in chapter two, was acknowledged in varying degrees between the Tlingit, Haida, and Kwakwaka'wakw. He was creator, culture hero, transformer, and trickster to all; yet, Raven's role as a cannibal servant in the Hamat'sa dance appears to be something altogether different. Not that cannibalism was contrary to what was intrinsically trickster, but what was different was that Raven was performed as a living entity. In this sense, Raven, or the concept of Raven, was brought to life and through performance he was made more *tangible*,

more *real*. However, what must also be considered here is how the individual tribes viewed Raven. Was the Hamat'sa Raven ever considered a trickster? And does the physical manifestation of trickster change how it is perceived?

The primary objective of this dissertation has been to track the history of tricksters in the visual arts. Yet, because there are so few instances of Native North American tricksters in the plastic arts I also consider tricksters' appearance in performance and bring to the conversation the impact of performance art before the 1970s. Powell recognized in the first BAE report that the language of performance was of great importance to the Native people of North America and from what I have learned about the Hamat'sa Raven it is not unreasonable to consider that the cannibal bird has a connection to Raven that was represented in the oral histories that carried on throughout the Pacific Northwest. Tricksters, after all, can be malevolent, which is best demonstrated within the stories about Coyote, whose actions were more wicked than most, another point that will be further examined in this chapter. More closely explored here is the importance of performance to the various trickster characters and the stories, the histories that accompany them, which involves both the storyteller as actor and the actor's embodiment, as in the case of the Hamat'sa Raven.

In 1921, the same year as the Cranmer potlatch, a law was being proposed that prohibited particular dances of the Pueblo Indians living in the southwestern United States. Objections most specifically involved the activities of the Pueblo clowns, another form of trickster embodiment that will be considered in this chapter. At this point in time I have found even fewer images of tricksters created

by Native artists in the first half in twentieth century than there were in the nineteenth. Perhaps this has to do with the significant change that occurred with indigenous artists and their art practices in these decades, as Native artists employed western techniques and moved into urban areas, which will also be further addressed here. Anthropological collecting of Native North American mythologies in the early twentieth century appeared to wane. Perhaps this was because anthropologists felt that they had exhausted the revenue of “original” Native stories. Even in the nineteenth century Boas, as mentioned in the previous chapter, believed that many First Nations and Native American peoples had been acculturated to the point where they could no longer provide any “authentic” information.

A still greater shift occurred in the twentieth century concerning the analyses of tricksters by psychologists who conceived theories based on anthropological data, and anthropologists who applied psychoanalytic theories (as well as those of their own creation) to their data. In the 1950s, for example, psychologist Carl Jung determined that trickster was an archetype, a level of development in the human psyche; also, in this same decade, anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied his form of structural analysis to explain, as he posited, why all North American tricksters were Raven or Coyote. This chapter is about North American tricksters in the twentieth century, that follows the progression of trickster characters and their stories as they were appropriated, analyzed, deconstructed, and ultimately renewed in the arts, social sciences, and popular culture from the turn of the twentieth century into the 1970s.

Pueblo Clowns as Tricksters

In the “The Sacred Clowns of the Pueblo and Mayo-Yaqui Indians,” Elsie Clews Parsons listed some of the many types of clowns and their functions, as they existed in individual Pueblo societies, as “the groups,” she said, “vary considerably in each Pueblo tribe.”³ The breakdown, covered “briefly,” in the nine pages of the essay, is far too complicated to explain here, but the primary idea is that clowns, like tricksters, are copious and complex. Of all Pueblo clowns it would seem that the most well known are the Koshare (or Kossa), who, as anthropologist Adolf Bandelier clarified in *The Delight Makers* (1980), function as much more than comic interlopers in the Pueblo dances.⁴ Koshares gained broader recognition through the assistance of images created by Pueblo artists, such as Awa Tsireh and Velino Herrera, who marketed their paintings depicting Pueblo subject matter to non-Native patrons. Paintings such as *Single Koshare* (n.d., figure 37) and *Green Corn Dance* (n.d., figure 38) provide strikingly detailed depictions of the Koshare, who are recognized by the black and white horizontal stripes that cover their bodies and the black circles they paint around their eyes and mouths (they may also apply red stripes to their face). Their hair was pulled up in either two vertical horns, or in tufts on the top or on the side of their heads and the rattles they tied at their hips made a pronounced clattering sound whenever they moved, especially when they danced. The smaller spotted Koshare pictured in *Green Corn Dance* was perhaps an initiate, who was dedicated, according to Clews Parsons, “as a sick infant or little boy” to the Koshare group.⁵ Historically the Koshare’s work has

involved aspects of war and healing, as well as ridicule and comedy. To them nothing was sacred; yet, they were considered sacred beings.⁶

Beginning in 1920, data about the clown's activities, which included mimetic copulation among other "atrocities," was recorded in a "Secret Dance" file, which contained testimonies from both Hopi and white observers, helped reformers to build a case against what they viewed as the loose sexual mores of the Pueblo people.⁷ Moreover, the clown's "tricksterish" performance of lewd acts, which were eventually used to ridicule whites and their sexuality, became central to a debate involving the banning of not only the Pueblo dances, but also other Indian dances in the United States. Moreover, the creation and enforcement of banning laws in both the Northwest Coast and the in Southwest involved debates about woman's rights regarding their sexuality.

To reformers, the clown's performances were viewed as immoral and promoted illicit sex along with other objectionable activity that did not correspond with Indian reform policies. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) paid little attention to the Pueblo dances before 1915, as concerns were concentrated on suppression of other ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance and the Ghost Dance from the Plains. But through the urging of the reformers, and perhaps from the information included in the Secret Dance File, governmental attitudes toward the Pueblo dances changed.⁸ Although the BIA appeared to side with the reformers, opposing female activists viewed the clowns' seemingly incongruous behavior as evidence "that Indian women were either passive victims or active leaders in sexual immorality."⁹

Incited by the Secret Dance File, Circular 1665, issued by Charles Burke, who was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1921, outlined a proposal for the law that would prohibit particular types of dances. Specifically, Circular 1665 stated that dances to be banned were those that contained “self-torture, immoral relations between the sexes, the sacrificial destruction of clothing or other useful articles, the reckless giving away of property, the use of injurious drugs or intoxicants, and frequent or prolonged periods of celebration which bring the Indians together from remote points to the neglect of their crops, and home interests.”¹⁰ Moreover, the dance participants would be further scrutinized for their portrayal of “superstitious cruelty, licentiousness, idleness, danger to health, and shiftless indifference to family welfare.”¹¹ The debate continued for over four years, and while the BIA used Circular 1665 to continue to suppress Indian rituals and religion, in 1925, over a case of abuse in Taos, a judge ruled that the Pueblos should be allowed to regulate their own affairs.¹² The attention brought about by both well-intentioned and bullying outsiders were not well received by the Pueblo people and they put heavy restrictions on filming, photographing, and publishing of ceremonies, or anything within their borders; hence there are few photographs of the Koshare and painters, such as Tsireh and Herrera, were subjected to internal scrutiny regarding their subject matter.

Yet, what has been neglected in the scholarship and needs to be further addressed here is how Pueblo people perceived clowns (here I am using the term “clown” to be inclusive of all the various Pueblo figures that have been similarly grouped by anthropologists). Similar to tricksters, clowns possessed a certain

ambiguity; they were not exactly admired, and they were not entirely ostracized either. Clowns were and are viewed as incarnates of gods and their role is a part of a ceremonial that provides a visual spectacle that can be described as otherworldly.¹³ In his analysis of rituals, anthropologist Victor Turner addressed the term “liminality” (from “limen,” meaning threshold), which he described as a paradoxical interstice, the “betwixt and between” the good and the bad, a space where both the culture-hero (sacred) and the criminal reside.¹⁴ Barbara Babcock, drawing largely on Turner’s theory of liminality, asserts that clowns, as well as tricksters, occupy a space of “marginality,” that exists somewhere outside the culture, where culture has no authority.¹⁵ Tricksters and clowns, according to Babcock, create chaos out of “order,” which promotes conformity through speculation about “the way things should be.”¹⁶ In the Pueblos clowns ridicule structures, which includes mimetic comical confrontations with both insiders and outsiders. Clowns make people aware of their own humanity; thus, through chaos they demonstrate the alternative to social order. But they are also vulgar actors, who ridicule and may frighten children. Not all Pueblo people revere clowns.¹⁷ I disagree, however, that clowns and tricksters are one in the same. Pueblo clowns share the foolish, buffoonish, highly sexual (but not violently), and magical traits of tricksters, but do these clowns have emotions? I have found no evidence with which to answer this question. Perhaps it is emotion that allows us to find a connection to tricksters and it is what separates them from clowns.

Masau’u (the skeleton) is considered the trickster of the Hopi. He is an important Katsina, who in performance wears a spotted mask with feathers or

horns sprouting from the top, as seen in the Hopi drawing collected by Jesse Walter Fewkes and published in the 21st BAE Report (1903, figure 39).¹⁸ Masau'u brought the Hopi into the fourth world, gave them seeds and taught them to plant, and he also oversees the world of the dead. Like other Native North American tricksters, Masau'u can shape-shift, has a ravenous appetite for sex and food, and is a mischief-maker that may to appear in the dreams of young women as an attractive man.¹⁹ As for the Koshare, they are not creators or transformers and I know of no stories that tell of the adventures of Pueblo clowns. But they are important to maintaining balance, so that the rains might come, the crops might grow, and the people might know how to be human. Stories of the Pueblo gods, however, are for the Pueblo people and it has not been made clear if Koshare feel sorrow and loss. Trickster Raven, as told in variations of the same story, felt empathy for the people and that is why he brought them the sun. Raven's creation of death, as depicted by Edenshaw (see chest, figure 27), caused him great sorrow. And in the Shasta story of the first death, the trickster Coyote buried his child and he cried.²⁰

The two case studies, one from the Kwakwaka'wakw and the other from the Pueblos, involve verifiable historic acts; yet in those acts there was a pervading trickster presence. Potlatches were tied to both the spiritual and economic needs of the community and by the time of the Alert Bay crackdown in 1921, it appeared that the displays of capital, which were associated with rank and power in the Kwakwaka'wakw community, may have overshadowed the dances' spiritual significance. And although Pueblo clowns maintain order in their communities by

ridiculing members of their own society, they are best known for satirizing those outside of Pueblo borders, such as invasive government agents (those who worked for the BIA for example) and authoritative anthropologists; thus inverting power relations through their topsy-turvy, sardonically over-the-top performances.

Tricksters likewise exhibit forms of mockery to challenge authority and question societal structures by demonstrating the consequences of extending oneself outside of functional societal boundaries. And tricksters' reckless self-gratification causes their suffering often accompanied with dire consequences. Desire, greed, and hunger for power often provide fuel for tricksters' actions — the end result never really benefits tricksters, but that is the lesson. The outlawing and suppression of both the Kwakwaka'wakw and the Pueblo dances demonstrate significant acts of control, a "strong-arming" of Native peoples by the hegemonic culture. It is perhaps remarkable that the dances continued through the 1930s and 1940s. Yet, the dances and their accompanying traditions were vital to their respective cultures, as demonstrated by men who wept over the confiscated masks. It is apparent that colonizers recognized the power of ritual and often targeted seemingly innocuous practices as a strategy to maintain domination. Which begs the question of what becomes of the colonized and what is lost in the process? In the twentieth century the Kwakwaka'wakw and the Pueblo peoples performed versions of traditional dances to tourists as a form of adaptation that allowed their traditions to be accepted and as an economic means. In trickster cycles, there is always a price to pay for behavior that does not benefit the whole of humankind (this comment is in reference to hegemonic structures); moreover,

until order is restored, tricksters will remain, always wandering, always in the pursuit of the next opportunity to create chaos.

Understanding Coyote

In the 1930s a movement developed in the Southwest that supported the education of Indian artists that was lead by the painter and educator Dorothy Dunn, who was the most influential instructor in the Santa Fe Indian School. Dunn pushed her students, who were initially from the southwest and included the likes of Allen Houser and Andrew Tsinajinnie, to paint what they knew of their histories. But as Dunn explained in *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas* (1968), some students that had been recruited to the School were reluctant to paint “Indian” subject matter; and rightfully, many students thought when they arrived at the School that they would be taught contemporary art techniques. But Dunn persisted in encouraging her students to depict indigenous daily activities, ceremonies, and mythologies. She helped to accomplish this through trips to the Laboratory of Anthropology and the Museum of New Mexico, where students were *expected* to learn about their heritage.²¹ And although it can be seen today that several students depicted traditional cosmology and mythology, few represented trickster figures. However, one student, Narciso Abeyta (Ha-So-De), who Dunn believed had great potential, depicted several narratives featuring what he called a “werewolf”(figure 40) and one painting referred to the trickster Coyote in his version of the Navajo story “Changing Bear Woman” (figure 41).

Abeyta was born Navajo and had grown up in New Mexico learning the Navajo stories of their history and their spiritual beliefs, and the stories of what

they feared. The “werewolf” that Abeyta painted from 1959 into the 1970s was from a story that his aunt had told him about her near abduction by what the Navajo knew to be a witch (see figure 40).²² In the painting *Werewolf* (1959) Abeyta depicted a skinwalker, who in the Navajo culture are human beings that have committed themselves to evil. Clyde Kluckhohn was the only anthropologist writing about the Navajo in the 1940s, as the Navajo were also wary of intruders, and they were even more reluctant to discuss skinwalkers, for fear of their own safety. Kluckhohn, however, collected twenty-four accounts of were-animals, noting that this type of witchcraft was the most commonly known form practiced among the Navajo people.²³ Navajo were-witches (ye-na-lʼo-ši) cover themselves in the skin of wolves, coyotes, bears, and other animals; then, concealed by their disguises, they take on inhuman characteristics. They are able to move at great speeds and perform their abominations under the cover of darkness.²⁴

In the painting you can see that the figure in left foreground, who is grabbing at the woman as she tries to mount a horse, is actually a human who has covered himself with a wolf or coyote pelt. Some of the more sensational contemporary writers have associated skin walkers with tricksters. Although I see no connection between the two it is correct to say that Coyote, who is the more well known and more buffoonish of tricksters, has committed some pretty heinous acts. Such is the case in the story depicted by Abeyta, where Coyote takes advantage of a young female god and her family devotion (see figure 41). The story begins when the one known as Tsikesasnátlehi (Maiden-Whose-Clothes-Rattle, or Bear Maiden) was seduced by Coyote and it was after she laid with Coyote that she

became evil and the evil in her made her turn ugly. Fangs grew where her teeth once were and her nose developed into a snout, and fur grew on her hands and her body until she looked more like a bear than a woman. Coyote, of course, had left her, but still she fought with and slayed his enemies (Coyote had gambled away his skin to the Otter people) and then she proceeded to kill ten of her eleven brothers.²⁵

Abeyta depicted the moment in the story when the youngest and only surviving brother destroys Bear Maiden's life force with an arrow made of chain lightning. Bear Maiden, through her brother's prompting, pledges her friendship to the "Dinnéh" and to this day she dwells in the "Black Mountain."²⁶ It is interesting that Abeyta painted only the ending scene. I have not found any other accompanying narratives that fill in the missing portions, which does not mean that they do not exist. I have found, however, that in the early 1950s Andrew Tsinajinnie, whose influence can be seen in Abeyta's work, contributed illustrations to a collection of Navajo Myths, including one titled "The Woman Who Became a Bear."²⁷

While the Abeyta paintings may not represent a Navajo trickster directly, the discussion of the artist's depictions of Navajo stories serve as a good segue for the trickster Coyote to enter into the conversation. For whatever reasons, Coyote, also known variously as "Old Man," "Uncle," and "Brother," who functioned on many levels in stories throughout North America, sometime in the twentieth century became most associated with Southwest and particularly with the Navajo people. Yet, as anthropologist Jerrold Levy asserts, there is little evidence before

the twentieth century that indicates Coyote was primary to either the Navajo or the Apache (who occupy the greatest area of the Southwestern peoples) and, as I have mentioned, in Pueblo societies Coyote is only a minor character. Coyote, according to Levy, was always the dominant trickster in “the Great Basin, the Plains, and parts of the Plateau and California,” where the figure first gained foothold as a trickster of the cultural hero kind, and also was credited with the creation of the world and humanity.²⁸

Biological coyotes, living up to their mythical trickster counterparts, displayed great cunning and an ability to survive, as demonstrated in the nineteenth century when they garnered a reputation as pests and were nearly exterminated from the continent. Yet, in the twentieth century the animals survived, thrived, and they continue to expand their territory today. They are carrion eaters and like ravens, coyotes appear to travel alone. There is something to be said about ghostly way coyotes can materialize as if almost out of nowhere in the desert, on the plains, or even in a city parking lot. Their barks and yips sound something like maniacal human laughter and their howls have a mournful quality that eerily lingers in the air on still nights. In all, coyote’s are intriguing animals that definitely have a certain air of mystery, which is perhaps why the magical trickster character of Native oral histories garnered the name Coyote and why stories featuring Coyote became so interesting to anthropologists. But coyotes are also known nuisances; farmers and ranchers for example, loath coyotes, as they will attack other smaller animals, steal food, and dig, like dogs, through garbage. Still, Coyote is neither dog, nor animal for that matter, but the appearance of the

biological animal today is widely associated with the trickster-par-excellence, who gained popularity with the broader public beginning in the mid-twentieth century when a coyote was used as the model for a cartoon character.

Tricksters and Cartoon Characters

Anthropologists were the greatest influence involved in introducing tricksters to a broader public and perhaps their intensive fieldwork and analyses contributed to the Warner Brothers creation of the characters Wile E. Coyote and Bugs Bunny. Although the animated “rascally” rabbit appeared before the easily duped coyote, both characters are considerably the most accepted of the appropriations of the North American trickster by non-Natives to date. However, I see the characters as problematic, not so much because of their appearance, but because of the personality traits and dialogs they were provided that contributed to the stereotyping of indigenous Americans, as well as many other cultural groups. It is my opinion that the very sight of these characters has the capability of triggering the emotions and perceptions that are connected with stereotyping, which I will expand on below. However, I will first explain these two characters’ resemblances to the Native American tricksters that I have discussed thus far.

Bugs Bunny, who was developed in the 1930s, at least a decade before Wiley Coyote, most reflected, but was not limited to, the character traits of Nanabozho from the Anishinaabe (Chippewa and Ojibwa) and Rabbit from the Cherokee. Rabbit stories, as previously mentioned, also influenced Harris’ creation and development of the character Br’er Rabbit. Bugs Bunny’s first appeared in the 1940 short film, *A Wild Hare* and subsequent cartoons featuring the personified

bunny became widely popular in the United States as children's entertainment (figure 42). Wile E. Coyote did not appear until 1949 (in the *Fast and Furry-ous*),²⁹ but through a study of both characters' development we can see their relation to characters in trickster stories of Native North American origin (figure 43).

Satire and irony, which dealt with historic and political issues, were unquestionably presented (as were stereotypes that reflected racism) through the sly actions of the "rascal rabbit," (and other characters) as directed by his creators, writers, and animators. Considering that these cartoons were produced until 1964 and were in broadcast syndication until 1986 (perhaps even longer) suggests that for over forty years a countless number of children would have been exposed to societal lessons taught, as it were, by Bugs Bunny and his animated colleagues.³⁰

When closely considered we see that the story lines in the cartoons have a great deal in common with trickster stories that were collected by anthropologists in the nineteenth century. In appearance Bugs Bunny may not, like Saynday for example, have a penis so long that he can wrap it around his waist, but he is an anthropomorphic rabbit with oversize ears and feet. Sexuality and innuendos are often alluded to through the Bugs Bunny character, seen in cartoons such as *Hare-um Scare-um* (1939) and *The Wabbit Who Came to Supper* (1942).³¹ Personality wise, Bugs is humorous and social, yet he is also an arrogant violator of structural protocols, who, like North American tricksters, has no close relationships.³² Bugs Bunny is an impulsively cunning intruder, who might coincidentally bring benefit to his fellow characters, alternatively Wile E. Coyote hardly ever communicates with other characters. Another difference between the two characters is that Bugs

Bunny never dies, but Coyote frequently dies, or nearly dies, through his own blundering faults, from which he quickly recovers, as if by magic.³³

Bugs Bunny challenges power structures by mocking dominant roles, such as the farmer, and in this his antics can be more closely compared to that of Pueblo clowns. But more like tricksters, Wile E. Coyote acts on his desire, which is to catch and eat the Roadrunner.³⁴ To He takes advantage of the high cliffs, narrow valleys, and enormous boulders, which he attempts to drop on the Road Runner. Wile E. Coyote meticulously calculates the distances from which he might drop these boulders, or the occasional bomb, grand piano, anvil, which were acquired from the fictional Acme Corporation. Still, the self-identified “genius,” (which is perhaps a quip toward the authoritative attitude of anthropologists, or perhaps Ph.D.s in general), with the use of all of his wiles, never succeeds in outsmarting the Roadrunner.

As a means of reprisal to Warner Brothers’ appropriation, Native American and First Nations film and graphic artists, beginning in the later twentieth century, began creating and distributing their own animation with respect to Native North American trickster stories. In *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), for example, writer and historian Thomas King provided trickster Coyote’s version of Columbus’s arrival in America, which was illustrated by the artist Kent Monkman, whose artwork and performances will be further discussed in chapter four.³⁵ The series titled *Raven’s Tales* (2006), developed by Vancouver artist and producer Winadzi James and Chris Kientz, features the story “Raven Steals the Light” based on North West Coast oral histories. And *Trickster: Native American Tales A Graphic Collection*

contains 21 North American Trickster stories from various cultural traditions, retold in graphic animation by contemporary indigenous artists and writers, such as “Horned Toad Lady and Coyote,” by Eldrena Douma and Roy Boney Jr. and “Rabbit’s Choctaw Tail Tale” by Tim Tingle and Pat Lewis.³⁶ The above are only a few examples of how indigenous artists and writers have reconfigured and restored tricksters as new traditions. Moreover, I suggest that the sea-change involving tricksters and as well as indigenous art began in the 1970s when artist Harry Fonseca rendered his first Coyote.

Harry Fonseca’s Coyote

In a hallway in the National Museum of American Indians there is a large painting that runs the down length of a wall that features a pictographic story of the Maidu creation (figure 44). Scattered, perhaps mapped, across the expanse of the canvas are figures representing people, animals, and gods. Cross hatched trees are scattered throughout and lines of white and blue refer to rivers that crawl across parts of the canvas like snakes, while more curves and circular lines delineate hills, mountains, and deserts. The entirety of the canvas is filled with shades of blue and orange. The painting is impressive in both size and technique and it is enjoyable to spend time in front of it and look. This was the second time Fonseca had painted the *Maidu Creation Story*, the first was in 1977, and both were based on a story told by his uncle, Henrey Azbill, a Konkow Maidu elder. Fonseca, however, is best known for his humorous paintings that featured his character version of the Maidu trickster, Coyote.

Fonseca painted his first Coyote, *Coyote #1* (1975, also referred to as *Deer Dancer* by the artist) in 1975, after seeing Frank Day's *Toto Dance at Bloomer Hill* (1973, see figures 45 and 46).³⁷ He said he of this first rendering that it was "very flat and direct," but his representations of Coyote would change considerably. From the 1970s through the 1980s Fonseca came to embrace the traditions of his indigenous culture and the art around him, he became a dancer himself, and early in his career he was either painting or dancing.³⁸ He learned much from the other California Native artists he worked with as he developed his more signature style that includes large colorful blocked forms, which he applied to the creation of Coyote, along with the later addition of his female counterpart, "Rose." *Coyote Leaves the Res* (1979) was made after Fonseca's first experience with a Coyote dancer and it was the painting that helped to launch his career and also released what he considered to be his "alter ego" (figure 47). Fonseca had found in the trickster a vehicle, which he used to confront perceptions of contemporary Native American people. His Coyote paintings were political, ironic, and humorous, constructed with the absurd, and always with a bit of "camp."

To further explain, by suggesting that Fonseca employed strategies based in concepts of absurdism I am not indicating the more extreme existentialist philosophies as promoted by Søren Kierkegaard or Albert Camus that struggled with the meaning of existence (although there may be some of this in Fonseca's work), rather, Fonseca's form of the absurd was based on absurdist theatrics, the presentation of the "unordinary" in an "over-the-top" manner. It is the kind of dramatic visual as seen in the plays of Samuel Becket, Eugène Ionesco, or Tom

Stoppard, where things are not as they should be. Much like the bizarre humor found in Native North American trickster stories, such as the instance when Coyote throws his penis across a river in order to have sex with a young woman, or when Wakdjunkaga, trickster of the Winnebago, gets into an argument with his own anus and when his left arm gets into fight with his right. Fonseca's Coyote bears only a slight resemblance to the animal, not lean, or boney, in fact he looks very well fed, somewhat blobby, at times even fat, and many times he is depicted wearing Converse® high-tops. He looks nothing like what might be expected of a god. All of which seems to fit nicely under the definition of camp, which to borrow from Susan Sontag, "is not a natural mode of sensibility, if there be any such. Indeed the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration . . . That way, the way of Camp, is not in terms of beauty, but in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization."³⁹

Coyote became a "tool" of sorts that Fonseca used to confront what disturbed him most. *Coyote's Wild and Woolly West Show* (1987), for example, was made with the purpose of exposing William Cody, a showman, as a perpetrator of deceptions, who helped to create American Indians as stereotype (figure 48).⁴⁰ Like the Pueblo clowns, Fonseca's Coyote functions in the space of Turner's liminality, where the line of what is culturally respected are crossed. Which brings to mind Fonseca's pictures of Coyote as cotton candy eating Koshare, symbolic of both Native tricksters and of Indianness (figure 49). Through Coyote Fonseca mocked fine art, anthropologists, and tourists, but mostly he mocked

misconceptions. By reversing power roles he created a topsy-turvy world where Coyote danced ballet, wore tuxedos, and played grand pianos.

From what I have gathered, Fonseca fully understood the complexities of tricksters, certainly of Coyote, but he also felt that being labeled as a Native artist he was at a disadvantage. Fonseca saw that Native artists were often confronted with “walls” that dictated what was expected of them — what they could represent, and where they were shown; hence the reason that Fonseca depicted so many narratives featuring the North American trickster figure — that was what his patrons wanted. Perhaps Coyote became Fonseca’s “wall,” and he used the trickster to express some of his own frustrations, but more than that, his Coyote paintings helped others to reconsider indigenous people, their cultures, and their histories.⁴¹ Still, did he continue with Coyote for too long? Maybe Fonseca failed to recognize too late that the trickster has a dark side. By the 1990s his Coyote had become somewhat of an icon, especially in Santa Fe, where the image was often connected to the city’s celebrations.

Although there were times when Fonseca attempted to stop depicting Coyote, one such instance occurred about the time he painted *The Last Tango in Santa Fe* (c.1990, figure 50). He went on to base a series of artworks on the California Gold Rush, but he continually revisited Coyote. He continued to search and study Native American histories and he did more with landscapes (such as *Creation Story*, mentioned above), he was affected by the work of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, and also other contemporary Native artists Rick Bartow, Frank La Pena, Bob Haozous, and Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith. All he wanted was to be

understood and respected as an artist, but he was never really broadly considered well known; perhaps this was due to his location in Santa Fe, or maybe it was because of Coyote.⁴² Yet, even when he was close to his own death in 2006, he thought about revitalizing the old trickster, he just never got quite that far.⁴³ His Coyote is not seen around so much anymore, but I hope that Fonseca's intended ironies, as shown through his innocuous ubiquitous character, are not dismissed amidst the fads of popular culture. What should be remembered is that Fonseca's idea of employing trickster was a method of both maintaining histories and advancing traditions that marked a pivotal point in the history of American art.

Lévi-Strauss, Jung, and Radin on the North American Trickster

Before continuing with my closer examination of contemporary artists I want to back up to the 1950s, during the time when tricksters regained the attention of anthropologists and psychologists, specifically Claude Lévi-Strauss, Paul Radin, and Carl Jung. The theories of these three social scientists are key to how North American tricksters are known today. In 1955 Lévi-Strauss published his analysis concerning "The Structural Study of Myth." It was in this essay that he deliberated on the problematic nature of the American trickster in mythology, and at which time he posed the his much deliberated question: "Why is it that throughout North America his [trickster's] part is assigned practically everywhere to either coyote or raven?"⁴⁴

Many have since pondered that question within a variation of arguments. First, Lévi-Strauss made the mistake of comparing the trickster figures with the biological animals, suggesting that they were both carrion-eating; therefore, they

were intermediaries in the food chain, as tricksters are intermediaries between life and death. One argument that evolved in contemporary scholarship stemmed from the fact that coyotes (and ravens also) hunt, thus they are also predators.⁴⁵ Yet the point Lévi-Strauss was trying to make really had less to do with the habits of the biological animals. Still another argument has centered on the fact that all Native North American cultures do not have Raven or Coyote, which is very true, in the eastern United States characters of the same name do not appear in indigenous oral histories, not to mention there are far too many trickster figures featured in indigenous North American cultural histories than I can know, or address in this dissertation.⁴⁶

However, stepping away from the literality of the question helps to understand that what Levi-Strauss was really addressing was that these most well known tricksters, Raven and Coyote, like others, were mediators of opposition. Meaning that they were somewhere in the middle, closer to humans and could relate to human struggles, internal and otherwise, better than other gods. Tricksters reflected human qualities, but, as stated here numerous times, they were not humans, nor were they animals, but they might take on the characteristics of both, or neither. In the stories tricksters acted upon desires and actions that humans either were not capable of, or they had to restrain, in order to exist in a society, or remain in a culture. In that they could be both good and bad, and helpful perhaps only when it benefited them. What type of physical form tricksters took on depended most likely on who was telling the story and where the story was told.

I felt compelled to address Lévi-Strauss' assessment of North American tricksters here because it is one that is continually accompanies pretty much any text from the 1950s to the present that involves the subject of tricksters. Although this initial analysis was flawed, and Boas and other anthropologists had addressed the subject at some length in the nineteenth century, Lévi-Strauss' acknowledged that trickster stories were *not* simple tales told by primitive peoples and this point he used to complement his future work on mythologies. With that being said, I can move on from Lévi-Strauss, but I would like to note that his analysis contributed greatly to the revival of trickster as a subject in academia in the mid-twentieth century. Still, I wonder if by this time Coyote, and to some extent Raven, had become the stereotypic tropes that they appear to be by the 1970s. Coyote (the animal and the trickster), of course, has a connection with Western settlement and the romanticized "cowboy and Indian" symbolism that grew out of novels and movies (and all that implies) in the first half of the twentieth century. However, Radin's well-studied analysis of the Winnebago trickster in his pivotal book, *The Trickster: A Study in American Mythology* from 1956, just one year after Lévi-Strauss' trickster hypothesis, undoubtedly also played significantly into North American tricksters' notoriety.

Radin's book is also a favorite reference for contemporary scholars. This is perhaps due to the "Wakdjunkaga cycle" that he begins with, which is based on fieldwork he conducted in 1908-1912 among the Siouan-speaking Winnebago people of central Wisconsin and eastern Nebraska. The 49 stories in the cycle concern the trickster Wakdjunkaga's life that plays out very similar to that of

Schoolcraft's Manabozho cycle from the Chippewa, that I discussed in length in chapter one.⁴⁷ It also follows a progression similar to that of the Hamat'sa initiate from the Northwest Coast. Wakdjunkaga was thought of as a human male in his basic form (according to Radin), he was wild and unconcerned with cultural mores; he wanders the world, gets into predicaments that involve blundering, lots of sex, and excrement, and a bit of death (categorized as a bungling host story), but he also gave medicine to the people. Near to the end of his earthly life, however, he settles down, staying in one place to care for his family. When his children are grown he left the earth to live in the underworld with "Earthmaker." In this alternate world that is just below ours Wakdjunkaga is in charge, Turtle runs the third world, and Hare is responsible for "the world in which we live."⁴⁸

The stories of Wakdjunkaga are humorous, sometimes sad, and with a few dirty jokes thrown in, yet the stories also provide some insight to the Winnebago's values and beliefs; however, it is Radin's cross-culturally synthesized definition of "Trickster" (referring to Wakdjunkaga) that is the most often cited in discourse:

Trickster is at one in the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being.⁴⁹

What is less considered is that it took Radin the better part of 40 years to write his pivotal publication and his encompassing trickster characterization. His initial research on the Winnebago appeared in 1923 in the 37th Annual BAE Report, with no mention of Wakdjunkaga. He claimed to have been provided the trickster cycle

by his primary consultant, Sam Blowsnake, whose autobiography, *Crashing Thunder*, he helped to publish in 1926.⁵⁰ And some twenty years later, from 1948-1950, he wrote three more publications concerning the tribe. The 1948 text, *Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study In Aboriginal Literature*, featured the first translation of stories concerning what Radin referred to as “Trickster.” Radin included an analysis that was initiated through the questions of psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

Jung contributed his essay “On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure” as an accompaniment to Radin’s trickster analysis. In the essay Jung introduced his fourth archetype — the trickster, which he compared to Wakdjunkaga. Jung explains that the term archetype is borrowed from earlier scholars who used it to “denote the symbolic figures in the primitive view of the world”⁵¹ (Lévy-Bruhl’s “représentations collectives”) which Jung related to the unconscious. The archetype, he said, is essentially materialized “unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and being perceived, and it takes its color from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear.”⁵² Jung viewed the trickster archetype as “an earlier rudimentary stage of consciousness” that is recognized and welcomed by the “individual” as something known perhaps even from some other time.⁵³ There is also in the trickster archetype an aspect that Jung refers to as the “shadow,” a largely negative part of the psyche that Jung believed was preserved in the form of trickster figures. Thus, the reason that trickster figures and their stories are so important, by Jung’s reasoning, is because the trickster “represents a vanishing level of consciousness which increasingly lacks

the power to take shape and assert itself.”⁵⁴ The trickster archetype covers up and protects the psyche from the shadow figure, the primitive “daemonic figure who was originally autonomous and even capable of causing possession.”⁵⁵ Cruder parts of the stories, Jung felt, would fall away with time, but the telling of trickster stories would continue, as they functioned as a form of therapy. The stories were pleasurable and their telling kept the “shadow figure” from the unconscious, keeping it instead in the conscious so it could be dealt with.

Jung’s theories were not without their problems, yet there is something to be said as far as his trickster hypothesis, as I can see that the stories were in a sense therapeutic, but it is also apparent that to indigenous peoples of North America the so-dubbed tricksters and their mythologies were much more. Yes, the stories presented lessons and they taught how to be human, but they also assisted in maintaining the histories, values, and belief systems of the people for which they were told. From Raven to Coyote and the embodiment of tricksters in the form of Koshare, tricksters were important to the cultures that invented them and tricksters have kept up with the changing situations that Native peoples confronted in the twentieth century. And tricksters continue to be a disruptive and fascinating paradox for the anthropologists, the structuralists, and the psychologists that try to define and contain them.

Harry Fonseca was among the earliest of contemporary Native artists to find the usefulness of trickster as a tool of satire, but perhaps Coyote was only up to his old tricks. I cannot say for sure that Fonseca felt that Coyote brought him the kind of success he had envisioned. Fonseca’s work also poses questions as to

whether or not his paintings contributed to strengthening the image of Coyote as a stereotype of Indianness. Moreover, it might also be asked why animals, especially coyote, became associated with the form of trickster figures. Some of these I have considered in the past three chapters. In the following chapters I will explore how and where North American tricksters have appeared in the visual arts in the past thirty or more years and discuss what it is that has maintained their survival.

¹ Curtis M. Hinsley and Bill Holm, "A Cannibal in the National Museum: The Early Career of Franz Boas in America," *American Anthropologist* 78, no. 2 (June 1, 1976), 307.

² Boas describes the point of the dance where the initiate, the Hamat'sa enters wearing a Raven mask, which is supposed to be growing out of him. To add to the theatricality another dancer wears the mask and the Hamat'sa miraculously appears as he was. See Franz Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," Washington DC: Government Printing office, 1897, 447-450.

³ Elsie Clews Parsons and Ralph L. Beals, "The Sacred Clowns of the Pueblo and Mayo-Yaqui Indians," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 36, no. 4 (October 1, 1934), 491-500.

⁴ Bandelier's fictional account was set in a time before European contact and based on his eight years of research on the Pueblo people in the nineteenth century. Through fiction he hoped to make his research more accessible and attractive to the general public, in other words, a non-Native audience; however his descriptive accounts of ceremony were recreated from his observations. See Adolph Francis Alphonse Bandelier, *The Delight Makers*, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1890).

⁵ Undoubtedly, they are still considered sacred beings. See Parsons and Beals, "The Sacred Clowns of the Pueblo and Mayo-Yaqui Indians," 496.

⁶ The Koshare are comparable to the Mandan's O-kee-hee-da discussed in chapter one. See figure 5.

⁷ "Immoral Dances Among the Pueblo Indians was submitted in 1915 to the BIA by P.T. Lonergan, superintendent of the Pueblo Day School. It was the first entry in what would be known as the "Secret Dance file." See Margaret D. Jacobs, "Making Savages of Us All: White Women, Pueblo Indians, and the Controversy over Indian Dances in the 1920s," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 1996), 179.

⁸ Jacobs, "Making Savages of Us All", 182; see also James Mooney, 1891-1892; *Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology. Annual Report [v. 10]* (Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1896), 651.

⁹ Jacobs, "Making Savages of Us All," 188.

¹⁰ Reprinted from the John Collier papers in Margaret D. Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879-1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 111.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Pueblos Have Right to Run Own Affairs, Court Decides," Santa Fe New Mexican, August 15, 1925, clipping from the Ina Sizer Cassidy papers, Laboratory of Anthropology/Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Santa Fe New Mexico. See Jacobs., 197. See also Frederick E. Hoxie, Peter C. Mancall, and James Hart Merrell, *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country, 1850 to the Present* (Psychology Press, 2001), 198.

¹³ Here I am considering my personal experience during a Powmu at Hopi on Second Mesa in 2012. The clowns that I viewed at Hopi wore masks and were painted brick red. Those known as "mudheads" would periodically pull aside an offending teenager (I only saw boys) and whip them with looked like a willow switch. The boys first ran and then, when they were caught, they simply complied by taking off their shirts and offering up their backs for striking. As I understand it, at a certain age the Katsinum actors human identities are revealed and this is when the whipping ends.

¹⁴ Terms such as liminality and marginality imply minimization or disregard; therefore, I have included the brief explanation of these theories to show that the ideas are not negative. What Turner and Babcock are suggesting is that clowns and tricksters occupy a space outside of boundaries, a space where individuals and even groups can travel outside what is considered the norm. Turner states that this space can be "dangerous" due to the blurring, or thinning of boundaries between mortal and spiritual worlds. See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969), 125.

¹⁵ Babcock suggests that clowns and tricksters survive in a common space that is beyond the boundaries of what is considered acceptable social structures. However, Babcock's analysis lacks specific information about how Pueblo people viewed clowns and tricksters historically. See Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, "'A Tolerated Margin of Mess': The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11, no. 3 (March 1, 1975), 148. See also, Babcock-Abrahams, "Arrange me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning" in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Jon MacAloon, ed. (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Is, 1984), 122.

¹⁶ Babcock, "A Tolerated Margin of Mess," 143.

¹⁷ In most cases (in stories and performance) tricksters and clowns implicate sex as part of the joke. Concerning the function of Pueblo clowns, see Jacobs, "Making Savages of Us All," 192-93; Edward P. Dozier, *The Pueblo Indians of North America* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press Inc., 1983), 202-03; Erna Fergusson, *Dancing Gods: Indian Ceremonials of New Mexico and Arizona* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), xxii.

¹⁸ Jesse Walter Fewkes, "Hopi Katsinas: Drawn By Native Artists," in *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 76-77.

¹⁹ Christopher Vecsey, "The Emergence of the Hopi People," *American Indian Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1983), 71. See also, Gerald Vizenor, "Trickster: The Sacred Fool" in Jace Weaver, *Other Words: American Indian Literature, Law, and Culture*, American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series ; v. 39 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 246.

²⁰ In the story of how Coyote created death. Collected from the Shasta. See Roland B. Dixon, "Shasta Myths," *The Journal of American Folklore* 23, no. 87 (January 1, 1910), 19-20.

²¹ Dorothy Dunn, *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas* (The University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 262.

²² Narciso Abeyta's son, Tony Abeyta, told me about the story of Abeyta's aunt in 2013.

²³ Clyde Kluckhohn, *Navajo Witchcraft* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944), 26.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Margaret Schevill Link, *The Pollen Path; a Collection of Navajo Myths Retold*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1956), 55-62. See also Haile, *Navajo Coyote Tales*, 82-88.

²⁶ This is perhaps the northern most of the four sacred mountains described in Navajo cosmology. See Schevill Link, *The Pollen Path*, 56.

²⁷ Two of Tsinajinnie's illustrations accompany the story of "The Woman Who became a bear. Of the two, the second illustration most closely resembles Abeyta's painting, which, considering that there were no other paintings depicting the story, leads me to believe that Abeyta most likely made the painting based on a topic that might sell. Dunn pointed out in *American Indian Painting* that Abeyta was influenced by the older Tsinajinnie. Moreover, some artists I have worked with acknowledge that there is power connected to images and I believe there the reason for Abeyta's depiction of Navajo stories was connected to deeper psychological issues. See Margaret Schevill Link, *The Pollen Path; a Collection of Navajo Myths Retold*, 58,60.

²⁸ Jerrold E. Levy, *In the Beginning: The Navajo Genesis*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1998), 83.

²⁹ Wile E Coyote's creator, Chuck Jones, was said to have based the character's likeness on Mark Twain's description of a coyote in *Roughing It* (1889). That Twain related in the following: "The coyote is a long, slim, sick and sorry looking skeleton, with a gray wolf-skin stretched over, it a tolerably bushy tail that forever sags down with a despairing expression of forsakenness and misery, a furtive and evil eye, and a long sharp face, with slightly lifted lip and exposed teeth. He has a general slinking expression all over. The coyote is a living, breathing allegory of Want." See Hugh Kenner, *Chuck Jones: A Flurry of Drawings*, 1st Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 15; William Bright, *A Coyote Reader*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993), 7.

³⁰ Current scholars, such as William Bright and William Hynes have mentioned the relationship of these cartoons to North American tricksters in the discourse; any in-depth analysis of Bugs Bunny appears sparse. Bright was the first in my research to mention Bugs Bunny as trickster. See Bright, *A Coyote Reader*, 1. Other mentions of Bugs are generally presented as a passing reference, or as a

comparison to Br'er Rabbit. In 1977, however researchers in New York City conducted a valuable study on children's responses to Bugs Bunny cartoons. "The Development of Trickster in Children's Narrative," by David Abrams and Brian Sutton Smith provides some interesting correlations between Bugs and tricksters cross-culturally. Abrams and Sutton Smith conducted comparative research on the attraction of the Bugs Bunny cartoons compared to other popular television from the 1970s (ranging broadly from shows such as *All in the Family* to *The Electric Company*). Their findings showed that in groups of children under ten years of age, the majority enjoyed and remembered the most from the Bugs Bunny cartoons. The study here serves as a point of departure for a discussion concerning this most successful non-Native visual appropriation of a North American trickster.

³¹ In the two cartoons mentioned Bugs Bunny dresses as a woman to attract Elmer Fudd. Tricksters, as stated in this dissertation, are highly sexual and although they are usually referred to as male, they do not identify with any particular gender. Tricksters' sexuality will be further addressed in chapter four.

³² I have noticed that in translations there is little elaboration of Native American tricksters' relatives. In one story Coyote falls in love with his daughter and fakes his own death so he might return in disguise and marry her (he is found out). Also, at one point in Radin's cycle Wakdjunkaga settles down with his family. In comparison, the trickster Loki from the Norse has family ties, as does the Greek Hermes. Although North American tricksters appear to have family, this is a minor point, at least in the anthropological translations. See Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), 52.

³³ David M. Abrams and Brian Sutton-Smith, "The Development of the Trickster in Children's Narrative," *The Journal of American Folklore* 90, no. 355 (January 1, 1977), 44.

³⁴ In cartoons such as *Operation Rabbit* (1952) and *Compressed Hare* (1961) Wile E. Coyote confronts the intruding Bugs Bunny for domination of terrain. Which is similar to the confrontations between Saynday and Coyote. Coyote has also confronted Raven and he shows up in many stories as an "extra" in many stories across North America.

³⁵ Thomas King, *A Coyote Columbus Story*, (Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2002).

³⁶ Matt Dembicki, ed., *Trickster: Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection*, (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2010), 55-62 and 79-88.

³⁷ Harry Fonseca, "The Strength That Continues to Go on for All of Us," *Museum Anthropology* 24, no. 2-3 (September 1, 2000), 37.

³⁸ Ibid., 38.

³⁹ Although Sontag approaches camp in as a more encompassing idea, I think part of what she talks about is applicable to Fonseca's Coyote. See Susan Sontag, "Susan Sontag: Notes On 'Camp,'" 1964, <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Sontag-NotesOnCamp-1964.html>.

⁴⁰ Fonseca said that he did not understand why Europeans were so fascinated by Native American mythology. "Being interested is one thing," he said, "but really wanting to get into your head is another." Ibid., 40.

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- ⁴¹ Fonseca stated that "Coyote is often up against a brick wall as are so many Native peoples and artists." See Patsy Phillips, "Sundays with Harry: An Essay on a Contemporary Native Artist of Our Time," *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012), 65.
- ⁴² Phillips wrote that Fonseca was often frustrated by the lack of serious criticism toward Native art. Ibid, 69.
- ⁴³ Fonseca died on December 28, 2006, six months after he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Ibid, 70.
- ⁴⁴ Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (October 1, 1955), 440.
- ⁴⁵ See for example, Franchot Ballinger, *Living Sideways Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions*, 22. See also Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 268.
- ⁴⁶ Michael Carroll provides a good summation of some of the arguments focusing on Lévi-Strauss' question. Michael P. Carroll, "Lévi-Strauss, Freud, and the Trickster: A New Perspective upon an Old Problem," *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 2 (1981), 303.
- ⁴⁷ The Kiowa also have 49 expedition, or war songs, although I am not certain of the connection. Radin begins the trickster cycle when the tribe is preparing for war.
- ⁴⁸ Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), 53.
- ⁴⁹ Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), x.
- ⁵⁰ This autobiography is an interesting publication and there has been some speculation about the similarities in Blowsnake's life story and the trickster cycle why Radin conspired with Blowsnake to publish the work that appears to have similarities to the trickster cycle. Radin seem to use the text to as a way to "authenticate" his consultant and his research. See introduction in Sam Blowsnake, *Crashing Thunder; the Autobiography of an American Indian* (New York, London, DAppleton and Company, 1926), xv-xxv.
- ⁵¹ Jungs philosophy of a "collective consciousness" has been confronted with much criticism. Freud believed that the "unconscious" was personal and there was nothing "collective" about repressed memory. See C. G. Jung (Carl Gustav), *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, Bollingen Series ; 20 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), 3-4.
- ⁵² Ibid, 5.
- ⁵³ C. G. Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster," in Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology*, 201.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, 204.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 205.

Chapter 4

Animal: North American Tricksters Take Form in the Contemporary

Levi-Strauss' question as to the relationship of Native North American trickster figures with ravens and coyotes also brings attention to the question I have as to why, by the twentieth century, North American tricksters were most associated with animals? As demonstrated in this dissertation, trickster figures take many different names and their forms are not static. Saynday, however, is the only completely human representation among the figures that I have located to date. The contemporary artists in this chapter all represent trickster figures in animal, or human/animal form in complex and layered narratives, which reflect their thoughts on issues, such as politics, race, gender, identity, and cultural trauma. Although I am well aware that there are many contemporary Native American artists who occasionally include tricksters in their oeuvre, as colleagues, family, and friends continually alert me to their efforts; however, I have chosen to consider artworks by Rick Bartow, Shawn Hunt, Jim Denomie, Steven Yazzie, and Julie Buffalohead. I see the work of these artists as very personal, as they draw from varied cultural histories as well as their own intimate experiences. Through tricksters they have found a way to voice their opinions, and their voices deserve to be well acknowledged. Aside from an exploration of tricksters in the work of the above artists, in this chapter I consider the question of why tricksters are associated with animals, Coyote's ubiquity in art today, and whether or not Native American artists can be regarded as tricksters.

Throughout my research concerning contemporary artists there has been one constant that continues to pervade my trickster inquiries that involves the artists' positioning in the art world. All of the contemporary artists that I address here are fall under the rubric of "Native American art" and their artwork is compartmentalized as such. I have been made aware of some of the frustrations felt by artists about the prescribed categorizations that inhibit the arts; therefore, in this chapter I also begin to access how depicting tricksters and being labeled as a "trickster artist" takes on different connotations when applied to Native American and First Nations artists.

Rick Bartow's Trickster Transformations

When researching Rick Bartow it became apparent that "transformation" was a big part of the discourse about his artwork; however, I am not certain if this "transformation," which continued to surface in catalogues, periodicals, and newspapers, was about his artwork, or about the artist himself. Bartow was valued as an artist and esteemed as a human being, as Bob Hicks explicated in the *Oregon Artswatch* on his recent death in April of 2016.¹ His artworks can be viewed as post-impressionistic, expressionistic, as well as abstract. They are reflective of artists such as Henri Matisse, Jean Dubuffet, and that of Francis Bacon, whose *Screaming Pope* and the fantastical distorted transmogrified animal/human bodies in his triptychs are such stuff that nightmares are made on.² Bacon's influence can be strongly seen in Bartow's paintings, but his renderings most certainly blend into own unique and identifiable style.

Many of Bartow's artworks can be a bit unsettling. In *Things You Know But Cannot Explain* (1979, figure 51) for example, Bartow draws a stark white human figure surrounded by darkness, the outline of a face only partly visible in the background.³ The figure draws one hand upward, with its eyes shut tightly, mouth open wide as if in mid-scream. Later works show Bartow's stylistic development with color and space comprised in images that were no less disturbing. As seen in his self-portrait triptych *PTSD I, II, III* (2008, figure 52) that included three portraits of the artist in succession, with a slash of black paint covering his mouth. The three panels, along with other paintings in his oeuvre, depict the artist's painful internal struggles with his own mental health; however, these paintings represent only a portion of Bartow's complex, sensitive, and insightful body of work. Bartow drew inspiration not only from those artists mentioned above, but others, such as Frank LaPena, Fritz Scholder, "Drake Deknatel, Frank Boyden, Mark Chagall, Richard Diebenkorn, Jim Dine, Horst Janssen, Odilon Redon, and Cy Twombly;"⁴ he was further influenced by a diverse body of histories, the many books he read, the music he listened to and played, and artistic cultural traditions from the Sioux to the Maori, and from Africa and traditional Native American arts from the Pacific Northwest. Through his artworks Bartow presented narratives where tragedy and comedy, reality and fantasy combined to make the fantastic. He was a storyteller, who invented his own visual language, which with he told stories of the past and the present. Weirdly wonderful and profoundly dark characters that at times came from his psyche and sometimes undeniably represented tricksters.

Bartow's oeuvre is bursting with ravens and crows, and to a lesser extent coyotes, or aspects thereof, as many of his animal figures are depicted in states of transformation.⁵ Before considering Bartow's depictions more closely and critically, I had presumed his animals, at least the ravens and coyotes, represented tricksters that he knew from his own Wiyot (and Yurok) ancestors. And to some extent they do, but as previously stated, Bartow was inspired by many cultural traditions. As curator Daniel Knapp asserts, Bartow "neither approximates or appropriates Native American art;"⁶ but it was not uncommon for Bartow to signify, through the use of symbols, issues that were, and continue to be of importance to all Native North American peoples, which he enhanced with own experiences as an indigenous person. An exceptional example of this is found in the sculpture *We Were Always Here* that was dedicated to the National Museum of the American Indian in 2012 (figure 53).

Consisting of two old-growth red cedar wood poles, the sculpture represents a universal approach to creation stories from the Northwest Coast that also served as a marker of the survival of all indigenous people. Carved on the top of one pole is a bear, which Bartow envisioned as mother and protector, while the other features a carving of Raven, who is, Bartow said, "the foible-filled teacher of great power."⁷ Raven is positioned at the top of a twenty-foot high totem-like pole, with wings outstretched as if he is flying overhead. Above the familiar trickster Bartow situated another carved circular face with arms attached that hang down around Raven's beaked-head. The combination of fragmented elements of human and bird perhaps suggests Raven's transformation, or a human/bird hybridized

trickster, similar to the depictions of Raven in Edenshaw's in argillite carvings from the 1890s (see figures 23-25 in chapter 2). Yet, to better understand why Bartow so frequently depicted ravens and crows requires some information about his relationship to them, as well as some intimation of his own history.

The Past in Perspective

Bartow claimed to be a "self taught" artist and he received a bachelor's degree in secondary art education from Western Oregon State College. Bartow was never secretive about the fact that he was an alcoholic, and he traced the beginnings of his addiction to the time he spent in the army during the Viet Nam war. He was not subjected to combat, but he witnessed its repercussion in the suffering faces and bodies that he played music for at the military hospitals. "It was years later," he said, that "I realized most of the people were probably already dead . . . they were living on morphine . . . doped out to the max to keep them together."⁸ When he returned to his Oregon home, Bartow affirmed that he "was a bit twisted." He compared himself to a "house" that was filled with "irrational fears, beliefs, and symbols," which occupied him with constant paralyzing fear: "Wind-blown paper would send me running; *crows*, became many things; I never remembered dreams and detested the wind; I wore bells on my wrists so I could hear my parts when they moved; I slept in my clothes so I'd be ready to go nowhere at all (*italics added*)."⁹ With his fear he began to draw as a way with which to confront "his demons."¹⁰

In some of his earliest drawings he depicted figures with masks that were either falling off of faces, or being taken away, usually by some unseen force. In the

reworking these images he found that he could draw motion in a single figure, which coincided with the Native American stories he was studying. Crow, who Bartow referred to as his “old nemesis,” took on new meaning. In drawings from the early 1990s, his experiments are apparent in *Crow’s Creation* (1992, figure 54), where Crow’s inky black beaked head covers a human face as wings sprout from the same human’s back. As human and bird morph into one, the calmness of Crow contrasts with the intensity of the human, who appears as if in agony, suggested by the bared teeth and the upraised hands. Crow, however, was only one in several of Bartow’s depictions where the artist shows a trickster transformation.

In *Coyote* (1991, figure 55), Bartow superimposes his face with that of the snarling Coyote; the positioning of outlines, and Coyote’s face juxtaposed with the artist’s give the impression of rapid movement, again as if the figure is going through a transformation. Thus, if both images were created when Bartow was coming to terms with his own psychological breakdown, it might be asked if the tricksters he depicted played a role in his survival? Still, why did Bartow find solace in tricksters and why Coyote and Raven, or Crow in particular? In answer to these questions I suggest that through tricksters he found a way to connect to his own past and through his creativity he shaped his own sense of selfhood.

Within her theory of “marginality” Babcock suggested that there were six functions that tricksters stories play in cultures, the most important being the “reflective creative.”¹¹ Ravens, Crows, and others, in a sense, took over a part of Bartow’s consciousness and allowed him to operate in a state of automatism; hence, he worked much like the expressionists he drew inspiration from. When in

the mode of creating (Bartow also played music) he could release his unconscious thoughts by implanting them in an artwork. Everything he learned, everything he knew and had experienced, came out in the creative process. Babcock asserted that, “abstract or creative thought is provoked by what William James called the ‘law of dissociation,’” otherwise known as “‘cognitive dissonance’ — a property which the marginal trickster most certainly manifests.” Babcock further commented that “in contrast to routine thinking, the creative act of thought is always ‘double minded i.e. a transitory state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed.’”¹² However, for Bartow I expect that this creative mode where he and trickster were entangled was not an easy space to occupy.

Bartow’s father was Yurok, at least that was what Bartow knew from the time he was a child until into his later adult life. From the information that I have garnered, it was sometime in the first decade of the twenty-first century that Bartow learned that his paternal family lineage was really Wiyot and not Yurok. This information, however, was really not that surprising, since in the early nineteenth century many remaining in the Wiyot tribe merged with the neighboring Yurok. What Bartow found most difficult to fathom was the Wiyot’s demise.

In the early nineteenth century the tribe was considerably smaller than some of the others in the area that is now northern California, and they had the misfortune of living near to where gold was found. Gold miners had been pouring into California since 1848 when the gold rush began and many conflicts arose

between the miners and the tribal people living in California. In 1860 gold miners operating in the area that is now Humboldt County, generally upset by the Wiyot's interference, murdered the majority of Wiyot people in a series of raids that took the lives of mostly women and children and community elders. On March 16, 1860 a correspondent for the *New York Times* wrote from San Francisco of the massacre:

It appears that the brutal murderers were not over-anxious to meet the male Indians; that a spy who had attended an annual dance on Indian Island (about a mile from Eureka, the County Seat of Humboldt) the evening previous, conveyed the intelligence that there was not a gun, bow or arrow on the island, that the savages were entirely defenceless [sic]. The whites then approached, about 6 o'clock in the morning, fired upon and killed three men, who were asleep in a cabin at some little distance from where the women lay, then, entering lodge after lodge, they dirked the sleeping, and with axes split open and crushed the skulls of the children and women. The total killed on the island were fifty-five, of whom only five were men. On South Beach, about a mile away from Eureka, in another direction, an hour or two before, the same party of whites had killed 58, most of them women and children. No defence [sic] was made.¹³

The spoils of colonization became even more personal when visiting Maori friends on a trip to New Zealand, visiting Maori friends Bartow happened across a box of Native American skulls that had been collected by a military man somewhere in the American West (no one is certain to how or when they ended up in New Zealand). As Hicks explained after Bartow's death: "They were the skulls of Indians who'd been killed, and when he entered the room, Rick said, the skulls began to scream, to shriek, to cry 'help us,' and he was shaken."¹⁴ He told Hicks that he brought these skulls back to the states and began the long process of returning them to their rightful tribe.¹⁵

Between Raven and Coyote

Bartow faced many hardships in his lifetime, including his experience with

PTSD, the knowledge of violent colonization against his ancestors, and the untimely deaths of friends and family members, all of which weighed heavily on him. Through trickster Bartow released his inner chaos and perhaps he was most comfortable when he allowed the trickster to take over. This is perhaps best seen in *Coyote & the Myth* (1991, figure 56), which depicts, perhaps, a metamorphosis where two figures become one. Bartow drew the arms and hands in such a way as to suggest that there is more than one figure involved. The coyote headed human figure is shadowed by a dark space that fills most of one side of the drawing. The unnatural colors that fill in Coyote's head remind us that we have entered into another realm — perhaps that of the dead.

The image is rather frightening, and it brings to mind Jung's theory of the "shadow" figure as a part of a latent consciousness. The drawing was created during the time when the artist was reworking some of his initial artworks, a time when his subconscious harbored some dark memories, which perhaps are represented by the dark shadow that looms behind the primary figure. Noticing also that Coyote takes over the head may imply that Bartow allowed the trickster to do his "thinking;" thus, in accordance with Jungian philosophy, we see that the trickster is actually protecting Bartow from his more sinister self.¹⁶ Knapp comments in the catalogue for Bartow's retrospective exhibit, *Things You Know But Cannot Explain* (2016), that the artist had a "personal fascination" with "cross-cultural" masks and their transformative power. Bartow often contemplated death through the depiction of masks, as well as other symbols, such as ladders and boats. Masks conceal the wearer's identity, which is helpful when traveling to the

spiritual world, and ladders and boats serve as signs of transition into other realms.

I would also like to bring attention to the fact that Raven was not traditionally a primary trickster for the Wiyot or the Yurok. According to the anthropologist A.L. Kroeber (also a student of Boas), who studied the California cultures in the early twentieth century, the primary trickster among the Yurok was *Wohpekumeu*, who was “mentioned loosely,” and pursued “every woman,” most unsuccessfully. However, the Yurok also told episodes that included “*Segep*, coyote,” although he was “less frequently a favorite intervention.”¹⁷ The equivalent to *Wohpekumeu* among the Wiyot is *Garswokwire*, or *Rakshuatlaketl*, but there is also *Gudatrigakwitl*, the creator, for whom there is no equivalent in the Yurok. A.L. Kroeber also wrote that the Wiyot had a “peculiar” fondness for animal characters, which he said was “a general Californian, rather than a central California trait, but it is a deviation from the specialized northwestern type of myth.”¹⁸

Perhaps there was there some underlying connection between Bartow’s depictions of animals with his ancestor’s curious regard for creatures; however, I think he just liked to depict animals. And, despite what I have considered here, Bartow’s artworks are not all dark, as in the above *We Were Always Here*, some are commemorative, some are humorous, and many are insightful. Bartow mentioned in an essay from 2007 that coyote has a way of showing up: “And maybe the night before I’d been at a ceremony and someone told a good coyote story.” Then “maybe I put a women over here. Then I’ve got a story about coyote tricking the women that captured all the salmon.”¹⁹

Bartow also depicted animals other than ravens and coyotes, such as bears, dogs, and owls, but tricksters were often highlighted. The sculpture, *From Nothing Coyote Creates Himself* (2004, figure 57), is one of his finest works, and it is one that I would have liked to ask him about. It refers to the idea of Coyote as creator, as found in many Native North American cultures. Meaning, of course, that there was nothing before Coyote. At one end Bartow has carved a coyote head that looks similar to the many he created in his drawings, and from that head a sort of arm with a human hand attached that extends to — who knows where. The bent “arm” was carved from old growth cedar and on Coyote’s chin, under his muzzle and extending down onto the arm, Bartow inserted very small wooden dowels, a reference to the African Nkondi figures that he first saw at a Pacific art exhibition. These wooden sculptures made by people living in the Congo region are believed to house spirits, whose powers are directed by inserting a sharp object, such as nails, into the wood. Yet, Bartow knew well enough that Coyote’s spirit could not be controlled. In a YouTube video posted by the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of art Bartow joked about the subject matter of the sculpture stating that Coyote “sometimes gets to smart,” and apparently the trickster escaped and ended up at a Manhattan club, where he then had to be shot with a tranquilizer dart and relocated back to the Museum.²⁰

Bartow had remarked at one time that his tricksters’ resemblance to Native American cultural stories was only incidental; moreover, he really never wanted to be known as a Native American artist. In a 1999 article, Margret Dubin explained that Bartow did not “grow up in an Indian community or learn traditional tribal

practices.”²¹ His Interest in “Yurok mythology” was intellectual as well as personal; however, he was not comfortable with the label ‘Indian artist’.” As Bartow explained: “I do some traditional things but that wasn’t passed on to me. That’s why I turn to Chagall, who said, ‘Let us find something authentic in our lives.’” This he found more personal than the “tribal.”²² Like other artists, writers, and musicians, Bartow found it easier to work through tricksters, perhaps because trickster’s ambiguity allows for their artistic invention. Trickster stories can be a way of socialization between cultural traditions and as I have indicated in the previous chapters of this dissertation, anthropological research suggests that historically trickster stories had both spiritual and secular functions. Which has lead to confusion about tricksters’ functions and the variance of tricksters between tribes. Some stories were shared, while others were kept within a given culture. Moreover, language and performance was important in dictating the function of trickster stories, as was the time and the place of their telling.²³

Gerald Vizenor, who has become a master of literary North American tricksters, explains that “trickster characters are imagined, created in stories, not actual or corporeal, and the creative art of trickster stories has never been a cultural representation.”²⁴ Which also confirms my thoughts concerning the artist as trickster, as he states in the following:

Native storiers and novelist are not tricksters, but the storier and writer may create trickster scenes and characters that are remembered in the motion of the seasons. . . . Native writers [or artists] may practice and study trickster hermeneutics, but that would not include an academic synthesis or ethnographic reduction of creative writers as trickster figures.²⁵

Given his own use of tricksters, it is also not surprising that Vizenor chose to use

Bartow's art on the covers of two of his books. Bartow's *Raven's Dream* (2012, figure 58) appeared on the cover of *Blue Ravens: Historical Novel*, a novel about Native American soldiers in the First World War; and Bartow's *Voices II* (2015) was included on the cover of *Treaty Shirts* (2016, figure 59), Vizenor's most recent satirical surrealist drama.²⁶

Undoubtedly Vizenor would agree that Bartow was not a trickster, as Raven and Coyote were neither animals, nor humans. Like Vizenor, I tend to think of Bartow as a "storier," for whom tricksters became the characters in compacted dramas, which were played out on canvases, or in the sculptures of old-growth cedar. From what I have gathered through the reading of many interviews and talks with colleagues and friends, Bartow was an invested student of all that was in the world around him and with his talents he combined all that he learned into a unique visual language. A language evoked from shadows of the past, of fear, laughter, and life, which he transformed into traditions of change.

Shawn Hunt's Traditional Ravens

Bartow resided in Newport, Oregon where Coyote stories originally developed, but moving farther up the Pacific Coast, contemporary artwork illustrates that Raven remains the principal trickster. Although there are many artists from the Northwest Coast who choose to depict Raven, usually in the traditional Northwest Coast formline style that was used by Edenshaw; however, the artist Shawn Hunt most definitely stands out in his unique translation of traditions. I was drawn to Hunt's work because of his use of Raven in one particular painting. The painting, simply titled *Trickster* (2008-2009, figure 60),

depicts the trickster Raven perched atop a Campbell's soup can with the content defining words, "Clam Chowder" written across the can's front. The Raven, represented on the top of the soup can, was created in a semblance of the traditional formline style used among the Tlingit, Haida, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Heiltsuk (formally the Bella Bella), which is part of Hunt's ancestry. In his painting Hunt refers to typical elements such as ovoids, u-splits, and crosshatching to emphasize, in general, Northwest Coast carving styles, yet he does not appear to adhere completely to any particular tribal design.²⁷ Here Hunt also draws on Trompe-l'œil, a three-dimensional effect, with which he defines the other beings that creepily inhabit Raven's body.

On Raven's left wing a bizarre grinning creature, drawn in an inventive composite view, looks out to the left through one sinister eye. The beast's arm, created by a u-form, rests against the wing and it wraps its fingers, or more aptly its claws, around the outer side of the wing, as if it is holding on. Another eerily grinning face, attached to Raven's breast, peers out from behind the right wing, meanwhile another set of claws reach around the side of the nose at the base of what would be Raven's neck. Even his beak has been invaded, as seen by the half opened eye peering out from his nasal passage. Raven's closest talon overlaps the edge of the soup can just above the brand name, which is written in the same cursive as the original. Hunt's Raven evokes traditional carving practices as well as the Haida story of how Raven created humans by coaxing them from a large clamshell; his inspiration for the story drawn from the larger-than-life depiction, *The Raven and the First Men*, created in yellow cedar wood by the well-known

Haida sculptor Bill Reid, which has been displayed in the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology since its dedication in 1980 (figure 61).²⁸

The face that makes up Raven's breast as it turns out is a not so ghoulish caricature of Bill Reid's face. The soup can, of course, is a reference to Andy Warhol's 32 Soup Cans from 1962 (figure 62), although Warhol gave no indication as to the configuration of the individual paintings, in this image from Museum of Modern Art the Clam Chowder is the first can on the upper right); however, concerning Hunt's painting we might be surprised by the contents of the can. An abstracted formline figure of a frog, an important clan crest on the Northwest Coast, is also visible on the gold medallion in the middle of the can.²⁹ In this painting Hunt, like Warhol, questions how we perceive art. But more, Hunt's clever juxtaposition of trickster and pop-art refers to the commodification Northwest Coast art and to the commodification of Northwest Coast oral histories. The stylistically formline carvings as well as Raven's reputation as trickster, transformer, and culture hero, have become a part of the identity for the Pacific Northwest.

Hunt's paintings not only refer to traditional sculpture techniques, they have a sculptural quality about them and with good reason: Hunt began his career as a sculptor. Hunt majored in sculpting and drawing at the University of British Columbia, but a big part of his education came from working with his family. His father, Bradley Hunt, is also an artist, primarily a sculptor, and he revived traditional carving methods by teaching and working with his sons. Hunt's brother Dean is a multimedia artist who prefers to apply his designs to skin with

traditional hand-poke and skin-stitch tattoo techniques. Hunt has collaborated with them both, but due to a neck injury that prevented him from sculpting for awhile, Hunt decided to take up painting and he studied for a year with the artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, whose work also reflects Northwest formline carving as well as surrealist imagery (figure 63), through which he addresses issues concerning politics, culture, and the environment as a First Nations citizen living in British Columbia. In his most recent exhibition, *Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: Unceded Territories* (2016), that opened at the Museum of Anthropology on the University of British Columbia Campus, Yuxweluptun underscored significant subject matter that aboriginal Canadians deal with even today, such as “fishing rights, hunting rights, water rights, inherent rights.”³⁰ The exhibit was located in the gallery next to where Bill Reid’s, *The Raven and the First Men*, is permanently on display.

Hunt’s newest paintings from the exhibit *Line is Language*, which opened on May 19, 2016, at the Burrard Art Foundation in Vancouver, demonstrate aspects of Yuxweluptun’s paintings; however, Hunt has created his own particular style, what he calls “neoformline,” with the idea that he is using the traditional formline style in new and unconventional ways to tell stories that have evolved among the Northwest Coast peoples, and Raven stories among them. As artists before him, Hunt uses imagery and line as a form of visual language. In *Light Bringer* (2016, figure 64), for example, Hunt gives life to magical creatures who have the power to transform and through the use of symbols he represents the story of Raven giving light to the people. Blue hued shadows give depth to the stark white creatures that

float over other beings that take form in the negative spaces. A ball representing the sun floats in the lower portion of the painting centered in the negative space and Raven appears amidst the beaks, noses, eyes, hands, and faces that swirl around the canvas, interconnected through a single line. Hunt sees the style as a “puzzle,” and perhaps an obsession, which he is learning as he designs more characters.

In *Ancestors/Sky People* (2016, figure 65) Hunt delineates figures such as Raven, Thunderbird, and Frog, and perhaps it is the teeth of the Sea Wolf that we see under the human breasts. Human hands stretch around the outer portion of the scene where humans and animals appear to meld together and become one. The longer you look at the paintings the more you can see, until you feel as if you might jump, or fall in amongst the swirling mass of shapes, animals and humans, bones and darkness, that are the story.³¹ Hunt has stated that in these paintings he refers to Heiltsuk history, and with them he questions the meaning of our very existence. He says that “like many artists” he has a “trickster nature,” meaning that he sees himself as a rebellious thinker. Similar to tricksters, Hunt moves across boundaries to give question to our own perceptions and perhaps to rethink what we think we know.

Art Practice Metamorphosis

Hunt’s newest sculptures appeared before a public audience in Richmond, British Columbia, in October of 2016. The sculptures refer to the iconic totem poles of the area; however, they have been taken apart and reassembled into human forms (figure 66). Bodies of the larger than life sculptures such as *Reclining Figure*

and *Goddess*, consist of “raw,” or unfinished red and yellow cedar, which is carved with generic imagery that conveys the idea of Northwest Coast design. Heads on the three full-body sculptures have discernable facial features and long lengths of dark horse hair that is attached at the top of head and covers the length of their backs. Hunt’s idea for the sculptures, he said, came from witnessing a totem pole from Haida Gwaii cut into three pieces to be shipped to a museum. The experience was one that affected Hunt’s views about his own relationship to art and it was from this experience that he began to deeply consider how First Nations cultures have been appropriated, “cut up” and reconstructed into some “more European.”³² His figurative sculptures represent this culture clash from the perspective of an artist with who has experienced and understands the meaning of tradition; however, Hunt is also an artist who is acutely aware that traditions evolve with each generation.

As Hunt explained in his artist’s statement in 2009:

I have never felt like I really belonged to any one particular movement, culture, category, or clique. As an artist this has given me an incredible amount of freedom. I don’t feel that my work is conceptual, traditional, artifact or craft. This is a freedom that allows me to distort, subvert, hijack and remix these categories in order to offer new points of view.³³

Hunt’s interpretation of his practice appears as a contemporary sentiment; however, Silver Horn, as he learned new artistic methods, continued to change the style with which he depicted narratives and Charles Edenshaw equally continued to change his artwork as he adapted his carvings for non-Haida audiences, which demonstrates that Native artists historically adapted. However, can contemporary artists address their indigenous and aboriginal heritage without being

categorized? Here, I also question if the use of trickster figures in the artwork contributes to contemporary artists classifications? Perhaps labeling is something that Native American artists will never be able to overcome. Still, there is a certain level Othering that is inflicted on contemporary artists perhaps somewhat through carelessly curated exhibitions, and even more through outdated perceptions of Native Americans that allow for romanticized and racist ideologies.

Jim Denomie's (Non) Trickster Rabbits

When I first began to consider which contemporary artists I should address, I most certainly considered the work of Jim Denomie, a Minneapolis (although his studio is actually nearer to Franconia, MN) based artist, whose unique stylistic approach that often reflects his Minnesota surroundings and sometimes his Anishinaabe heritage, but he also draws from the stories from other Native cultures. Moreover, I had seen Denomie's rabbits and I thought perhaps that his rabbits represented Nanobozho, the trickster of Schoolcraft's research and the trickster who was most associated with biological rabbits. Although many artists depict Coyote, far more than I initially thought, there are few that represent Nanobozho. Yet, when I asked Denomie about how he came to use of tricksters in his artwork, he informed me that there was no connection between the animals he painted and tricksters. You see, Denomie grew up in South Minneapolis and his immediate family, concerned with making a living, had little time for keeping traditions. Although Denomie knew about Nanobozho, he had no history with the trickster or trickster stories. But the animal, such as the cottontail variety of rabbit that roam wild in Minnesota he is quite fond of, and he indicates that often when

he is faced with times of struggle he sees rabbits; moreover, they materialize in the strangest places.³⁴

Some of Denomie's rabbits appear quite peacefully doing what rabbits do most of the time — play and eat. Yet, in *Night Guardian* (2009, figure 67), for example, a lone rabbit painted in a Fauvist inspired landscape takes on the role of a guardian. The bunny appears over-sized, encompassing nearly the entire space of the canvas, despite the figure's distinction, it is still nothing more than a rabbit, non-threatening to humans, non-anthropomorphic, simply watching, perhaps waiting to usher in the dawn, as earlier stories suggest. In another, *Moonlight Serenade* (2009, figure 68), Denomie's bluish hued rabbits maybe engaged in something more romantic, as they dance in the moonlight and participate in the other thing that rabbits are know to do, which is to procreate. Denomie prefers to approach his artwork with humor and he often uses animals in the place of humans in his character narratives.

In two earlier paintings *Dream Rabbit* (1999) and *Dream Rabbit II* (2002) Denomie creates landscapes that can be described as otherworldly, as if perchance we have entered the artist's mind's eye in the midst of a dream (figures 69 and 70). Rolling hills resemble lounging female forms, while smaller standing bodies represent sapling trees, while oddly shaped mushrooms look suspiciously phallic. And a conspicuous white rabbit, perhaps reflective of the artist himself, sits on the flat surface of what appears to be a larger growth tree stump (might Grace Slick be singing in the background?). In the similar *Dream Rabbit* from 2002, Denomie refines and defines his landscape with reds, blues and greens. Also in this painting

he has added three deer skulls that are perched on a stump. Across from the deer another white rabbit, sits, looking quite out of place, near to a slender blue-branched tree.

What is most notable about the rabbit paintings is Denomie's use of color, which is something he likes to experiment with. In the above paintings the artist, like Bartow, introduces us to fantastical worlds through his use of color and rough, quickly rendered characters, yet, the mood Denomie creates is something quite different than Bartow's. Denomie never intended that his rabbits represent the trickster Nanobozho, although others have suggested it, which most likely stems from the knowledge of his Anishinaabe ancestry. Denomie was in fact born on the Lac Courte Oreille reservation in northern Wisconsin, and when he was only four his family moved to Chicago through a government program, one of several that developed in 1960s with the intent to move indigenous people into Urban areas. His parents split after a year and he moved with his mother to Minneapolis. He did not find the guidance he needed in his south Minneapolis high school, and, like so many young people trying to find their way, he dropped out and began a seemingly never-ending cycle of substance abuse. However, like Bartow, Denomie got sober and in 1995 he graduated from the University of Minnesota, with a BFA in art and a minor in American Indian studies.³⁵ His paintings show influence from artists such as Fritz Scholder and T. C. Cannon, as well as Henri Matisse, Henri Rousseau, and Pablo Picasso. His style reflects "primitivism," which in itself is a form of confrontation, a commentary on a form that in art world was a form Othering. Some of Denomie's paintings demonstrate his activism, some represent very

personal parts of his life. Many address very serious concerns in a comical manner, layered with his apprehensions, concern for family and community and packed with a cast of characters that include Christ, Tonto and the Lone Ranger, Elvis, and Jessie Ventura, the former wrestler, and once governor of Minnesota. Denomie's ideas come from research, his personal experiences, and some of his narratives come from the stories he reads in the daily newspaper.

In a recent painting, for example, Denomie came across the report that featured the successes of Woodrow W. Keeble, a under acknowledged national hero, who was also a full-blood member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota. Keeble, once a star athlete, was drafted in the Korean War, and was posthumously awarded the congressional metal of honor, some twenty-six years after his death. He was commended for his valor as a soldier, but his time in battle left him with numerous health problems. Paralyzed and broken, he died in 1982. In *A Beautiful Hero Woody Keeble* (2015, figure 71), Denomie documents the day on which Sergeant Keeble led his "Company G" into battle. Keeble, the grinning warrior sitting high on his grinning white horse, leads his soldiers, which through Denomie's invention have become animals, small blue rabbits to be exact, into the fray of the trickster enemies. Denomie said he could not explain why he turned these soldiers into animals; he felt that it just seemed right.

Ravens and coyotes fire machine guns and lob grenades at the invincible Keeble and in the surrounding hills spectral half deer, half people, perhaps ancestors, float over the hills, receding into the distant mountains.³⁶ There is an

absurdity to the floating deer-headed naked bodies, rabbit soldiers, owl dive-bombers, and ravens and coyotes with machine guns and grenades. The scene is humorous, perhaps until it is realized that the drama represented refers to the horrendous violence of war. The animals in the surrealist setting somehow make it all seem more palatable, and that is where the idea of trickster is not lost. Much like trickster's function in trickster stories, the laughter that Denomie instills in his artwork becomes "serious" medicine.

The purpose of illuminating Denomie's work here is to illustrate how the concept of trickster is imposed on Native American artists. "Post-modern trickster and queer trickster" are two of the terms I have recently come across that were used to describe American Indian and First Nations artists. And I wondered why scholars and curators, as well as journalists (who can be the worst) continue to find the use of tricksters so provocative as a framework for defining an artist or parts their oeuvre. Because of the fact that sometimes a rabbit is just a rabbit, what is clever and subversive about the representation of trickster characters can become overshadowed when Native artists themselves are defined, often in a less clever manner, by the same methods that differentiates their work, in which case the discourse itself becomes stereotypical.

Writer Kristina Fagan provides a compelling argument concerning the trendiness of tricksters in her essay "The Trouble with the Trickster," where she suggests that acknowledgements of tricksters in an oversimplified manner began from the desire for "Indigenous cultural difference" away from mainstream society (here she refers specifically to Canada). Greater cultural awareness, Fagan says,

prompted reactions from indigenous writers and artists to claim a recognizable symbol that defined this difference. The trouble, Fagan finds, is that “there is danger when focusing on cultural symbols as difference “because symbols can easily become labels, commodities, and stereotypes, ways of explaining and controlling that which is unfamiliar.”³⁷ Trickster figures came to be thought of “as timeless, as a manifestation of Indigenous tradition,” that is if we consider “tradition as the perfect transmission of beliefs and statements handed down unchanged from one generation to the next.”³⁸

However, not only the artists I describe here, but also many others successfully make use of trickster figures and trickster strategies to counter colonial constructions. Consider, for example, the work of Gerald Vizenor in comparison to the artists I have discussed. Tricksters enter Vizenor’s fictional works as a cast of characters, which he asserts, best represents the internal conflict of people considered “mixedbloods,” an idea that stems from his own Métis heritage. His use of trickster mythology, Craig Owens writes, is Vizenor’s chosen “imaginative weapon” for dealing with his unsettling past, which includes the murder of his father at an early age and a childhood spent in a string of foster homes in Minneapolis, near to the White Earth reservation where his father’s Anishinaabe relations lived.³⁹ Vizenor’s post-structuralist methodology provides a critical assessment of both “communal tribal cultures and those urban pretensions that counter conservative traditions.”⁴⁰ Much like the artists considered in this chapter (as well as Harry Fonseca in chapter 3) it is through fiction that they creates *new* mythologies with the help of peculiar trickster figures who may reside

in urban spaces and reservation lands, or even somewhere in between.

Steven Yazzie's Coyotes

Of the trickster figures I have presented here, none are depicted more than Coyote, although I am not sure yet as to the reason for this phenomena. The attraction may have something to do with the animal's characteristics being similar to domestic dogs, which today are more closely linked to humans than animals. Four of the six artists I have discussed in this dissertation depict coyotes with respect to the trickster figure of the same name, who by now we know is not really a coyote. Images of coyotes, however, still evoke ideas of the divine being; who, in the Navajo and Pueblo societies, for example, was once among the Holy people.

In 2008 the artist Steven Yazzie, began painting a series that featured coyotes, where the fearsome (figure 72) and sometimes rather sweet looking (figure 73) animals eat hot dogs, sit in chairs, play on beds, and comfortably wander through abandoned architecture. These dwellings consisted of mostly large homes, desert utopias that had been rapidly implanted on top of coyotes' desert territory. Yazzie created this series in reaction to urban sprawl that began and continued to extend across the desert landscape, which was obstructed only briefly by the housing crash that had deep repercussions in cities such as Phoenix, where Yazzie was raised and now makes his home.

In the painting *Modernity's Sunset* (2010, figure 74) Yazzie depicts coyotes now inhabiting what was once a private human space as the sun sets in the background over a desert landscape, a line of clouds overcasting the brilliant light

that is seen through a floor to ceiling window. The painting depicts the spoils of a capitalist society and the death of the American dream, as indicated by the designer furniture, the unmade bed where sleep and dreams ensued, and the image of the American Flag that hangs at half-mast in the painting on the wall above the bed. Yazzie's realistic depiction of the animals recalls the trickster Coyote drawn from various cultures. Restructuring of the world after a great flood was one of the primary stories concerning Nanobozho and the story of Raven stealing the sun made the trickster popular as a culture hero. Coyote had also contributed to the universe's creation by placing the stars in the sky and giving the people fire. As it was, Coyote once held an esteemed position, and in some areas, first in California, he was known as a culture hero, but in the Southwest he also gained the reputation of being a dangerous fool — as Coyote stories can be used for good, but they can also be used for evil.⁴¹

Yazzie is well aware of Coyote's reputation. Coyote is a part of Yazzie's Navajo/Laguna Pueblo heritage and he understands that there is a responsibility that comes with Coyote's representation. By inserting the animal, which is symbolic of the Southwestern desert, into these abandoned man-made environments Yazzie questions relationships between humans and animals, and the sustainability of the land where they both exist. Among the Navajo Coyote was considered a sacred figure, he was of the gods who was regarded as a "respectable hunter tutelary" and "probably enjoyed the rights of kinship, which then applied to all fellow Hunter peoples."⁴² But when the people became farmers, as the Navajo and the Pueblo people did, coyotes became pests, the killers of sheep

and other livestock, and then the relationship between Coyote and the people changed. Killing of the animal meant offending the gods and caused what was known as Coyote illness.⁴³ To this day, the sight of a coyote is considered a bad omen among the Navajo people. However, the “Old Man” trickster still plays a significant role in many Native American cosmologies, and often through examples of “what-not-to-do” Coyote functions as a keeper of social order. In the painting, *On all Twelves* (2009, figure 75), Yazzie depicts nude human crawling across the desert floor with the three tricksters on his back, a reference to the primary tricksters and perhaps refers to the Diné creation story in which the people emerged from worlds under surface of the earth. His narrative reminds us that tricksters took part at the earths beginning, and perhaps tricksters will shape another world long after humans are gone.

In some cultures Coyote stories are still told as a part of ceremony, yet there are also stories that are told on a secular level. The latter, which are told at anytime, are usually humorous. As with other tricksters, Coyote brings about what art historian Claudia Mesch has referred to as “serious laughter,” which is a component of healing that provides space for contemplation.⁴⁴ In *Death of the Curator* (2009, figure 76) Yazzie perhaps takes a biting stab at the categorizing system that defines artists and their artwork. Like Fonseca and Bartow, Yazzie thinks of himself as an artist who happens to have Native American ancestors and like Vizenor, he makes use of trickster characters as a political and satirical tool. The coyotes in *Death of the Curator* pay no attention to the abstract painting that they trot by, nor do they jump up on the bench meant for viewing. In the space

Yazzie has created he questions the “missing” artworks by artists such as Fonseca and Bartow, as well as himself, in spaces that exhibit artists such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, and Max Ernst, all of whom drew on “primitivism.” Through Coyote, as Mesch examines, Yazzie continually rejects “the social/political status quo” and works to create something else that is overseen by a “group or community,” instead of a single controlling entity.⁴⁵

Yazzie had once mentioned to me that he did not want to continue with Coyote paintings because he felt that he was moving away from that period in his artwork.⁴⁶ Since 2012 he has depicted only few of the animals, but perhaps Coyote keeps calling him back. In 2014, for example, with the help of his son, who was four at the time, Yazzie built a model Coyote with LEGOS® (figure 77). *Lego-te* was included in the exhibition *Build!* at the Phoenix Art Museum. The exhibit promoted the use of LEGO® bricks to build bridges between cultures.⁴⁷ As seen in the image behind Yazzie, *Lego-te* was immortalized in *The Gazer* (2014), where in another empty absurdist interior space the plastic creation sits on a carpet looking at a coyote, who sits in a chair gazing out a large window at a manufactured desert landscape. It is apparent that Yazzie has found a way to coexist with the trickster. Although I am not sure if the plan was carried through, after the exhibition *Lego-te* was to be disassembled so the bricks might be used again, changed into something else to continue on anew.

Julie Buffalohead, Nanobozho, and Coyote

The artist Julie Buffalohead includes the trickster Coyote in her work, but she also eloquently paints other animal and animal/human trickster figures that

refer to many indigenous cultural histories. Although it does not appear that she privileges any one culture in particular, she states that she draws inspiration from stories from the Lakota and Ojibwa, as well as from her own Ponca heritage.

Buffalohead is very open about the fact that her paintings are autobiographical and they have been, at times, a method for her to work through troubling periods. She often includes herself in her work. While still in graduate school she painted *Nanobozho and Coyote's War Party* (2001) and *Coyote Dreams as a Pinup Girl* (2002) where she created a sort of "tableau" of her own psyche (figures 78 and 79). One in which female anthropomorphic versions of the tricksters Nanobozho and Coyote enacted some of her deepest concerns. Buffalohead said at the time she started creating her trickster figures she was thinking a lot about the split she felt within her own identity, between her Native and non-Native self. The half animal creatures, she felt were "grasping at Native values" and Coyote represented what she saw as "different kinds of power," something she felt she had lost.⁴⁸ In *Nanobozho and Coyote's War Party* the scene is moody, which is exactly what Buffalohead was trying to convey, it happened to match what she was feeling at the time. The painting is also reminiscent of a scene from a western film, one where the Native tricksters have turned the situation around, as they often do, and now they are the ones who are in control. Nanobozho, half woman, half rabbit, clutches three arrows and a bow lies at her high-heeled feet. Nanobozho prepares for war, one of the more ancient functions of trickster. The male gunslinger, however, pistol pointed at Coyote, has no power, because he is, after all, only a toy. Coyote possesses the camera, a fabricator of fetishistic objects; thus, the female trickster

switches roles within the patriarchal colonized drama and becomes the controller of the gaze.⁴⁹ Moreover, in *Coyote Dreams as a Pinup Girl*, Coyote is also a fetish object, feminized and eroticized in stockings, garter, and hose, and she dreams of other fetishized objects — the high-heeled shoes, the male Indian riding a horse and wearing a headdress, and even the rifle he carries.⁵⁰ These paintings reveal stories that unfold in layers of realization, as in Hunt's work, the longer you look the more you see; moreover, they are among the earliest works in which Buffalohead began depicting herself in the role of trickster.

Buffalohead was raised primarily in Minneapolis; her mother worked as an anthropologist and her father began the nation's first Native studies program at the University of Minnesota. She and her brother were very young when they began the process of incorporating pieces of their tribal and family history into their sense of identity. Buffalohead's diverse knowledge of Native tricksters, however, came from the many Native people she met through her parents. She sees Coyote as a powerful being and uses Coyote as a conduit with which to voice her own frustrations, as she explains in the following:

In Native lore the coyote is a shape shifter and may inhabit or become a human being. He engages in socially unacceptable behavior. There is a complexity to the trickster character, he is both hero and fool. Coyotes can become entangled in precarious situations due to his own greed. . . . I use the coyote as an alternate representation of myself. In part due to the Native philosophy that coyote is symbolic of what it means to be human to make mistakes, to create, to destroy. So, for me these trickster figures represent a kind of sacred being.⁵¹

In *The Four Tricksters* Buffalohead explores issues of mourning through the connections of four primary figures, Nanobozho, Coyote, Raven, and Iktomi, or Icktanicki (the spider) who is another primary trickster in the Plains tribes,

including the Ponca, but one I do not address in this dissertation (figure 80). This is a piece that Buffalohead has reworked, one in which she shows Rabbit, or Nanobozho, helping to cover an injured or dying Raven. She envisions that these more famous tricksters exist together and that they can help one another in times of trouble, as people also should.

Within her stories, Buffalohead creates a world that projects a certain surrealist quality, as seen in *The Trickster Showdown* (2014, figure 81), where the characters Coyote is dressed in a pink tutu staring down at a tiny fearful looking Rabbit (presumably Nanobozho), who wears a geometric patterned sash and holds a wand with a star at its tip. In this painting, as in others, Buffalohead draws on Native North American stories and European folktales; her characters are not exactly realistic, as they cast no shadows and the backgrounds and landscapes are limited, or they simply don't exist. It can be said that all of the artists in this paper draw on surrealism, perhaps because the tricksters with whom they depict, dwell in an interstice outside of human existence that hinges on absurdity, which is the same space that Babcock suggested tricksters exist. It is, according to Babcock, a space of "marginality," a world outside of the human realm where often reality as we see it is turned upside-down, as in *Revisionist History Lesson* (2014), where Coyote becomes a puppeteer (figure 82). And through her manipulation of Nanobozho, the little rabbit who holds a calumet and Turtle, who once carried the world on his back, Coyote changes the course of Euro-American colonization, hence the history of North America.

Buffalohead also incorporates another level of trickery into her artwork,

which is the use of masks. She says that masks allude to the shifting power of trickster, but also “parallels the imaginative world of children.” Buffalohead got the idea of using masks from watching her daughter play, such that some “are humorous and meant to reflect a pretend world where children can assign themselves a different identity.”⁵² In the worlds she creates, anthropomorphized animals, including the trickster kind, put on masks to transform their identity. Buffalohead employs masks as a form of transformation, not as a disguise.⁵³ In *Let the Show Begin* (2010, figure 83), for example, Buffalohead puts on the mask of Nanobozho and a coyote wears the mask of Coyote, a reference to the animal as trickster. Buffalohead as Nanobozho, reads Coyote’s fortune as in the background a fox acts as puppeteer. This is where Buffalohead addresses control, and power structures. The scene is very funny, but it is to wonder what Nanobozho sees in the cards, as Coyote appears to nervously shift and barely balances on the chair.

I also suggest that Buffalohead’s use of trickster figures is part of the “reflexive-creative,” function that tricksters perform, discussed above, that is “fundamental” to creativity. Considering the work of Arthur Koestler, Babcock asserts that the creative act is a “transitory state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed,” as is the case in transformation. Also drawing from Henri Bergson’s ideas of the creative and the comic as “capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time.”⁵⁴ That is to say that Buffalohead masterfully creates scenes of comedy that refer to deeper issues that are political, social, and cultural. I see this in *The Lone Ranger Rides Again* (2012, figure 84), where Buffalohead wears a rabbit mask

and sits on a red sofa reading an unnamed book to a rabbit, a raven (or crow), and a large male deer, noted by his horns, who wears a the same mask that the Lone Ranger character from the book and the television series wore. He also wears a belt holster with a pistol around his middle. It is a peculiarly humorous scene, in which Buffalohead juxtaposes incongruous frames of reference — a deer dressed as the Lone Ranger, personified animals, a red couch in the forest, as indicted by the feathery white lines of trees. It is a space, like all of Buffalohead's spaces, that Victor Turner defined as "*communitas*," a model of a society where "hierarchies are leveled, distinctions are dissolved, and roles are reversed."⁵⁵ In Buffalohead's artwork *communitas* is the space where tricksters live.

All Tricksters Together Now

Once more I call to Vizenor's work and his term "survivance," which is all too familiar in the discourse regarding Native North American art and Native American studies. Yet, it is a powerful word and its use fits well here: "the nature of survivance is unmistakable in native stories, natural reason, remembrance, traditions, and customs and is clearly observable in narrative resistance and personal attributes, such as the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind and moral courage. The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility, and victimry."⁵⁶ The artists I have spoken of in this chapter have invigorated tricksters as a method of social change, in their own form of survivance. Bartow, Hunt, Denomie, Yazzie, and Buffalohead call on Native traditions and histories to cleverly, subversively, and satirically confront issues and resist a past that has excluded the stories of the marginalized voices. They

have taken on the most powerful role, that of the storyteller, and through their silent visual language they have created new traditions, with which, through laughter, satire, and irony, they question structures of power, the fragility of this world, and remind us of our own humanity.

¹ Hicks explained at great length how the art community in Portland grieved Bartow's death. He was described as a "genius," who was also a generous person. Unfortunately, he became ill before I could meet with him personally. See Bob Hicks, "A Death in the Family: Rick Bartow," *Oregon ArtsWatch*, April 4, 2016, <http://www.orartswatch.org/a-death-in-the-family-rick-bartow/>.

² The line is a reference to the William Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Shakespeare, Hemmingway, and Herman Melville were among Bartow's favorite authors and he often includes symbols that refer to Western thought and philosophy. See Danielle Knapp, "Dialogue" in *Rick Bartow: Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, ed. Jill Hartz and Danielle M. Knapp (Eugene: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, 2016), 40.

³ In a video interview Bartow explains that "Things you know but cannot explain," is a quote by Arthur Schopenhauer, a nineteenth century German philosopher, who believed that "aesthetic contemplation" allowed an escape from pain through allowing a patient to become one with their deepest fears. Schopenhauer concept of "will" he believed was signified by words such as "desires" as and "want," which directly related to life and death. Schopenhauer's influence can be also seen in Camus theories, all of which seems to fit nicely with tricksters and Bartow's approach to his artwork. For "aesthetic contemplation" see for example, Dale Jacquette, *Schopenhauer, Philosophy and the Arts* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87.

⁴ See Knapp, "Tradition," in *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, 50.

⁵ In some Northwest Coast cultures Crow and Raven were one in the same, tricksters and creators. This may have also been from misunderstood translations from indigenous languages to English. However, Boas commented that Raven was a primary character only in the northern most tribes of British Columbia. Crows appear in the stories of the Coast Salish and even into the southwestern Pueblos. See John M. Marzluff, Tony Angell, and Paul R. Ehrlich, *In the Company of Crows and Ravens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 117-119; Franz Boas, "Introduction to James Teit, 'The Traditions of the Thompson Indians of British Columbia' "(1898), in *Race, Language and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), 408.

⁶ Knapp, "Traditions," in *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, 50.

⁷ "National Museum of the American Indian Welcomes New Sculptures by Artist Rick Bartow | Newsdesk," *Newsdesk-Press Room of the Smithsonian Institution*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/national-museum-american-indian-welcomes-new-sculptures-artist-rick-bartow>.

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- ⁸ Bartow quoted in Bob Keefer, "Dark Star," in *The Register-Guard*, 2002.
- ⁹ Rick Bartow, Artist's Statement for the exhibition *Transformations*, 1989.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, "'A Tolerated Margin of Mess': The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11, no. 3 (March 1, 1975), 183.
- ¹² Ibid, 184.
- ¹³ "FROM CALIFORNIA.; The Humboldt Butchery of Indian Infants and Women-Jacob Elyea Hanged Bogus Mining Stories A Solid Ledge of Gold at Jacksonville Items About Town, & C.," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1860. I have included this passage to explicate the horrendousness of the situation and the cavalier way with which it was addressed, at least in the east. There were other coordinated attacks by groups of vigilantes that claimed revenge for cattle rustling. Surviving Wiyot people were taken to Fort Humboldt for their protection. The tribe survives today near Humboldt Bay.
- ¹⁴ Hicks, "A Death in the Family." See also Lawrence Fong, "Truth Behind the Mask," in *Rick Bartow: Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, 10.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ C. G. Jung (Carl Gustav), *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, Bollingen Series ; 20 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 143.
- ¹⁷ Coyote stories were increasingly told in the twentieth century. Bartow created *Water for Segyp* in 2012. See historical information in A.L. Kroeber, "Handbook of the Indians of California," *Smithsonian Institutes Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 78, (Washington D.C.: Washington Government Printing Office, 1925), 72-73.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 119-120.
- ¹⁹ "Transformation: The Art of Rick Bartow | Cultural Survival," accessed March 2, 2017, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/transformation-art-rick-bartow>.
- ²⁰ Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, *A Moment with Rick Bartow: From Nothing Coyote Creates Himself*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OdeCh2hx1A>.
- ²¹ Margret Dubin, "Talking Rick Bartow," in Elinor S. Schrader, ed., *Indian Artist Magazine, Winter 1999* (Indian Artist, Inc., 1999), 40.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Anthropologist and Kiowa researcher Gus Palmer told me that his grandfather would tell him Saynday stories when his grandmother was busy with other things, as some were quite dirty, which made them all the funnier when he was young. He also said that Saynday stories were funny when told in the Kiowa language, but they were not as funny in English. This emphasizes that there are problems with translating the stories into English. Gus Palmer, interview by the author, April 27, 2016.
- ²⁴ Selma Rajjevic / 05.26.16, "'Words Are Crossbloods': An Interview with Gerald Vizenor « Post45," accessed March 2, 2017, <http://post45.research.yale.edu/2016/05/words-are-crossbloods-an-interview-with-gerald-vizenor/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Vizenor wrote of Bartow's retrospective, *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, "Bartow creates marvelous scenes of imaginary motion, and his visionary art reveals the countenance of humans, animals, and birds, in a great union of consciousness, the scenes of a bygone tradition of totemic liberty." See Gerald Vizenor, "Rick Bartow: Maestro of Totemic Liberty," written for the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe in 2016. I offer much thanks to Gerald Vizenor for providing me a copy of his text.

²⁷ See Bill Holm, *Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form*, (Seattle: Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Coast Art, Burke Museum, in association with University of Washington Press, 2015).

²⁸ The sculpture was also featured on the Canadian \$20 bill from 2004-2012. See "Bill Reid Foundation," accessed February 23, 2017, <http://www.billreidfoundation.ca/banknote/raven.htm>.

²⁹ Warhol left the medallion blank and the original was modeled after the medal given to the soup company in 1900 at the Paris International Exposition.

³⁰ Lawrence Paul, *Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: Born to Live and Die on Your Colonialist Reservations : June 20-September 16, 1995*, (Vancouver, British Columbia: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1995), 1.

³¹ Shawn Hunt, public lecture, opening of *Line as Language* Burrard Art Foundation, May 19, 2016.

³² Kevin Griffin More from Kevin Griffin Published on: November 18, 2016 | Last Updated: January 19, and 2017 10:41 Am Pdt, "ART SEEN: Visual Resistance: Shawn Hunt and Diyan Achjadi Make Colonialism Visible at Richmond Art Gallery," *Vancouver Sun*, November 18, 2016,

<http://vancouversun.com/entertainment/local-arts/visual-resistance-shawn-hunt-and-diyan-achjadi-make-colonialism-visible-at-richmond-art-gallery>.

³³ See "My Work Is Me: Shawn Hunt," *Northwest Coast Style*, January 18, 2015. See also "Stonington Gallery | Artist: Shawn Hunt," accessed March 2, 2017, See also "About « Shawn Hunt," accessed February 25, 2017, <http://www.shawnhunt.net/?cat=8>.

³⁴ Jim Denomie, interview by the author, December 28, 2015. Coincidentally, when I visited Denomie at his studio in rural Minnesota on a snowy December night, there were rabbit tracks leading to his door.

³⁵ Jim Denomie, interview with the author, December 28, 2015.

³⁶ The scene is described in the following text: "Despite the fact that the enemy troops were now directing their firepower against him and unleashing a shower of grenades in a frantic attempt to stop his advance, he moved forward against the third hostile emplacement, and skillfully neutralized the remaining enemy position. As his comrades moved forward to join him, Master Sergeant Keeble continued to direct accurate fire against nearby trenches, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Inspired by his courage, Company G successfully moved forward and seized its important objective. The extraordinary courage, selfless service, and devotion to duty displayed that day by Master Sergeant Keeble was an

inspiration to all around him and reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army." See Daniel Sauerwein, "Woodrow W. 'Woody' Keeble: An American Hero," *Military History*, March 9, 2008, <https://militaryhistoryblog.wordpress.com/2008/03/08/woodrow-w-woody-keeble-an-american-hero>.

³⁷Kristina Fagan, "The Trouble with the Trickster" in *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*, Morra and Reder, eds.(Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010), 4.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Louis Owens, *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*, 1st ed, (American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series ; v. 3) (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 227.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 228.

⁴¹ Karl W Luckert, *Coyoteway: A Navajo Holyway Healing Ceremonial* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979).

⁴² Ibid., 9. See also Clyde Kluckhohn, *Navaho Witchcraft* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 27. Both Luckert and Kluckhohn explain that Coyote was once associated with witches.

⁴³ Luckert, *Coyoteway*, 11. Luckert explored the Coyoteway ceremony that was nearly obsolete by the 1970s. However, the reason that the Coyoteway was performed was as a way to heal a person who had been inflicted with Coyote illness. It was believed that when a hunter killed a coyote they offended the Coyote people, who were the gods. Human hunters might lose their vision, their memory, or their mind.

⁴⁴ Claudia Mesch, "'What Makes Indians Laugh' Surrealism, Ritual, and Return in Steven Yazzie and Joseph Beuys," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 6, no. 1 (2012), 55.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁶ Personal conversation with Steven Yazzie, September 10, 2011.

⁴⁷ "Heard Museum's 'BUILD!' Exhibit - Raising Arizona Kids Magazine," accessed October 3, 2016, <http://www.raisingarizonakids.com/2014/05/heard-museums-build-exhibit/>.

⁴⁸ Julie Buffalohead, interview by the author, August 10, 2016.

⁴⁹ Feminist writer Laura Mulvey, drawing on Freudian theories, writes about "scopophilia," the Freudian term for the "pleasure of looking" that is a component of sexuality. Tricksters and humans are sexual beings and Buffalohead acknowledges the turn of the gaze. See Laura. Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 2nd ed., Language, Discourse, Society (Basingstoke [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 17.

⁵⁰ Mulvey points out that Freud identified fetishes as a group of signs that indicated a "woman's imaginary castration onto a variety of reassuring but often surprising objects — shoes, corsets, rubber gloves, belts knickers and so on." The signs become the source of male fantasy. I suggest that Buffalohead blurs the lines of sexuality and fantasy by depicting the objects and the one who fantasizes in

female, the trickster functions here then to reverse and confuse previous signifiers. See Ibid., 10-11.

⁵¹ Julie Buffalohead, interview by the author, August 10, 2016.

⁵² Julie Buffalohead, interview by the author, August 10, 2016.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Babcock-Abrahams, "A Tolerated Margin of Mess," 184.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 185.

⁵⁶ Gerald Robert Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance," in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, Gerald Vizenor, ed., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008),1.

Chapter 5

Performing Trickster

In art historical discourse there has been much discussion concerning “the artist as trickster.” However, as Vizenor stated, it is “ethnographically reductive” to address artists as trickster figures. In this dissertation I propose that the artists “practice and study trickster hermeneutics,”¹ but they do not become tricksters by taking on trickster characteristics. Depictions of coyotes, raven, and rabbit are signifiers of beings that have no fixed form; the animals only serve to recall what are multifarious and complex magical creatures. “Trickster discourse” concerning the arts has not been restricted to Native North American artists, or North American tricksters. Many contemporary scholars have fallen into the same habit of cross-cultural comparisons that anthropologists in the nineteenth century used when trying to define tricksters as they existed in diverse Native and Aboriginal cultures in North America. The writer Lewis Hyde, for example, placed the artist Marcel Duchamp and the poet Allen Ginsberg in the same frame of reference as the trickster Monkey from African stories because the artists created politically subversive, ironic, and satirical artwork. They pushed boundaries, putting themselves on the threshold, near to falling into and being contained in the very thing that they opposed.²

Hyde’s point is well taken, but his comparisons are far-reaching and muddled by too many cross-references. His choice of Monkey is quite random, not to mention that he provides little information on Monkey. Where was Monkey from? And how did those who maintained his stories perceive Monkey? Does Hyde

assume that the trickster Monkey had the same meaning as the Greek Hermes, or even a version of Coyote? This seems to be significant information that needs closer scrutiny.

As Radin asserted in 1956, many trickster characteristics overlap; however, no general meaning for North American tricksters has ever been determined and there can be great variances between Monkey from African stories, Loki from the Norse, and as I have stressed here, there are differences between the North American trickster figures Nanobozho and Coyote. There is also an altogether different connotation when trickster discourse is directed toward artists with American Indian and First Nations ancestry. North American tricksters are problematic in that they still have a place in many cultures' spiritual beliefs, they are thought of differently between regions and even tribes, and some figures are also associated with stereotypes. However, the contemporary artists that depict trickster figures primarily in the form of animals draw from many cultural traditions. Tricksters are a way of connecting to tradition, but their ambiguity and their humanness allows for them to change with the times.

In the 1990s, a wave of trickster discourse developed and North American tricksters were at the vanguard of the developing art and literature. However, in this trickster revival there was much-neglected area concerning North American tricksters' influence in, or connection with, the performance arts. North American tricksters were historically based on oral tradition and they thrived through the performances of storytellers, those that Powell viewed as "preachers." Artists that represent trickster figures, such as those discussed in chapter four, are responding

to what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has called “specular alterity,” a form of mimicry in which one perpetually mirrors back their otherness. The use of trickster figures in their imagined form, established by hegemonic structures, interrupts the continuum of Othering by reflecting the trickster figure back as an absurdity — Fonseca’s Coyote dancing in a tuxedo, for example — and in such a reversal, trickster becomes a subtle, but powerful, satirical tool.

The purpose of this chapter is to first consider further how defining artists as tricksters became popular and to continue the discussion as to what concerns have developed from what is now an over-used concept. Moreover, in this chapter I more closely examine how artists have made tricksters usefulness in Native North American performance arts and I briefly address how authors, playwrights, and scholars influenced tricksters’ presence since the 1970s. The focus of this chapter, however, centers on an investigation of the work of artists who enact trickster, specifically the performance and installation artists Jimmie Durham, James Luna, and Kent Monkman, all of whom are widely established and distinguished in and out of the genre of Native American art.

North American Tricksters’ Function in Contemporary Literature

Tricksters are captivating because of their unpredictable complexity, their ambiguity in function and form, and because many of the stories are just really funny. In Native American communities, humor has always been considered a valuable tool for its power to relieve societal anxieties and to heal. Vine Deloria commented that he was sometimes surprised by the “apparent overemphasis on humor within the Indian world. Indians have found a humorous side to nearly

every problem and the experiences of life have generally been well defined through jokes and stories that they have become a thing in themselves.”³ Indeed, the stories, like the cultures from which they are derived, are not static and their functions have evolved to suit the ensuing changes experienced Native North American people.

Deloria also had something to say about anthropologists. In chapter four of his 1969 book *Custer Died for Your Sins*, titled “Anthropologists and Other Friends,” Deloria scrutinized the role that anthropologists have played in the colonization of American Indians. His primary point being that anthropologists have spent a great amount of time and money helping to make Indians into something that they never were, which has created even bigger problems for indigenous people. Deloria asks how Native people will ever get out of poverty and discrimination when they are continually challenged for not being Indian enough.⁴ Anthropologists contributed greatly to the phenomena of making a mystery of North American indigeneity, but the ideas of anthropology changed, as anthropological collections from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some of those collected by Boas, for example, are recognized for their value as historical documents, and anthropologists who are now collecting and caring for Native American archives are themselves of Native descent.

An art historian recently asked me what made artist’s depictions of tricksters “authentic” when they were accessing in their art many cultural traditions outside of their own traditions? I found it unsettling that a scholar had the idea that artists of Native ancestry should be limited by their heritage. Why

should ancestry dictate any part of what issues an artist presents? Only recently this became a hot-button issue in the United States when Dana Schutz, a white artist, depicted in a painting that was featured at the Whitney biennial the mutilated corpse of Emmitt Till, an African American teenager who was brutally killed in 1955 by two white men. The painting and subsequent protests against its presentation involved identity, which is indeed very personal, political, and complex. Therefore, I ask here if there is there a way that an artist can successfully retain traditions and histories while continuing to develop their own space in a multi-culturally centered modernity? This is exactly what the artists addressed in this dissertation strive to accomplish. All of the artists discussed come from different backgrounds, all have different learned experiences, and all are just trying to make sense of the world they know that is filled with complicated histories and ways of understanding, as it is for all of us.

I have previously commented on Vizenor's relationship to tricksters; still, he is perhaps one of the most important literary figures to contribute to the resurgence of North American tricksters in the twentieth century. Taking advantage of tricksters' ambiguity and shape shifting abilities, Vizenor began a series of fiction books in the 1980s, which featured a cast of altered trickster characters that represent his own struggle with his conflicted heritage. His first volume, *Earth Diver's: Tribal Narratives on Mixed Descent* (1981), is comprised of a series of narratives where "earthdivers" serve as the metaphoric trickster protagonists, drawn from real life "mixedbloods," or Métis, who travel from their

traditional realms into contemporary urban settings to create a “new consciousness of coexistence.”⁵

Vizenor opens the *The Trickster of Liberty* (1988) with the much-quoted prologue, “Tricksters and Transvaluation,” in which the “mixedblood trickster” Sergeant Alex Hobraiser, debates the meaning of tricksters with an anthropologist named Eastman Schicer. Through these two characters Vizenor defines the trickster as a literary invention, not anthropological, that “liberates” the Native imagination as a “comic discourse and language game.”⁶ Through the written word, Vizenor says, tricksters have survived. Vizenor recalls of some of the most popular theories from the mid-twentieth century, such as those of Roland Gérard Barthes and Jacques Lacan, to support his argument, which he illustrates through his fictional narrative. Vizenor defines North American tricksters, as “mongrels” of mythology and “tribal tricksters” are never what they seem. Refuting the concepts put forth by Radin and Jung, Vizenor asserts that tricksters cannot be locked into a “method,” or theory, because “methods are the death of the imagination and the end of the trickster. The trickster is a communal voice in a comic worldview, not a tragic method in the social sciences.”⁷ Vizenor does not define himself through the identity of tricksters, but rather he has found his most comfortable identity as a writer through their mythology. His myths are new inventions in which he melds Anishinaabe traditions with contemporary culture.

North American Tricksters in the 1990s: Theatrics and Humor

Critical scholarship on the topic of tricksters by both Native and non-Native writers alike increased greatly in the 1990s. In *Mythical Trickster Figures*:

Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms (1993), William J. Hynes and William G. Doty approach the complexity of examining trickster figures with consideration to both the concept of the universal archetype and cultural-specific perspectives. Hynes and Doty importantly assert that “trickster material” requires careful attention because of its varied and complex functions: “they are often entertainments involving play or laughter, but they are entertainments that are *instructive*.”⁸ Tricksters “map” for some societies the proper way to act.

Similar to anthropologists over a century earlier, Hynes lumps tricksters cross-culturally and historically, assigning primarily the same similarities that Radin did in 1956, through six traits that he found common among all tricksters:

At the heart of this cluster of manifest trickster traits is (1) the fundamentally ambiguous and anomalous personality of the trickster. Flowing from this are such other features as (2) deceiver/trick player, (3) shape shifter, (4) situation-invertor, (5) messenger/imitator of the gods, (6) and sacred/lewd *bricoleur* (my italics).⁹

Perhaps there this is a fair assessment of characteristics, but most North American tricksters were also tied to death, and somehow involved in the creation of at least portions of the universe, which may allude to the Hyde’s use of the term *bricoleur*; however, that term is loaded and needs some clarification.

The term “bricoleur” was used by Lévi-Strauss in his book, *The Savage Mind*, where he defined the term as “someone who works with works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman.”¹⁰ A bricoleur uses “what is at hand” to create; “that is to say with a set of tools and materials that is always finite and always heterogeneous.”¹¹ Lévi-Strauss used the term as an analogy for the creation mythologies. Bricoleur has often been used when referring to

trickster, as tricksters can be creators — Bartow's Coyote created himself from nothing. The term has also been applied liberally to describe certain artists, which is important for this chapter particularly. However, it is Lévi-Strauss' "devious means" that strikes me as something to consider more closely.¹²

While there are problems with Hynes and Doty's broad approach, the individual essays do provide some valuable information about trickster scholarship. Hynes, being a linguist, also examined what many "trickster scholars" omit in their analysis, is the importance of "play." What is divisively clever about trickster stories is not perhaps so much tricksters' methods, but the methods of the storyteller, who determines the timing and the rhythm of the story — how the story should be performed. The theatricality of trickster stories, is comprised of, as Vizenor asserted, "language games" that are often lost in trickster's methodization.

The subject of tricksters in connection with humor and play brings this discussion to Kenneth Lincoln's, *Indi'n Humor: Bicultural Play in Native America* (1993) and Allen J. Ryan's, *The Trickster Shift: Humor and Irony in Contemporary Native Art* (1999), both of which brought attention to the work of several indigenous artists and helped to establish "trickster" as a framework for distinguishing Native American art in art scholarship and criticism. Lincoln hoped to reveal the complexity of "Indian humor to non-Indians," when he approached his analysis of "Indi'n humor" through his own understandings of "the millennia-old tribal legacies of Trickster, an antiheroic comic teacher and holy fool, to fashion a new image of the surviving Indian as comic artist more than a tragic victim, seriously humorous to the native core."¹³ Lincoln addresses novelists, playwrights,

and artists, such as Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Dan Namingha, Jean LaMarr, Larry McNeil, with one section devoted to Harry Fonseca, who is the only visual artist that really receives any detailed analysis. Lincoln traces the meaning and importance of humor and satire in mostly American Indian cultures (only somewhat addressing Canadian First Nations cultures), but like other scholars writing in the 1990s, he presents a pan-Indian approach, using far too many examples, which makes for confusion. He also spends a great amount of time on Coyote, neglecting other North American figures and their histories. Thus, Lincoln misses most of the notable distinctions of trickster humor in Native cultures, and by doing so he falls into a trickster predicament of his own making. In the dilution of Native North American trickster figures, Lincoln only further enforces Coyote's role as a stereotype, which serves to place Coyotes' power in the hands of the dominant culture.

Ryan focuses on the "tricksterishness" found in the practice of primarily Canadian First Nations visual artists. He does this through the analysis of artwork and interviews of a vastly intriguing body of artists, such as Shelly Niro, Rebecca Belmore, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Edward Poitras, and, of course, Harry Fonseca. Ryan sees that many Native artists possess the ability to, similar to Pueblo Clowns, interact "creatively with chaos," and can "withstand contact with nonorder."¹⁴ Ryan's analysis encompasses trickster figures broadly, concentrating on tricksters can accomplish with their "wit" to "combat ignorance and imagine other ways of being human." But they all, he says, "are the product of trickster practice."¹⁵ Ryan did much to help to establish tricksters as a framework for

discussing the artwork of Native American artists, acknowledging them in a way that did not confine them to colonial stereotypes. However, did Ryan's book contribute to the subsequent outpouring of "trickster discourse" directed at artists of Native American descent? In the eighteen years that have passed since the publication of *"The Trickster Shift,"* there have been many Native artists who have been dubbed "tricksters." Does every artist whose artwork is satirical or politically subversive is a trickster, or practicing a form of trickery? Some so-called "trickster artists" do not appear to "trick" within their depictions. Then is it considerably more provocative, more exotic for an artist to be named a trickster? What must be carefully considered is how trickery and trickster are defined because carelessness in the name of trickster can lead to the categorization of artists, the diminishing of individual and societal cultural values, as well as the reducing the diversity of histories. With that being said, there are still some artists who favor trickster strategies in their practice and embrace trickery as an art form.

Joseph Beuys" "Fifteen Minutes" of Trickster

In *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* (1990), Vizenor's character, Proude Cedarfair, leader of a group of "mixedbloods," comments: "The trickster and warrior clowns have stopped more evil violence with their wit than have lovers with their lust and fools with the power and rage."¹⁶ In this chapter I examine the humor aspect of North American tricksters, and indeed humor is largely what tricksters are known for, even though I have exemplified that the figures are much more complex. I do question, however, if tricksters are capable of "wit." Sigmund Freud, in his extensive analysis on humor, contended that "wit" was comprised of

“the contrast of ideas,” of making “sense of nonsense” and differentiating “confusion and clearness.”¹⁷ This backwards and forwards, topsy-turvy definition most certainly correlates to tricksters’ function and dominion. Yet, perhaps tricksters’ wit, as it were, is not inherent to the figures, but instead comes from the clever informer, otherwise known as the storyteller.

At this juncture I feel it is important to address German artist Joseph Beuys’ iconic, *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974, figure 85), a performance piece that most closely epitomizes the idea of the artists as trickster. The piece was a pivotal moment in the history of art that helped to seal his fame in the vein of Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, and André Breton. *I Like America* also reflected years of Beuys careful structuring and posturing of his own form of personal mythology based on the “story,” which involved his rescue from a plane crash by Tartars in Crimea during World War II.¹⁸ Beuys stated that he was nearly frozen to death and the Tartars who found him, covered him in fat and wrapped him in felt, essentially resuscitating him. “Fat” and “felt” figured prominently in Beuys artworks from the 1960s into the 1970s, as signifiers of magic objects from which he drew power for the performances of his “shaman-like resurrections”¹⁹ that he began performing in the 1960s. Dead hares were also added were also used as objects in performances, such as *Eurasia* (1963); *The Chief* (1963-1964), and *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1964, figure 86). The dead animal, or its spirit, reflecting Beuys’ absurdist confrontation of society’s relationship to art in museums, as Valerie Casey wrote, dead hares represented “the viewer in the museum — an anesthetized and flaccid figure to be carried and directed, supplied with the

prosthetic vision of the curatorial interpretation.”²⁰

Still, Beuys appeared to be caught up in the authority and publicity that his mystical persona offered, and in the span of his career he became a media sensation. His *I Like America* performance in 1974, however, went nearly unnoticed, primarily because at the time his artistic practice was not fashionable in the United States. Beuys art was wide-reaching and formulated through a variety of influences, from death and politics, to science and the natural world. Considering the nature of *I Like America*, it is also not surprising to learn that he had a great interest in German anthropology and the study of Native American cultures, although some of his ideas about indigenous cultures may have been fueled by the fictional writings of the popular nineteenth century German novelist Karl May.

In the installation, Beuys spent three days (initially he was to have spent a week) with a live coyote in the confines of a gallery space at René Block’s art gallery in Manhattan. He arrived at the gallery from Kennedy airport in the back of an ambulance, again wrapped in a “felt” wool blanket, the objective of his arrival in an ambulance being to prevent his feet from touching American soil until his encounter with the coyote. He had an emergency case that contained blood stained bandages, syringes, and medicinal plants, and among the other paraphernalia there was also a felt blanket, and a ball of fat.²¹ Beuys defined his role as both shepherd and shaman, though the cane he carried that served to protect his shepherd-self from the coyote. For the shaman the cane operated as sort of spiritual divining rod that provided Beuys access to Coyote’s spirit, who would act

as his guide in the spiritual world.

I Like America was an expansion of absurdity and spectacle in which Beuys created an inverted universe. He envisioned the piece as a ritualistic healing of the “sickness of nature,” that he saw that was lost through the development of civilization. Caroline Tisdall depicted Beuys’ theatrics as a symphonic melding of humanity and nature and wrote of it as were if it were a syrupy romance in which “the white man and the animal exchanged signs of recognition, adapted to each other, or adopted each other.”²² Instead, the installation staged by a German artist about American genocide depicted a confusing “dialogue” that took place between a wild animal (who was provoked by Beuys through the loud noises and jabs from his crook) and the artist within a conspicuously “unnatural” environment of a gallery space.²³ Perceivably, the coyote represented the North American trickster figure, who became an actor in Beuys imaginatively staged “story.” However, Beuys appeared to lack the ability to communicate with the animal’s spirit as he had planned and the coyote, named “Little John,” refused its experimental confines, squirmed out of Beuys arms when he attempted to hold him, as would any living wild animal.²⁴ Little John growled at the artist and urinated whenever and on whatever, including over the several copies of the Wall Street Journal that were brought in daily.²⁵ The layers of Beuys performance unfolded as a comedy in which he was allotted the role of a buffoon, exemplary of a trickster who overstepped his human boundaries, and in the manner of tricksters, Beuys became the butt of his own joke.

The Many Faces of Jimmie Durham

I Like America gained a sort of cultish following some years after its debut. Film footage of the performance has been modernized and immortalized through the easily accessible *YouTube* video-sharing site. The example serves to demonstrate a case in point, in which a non-Native artist embraced, appropriated, reconceived, and incarnated the essence of North American trickster through his own body. We will never know if Beuys' intention was to be humorous. Beuys attempted to strategize, but as often happens in trickster stories, the situation was turned around and in Beuys' upside-down world the coyote, Little John, claimed the upper hand. Still, *I Like America* has become one of Beuys' most cited artworks in his extensive oeuvre; an oeuvre that reflects aspects of Dada, Surrealism, Expressionism, Conceptualism, Pop-Art, and Performance Art, as well as his own Fluxus movement. Beuys continually pushed the boundaries of art and he was successful in his endeavors. It is no wonder that so many contemporary artists have emulated and were inspired by his artworks; I would include the artist Jimmie Durham among them.

Durham's response to Beuys' work takes the form of a peculiarly configured representation of Coyote made of a coyote skull, shells, a wooden post, an animal's horn, and an old rearview mirror, titled *Not Joseph Beuys' Coyote* (1990, figure 87). It is a "resurrection" of dead things that are attached to pieces of inanimate scrap that becomes an animated grinning, laughing, snarling grotesque, who waves one horn-shaped handleless arm at what, we can only guess. Is Durham's Coyote looking toward the past; or is Coyote directing a universal hand gesture at Beuys? Perhaps the old trickster is welcoming someone, or something new, the rearview

mirror, after all, has been painted over in a turquoise blue, thus made useless for seeing what is behind. Coyote's skull, an object of nature that is also associated with the readymade, is decorated in a way that reflects Durham's consideration for space through his careful divisions of line and color that he applies to many of the faces he renders. The skull is completely covered with decoration, one half covered by yellow paint that is interrupted by a central line of small red beads that runs from top of the head to the gapping mouth. A turquoise mosaic that covers the other half of the skull, and one gold colored taxidermy eye nearly bulges out of the left eye socket, evocative of the eye-juggler story, where the trickster Coyote loses his eyes trying to play a shaman's game of magic.²⁶

Perhaps the smiling Coyote is a reflection of the artist himself, as Lucy Lippard wrote of Durham and his bone sculptures:

As well as putting himself in the animal's place, he also evokes the social forces that killed it. The open jaws of deer, panther, coyote, moose, combine several meanings in a single grimace: these animals laugh, they cry, they snarl, they hear prayers. A significant part of Durham's identity is somehow wrapped up in them, and dead creatures continue to visit him.²⁷

Moreover, he had a long history with the trickster Coyote, as he explained:

When I was 13 or so I had to go out into the woods and find my real name. Coyote, who invented death and singing, was the spirit who gave me my name. As is often the case, he also gave me a gift. This is what he gave me as a name gift; that I would always see whatever was dead if it were within my field of vision. For more than thirty years I have seen every dead bird and animal every day wherever I am. So it became necessary to see if that was a usable gift or just a dirty trick that would drive me crazy.²⁸

This is not to say that Durham is a trickster, but rather he embraces Coyote as a part of his heritage and he employs trickster methodologies, pushing boundaries for example, as of a part of his art practice.

Durham's oeuvre is extensive, as well as global, but his association with trickster strategies, however, is best evidenced in his "self-portraits." The earliest and most famous of which is his so-titled, full-body multimedia piece from 1986 that was most recently analyzed by Elisabeth Sussman for the exhibition, *Jimmie Durham: at the Center of Earth* (figure 88). Thanks to Sussman's close analysis we are able to have an intimate look at this semi-sculptural collage that is comprised of canvas, paint, metal, hair, fur, chicken feathers, human rib bones, sheep bones, seashell, and thread.²⁹ Durham's provides a view of his entire nude body that was traced by his partner, artist Maria Thereza Alves, onto canvas, which he then painted and covered with "witty" text. These humorous statements read as Durham's inner voice, where he provides an informative assessment of himself as well as his critique of societal, often stereotypical, perceptions of "normal." With statements, such as "My skin is not really this dark, but I am sure that many Indians have coppery skin," and "Indian penises are unusually large and colorful"(as noted by Sussman, with the word "penises" written in larger letters) Durham evokes some of the clichés that are meant to "compartmentalize" all Native men.³⁰ Moreover, the brightly colored face, Sussman indicates, "is painted in the colors and symbols that accord with the stereotypical representation of the American Indian,"³¹ an identifier of Durham's Indianness with which he equivocally questions his own perception of self.

Durham has had a long struggle with his public identity. Perhaps part of the reason his sculptures, paintings, poetry and prose, and performances, have not received the attention they deserve (although in the past ten years he has been

increasingly cited for his contributions to Native American art) has something to do with Durham's cultural heritage and the timely controversy in which his art practice was enveloped — which comes down to is a case of misinterpreted identity.

Is Durham Serious?

Durham's life experience is as far reaching as his artistic practice. He was born in Arkansas, and he was raised there, and in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. Durham did his first performance piece in 1963 in Houston, where he read texts of famous Native leaders. In 1968 he enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Genève and in the 1970s after he got his degree he returned to the United States, and began his work as an activist, becoming deeply involved with the American Indian Movement (AIM). Durham debuted his "bone" sculptures in the 1980s, but he was concerned about their presentation, viewing the pieces as too "beautiful," too much like "folk art," and artifacts, or like ceremonial objects, they were too easily consumed as stereotypes of what was considered "Indian" art.³² As Durham recently said: "I have never liked the idea of an 'Indian' art world or of Indian art. It seems too closed and too commercial."³³ Durham came to the New York art scene at a time when, Ann Ellegood writes, there was "a period of steady and vocal calls for the increased backing and visibility for artists of color."³⁴ These efforts effectively opened up avenues of opportunity for marginalized artists that were in need of recognition, but the support also assisted in informing systematic categorizations of difference. "The result," says Ellegood, "was the segregation of

these artists, often in venues that had been founded with the express mission of providing a platform for underrecognized ‘Others.’” Durham said of that period:

When I showed in NYC in the 80s there was an extremely tight idea about what art was; that it was made by whites, not by the rest of us. So I began to poke at that idea and its foolishness at the same time that I tried to show how Native American realities were invisible in destructive ways.³⁵

In addition, in 1990 the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Act established, in order to protect Native artists, that a that a person must be officially certified as a tribal member, that anyone trying to pass artworks with the impression that it was produced by Indian artists, when it was not, may face “civil or criminal penalties up to a \$250,000 fine, or a 5-year prison term, or both,”³⁶ for a first offense. The law stands today. The issue for Durham around the time the law was instated was that he was not registered, for whatever reason, with the Cherokee tribe, and the issue of his representation, as an “Indian artist,” whether he denied it or not, became a bone of contention with some Native artists. Durham refused to engage with the controversy. Still, has the debate only contributed to Durham’s legend? Moreover, do we as art historians, contribute to its growth? In 2015 some of Durham’s *Self-Portrait* was featured in *Native North American Art*, a survey book about Native North American artists, along with a quote that appeared under the sub-title “The Artist as Trickster”:

I herby swear to the truth of the following statement: I am a full-blood contemporary artist of the subgroup (or clan) called sculptors. I am not an American Indian, nor have I ever seen or sworn loyalty to India. I am not a Native “American,” nor do I feel that “America” has any right to either name me or un-name me. I have previously stated that I should be considered a mixed-blood: that is, I claim to be male but in fact only one of my parents is male.³⁷

Durham, always wandering, had moved to Cuernavaca Mexico in 1987, before the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Act was instated. His leaving was not all together political, as he desired a more “cosmopolitan environment” and it was not long after he began his life in Mexico he was actively exhibiting in Europe.³⁸ His wandering ways eventually took him to Europe, where he is today, and perhaps all that was behind him (and no rearview mirrors) brought about a change in the way he thought about “self.” In 2006 he created a few more self-portraits that were a departure from his original sardonic and symbolically anti-primitivism 1986 representation.

W. Jackson Rushing comparatively wrote that Durham “often found it useful to adapt the guise of trickster . . . Durham, like trickster, seeks self-empowerment through a constantly shifting ‘proliferation of identities.’”³⁹ *Self-Portrait as Rosa Levy* (2006, figure 89) is perhaps one of his most interesting “identity shifts.” In the photograph, Durham engages viewers in a “game” of transformation. Using his body as subject matter, Durham performs his “incarnation” of the imagined “Rosa Levy,” as mimetic referral to Duchamp’s *Rose Sélavy* (1921, figure 90) and Duchamp’s mustached and bearded Mona Lisa of *L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919, figure 91). To clarify, Rose Sélavy was Duchamp’s enactment of what many have referred to as his female alter ego.⁴⁰ The title for this character was included as a part of Duchamp’s inverted and symbolic language games that were markedly Dadaist and paradoxically humorous. Duchamp imagined Sélavy as a cabaret dancer, and *Why not sneeze Rose Sélavy?* Duchamp’s 1924 sculpture became part of the joke, as sneeze was a euphemism for orgasm, and “Sélavy” sounding like the French *C’est la*

vie (such is life). While L.H.O.O.Q. is a pun, sounding in French like “Elle a chaud au cul”, a bawdy expression indicating female sexual desire.⁴¹

Durham’s incarnation is homage to a Duchampian parody, his parody of a parody with a twist. The striped scarf draped over Durham’s head mimics the mantle worn by the Mona Lisa and there is a thin moustache drawn over Durham’s pink lipsticked Mona Lisa smile, and he appears almost as if he is wrapped in a velvet towel, his upper chest a bit hairy and right shoulder bare. In the unpolished presentation there is no question that Rosa Lévy is Durham. Thus, with his wry sense of humor, Durham further problematizes and satirizes his own self-image through layers, not only in the anagram that is the title, but also in the juxtapositions of masculine with feminine, virtue with immorality, and clever with outrageous.

As it is with tricksters, in Durham’s stories there are parts that the listener and in this case, the viewer, needs to sort out for themselves. In *Self-Portrait Pretending to be Maria Thereza Alves* (2006, figure 92) for example, the artist represents more personal aspects of self, as Durham uses a painted mask representing Alves’ face to cover his own. The replica of Alves’ face is not a functional a mask; lacking openings for seeing and breathing it becomes a barrier between the viewer and himself. Entirely concealing the artist, the smaller mask that he holds brings attention to Durham’s hand that tenderly cradles the mask. It is a odd enactment, but one in which the artist allows us to witness what might a touching moment. Durham, however, turns the same image upside-down in *Self-Portrait Pretending to be Maria Thereza Alves as Terminator* (2006, figure 93).

Wrapping a layer of tin foil over his head and painting the mask of Alves face in shiny metallic silver, Durham creates an outlandish semblance of Alves as if she were the powerful “cyborg” from the 1984 movie *The Terminator* (and subsequent sequels), perhaps reminding us that his art is not always to be taken too seriously. Similarly, in *Self-Portrait Pretending to be a Stone Statue of Myself* (2006, figure 94), Durham, questions the seriousness of art simply by holding an ordinary stone in front of his face. The absurdity of the image explained by the title, which identifies the subject (Durham) and the act. Here, Durham again uses a play of words to create a drama where he makes himself the central object of his social commentary.

Two of my favorite portraits of Durham, however, are not titled “self-portrait;” in fact, the artist does not really take credit for either, yet he is the subject matter of both. In *Jimmie as a Flower*, from 1983/84 (figure, 95) Alves, depicted Durham’s face amidst a field of red and blue flowered fabrics. His make-up, applied as if it were a mask, almost conceals him, but emphasizes his bright blue, slightly crooked eyes. The blending of fabric and human is striking, and incredibly humorous. The second image, by photographer Jens Ziehe, is included on the back cover of Durham’s latest book, *Jimmie Durham in Europe* (2015), which consists of thirty-nine photographs of Durham in different European settings.⁴² In the image Durham is holding up a paper mask that is a sepia image of himself (figure, 96). The monochromatic neutrality of the mask and the softened background serve to accentuate the steel blueness of Durham’s eyes that stare back directly at the viewer. There is a transparency to the photograph, as artist is

keenly sure of himself, layer upon layer, the image suggesting that perhaps Durham is content, having come to terms with Coyote and with the trickster's ways.

James Luna with Trickster on the Threshold

But can artists like Durham successfully embrace trickster strategies without being trapped in exactly what they oppose? How do they not wear out their welcome? The brilliance of tricksters is their ambiguity, and artists, the storytellers, learn to enlist tricksters to use their best ruses, their best sly, and witty inversions, as a way to constantly reinvent themselves.

I could hardly mention performance and tricksters without a discussion of the artist James Luna, who does not consider himself a trickster. In fact he does not like the label. Another thing that Luna tends to shy away from in discussion is his pivotal work, *Artifact Piece* (1987, figure 97). Yet the performance undeniably changed the way we look at art and how we perceive identity. Luna premiered this performance artwork, at the Museum of Man in San Diego, California, where in it he challenged practices of display by turning his own body into an artifact. Lying himself across the length of a large table that was covered with sand, wearing only a breechcloth, he surrounded his body with didactic panels that documented actual events from his life. The work, Linda Weintraub states, stems from Luna's desire to educate people on the realities of what it meant to be a "real" Indian in the late decades of the twentieth century.⁴³ Luna was among a number of American Indian activists and artists called attention to what Weintraub calls a "perversion of prejudice," which was a result of non-natives' romanticization of

Indian people and the counterculture movements of the 1960s that renewed a desire among United States citizens to become “Indian.”⁴⁴

The point of Luna’s *Artifact Piece* was to offer a view into the difficulties of “growing up Indian,” which he experienced as member of the Luiseno/Diegueno tribe, on the La Jolla Reservation in North San Diego County.

The labels acknowledge the scares on his body, the life experiences of the injuries that caused them, and valuable lessons learned. One excerpt includes the following: Drunk beyond the point of being able to defend himself, he was jumped by the people from another reservation . . . Saved by an old man, he awoke with a swollen face covered with dried blood. Thereafter, he made it a point not to be as trusting among relatives and other Indians.⁴⁵

Along side the table were two cabinets filled the multifarious layers of Luna’s identity. One cabinet contained Indian artifacts from his ancestral heritage, including those used in ritual, while the other cabinet held documentation from Luna’s life, such as albums from Miles Davis and the Sex Pistols, a figurine of Willie Mays, and Luna’s master’s degree.

In *Artifact Piece* Luna placed a live object (his body) in the midst of a space dedicated to the display of artifacts, dinosaur bones, and fossils, and transformed it into a space of negotiation, where new discourse was formed. It marked a pivotal moment in practices of collecting and displaying Native American art and today remains the most critically acclaimed work of performance art produced by an indigenous artist. *Artifact Piece* was, as Lara Evans points out in her essay “The Artifact Piece and Artifact Piece Revisited,” among a wave of performative works in the 1980s and 1990s that confronted institutional (museum) practices.⁴⁶ Luna’s work has inspired countless other Native North American artists to expand in the

area of performance art, where a rich body of important work continues to challenge prejudices and practices of Othering by mirroring back with sardonic wit what colonization has destroyed and then recreated.⁴⁷

Luna continually works to expand his oeuvre, with each performance providing social commentary that is woven with strands of history and his personal life experiences. Such as in *We Become Them* (2011, figure 98), in which Luna walks center stage and stands below a projected image of Northwest Coast dance mask. Facing the audience, he contorts his facial features to imitate the carving and with each screen change Luna becomes another mask. Like the performers in the Northwest Coast dances Luna transforms into the otherworldly creatures that the masks represent.⁴⁸

All of Luna's performances have this personal touch, and both time and space play significantly in his pieces. In 1991 Luna first performed *Take a Picture With a Real Indian* (figure 99), in which he offered viewers the opportunity to enter into the exhibition space, perhaps even touch the artist, and have their photograph taken with him, first while he was costumed in a loincloth, and then again when he was dressed in black turtleneck and kaki pants. Luna restaged the piece in 2011, on Columbus Day in front of the busy Union Station in Washington D.C. (near to the Smithsonian Museum), where he stood at a podium and invited people on the street to "Take a picture with a real Indian." He waited until one person, and subsequently a line of people, gathered around him to be photographed, but as he remarked in an interview: "I'll do that for a while until I get mad enough or humiliated enough. It's double humiliation."⁴⁹ Still, the point of

performance art often resides in the artist's own objectification, thus the core success of performance art such as Luna's is ostensibly bound to an artist's willingness to objectify themselves.

Similarly, in stories trickster figures must deal with humiliation as a consequence of selfish actions, or indiscretions. Aspects of Luna's performance art are "tricky," subversive, spontaneous, satiric, and at times, just plain funny. Although Luna is sometimes exhausted by people's praise of his "funniness." His performances, while outrageous and absurdist are also thoughtfully and carefully planned out. He studies and trains as a part of his art preparation, his performances adhere to a script, and he rehearses and blocks so that he may find key areas and work his timing. He also works with musicians and other performers who must know their cues, so there are also times when he acts as writer, director, and stage manager. I explain this part of Luna's preparation because the work of performance artists is often thought to be "organic," but serious performance artists prepare for months and years. Luna carefully studies his influences to prepare the stories he tells, which combine the histories of people and cultures, and also refers to the work of other artists.

Luna has been influenced by the work of performance artists such as: Vito Acconci, who was first noted for his performance *Seedbed* (1971), in which he lay under a gallery ramp and masturbated (Acconci later turned to sculptures, and installations, architecture); Marina Abramović, who was one of the earliest performance artists to invite the audience to participate with her body, which she used as a medium; and Anishinaabe performance artist Rebecca Belmore, who has

used her body to problematize colonized sites, spaces like “The Grange” (the original location of the Art Gallery of Ontario), where in *Wild* (2008) she lay naked in a four-post bed under a red satin bed cover that was sewn with human hair.⁵⁰

Luna is often compared with Belmore in the context of their performance work and he has been featured with her in exhibitions. He also does collaborative work with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, whose outrageously humorous enactments underscore the serious aspects of social and cultural shifts that have to do with race, identity, and power; issues that Luna addressed in *Emendatio* (figure 97), which he performed at the 2005 Venice Biennale in conjunction with his installation, *Chapel for Pablo Tac* (both of which were reinstalled at the Museum of the American Indian in 2006). *Emendatio*, the performance, was Luna’s method of rectifying history, by telling Tac’s story, that of a Luiseño man who was the first to write down the history of the Luiseño people.

More recently Luna has been telling the story of “Ishi,” the lone survivor of the Yahi tribe, who lived the last five years of his life at the Anthropological Museum in San Francisco (figure 100). The story of Ishi is tragic, the stuff of Luna’s “dreams and nightmares.”⁵¹ There is a part of Luna that is terrified of becoming Ishi and there is a part of Luna that is Ishi. Of this man called Ishi, Vizenor wrote, he “created a sense of natural presence in his stories, a native presence that included others. . . . He was a tricky storiier in exile.”⁵² Luna’s performances of modernity recall ancient methods of teaching in which Luna pulls his audience to the threshold of the space between myth and reality, and like “storiers” before him,

he brings to the performance the flesh and blood form of trickster, to entertain, to teach, to question, constantly evolving to suit the needs of the people.

Tricksters, Sex, and Kent Monkman

Performance art sprang from the cultural, social, and ethnic clashes of the 1960s, a time when the *body* became central to individual and collective identity. Durham, and Luna have made use of their bodies as objects on which cultural history, personal experience, and the contemporary congregate as a breath of social commentary. Then there is Kent Monkman, painter, installation, and performance artist, who celebrates the crossing of social boundaries, contextualized within his own decolonizing body. Yet, Monkman cannot, as it appears, get away from the label “trickster.” In 2012 in a Toronto publication he was headlined as “Queer Trickster,” and just a few months ago a friend made me aware of “Kent Monkman: A trickster with a cause crashes Canada’s 150th birthday party, ” that led the announcement of *Shame and Prejudice* an exhibition that featured Monkman’s newest paintings, and took place at the University of Toronto Art Museum. I do not view Monkman as a trickster; however, his character “Miss Chief” presents an interesting twist to the issue of artist as trickster.

Monkman is Cree and Irish and grew up near his Cree family in Canada. He began his career by studying illustrations and tried abstract painting for a time, but he transformed his career by creating an identity that became the voice of his artistic practice. Considered here is how Monkman sanctions theories of mimesis within his drag performances to challenge long-standing ideologies concerning

ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Monkman describes the character of *Miss Chief Share Eagle Testickle*, as his “alter ego (figure 101).” The meaning behind this statement can only be determined through an examination of the character herself and for what she stands. Miss Chief portrays the ideal of an American Indian woman, whose acts of power also reflect social and cultural ideals of masculinity.

Monkman’s Miss Chief is a respectful nod to women such as Molly Nelson (also Molly Spotted Elk, Penobscot), Pauline Johnson (Mohawk), and Cher, who presented herself in the 1970s as Cherokee. The name “Chief Eagle Testicle” is actually a word play on “Mischief Cher Egotistical.”⁵³ Looking to Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, Monkman’s act, or embodiment, can be viewed as a social cultural process where “identity” is expressed by a repetitive set of “*fabrications*” that are “sustained through corporal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.”⁵⁴ Monkman’s fabrications are a performance, the enactment of an act, which challenges the determiners established by hetero-normative preconceptions of masculine and feminine, and sex and sexuality all in settings of Western colonization, impending domination. Monkman performs, photographs, and paints his “trickster identity,” Miss Chief, into scenarios that problematize perceptions of Native people during the settlement of the American West; He refers specifically to colonial strategies that objectified the female Indian body and Native sexuality.

Much of his work from the first decade of the twenty-first century addresses *berdache* a North American French term, derived from the Arabic

bardaj, meaning slave, applied by anthropologists to what some Native people define as a gender transformation. In the 1990s the term “Two Spirit” was used to identify indigenous members of the LGBTQ community, but this too was problematic considering that this only pertained to the binary “enactments” of “feminine” and “masculine,” and historically in Native communities there more than “two” levels of gender. Gender variances among tribes have been identified by terms such as *nádleehé* (Navajo), *winkte* (Lakota), *warharmi* (Kamia), and *hwame* (Mohave).⁵⁵ As anthropologists contend, historic theories surrounding gender are varied. One thought involves the notion of “reincarnation” in which an individual of one gender went through the process of becoming a sex that was not their previous one, while others determined that in some societies what anthropologists labeled berdache was one gender of a multiple gendered system.⁵⁶ What might fall to the category of what is known today as queer, but can tricksters be “queer?” Artists are not tricksters, but gender, as with most things trickster, has no boundaries.

In the painting *Dance to the Berdache* (1835-37) George Catlin documented his confusion toward what struck him as a humorous and yet “degrading” celebration, in which a man dressed in “woman’s clothes” was acknowledged for the “extraordinary privileges he possessed.”⁵⁷ In part of the exhibition, *Shapeshifters, Time Travelers and Storytellers* (2007, figure 102), *Miss Chief* holds a séance in which to channel Catlin, Paul Kane and Eugene Delacroix, where she questions their methodologies of ethnographic recording. In the final act *Miss Chief*

calls up her own berdache dancers to perform a “campy dance party” version of Catlin’s static image.

In his retelling of the Winnebago cycle Radin described that the trickster Wakdjunkaga took step over gender binaries through transformation. Apparently Wakdjunkaga (referred to as male) was hungry and he knew that a wedding was always the cause for a feast. He also knew of a chief’s son that was looking for a wife. So with an elk’s liver Wakdjunkaga made a “vulva” and from the elk’s kidneys he made breasts. His friends Fox, Jaybird, and Nit, helped him into a tight dress and he was transformed into “a very pretty woman indeed.”⁵⁸ The chief’s son found Wakdjunkaga very attractive and he married the trickster; they had three children, all boys, who were in reality Fox, Jaybird, and Nit. The four were eventually found out — as the moose liver fell out from beneath Wakdjunkaga’s dress. The story tells us something about gender transformation and about the serious and humorous nature of deception. In his more explicit paintings Monkman’s candor about gender roles and sexuality fuels an explosive controversial confrontation between the historical and reality.⁵⁹

Although Monkman is most often indicated as a Native American artist, but perhaps because of his location in Canada Monkman is also featured in the broader context of contemporary art. Monkman addresses subjects from a wide-range of sources referring to images of painters from Canada and the United States, indigenous and aboriginal traditions, and European myths and popular culture. Monkman’s more recent paintings include contemporary settings and artworks from the twentieth century. In his installation *Bête Noire* (2014, figure 103), for

example, Monkman depicts aspects of Albert Bierstadt's nineteenth painting, *The Last of the Buffalo* (1888, figure 104) and Pablo Picasso's cubist bull from 1945. In this installation Monkman incarnates the archetypal and tricksterish "femme fatale" Miss Chief, who vanquishes the Picassoesque bull, a symbol of virility, with two pink arrows. Aside the dead bull stands a snarling coyote, indicative of trickster's presence. The scene, reflective of others by Monkman, is a satirical reconstruction of Bierstadt's nineteenth century image, a parody through which his trickster persona opens the door to an alternative space where histories are revisited.

In 2013 Miss Chief entered the space of the Denver Art Museum and with a witty perceptiveness she met and offered her assistance to the various *Casualties of Modernity*, the title of the performance piece (2013, figure 105). The "casualties," as it were, were comprised of the multiple faces of modernist art. Miss Chief's first meeting was with the damaged movement "Romanticism," in which the targets of Monkman's critiques, such as Bierstadt, Kane, and Delacroix, participated. Of Romanticism, represented by a living male marble sculpture, Miss Chief comments:

Oh yes, I know a lot about the romantic savage. Europeans projected their fantasies onto us, but I have to admit I absolutely thrived on the attention! Oh how I was the toast of Europe while performing with my mentor (and I over) George Catlin in Paris and London. And I am still a hopeless romantic. I mean look at this gorgeous specimen! Can you blame me? How sad to see him go! The poor poor soul!⁶⁰

In the above commentary, Miss Chief identifies her status as an *object d'arte* that has become a living breathing entity, the desire, the lover, and the fantasy, of nineteenth century painters that were known to objectify Native people. The space

of the art museum becomes an alternative interstice, where tricksters are most comfortable. A place where Miss Chief, wearing a black full-feathered headdress and spectacular gown embroidered with “dream catchers” and adorned with beads and feathers, holds the power. She humorously attempts to imbue her power into the sickly arts, from the diseased cubist, to the hindered abstract expressionist, to the all-encompassing contemporary. With outrageous wit Monkman problematizes and politicizes, and spectacularly and erotically engages us with his alternative histories. Through his “campy” enactments of the character Miss Chief, Monkman allows his audiences to join him in inverted spaces to laugh, to heal, and to consider deeper underlying questions of what it means to be human.

Artists Opening Doors

Through the efforts of visual artists, writers, musicians, and performers, tricksters will take on new forms and new functions, as they did in the twentieth century. Radin asserted that the symbol of trickster contains the promise of “differentiation” and for that “reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting trickster anew. No generation understands him completely, but no generation can do without him.”⁶¹ In this chapter I have written about the rise of trickster from the twentieth century into the present, citing the written works of writers, and installation and performance artists, not as tricksters, but as manipulators of trickster strategies. Performance artists Jimmie Durham, James Luna, and Kent Monkman all emulate, in individual ways, trickster functions mostly through their actions. Humor, satire, subversion, and irony are the

subjective component of their repertoire, which is layered over the burdens of our history.

I do not see that the above artists are tricksters; however, their activities do resemble that of the Koshare, the clowns of the Pueblos, who serve a different purpose. Tricksters live in the spaces of “marginality,” but it is the clowns who stand at the threshold (the space of liminality) and hold open the door. The artists I have spoken of here have taken on the responsibility of keeping history and like the storytellers that came before them they introduce us to the interstices where tricksters dwell.

¹ Selma Raljevic / 05.26.16, “‘Words Are Crossbloods’: An Interview with Gerald Vizenor « Post45,” accessed March 10, 2017, <http://post45.research.yale.edu/2016/05/words-are-crossbloods-an-interview-with-gerald-vizenor/>.

² Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 275.

³ Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1969) 146-47.

⁴ Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 1969, 87.

⁵ Gerald Vizenor, *Earthdivers: Tribal Narratives on Mixed Descent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981), ix.

⁶ Gerald Robert Vizenor, *The Trickster of Liberty: Native Heirs to a Wild Baronage* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), x.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁸ William J. Hynes and William G. Doty, eds., *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Kenneth Lincoln Professor of Modern and Native American Literatures University of California at Los Angeles, *Indi'n Humor : Bicultural Play in Native America: Bicultural Play in Native America* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.

¹⁴ Allan J Ryan, *The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 252.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ Gerald Vizenor, *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles*, 1 edition (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1990), 15.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, "Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious," (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co.), 7-11.

¹⁸ Caroline Tisdall's Guggenheim catalogue included Beuys recollection of the incident: "The tail flipped over and I was completely buried in snow. That's how the Tartars found me days later. . . . They covered my body in fat to help it regenerate warmth, and wrapped it in felt as an isolator to keep the warmth in." See reprint in Benjamin Buchlon, "The Twilight of the Idol," in *Joseph Beuys: The Reader*, ed. Claudia Mesch and Viola Michely (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), 113.

¹⁹ Claudia Mesch, "'What Makes Indians Laugh' Surrealism, Ritual, and Return in Steven Yazzie and Joseph Beuys," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 6, no. 1 (2012), 50.

²⁰ Valerie Casey, "Staging Meaning: Performance in the Modern Museum," *TDR* (1988-) 49, no. 3 (2005), 78.

²¹ Alain Borer, *The Essential Joseph Beuys* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 25.

²² Carol Tisdall, *Coyote* reprinted in *Ibid.*, 25.

²³ David Hopkins writes that Beuys saw this performance as a "dialogue" between himself and the coyote that represented the "genocide by White America on its indigenous peoples." See David Hopkins, *After Modern Art 1945-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 87.

²⁴ Information about the coyote's name see Mesch, "'What Makes Indians Laugh' Surrealism, Ritual, and Return in Steven Yazzie and Joseph Beuys, 51."

²⁵ Linda Weintraub, *Art on the Edge and over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society, 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield: Art Insights, Inc.), 182.

²⁶ In the eye juggler story, many times mentioned in association with Navajo traditions, Coyote meets a shaman, or a wealthy man, who is taking his eyes out and throwing them into a tree. Coyote wants to learn the game and he is shown, but warned that he must only do the trick four times, or his eyes will stay in the tree. But Coyote being Coyote is having such a good time playing the game that he throws his eyes up a fifth time and they stick in the tree. Blind, he begins to howl. In one version Mouse and Bison come to Coyote's aid and each give him an eye. Mouse's eye falls back into one socket and Bison's eye, which is far too large, bulges from the other socket. This is why coyotes lean to one side when they walk. See for example, Barry Holstun Lopez, *Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping with His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America* (Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2013), 64-65.

²⁷ Lucy Lippard, "From the Archives: Jimmie Durham—Postmodernist 'Savage' - Magazine - Art in America," (Feb. 1993) accessed February 27, 2017, n.p. <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazine/from-the-archives-jimmie-durham-postmodernist-savage/>.

²⁸ This quote also comes from Lippard's same 1993 essay and has been commonly cited over the past fourteen years. The same quote was most recently reprinted in Jessica Horton's essay in the catalogue for Durham's retrospective. See Jessica L.

Horton, "Jimmie Durham's Stones and Bones," in *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, Anne Ellegood ed. (Los Angeles: Prestel, 2017), 80.

²⁹ This information provided in Elizabeth Sussman's essay "Jimmie Durham: Self Portrait" in *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, n.p. [56].

³⁰ Ibid., 59.

³¹ Ibid., 57.

³² "From the Archives: Jimmie Durham—Postmodernist 'Savage' - Magazine - Art in America."

³³ Jimmie Durham, email to the author, February 24, 2017.

³⁴ Ann Ellegood, "Jimmie Durham: Post American," in *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, 15.

³⁵ Jimmie Durham, email to the author, February 24, 2017.

³⁶ From "The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990," October 19, 2015, <https://www.doi.gov/iacb/act>.

³⁷ See reprint of quote from Laura Turney, "Cenci n'est pas Jimmie Durham," in Janet Catherine Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, *Native North American Art*, 2 edition (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) 300.

³⁸ Ellegood, *Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World*, n.p. [26].

³⁹ See Jackson Rushing, "Jimmie Durham: Trickster as Intervention," *Artspace 16* (January–April 1992), 65.

⁴⁰ See Juan Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 191.

⁴¹ Some basic information about Duchamp's meaning of L.H.O.O.Q. see Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 1998), 47.

⁴² This book provides a fine example of Durham's acts of absurdity. A photograph of Durham at a bus stop in Europe; a photograph of Durham eating chocolate in Europe; a photograph Durham reading a European magazine. Durham includes in this book some poetry and his vision for a new direction in Europe. See Jimmie Durham, *Jimmie Durham: In Europe*, N.b.k. Ausstellungen ; Bd. 17 (Berlin : Köln: Nbk; Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015).

⁴³ Ibid, 98.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁶ Laura M. Evans, "The Artifact Piece and Artifact Piece Revisited" in *Action and Agency: Advancing the Dialogue on Native Performance Art*, Nancy J. Blomberg ed. (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2008), 63.

⁴⁷ Artist Erica Lord replicated Luna's piece in the at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, George Gustav Heye Center, in New York City *Artifact Piece Revisited* (2008), Lord substituted her body and own life's story for Luna's, which added a level of feminism to Luna's multilayered deconstructionist piece.

⁴⁸ I attended this performance in 2011 and recently discussed the performance with Luna.

⁴⁹ James Luna quoted by Jess Righthand, "Q and A: James Luna," *Smithsonian*, accessed November 2, 2016, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/q-and-a-james-luna-74252076/>.

⁵⁰ In *Vigil* (2002) Belmore created a ritual performance that honored the Aboriginal female victims of a serial murderer, which was one of her most powerful performances. In the piece she scrubs the sidewalk, nails herself to a post, ripping away the dress she is wears, she struggles, calls out the names of the dead and then pulled the stem of a red rose through her teeth stripping it of leaves and petals as a way of experiencing the pain of the women.

⁵¹ *ISHI: The Archive Performance*, (video) James Luna, accessed January 23, 2017, <http://www.jamesluna.red/pacific-tavern/>.

⁵² Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance," in

⁵³ Monkman says that he was inspired by Nelson's and Cher's glamorous costumes (created by designer Bob Mackie), as well as their stage presence, of particular interest was Cher's presentation in the song *Half-Breed*. Conversation with the artist, Arizona State University, March 19, 2009.

⁵⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 173.

⁵⁵ Sabine Lang, "Various Kinds of Two Spirit People Variance and Homosexuality in Native American Communities," in , *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds., First Edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), pg. 101.

⁵⁶ See Jean-Guy Goulet, "'Berdache/Two Spirit': A Comparison of Anthropological and Native Constructions of Gendered Identities Among the Northern Athapaskans" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2 no. 4 (December 1996) 683 -84. In Cree the word *ayekkwew* means "neither man nor woman" or "man and woman." See Walter Williams, *The Spirit and The Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 82.

⁵⁷ George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians in Two Volumes* (New York, Wiley and Putnam, 1841), 214-15.

⁵⁸ Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956).

⁵⁹ Artist and curator Gerald McMaster states that Monkman "does not intend to covertly repulsive." Rather in his paintings he represents a "subterfuge in which the tide of these struggles is turned against the colonizer, who is either handcuffed or aggressively raped. If that doesn't work the reversal is effected by the force of persuasion, with the antagonist becoming turned on, turned over, to a more evocative acumen." See Gerald McMaster, "The Geography of Home," in *Kent Monkman: The Triumph of Mischief*, David Liss and Shirley Madill eds.(Hamilton, ON: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2007), 96.

⁶⁰ Kent Monkman, from the performance, *Casualties of Modernity*.

⁶¹ Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology*.

Conclusions

Then, it seems, that Coyote was again restored to life from above the sky — by Spotted Thunder, by Left-handed Thunder, by Spotted and Left-handed Wind. On the side of this one, Raised-by-the-owl, the story ends here, while stories about the Coyote are not yet at an end. Stories about him continue on.¹

I began this dissertation project with the intention of identifying a visual history of Native North American tricksters since the nineteenth century. I began with the hope that I might find images that had been created primarily by Native American artists that depicted the first versions of trickster figures seen in contemporary artwork, such as Nanobozho, Coyote, and Raven, and possibly even some outlying figures that I had not seen but knew of, such as Itanike (also known as Iktomi) and Glooscap. The initial idea for this dissertation stemmed from the fact that many contemporary artists of Native decent have been referring to trickster figures in their work since the 1970s. I was also curious about the overwhelming use of tricksters as a conceptual framework in the analysis of artists' work, especially Native American artists that surged in discourse beginning in the 1990s. I soon came to the realization that the historic imagery I was looking for was, for the most part, nonexistent. Two notable exceptions, the series of Saynday drawings by Silver Horn and the argillite carvings of Raven made by Charles Edenshaw, supported the prospect that more images existed, but even now I have yet to locate any more visual narratives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²

Raven, of course, was a prevalent figure throughout the northern most tribes of the Northwest Coast, including the Haida, Tlingit, and northern

Kwakwaka'wakw (Boas found that among the southern Kwakwaka'wakw Raven was not a primary figure). Raven was also one of the most complex figures as of the three animal tricksters I more closely examined in this dissertation, the other two being Coyote and Nanobozho. Raven appeared as a primary trickster figure in only the northern-most tribes living along the North West Coast, which Boas emphasized in the research he conducted in the Kwakwaka'wakw. The historical significance of Raven appears to differ from the figure's contemporary status, which complicates its depiction in the arts. The Hamat'sa Raven, for example, may or may not have been a manifestation of the trickster Raven, or the cannibal bird may have been a separate character altogether, which is part of what early anthropologists struggled with as they tried to pull together many traits as well as many characters from many stories and categorize them as a single being. I am not sure that the anthropologists ever determined a definitive definition or a clear example for the term that was introduced by Brinton in 1885, but they seemed to favor the idea of trickster as a point of debate, which helped to make the who, what, and why of tricksters a prevalent topic in nineteenth century anthropological discourse.

Moreover, the collection of imagery featuring the figure Raven in bird or bird/human form was one thing; collecting imagery that represented trickster apologies was much more difficult. One reason had to do with the fact that Native peoples represented narratives differently than European anthropologists were accustomed to, which has been discussed concerning depictions in ledger art and beadwork, but deserves more consideration in general. Silver Horn had a rather

innate ability to depict narratives in a few images, or even the actions of an entire story on one page of paper, as seen in his later drawings. Edenshaw quickly picked up the idea of carving narratives out of argillite, which he had probably adapted from pole or house carvings, as ancestral histories were represented in cedar carvings that predate European contact. Working in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Edenshaw was a link to stylistic traditions that were revitalized as an art form only in the later half of the twentieth century.

As to Silver Horn and Edenshaw's reasons for creating trickster narratives for outsiders, there have been some conjectures. Lieutenant Hugh Scott had encouraged Silver Horn to depict the Saynday stories as a way of preserving Kiowa mythologies, although the majority of Silver Horn's Saynday images located in an old target record book had been overlooked for more than a century. Mooney had hired Silver Horn to do other drawings on paper for the BAE and these images were published in government publications in the late nineteenth century. Silver Horn's artwork for Mooney reflected, as Candace Green and others have indicated, the transfer of symbols and artistic methods that Kiowa artists, as well as artists from other tribes, first rendered on hides.

Edenshaw, who advised Boas on the symbolism of Northwest Coast characters, saw the reproductions of Haida stories in argillite carvings, such as *How Raven Gave Females Their tsaw*, as a way to garner income from the sale of tourist art, and perhaps as a way of maintaining and preserving Haida oral histories. However, Edenshaw's patrons were not Haida, so the likelihood of the story's preservation on objects that were made for tourist trade on the fragile

argillite would have seemed doubtful. Non-Native collectors may have also had issues with the stories content. The fascinating thing about the three illustrated plates is that the humorous illustrations carved by Edenshaw were all about sex, which may have been considered offensive to Victorian morality that pervaded in the late 1800s in Euro-American society. Yet, the plates survived, although separated, with only a bit of damage, and despite over one hundred years since their creation scholars, such as Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, whose mother told her the story, Robin Wright and Daina Augaitis, were able to match together the three plates and connect the figuration of the carvings to sequences in the Haida story. But the task of trying to find out if the original purchasers of the plates even knew what was depicted seems most unlikely.

Perhaps there were also tribal protocols surrounding the depiction of tricksters. They were, after all, magical beings with a mean streak, thus depictions might have been considerably dangerous; moreover, there was some knowledge, as Schoolcraft lamented in the mid-eighteenth century, that tribes hid information from Europeans, not to mention from other tribes. However, Europeans tended to have big problems with some of trickster's activities and in some cases, such as that of the missionaries, the telling of the stories was squelched. As mentioned in chapter one, early nineteenth ethnographers (including missionaries, explorers, and settlers) thought of the figures as devils, as some of the stories were pornographic (tricksters, like humans, are sexual beings), some contained incest (Coyote married his own daughter),³ some contained murder and cannibalism (Wakdjunkaga eats the children he offers to babysit),⁴ not to mention that there

were in every culture a bunch of jokes about excrement. Besides all of the above, tricksters were not of any fixed form, nor were they the animals that they later became associated with, thus it was difficult to visually represent a creature that represented every human and no one — one that “belonged to another realm materially and spiritually.”⁵ Tricksters were indefinable and all-encompassing beings, and “neither the gods nor man knew precisely what to do with them.”⁶

Issues with tricksters’ representation bring the subject of animals to the conversation. In chapters one through three I introduce the three animals most prevalently associated with tricksters by the twentieth century (one in each chapter). I chose to research Rabbit or Nanobozho, Raven, and Coyote because of their prevalence not only in contemporary artworks, but also their appearance in literature, music, and the whole of popular culture in general. These three animals have been addressed in many of the anthropological texts concerning tricksters, but I regard the animals as signifiers for a variety of North American tricksters that may have something to do with psychology. According to Jung tricksters developed from a lower level of consciousness, and although I am not completely swayed by Jung’s argument about the trickster archetype, I do think animals were human’s way of distancing themselves from tricksters. What I mean by this is that in the stories tricksters perform acts that humans might, in fact, be capable of; however, these actions might not conform to cultural mores, thus insertion of an animal-like being made the idea of trickster a little less personal. Animals made humans feel better about themselves; however, some tricksters continued to be thought of as human in form. Still, why the three particular animals, and especially Coyote,

became associated with North American tricksters raises more perplexing questions. The names of the three common animal tricksters, as I explained in the first chapters of this dissertation, were derived from different regions in North America. What animals emerged as primary tricksters depended on the importance or relevance of the animals to the various tribes that told their stories. Ravens, which are large and perceivably intelligent birds, for example, were frequently seen in the Northwest Coast, where, Radin and Boas explained, Raven was always trickster.⁷

Coyote, however, became known as trickster-par-excellence sometime in the twentieth century. The biological animals became symbolic of the West in the 1950s with growing interest in novels and movies that featured Western settlement. In 1975 Fonseca painted his *Coyote #1* and his anthropomorphic *canis latrans* appeared in unexpected costumes and places throughout the 1980s. Beginning in the 1990s a flood of scholarship from both Native and non-Native scholars featured Coyote and analyses of his role as a trickster. From an outsider's perspective it might have appeared that Coyote was the only Native North American trickster. This perhaps was Beuys' observation concerning his installation *I like America and America Likes Me* (1974). The performance piece, successful or not, became one of his most notable. Whether this had anything to do with Coyote's magic is debatable, but Beuys believed he communicated metaphysically with "Little John," the coyote he used in the artwork that he claimed addressed American genocide. However, his use of the coyote to represent

all American Indian people only helped to enforce the coyote as a stereotype of Indians. Coyotes have not completely lost this association even today.

Coyotes were also mentioned in the less acknowledged writings of the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, who studied witchcraft among the Navajo in the 1940s. Kluckhohn said that Navajo skin walkers, shape shifting witches, might take the form of coyotes, thus it is not surprising that Navajo people have told some dark stories about trickster Coyote. Witches, as well as Coyote, were a part of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, her award-winning book from 1977 that told the story of Tayo, a "mixed blood" Laguna Pueblo man, who returned to his family home following World War II suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). In the book Silko brings into focus the critical role that tradition, as demonstrated by a healing ceremony, played in Tayo's recovery.

Anthropologist Karl Luckert also wrote in the 1970s about Coyoteway, a ceremonial performed among the Navajo and Pueblo people that assisted with the healing of those who became ill with what was known as "Coyote sickness." The illness, Luckert explained, was contracted when a hunter kills a "Coyote person," who is a god that has manifested as the animal. Anyone, however, could contract the disease just by walking by a dead animal. Some of the symptoms included vision problems, loss of memory or mind, and fainting.⁸ Kluckhohn mentioned that mania, sexual promiscuity, and even rabies might also be recognized as part of the sickness.⁹ Around the same time Luckert was working in the Southwest, another anthropologist, Barre Toelken, was working with Navajo singers collecting and recording Coyote stories. In the early 1980s, years into his work, Toelken met with

a Navajo singer, who asked him which of his family members he was prepared to murder. Apparently Toelken had found in his analysis of the language in the stories that parts of the stories were used for healing purposes in ceremonies, what he did not realize was that other parts of the same stories were used for evil and he knew that witches committed to covens by killing someone close to them, generally a sibling. He also wrote that his primary Navajo consultant had suddenly become ill and that there were other incidents that occurred within his family that he had written off as circumstance.¹⁰ Soon after the questioning by the singer Toelken said that he quit collecting the Coyote stories.

Silko's book and the above anthropologists' texts, or accounts, demonstrated not only the ubiquity of Coyote, both the good and the bad, and but also the significance of traditions. Traditions serve as touchstones to common histories and to reinforce commonality between people; traditions are what connects us to our past and they provide the power to go forward into the future. The subject of tradition brings me to a point that I would have liked to have addressed further in the body of this dissertation, which concerns the lack of trickster imagery created by Native people between the years of 1920 to 1975. The lack of imagery is not really surprising, considering so little was created prior to this time; however, in this time a growing interest in Native American art produced a market for paintings and sculptures created by artists such as Alan Houser, Andrew Tsinajinnie, and, as previously mentioned, Narciso Abeyta.

What has been discussed less in discourse concerning Native American artists is that from the beginning of the nineteenth century into the 1970s the

United States was involved in four major wars, including World War II (1941-1945), which, as Silko wrote about, deeply affected indigenous people and their traditions. The Vietnam War (1964-1973, part of the Cold War) also brought many indigenous youth to the horrors of battle, which affected the artist Rick Bartow, who, like Abeyta, suffered from PTSD. I found that both artists addressed the suffering of their psyche in their paintings, and sometimes tricksters were present. I was very sorry to have missed talking with Bartow; his extensive oeuvre deserves a greater amount of attention, but I was thankful to have spent time in Portland with his friend and agent Charlie Froelick, as he helped me to better understand the person behind the sometimes-dark expressionistic images.

Coyote continues today as the most prevalent North American trickster. Nearly all of the artists addressed in this dissertation have some sort of relationship with the old dog-like trickster figure, with the exception of Shawn Hunt and Jim Denomie. Both artists have personal reasons for depicting ravens and rabbits with their very different stylistic choices. Hunt recently told me that he does not really think about tricksters when he is working and Denomie similarly shared with me that tricksters were not a part of his repertoire. I guess tricksters are just always there, or perhaps I have become so conditioned to thinking about tricksters as a phenomenon in Native American art that I find them everywhere. I see this as a problem in the current discourse, because not every Native American artist who creates subversive, ironic, or political art is a trickster. As I stated earlier in this document, sometimes a rabbit is just a rabbit.

Julie Buffalohead's imagery inspired this dissertation project about tricksters in the visual arts and I am thankful for all of the help she provided me while studying her artwork. Buffalohead's paintings are filled with wonderfully intelligent, witty, and complex layers of meaning; thus, knowing the artist's viewpoint is invaluable for their interpretation. Coyote looms large in her work, as she feels that the trickster gives her the "power" to address important cultural violations. Steven Yazzie also finds Coyote as a vehicle with which to broach topics that he finds distressful, but rather than putting himself in the tricksters place he renders biological animals that refer to the trickster stories of his Navajo heritage. His coyotes are wild things that reclaim their home in abandoned human made desert utopias. Yazzie's coyotes suggest an ecological violation, the kind that people who have made their homes in the desert southwest face today, as populations grow and water sources dwindle. Coyotes work as metaphor for Yazzie that reminds humans that their own foolish greed will someday destroy them.

The idea of artists performing trickster became more of an undertaking than I had anticipated. While the number of performance artists who address American Indian and First Nations topics continues to grow, I felt that it was important to consider some of the key participants that have made a significant mark in performance art and are known to be "tricksters." Jimmie Durham and James Luna based their work on the performance artists that began working in the 1950s and 1960s, when using the human body as a means of social commentary made for sometimes shocking artworks. Durham and Luna were part of the

activism that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, when attentions turned towards the work of artists whose voices had been long marginalized. However, it was also during these decades that artists became “compartmentalized” in categories that maintained marginalization. The use of trickster as a framework for discussing these artists and their artwork was a part of the offensive, however, it can also be said that they took on trickster strategies a part of their identity. Part of Durham’s fame has come from his rejection of categorization.

Monkman alternatively found a very clever way to become one of the most political and in-demand performance artists today. Monkman’s alter ego Miss Chief has taken on a life of her own, providing commentary not only in Monkman’s paintings, installations performances, but also through educational films and social media (Miss Chief and I are Facebook friends). The character offers Monkman a platform with which to humorously confront issues of race, gender, and perhaps most importantly, the way we remember history. Durham, Luna, and Monkman have all embraced the idea of trickster as an inversion strategy, one in which audiences can experience laughter and the uneasy feelings of guilt and shame simultaneously. As it is with trickster stories, the three above artists engage emotions through satire that is touched with absurdity, to remind humans of their own failings.

Writer Thomas King insightfully wrote in 2003, that “the truth about stories is that that’s all we are.”¹¹ What I hoped to create in the writing of dissertation was a different kind of story about the importance Native North American tricksters, and to illuminate their use as a new tradition in the work Native North American

artists today. In these pages I have been careful not to bring in comparisons of trickster figures, or the stories of cultures outside of those in North America. But I do think that some synergy occurred between the figures and the stories that were brought to the Americas from Africa, Asia, and Europe. Yet, I am uncertain how to approach such a task, as the cross-cultural approach becomes overwhelming, confusing, and diminishing to trickster traditions when they are referred to archetypally. Loki (Norse), Eshu (Yoruba), and Coyote (many Native American cultures) may vary in form and function, but what they hold in common is the richness they add to the histories they represent. North American tricksters were and are as diverse as the people they came from and what I elucidate here is the abundance of tricksters and their histories, as they have existed and still exist throughout North America.

Recently, I attended the exhibition, *From the Belly of our Being: Art by and about Native creation*, which was curated by heather atone, at Oklahoma State University. Included in the exhibit was Kiowa artist Keri Ataumbi's *Saynday's Sunglasses*, which consists of two wooden boxes, one with a lid and a mirror, and four pairs of sunglasses made of gold and sterling silver, deer antler, buffalo horn, and opal, with polarized lenses. One pair of sunglasses lay in the shallower box and the others, having been removed from the deeper mirrored box, were spread across the brilliant white surface of a pedestal. This piece depicts the story of Saynday's theft of the sun from the people who lived on the other side of the world. As Ataumbi states, "they probably needed the sunglasses because I thought that it must have been really bright when they were carrying the sun on their backs,"¹² to

bring it back to the Kiowa people. But, when the Kiowa trickster returns he throws the sun into the air so that it might be shared with the other people, who live on the other side of the world. It's a good story, and Ataumbi tells it well. The artwork also demonstrates that tricksters are a part of North American cultures still today and that their stories are still needed. Meaning that tricksters are the same today as they were, waiting and wandering, looking to be told in the form of a good story, and through some attention I believe we can witness their manifestations.

¹ Berard Haile, *Navajo Coyote Tales: The Curly To Aheedliinii Version*, American Tribal Religions ; v. 8 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 62.

² Although these artists were influenced through the urging of outside sources, they were among the earliest Native artists to depict by sequential narratives that followed the oral content of the traditional stories. The four images of Saynday by an unknown Kiowa artist that are located in the Smithsonian collections are similar to Silver Horn's depictions of the trickster, which means they may have known each other, or there were at one time other images Saynday. Meaning that there may have been a standard for representing Saynday.

³ The story of Coyote faking his death, transforming his appearance, and coming back to marry his daughter shows up in many collections, see one example of the same story in Berard Haile, *Navajo Coyote Tales*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1974), 47-52.

⁴ See example of "Mothers seek plums while trickster eats children," Paul Radin, *The Trickster; A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1956), 29.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ I explained in chapter three Boas' work on the trickster Raven. Radin wrote about Raven's relationship to the Wakdjunkaga cycle. See Ibid, 156.

⁸ Karl W Luckert, *Coyoteway: A Navajo Holyway Healing Ceremonial* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979), 9.

⁹ Clyde Kluckhohn, *Navaho Witchcraft*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 37.

¹⁰ See Barre Toelken, "Beauty Behind Me; Beauty Before (AFS Address)," *The Journal of American Folklore* 117, no. 466 (2004): 441-45.

¹¹ Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2008), 2.

¹² Keri Ataumbi, "Artist's Statement," in *FROM THE BELLY OF OUR BEING: art by and about Native creation*, heather atone, ed., (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, 2016), 12.

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APPENDIX

FIGURES

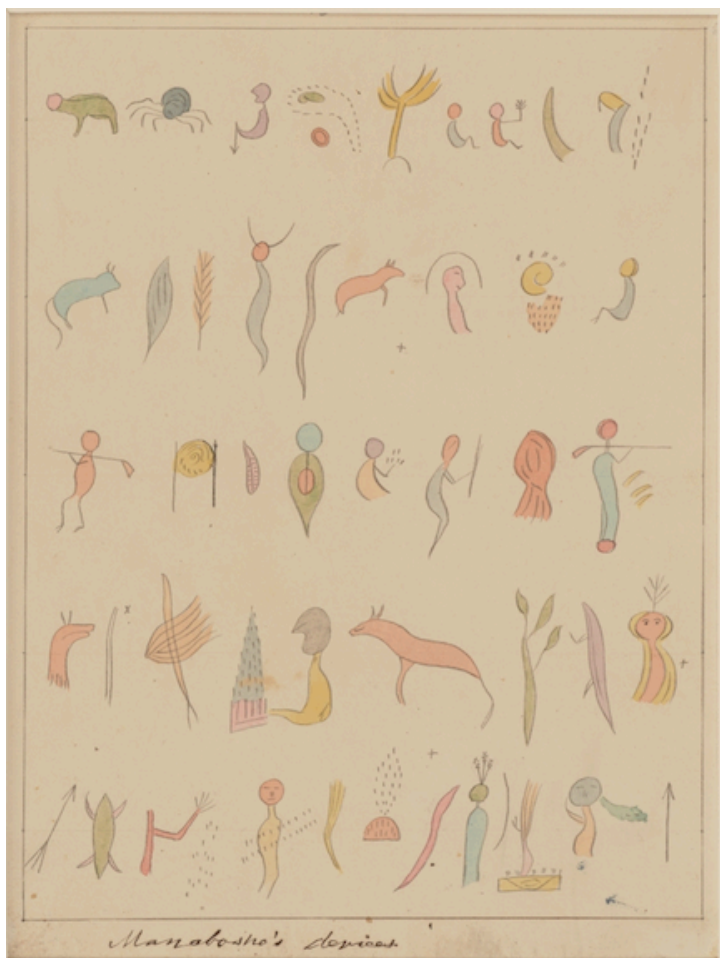


Fig. 1. Seth Eastman, Manabosho's Devices, 1849-1855

Pen, ink, and watercolor, 8 15/16 × 6 3/4 in. (22.7 × 17.15 cm) (image)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of the W. Duncan and Nivin MacMillan Foundation

2014.31.15

Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art



Fig. 2. Seth Eastman, Manabosho's Devices, 1849-1855

Pen, ink, and watercolor, 8 15/16 × 6 3/4 in. (22.7 × 17.15 cm) (image)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of the W. Duncan and Nivin MacMillan Foundation
2014.31.15

Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art



Fig. 3. Seth Eastman, Manabosho's Devices, 1849-1855

Pen, ink, and watercolor, 8 15/16 × 6 3/4 in. (22.7 × 17.15 cm) (image)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of the W. Duncan and Nivin MacMillan Foundation
2014.31.15

Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art



Fig. 4. Seth Eastman, Manabosho's Devices, 1849-1855

Pen, ink, and watercolor, 8 15/16 × 6 3/4 in. (22.7 × 17.15 cm) (image)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Gift of the W. Duncan and Nivin MacMillan Foundation
2014.31.15

Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art



Fig. 5. George Catlin, *O-ke-hee-de* image in *O-ke-pa Ceremony*, c. 1867.



Fig. 6. George Catlin, *O-ke-hee-de*, c. 1832.



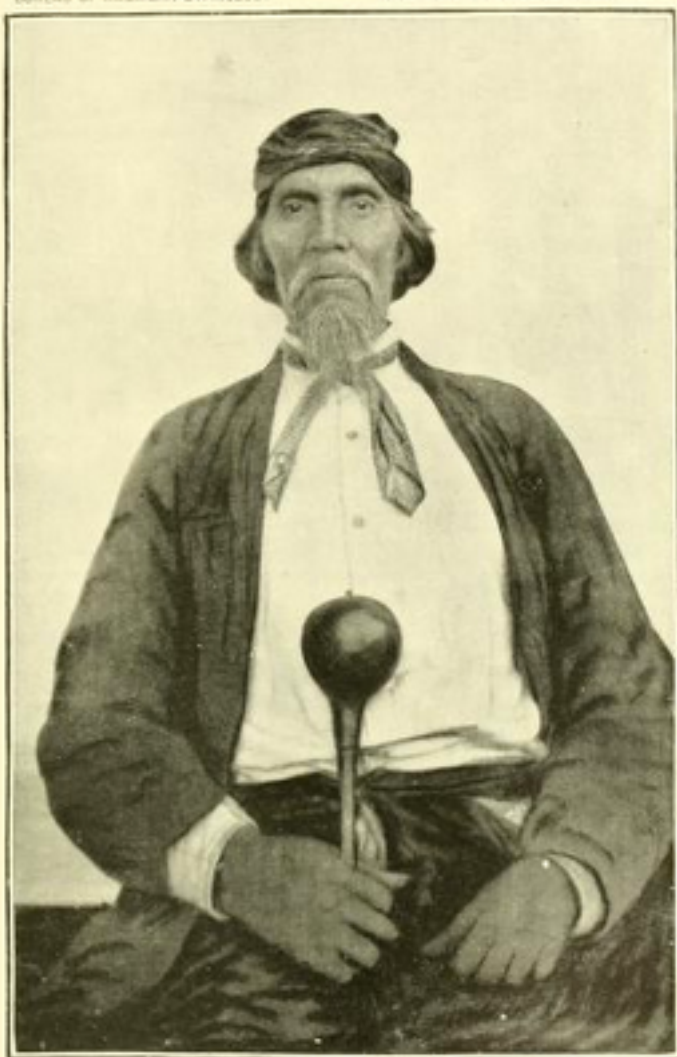
Fig. 7. Entrance of O-ke-hee-de. George Catlin, *Bull Dance, O-kee-pa Ceremony*, 1832. Photo: Smithsonian American Art Museum.



Fig. 8. George Catlin, *O-ke-hee-de Mounting Buffalo Dancers*, c. 1832.
Photo: British Museum

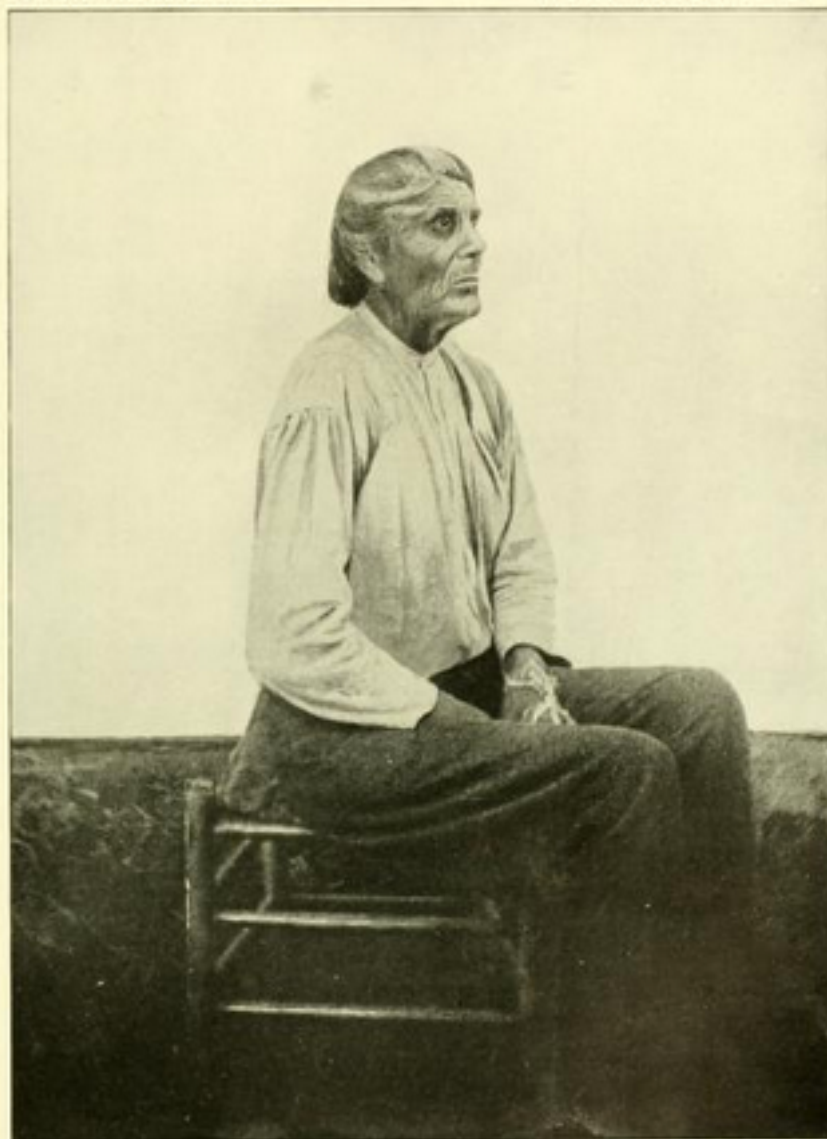


Fig. 9. George Catlin, *O-ke-hee-de Chased by Women*, c. 1832.
Photo: British Museum



SWIMMER (A'YŪÑ'INĪ)

Fig. 10. A'yûñ'inĩ, or Swimmer.



PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR, 1900

JOHN AX (ITAGÛ'NÛHÎ)

Fig. 11. Ităgû'năhî, or John Ax.

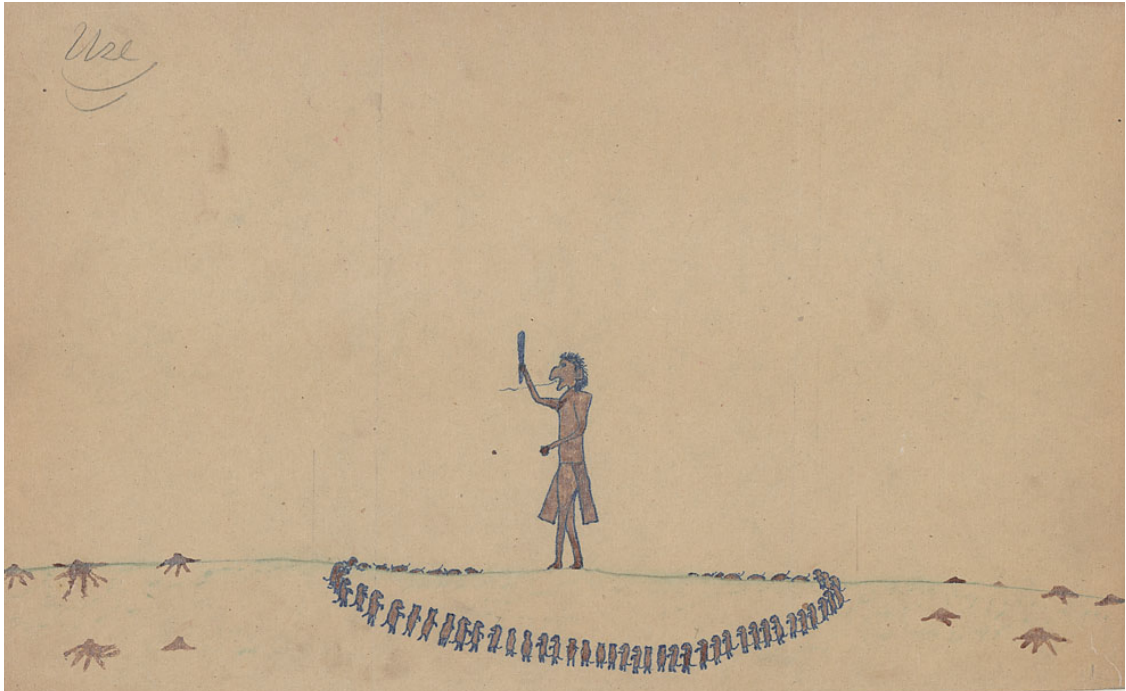


Fig. 12. Unknown Artist, Saynday and Prairie Dogs, n.d.

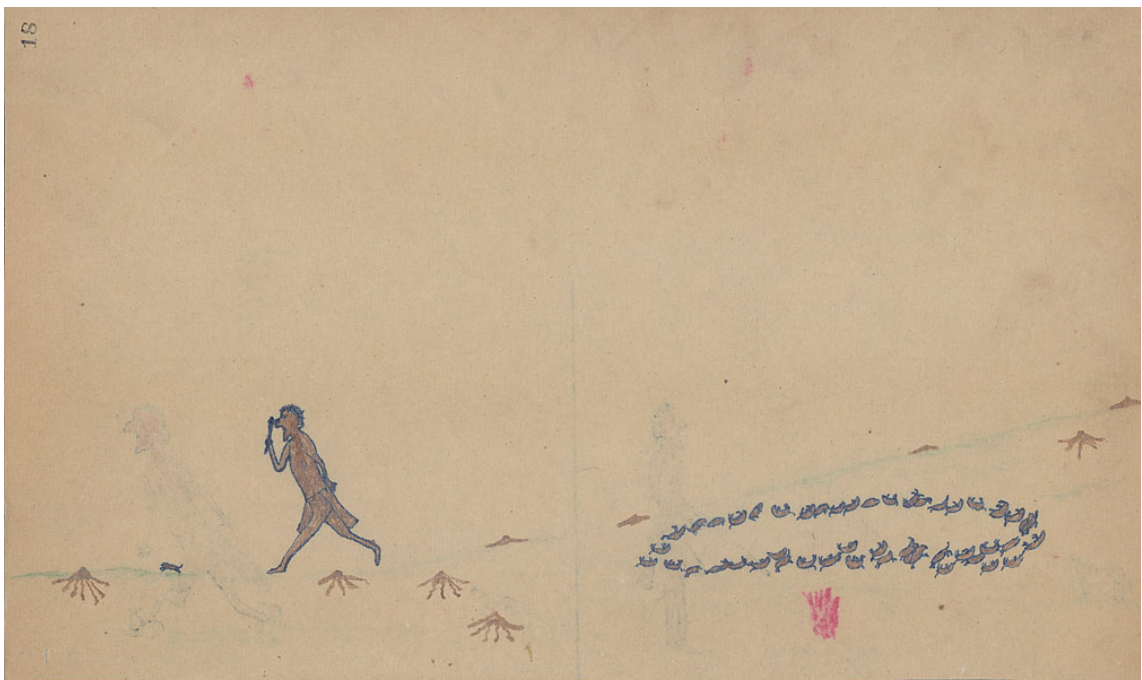


Fig. 13. Unknown Artist, Saynday and Prairie Dogs, n.d.

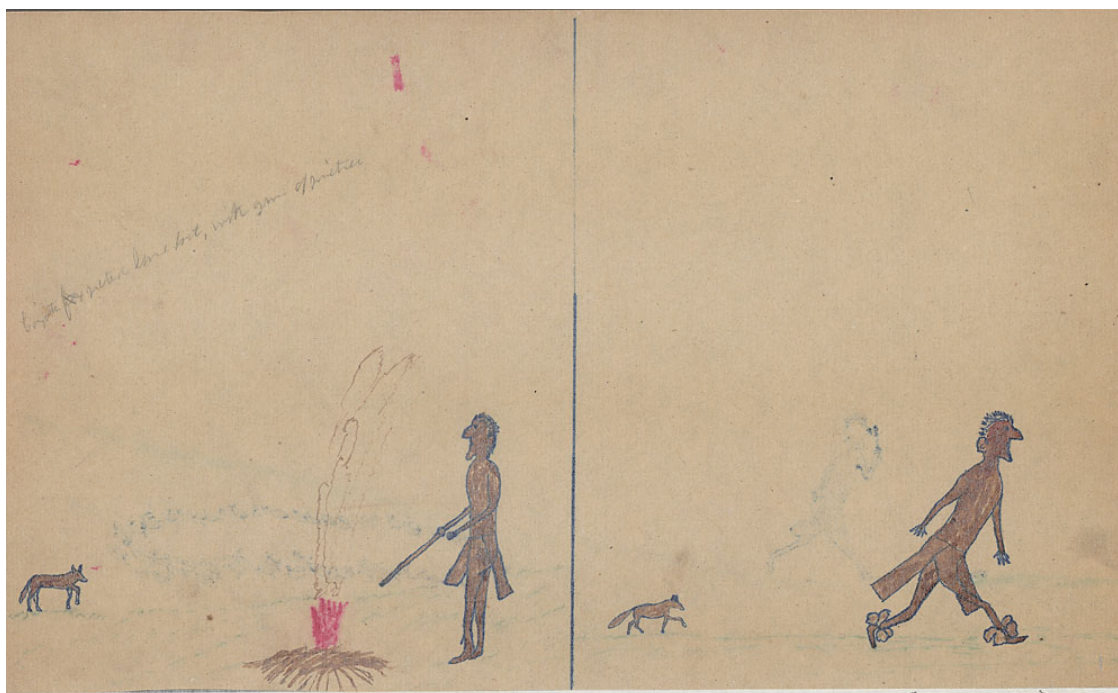


Fig. 14. Unknown Artist, Saynday and Prairie Dogs, n.d.



Fig. 15. Unknown Artist, Saynday and Prairie Dogs, n.d.



Fig. 16. Silver Horn, "Saynday and the Tight Tree" 1884.
graphite and watercolor; 30 x 35 cm
Photo: National Anthropological Archives



The tree closed in on Saynday

Fig. 17. Roland Whitehorse, Illustration for "How Saynday got Caught in a Tree," in *Wintertelling Stories*, 1947.



Fig. 18. Silver Horn, *The Kiowa Pantheon*, Hide Painting, 1904.
Photo: Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives.



Fig. 19. Silver Horn, Hide Painting, c. 1910.
55 1/8 in. x 37 in. (140.02 cm x 93.98 cm)
Photograph: Pomona College Museum of Art.



Fig. 20. Major John Wesley Powell in Indian dress and Tau-ruv, a member of Paiute Indian Tribe. Uintah Valley, n.d.
Photo: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology.



Fig. 21. Franz Boas with Harpoon, n.d.



Fig. 22. Drawing from "The Central Eskimo," 1888.
(Text reads: "Fig. 399. Eskimo waiting return of seal to blowhole.")



Fig. 23. Charles Edenshaw, Plate, pre-1894.
Collection of the Field Museum.



Fig. 24. Charles Edenshaw, Plate, c. 1885. Collection of the Seattle Art Museum.



Fig. 25. Charles Edenshaw, Platter, c. 1885.
National Museum of Ireland, Ethnographic Collection.



Fig. 26. Charles Edenshaw, ferrule, silver, n.d.
Photo: Pitt Rivers Museum.



Fig. 27. Charles Edenshaw, Chest, late nineteenth century.
Collection of the Royal BC Museum.

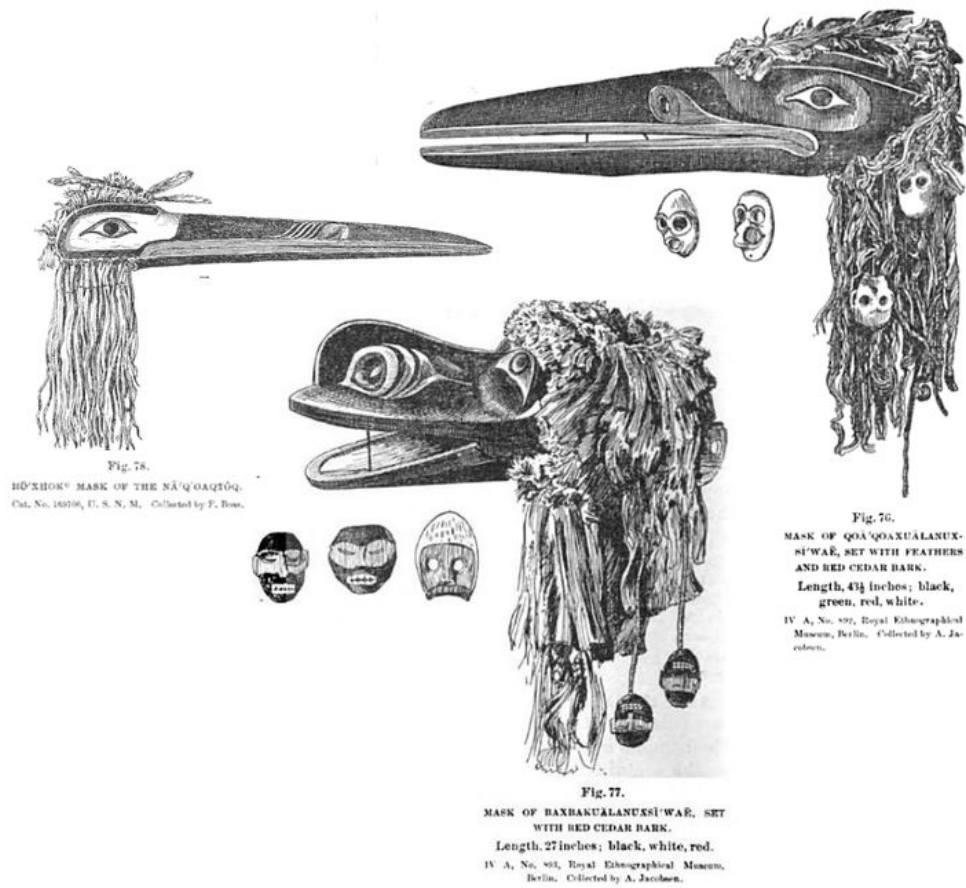


Fig. 28. Sketches of Hamat'sa masks from
*The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the
Kwakiutl Indians*, Franz Boas, 1895.



Fig. 29. Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa Raven, Edward Curtis, 1910.



Fig. 30. Kwakwaka'wakw Hamat'sa Raven and Huxhukw, Edward Curtis, 1910.



Fig. 31. Masks surrendered under duress by the Kwakwaka'wakw people after Chief Dan Cranmer's potlatch, c. 1921. Photographer unknown. Royal British Columbia Museum.



Fig. 32. Kwaxalanukwame', Odan, Chief Johnny Drabble. Photograph by William Halliday. Royal BC Museum, c. 1921. PN 12195.



Title: 'Yalis [Alert Bay]; material culture that was surrendered ...

Fig. 33. Masks confiscated from the Cranmer Potlatch, Alert Bay, c. 1921.
Photo: Royal British Columbia Museum.



Fig. 34. The guests enter Kenada's house through the Raven's open mouth. This concept of a door as a devouring mouth appears in Kwakwaka'wakw oral histories and was used by Curtis and the Kwakwaka'wakw set builders. Film: *In the Land of the Headhunters*, Edward Curtis, 1914.



Fig. 35. *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, Edward Curtis, 1914.



Fig. 36. Raven Mask of Red and White Cedar Bark purchased by Franz Boas in 1894.

Photo in: *The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, 1895.



Fig. 37. Awa Tsireh, *Single Koshare*, nd.



Fig. 38. Valino Shije Herrera, *Green Corn Dance*, nd.
Image: On exhibit at the Gilcrease Museum.



Fig. 39. "Masau'u Kachina" (lower left corner) by unknown Hopi artist, 1903. Collected by Jesse Walter Fewkes.



Fig. 40. Narciso Abeyta, *Werewolf*, 1959.
Photo: Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.



Fig. 41. Narciso Abeyta, *Changeable Bear Woman*, 1959.
Photo: Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

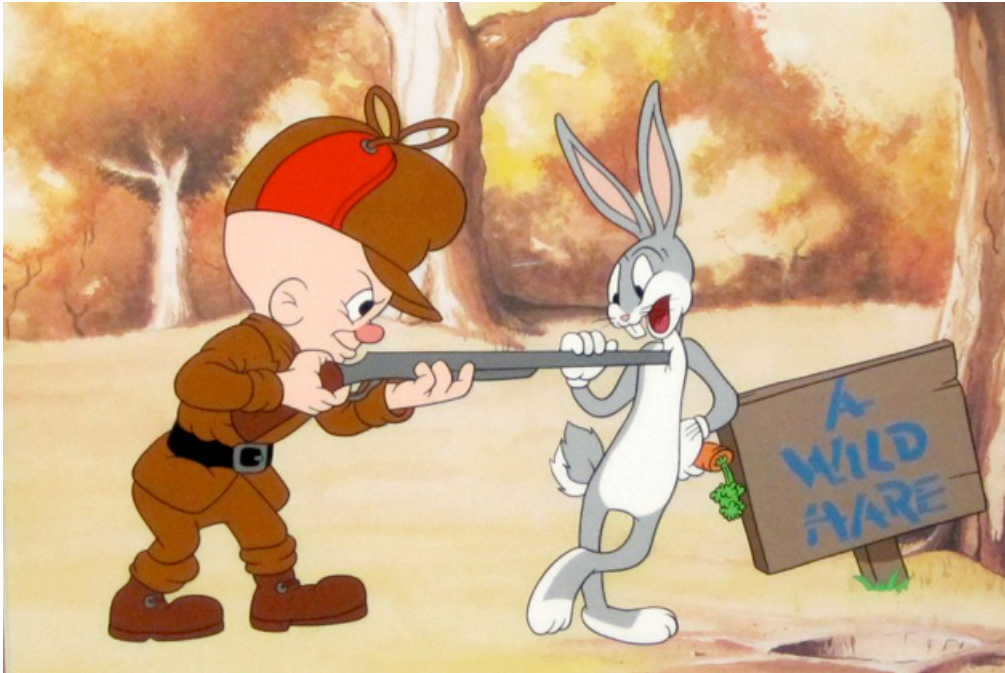


Fig. 42. Still from *A Wild Hare*, 1940.



Fig. 43. Still from *Fast and Furry-ous*, 1949.



Fig. 44. Harry Fonseca, *Creation Story*, 2000.
Photo: National Museum of the American Indian.
525 x 194 x 542 cm

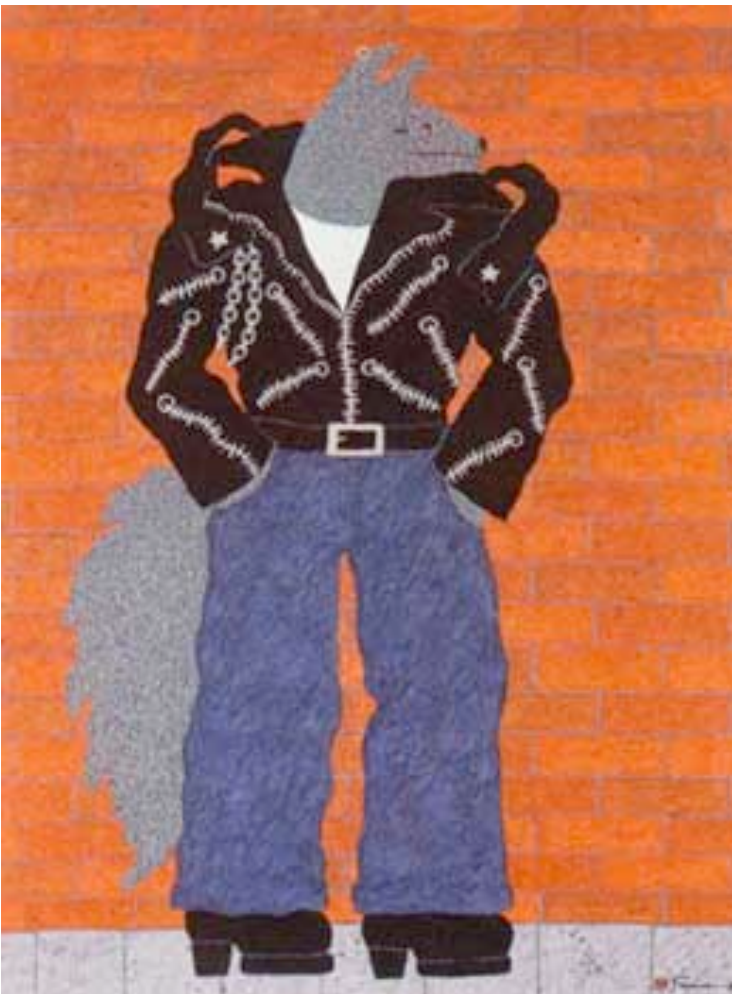


Fig. 45. Harry Fonseca, *Coyote Leaves the Res*, 1979.



Fig. 46. Harry Fonseca, *Coyote #1*, 1975.
Photo: Denver Art Museum.



Fig. 47. Frank Day, *Toto Dance at Bloomer Hill*, 1973.
Photo: National Museum of the American Indian.

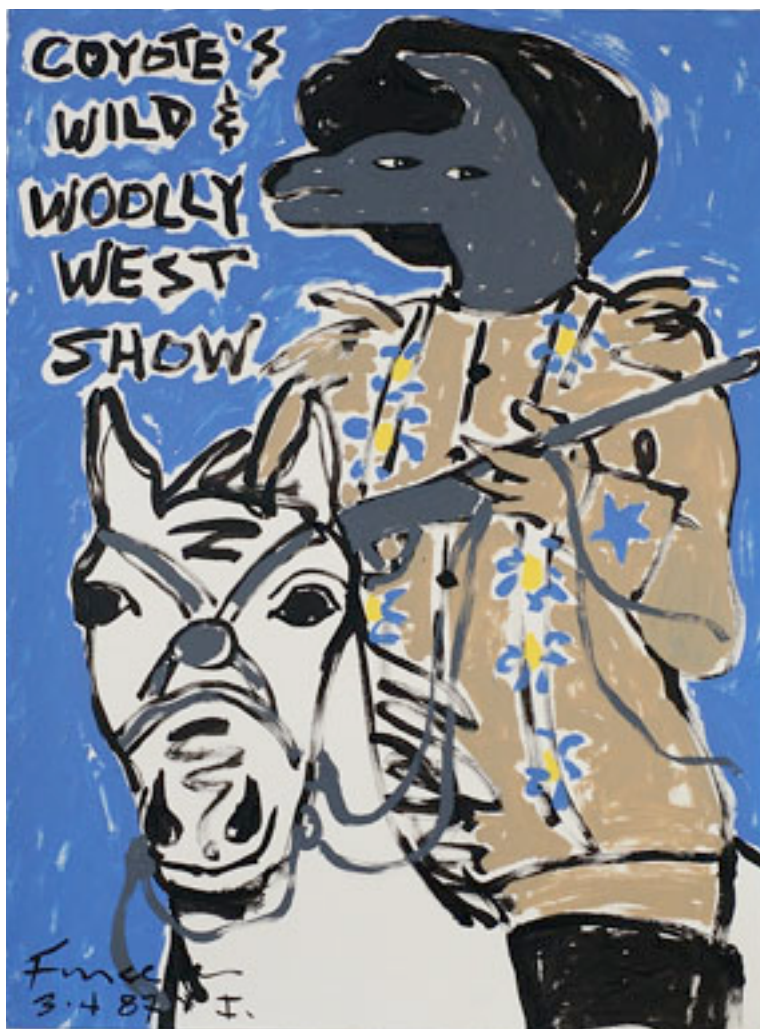


Fig.48. Harry Fonseca, *Coyote's Wild and Woolly West Show*, 1987.



Fig. 49. Harry Fonseca, Untitled (Koshare with Cotton Candy), 1983.



Fig. 50. Harry Fonseca, *Last Tango in Santa Fe*, c.1990.



Fig. 51. Rick Bartow, *Things You Know But Cannot Explain*, 1979.



Fig. 52. Rick Bartow, *PTSD, I, II, III*, 2009.



Fig. 53. Rick Bartow, *We Were Always Here*, 2012.



Fig. 54. Rick Bartow, *Crows Creation V*, 1992.



Fig. 55. Rick Bartow, *Coyote*, Pastel on Paper, 1991.
Photo: Washington State Arts Commission.



Fig. 56. Rick Bartow, *Coyote and the Myth*, 1991.



Fig. 57. Rick Bartow, *From Nothing Coyote Creates Himself*, 2004.
Photo: Frolick Gallery

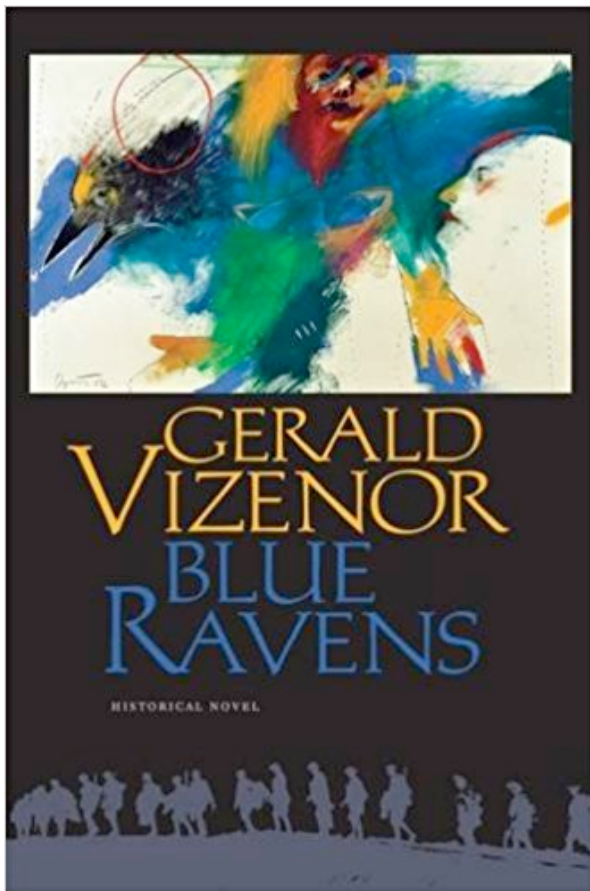


Fig. 58. Rick Bartow, *Raven's Dream*, 2012.



Fig. 59. Rick Bartow, *Voices II*, 2012.
Photo: Frolick Gallery



Fig. 60. Shawn Hunt, *Trickster*, 2008-2009.

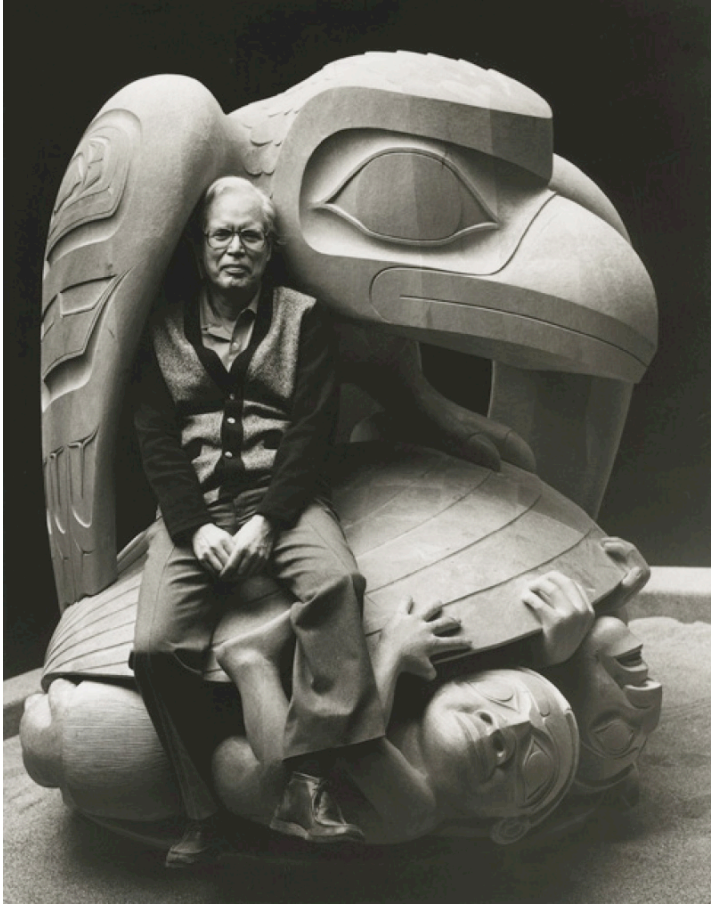


Fig. 61. Bill Reid, *The Raven and the First Men*, 1980.



Fig. 62. Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962.

Photo: Museum of Modern Art



Fig. 63. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *Floor Opener*, 2013.



Fig. 64. Shawn Hunt, *The Light Bringer*, 2016.



Fig. 65. Shawn Hunt, *Ancestors / Sky People*, 2016.



Fig. 66. Shawn Hunt, *Reclining Figure*, and *Goddess*, 2016.
Red Cedar, Yellow Cedar, Horsehair 17" H x 10" W x 12.5" L



Fig. 67. Jim Denomie, *Night Guardian*, 2009.



Fig. 68. Jim Denomie, *Moonlight Serenade*, 2009.



Fig. 69. Jim Denomie, *Dream Rabbit*, 1999.



Fig. 70. Jim Denomie, *Dream Rabbit II*, 2002.



Fig. 71. Jim Denomie, *A Beautiful Hero Woody Keeble*, 2015.



Fig. 72. Seven Yazzie, *Coyote with a Hotdog*, 2008.



Fig. 73. Steven Yazzie, *The Visitor*, 2012.



Fig. 74. Steven Yazzie, *Modernity's Sunset*, 2010.



Fig. 75. Steven Yazzie, *On All Twelves*, 2009.



Fig. 76. Steven Yazzie, *Death of the Curator*, 2009.



Fig. 77. Steven Yazzie with “Lego-te” and *The Gazer* 2014.



Fig. 78. Julie Buffalohead, *Nanobozho and Coyote's War Party*, 2000.

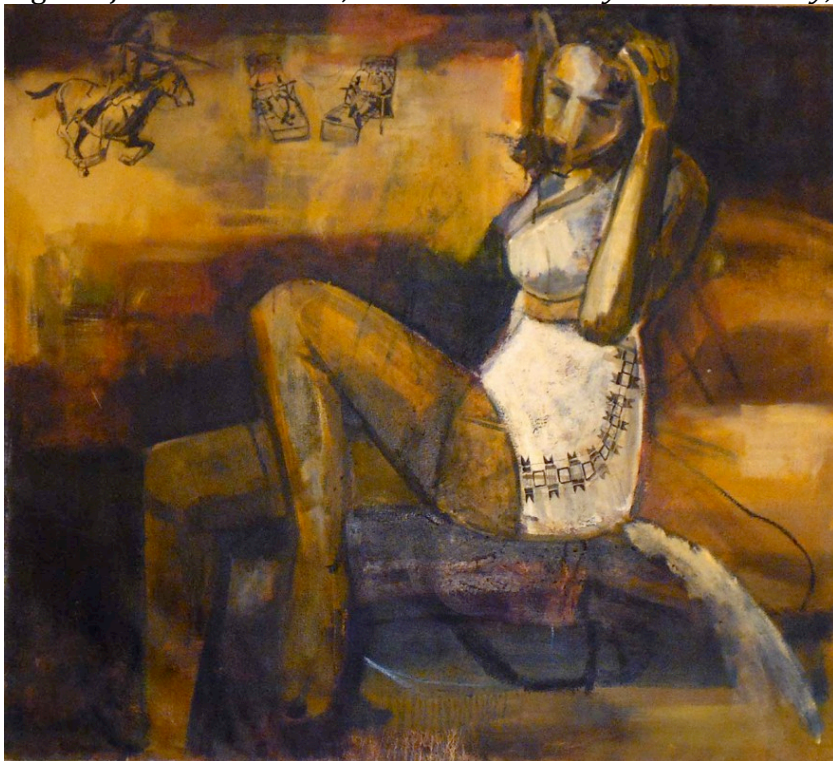


Fig. 79. Julie Buffalohead, *Coyote Dreams as a Pinup Girl*, 2002.

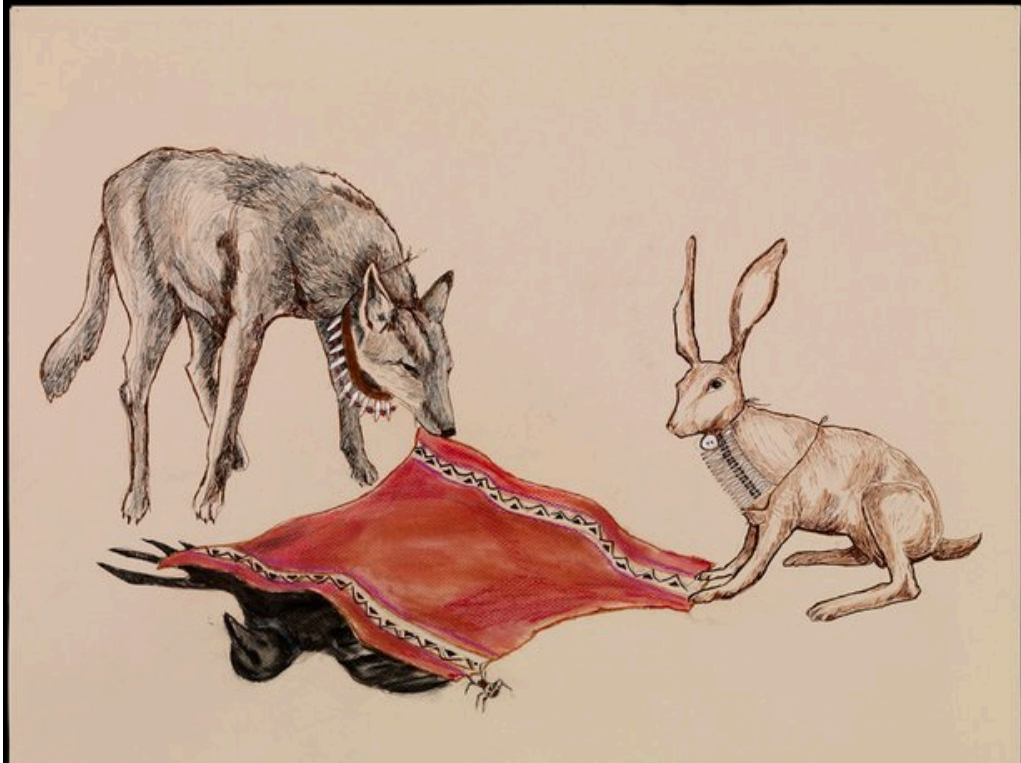


Fig. 80. Julie Buffalohead, *The Four Tricksters*, 2011.

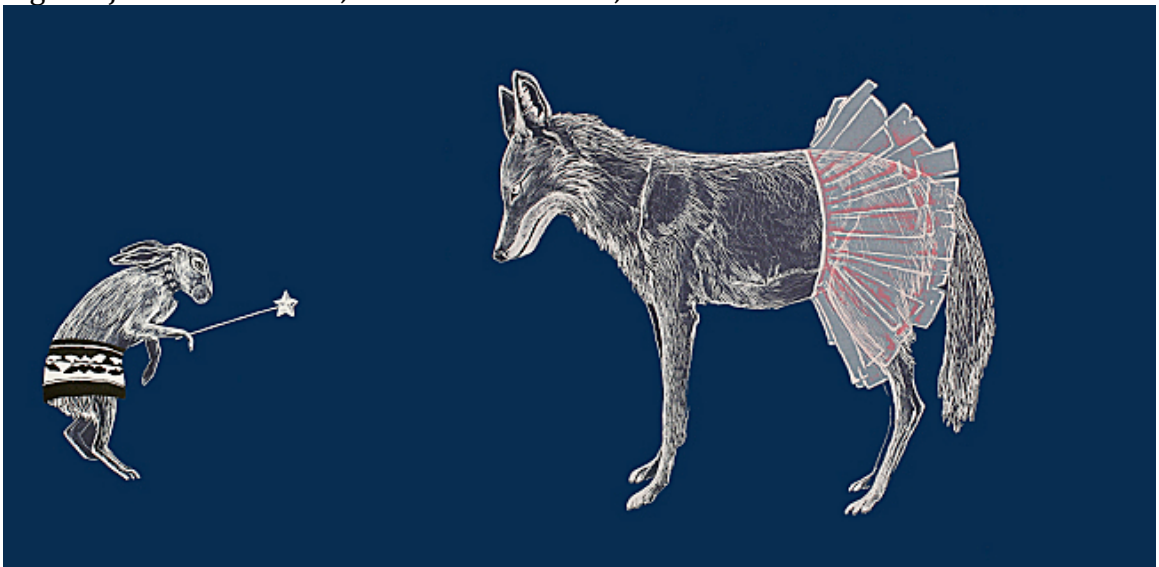


Fig. 81. Julie Buffalohead, *The Trickster Showdown*, 2014.



Fig. 82. Julie Buffalohead, *Revisionist History Lesson*, from 2014.



Fig. 83. Julie Buffalohead, *Let the Show Begin*, 2010.



Fig. 84. Julie Buffalohead, *The Lone Ranger Rides Again*, 2012.
Photo: Bockley Gallery.



Fig. 85. Joseph Beuys, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965.



Fig. 86. Joseph Beuys, *I Like America, America Likes Me*, 1974.



Fig. 87. Jimmie Durham, *Not Joseph Beuys' Coyote*, 1990.



Fig. 88. Jimmie Durham, *Self Portrait*, 1987.



Fig. 89. Jimmie Durham, *Self-Portrait as Rosa Lévy*, 2006.



Fig. 90. Marcel Duchamp, *Rose Sélavy*, 1921.



Fig. 91. Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919.



Fig. 92. Jimmie Durham, *Self-Portrait Pretending to Be Maria Thereza Alves*, 2006.



Fig. 93. Jimmie Durham, *Self-Portrait Pretending to Be Maria Thereza Alves as Terminator*, 2006.



Fig. 94. Jimmie Durham, *Self-Portrait Pretending to be a Stone Statue of Myself*, 2006.



Fig. 95. Maria Thereza Alves, *Jimmie as a Flower*, 1983/84.
A portrait of Jimmie Durham.



Fig. 96. Jimmie Durham, 2015, photo: Jens Ziehe.



Fig. 97. James Luna, *Artifact Piece*, 1987.



Fig. 98. James Luna, *We Become Them*, 2011.



Fig. 99. James Luna, *Take a Picture with a Real Indian*, 2011.



Fig. 100. James Luna, *ISHI: The Archive Performance*, 2016.



Fig. 101. Kent Monkman as “Miss Chief,” 2007.
Still from *Robin’s Hood*, 2007.



Fig. 102. Kent Monkman, *Dance to the Berdache*, 2008.



Fig. 103. Kent Monkman, *Bête Noire*, 2014.



Fig. 104. Albert Bierstadt, *The Last of the Buffalo*, ca. 1888.



Fig. 105. Kent Monkman, *Casualties of Modernity*, Denver Art Museum, 2013.