Apropos Appropriate Appropriations: Metissage After the Apologies
[Keynote: *Art and Appropriation Post the Apology*. University of New South Wales, Sydney, AU.]

[Editors. Much here is refined later. However, this was an important early international effort. I was invited to Sydney to broach this issues after the "Appropriation of Aboriginal art Australia letters" exchange.]

The title of our symposium, 'Art and Appropriation Post the Apology', suggests that we are at the Post; one age is behind us, another before us. An optimistic descendent of the Old World might read this as an indication that we are already living in a Post Apology era. 'Post the Apology', post-apologetic—being post, after, no longer having to apologize. This must be a relief for anyone suffering *post*-colonial guilt. Not so fast. The title elides what the contrition was for: apologized for what? We could be less euphemistic: 'Art and Appropriation Post the Near-Genocide,' 'Post Forced Assimilation'. Yikes! I'm not giving up a beautiful Saturday to hear about that. Though, I might attend: 'Art and Appropriation Post the Reparations and After the Settlement of All Land Claims and Other Assorted Grievances'. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

We must not celebrate the Apology post haste, or as a post, a fixed marker, a memorial, a means of bundling our histories and forgetting the wounded, living legacies. The Apology should not mark an absolution but engage atonement, a long struggle of reconciliation.

Australia and Canada are not at the beginning or end of anything. We wriggle in the sticky middle. Our twinned Apologies only signal a shift in Indigenous and Settler relations *if we want them to, if we persist in making it so*. The confessions were firm, clear and of a moment. What follows will be fragile, messy and take generations. A great deal of work led up to these declarations and a considerable amount remains if everyone is to awaken to justice, to repair what can be fixed, mourn what cannot, and negotiate new relationships, human-to-human, Nations-to-Nation.

Art has a role in reconciliation. It is the symbolic realm where social change is often first dreamt and practiced. I am an optimist. There is no future in pessimism. I choose to believe that the Apologies *do* express a desire for change and that this drive is not based on guilt, but on enlightenment and mutual self-interest. If some White folks are weary from the burden of supremacy and requests for apologies, Indigenous people are equally tired of being oppressed and angry.

I have been invited to share my understanding of the Canadian situation, post *our* Apology, from my perspective as a Métis artist and curator. I will discuss cross-cultural appropriation with a mind to have non-Aboriginal people glimpse the subtlety of our artistic struggle and, more importantly, to see if any of this experience rhymes with that of Indigenous people here and how we might learn from each other. I am going to tell you some stories.

If I refer to things familiar to Canadians but not Australians, if I am obtuse, or if a provincialism needs clarification, please press pause. One such Canadianism is *Métis*. The Métis are an Aboriginal people formally recognized by an amendment to the Canadian Constitution in 1982. Our Nation descends from the offspring of European, mostly French, and First Nations people who organized themselves separately from their parental cultures in the 18th century. We have home communities, but most of us are now urban. We have a language, Mitchif, which a few still speak. We have distinct histories, oral and material cultures. Our collective identity was forged in two battles with government troops and chastened with the execution of our leader, Louis Riel, for treason, in 1885, in the city where I live, Regina. Many Métis were displaced during the subsequent Western expansion and indoctrinated in residential schools alongside our First Nations cousins. Many are members of the 'stolen generation', adopted into or otherwise assimilated by Euro-Canadian culture.

I am not here as a practitioner, an artist and curator. I am an appropriationist. Making new works from old has been my primary visual strategy. As an artist, I believe that artists should be unrestrained. As a Métis, I see that the dominant society's drive to make everything available for view and use, at a price, is at odds with Aboriginal worldviews and that rampant appropriation is disrespectful and damaging to our cultures. However, I still do not think this should trouble the artist. It would be *nice* if artists saw themselves as citizens as well as creators. I would *appreciate* it if they would recognize their privilege and exercise power with care. But I *know* that ethical behaviour is not a necessary condition for being an artist. Ethics *is*, however, a requirement for curators.

Curators are censors. We keep out more than we let in. Our choices are determined within a discourse of reasons, precedent, politics, personal preferences and ethical guidelines. Curation, though not quite a profession, is a contest of ideas and reputations and curators should be held accountable for their choices and reasons. In their studios, artists should do as they please. But public display of their work, publication, *that* is another matter, a social matter.

First, we should come to terms.
Appropriation is **not** theft. Appropriation is sanctioned taking. The word means making one's own some thing that belongs to another with that person's permission; or, it is a transfer of ownership with cause and state approval. There is a separate word for dishonest taking. Theft is ***mis****appropriation*—the acquisition of property without either the rightful owner's permission or a public sanction.

When artists refer to their practice as *appropriation*, rather than *misappropriation*, they perform an act of will rather than stating a necessary fact. They assert an *a priora* claim that their borrowings-without-permission are justified. The argument seems to be that if Appropriation art is an authentic art movement, then all of its products must also be legitimate. Lurking in the woods just behind this declaration is the grinning specter, 'artistic license'—the belief that creative people have an inherent right to take and use whatever they require to satisfy their artistic needs. This is not an argument but an axiom,

a claim that is only true as long as we believe it. This fiat is not valid always, everywhere and for everyone.

Confidence in these claims erodes when the line between appropriation and misappropriation becomes too blurred or when the borrower is no longer credible. When an artist's copies are patently motivated more by money than higher ideals, *appropriation* becomes a euphemism for theft. *Artists are granted artistic license—or rather, their 'borrowings' are tolerated—under the condition that they generate a social value greater than the rights of the individual whose property is being infringed.* The use of a politician's appearance in satire and political commentary, for example, is protected in the United States (but not Canada).

Settler and Indigenous realms overlap and the inter-looping, interloping, engenders a contest. Each sees the same space differently. Living together requires respect, education, negotiation and accommodation. It begins with a recognition, a re-cognition, an acceptance that Settlers are guests. This truth must begin, end and inform every discussion that includes the land and the people. Settlers on Turtle Island (North America) do not share the same concepts of art and property as their Traditional hosts. In fact, in several senses, there is no such thing as Indigenous art. That is, no First Nations language has a word for it.

A month ago, I was privileged to attend an unprecedented gathering of more than fifty Indigenous elders and cultural leaders. The Saskatchewan government assembled us to discuss the importance of art and culture to First Nations and Métis people with a mind to generate a more inclusive and responsive basis for policy and funding. For several hours, the Elders sat in a circle, and one-by-one shared their experiences and profound teachings offered little enlightenment of the topic—at least according to terms the government could hear. They explained that culture is everything the people do. They would not separate 'art' from the rest of life—which makes project funding a challenge. In Traditional First Nations culture, a significant object is never just itself; it is attached to a keeper, it has a story, protocol and use. It is inseparable from the living cultural context. Such things are not goods.

There is also no Aboriginal art in the sense that Native peoples are not homogenous. There are more than 600 First Nations speaking 50 different languages. There is Shuswap culture, Gitxsan culture, Dene culture, and so on. Each has its own protocols. The right to use and reproduce culture belongs to communities, not individuals. Protocols are passed from elder to initiate, from teacher to student. Within Traditional culture, a person is a 'keeper' not an owner of this knowledge. They are charged with appropriate sharing, not hoarding. Among the Anishinaabe, for example, only Bear clan members are supposed to represent bears. If a Sturgeon person were to carve one, it would be perceived as either a provocation or an act of ignorance. If a provocation, it would be met with a correction, if ignorance, with compassion and education.

Now, there are plenty of bears in Canada. Seeing one, a Monias (non-Aboriginal) artist may want to draw its likeness. Because she is from another world and unaware of this

being's significance and kinship, a Traditional Anishinaabe may be irritated but is unlikely to feel a stronger offence because none is intended. The visitor wants to capture a likeness that belongs to no one, rather than misappropriate a meaning that does have keepers. However, if the artist were to paint the bear in, say, the Woodlands Cree style, she would then be willfully breaking-and-entering the Cree visual discourse and folks would be right to wonder if the misappropriation was a provocation, ignorance, or, perhaps worse still, out of appreciation.

When Settlers assert their worldview on Traditional Indigenous people, you cannot blame them if this looks like rude behaviour and more of the bad old colonial project. On the other hand, if Monias were adopted into Traditional Indigenous worldviews, their culture will be transformed and harmony will rule these lands. As this is not likely to happen *right* away, perhaps there is a middle ground. After all, *not all Settlers are Imperialists and not all Indigenous people are Traditional.*

This talk is not primarily about crude cultural exploitation—carpet-baggers who mine the remote poor for their exotic images. This righteous work is well under way—and, in fact, is led by Australians (NAVA). When you read the NAVA documents, however, a clear sense of an Aboriginal type emerges—one in need of protection. Don't get me wrong. This is absolutely first-rate work that we, in Saskatchewan, are appropriating appropriately. That the artists are given substantial voice in these documents is their best feature. And these protections are clearly required—for *some* cultural producers. It's just that only this one range of artists is evoked by the texts. Where is the guide that helps Contemporary Indigenous artists recon the subtler 'high-art' system, how to unsettle the Settlers?

Among the questions such a guide would consider are: "Why do Settlers want Aboriginal things, anyway?" Why do 'high-art' White artists occasionally rip-off Indigenous art, and 'high-art' Indigenous artists *continuously* rip-off Western culture? "Is dominant culture appropriation of Indigenous art going to continue the project of unconscious colonialism and necessitate Aboriginal Reactionism, or can it evolve into a métissage—a critical play of ideas and influences in a shared, respectful space that leads to post-ironic, constructive production?"

My friend Neal McLeod—a Plains Cree, PhD—paints Windegos. Windego is the fearsome spirit of Algonquin and Cree stories that possesses people, causing them to crave human flesh. Neal pictures this spirit as a metaphor for any insatiable, irrational hunger. He often figures colonists as Windegos, voracious consumers of others. The guide would help us see which Settlers were greedy or needy.

Not every appropriation of Indigenous culture by non-Indigenous people is a *conscious* Imperialistic conspiracy. Consider *tribute appropriations*—the decorating of one's self and home with *Aboriginalia* out of a genuine (or at least guileless) feeling of admiration. Tribute appropriation is a back-handed compliment, an urge to show affiliation with the 'other' by having their things.

Two weeks ago, I was in Calgary shopping for gifts in case I met with an elder here. I thought they might like a little Indigenous some thing—tokens of home. I am an idiot who falls into the modes I critique with alarming frequency. It's embarrassing. Weeks earlier, I was at a powwow and on the same mission, but everything was made in China or by the 'perhaps' tribes of Central America. There was almost nothing authentically Plains Cree, at a powwow! Now, there may be sound cultural reasons for this—people not wanting to commodify their art, separate it from its use and ceremony. But artists tell me otherwise. They say there is no market in Saskatchewan. People in the know can't pay what quality goods are worth and those who don't know buy the cheap knock-offs. Inexpensive fakes have ruined the market. Impressive Aboriginal art is made, but it goes to where those who both know and have money meet, the great Indigenous art fair two thousand miles in the south, in Santa Fe.

Calgary is cowboy and Indian heaven—heaven, that is, if you are Cher, circa 1974. The shops are stuffed with hideous "Indian" pastiches made in China or in India by Indians-of a sort: fluffy headdresses of the Las Vegas band; beaded belts with designs from the sham Sioux; machine stitched moccasins by the Counterfiet Cree; dream catchers from the Generic tribe for the wanna-be market. Who buys this stuff?

One danger of cultural pollution, following Baudrillard, is that the simulacra threatens to displace the (Ab)original. Indigenous kids are fed the same awful, distorted imitations as everyone else. *If* they know better, *what* they know is that their culture is not respected. While there *is* a revival of regalia making and powwow among inner-city prairie youth, many more turn to African American hip-hop culture because it, not Indigenous culture, is legitimized by the media. [I should say that I am a fan of Aboriginal hip hop as a form of the sort of metissage I will later discuss.]

Souvenir hunters, participants of low-end tribute appropriation, collect tokens from their travels. Because they only want signifiers, it doesn't matter if the totem pole is plastic or argillite, or if it is made by children in Guangdong or by Haida Gua artistans. In fact, the operation requires a willful blindness, a satisfaction with the inauthentic and disposable. They are only desirable *because* they are cheap fakes. It is their inauthenticity that allows them to function as affirmations of Whiteness: "I was there; I saw that; I bought this imitation, proof. I returned unaltered. I did not go Native." Let's put it this way, when your White neighbours start collecting real Aboriginal art from living artists and have Indigenous friends over for dinner (and not just the light-skinned fellas), and those guys collect your art, too, *then* you know we are Post the Apology.

Some Aboriginal artists are sucked into this game and make simulations of art to satisfy a higher level of tribute appropriation; one that craves decorative surfaces more than content. These consumers are looking for a mute Indigenous presence, proof that the owner is not racist. Being an art patron does not mean being patronizing.

Pastiche is easy to consume because it is designed not to be taken seriously. Counterfeit gee-gaws are jokes. I suppose that postmodern types enjoy kitsch because it upends the conventional art hierarchy, flattens things into a web of equal, equally inauthentic parts.

Few Aboriginal folks embrace it though, because it rarely rhymes with Indigenous worldviews. Deconstruction may be fine for the disenchanted, but it's annoying to those who are not so unburdened, who share a meta-narrative, are not alienated from culture, family, land and those who came before and inform us yet.

There are even more engaged forms of tribute appropriation. *Wanabeism* is a more intimate version of tribute acquisition and is a variety of transvestitism. Conventionally, the word describes men who costume themselves as women do. Cross-dressing is not performed for sexual excitement but as a way of identifying with admired women. *It is the appropriation of the aura of another for oneself.* The pleasure, I am told, derives from the tension of not quite becoming another and no longer quite being oneself. Caucasions parading as Indians used to be very common in North America. I remember regular visits from the Halloween tribe. In grade school we made "Indian" outfits from shopping bags and White actors often dressed as "Indians" on television and in movies. Now, you have to go to Germany, especially Cologne's Karnival, to see large numbers of White folks playing Karl May inspired wannabe "Indians". It is not that the impulse has subsided; it has just become a more sophisticated and less occasional.

I am not sure if it so here, as it is in Canada, but tattoos are popular. A fashionable genre is to sport ink from cultures not one's own. I haven't been to Japan, but I suppose the youth there must have etched above their asses, English words like "peaceful warrior" and "warm wind," as their counterparts in Canada have the Japanese calligraphic equivalents posted above their posteriors.

Even more popular than foreign language tattoos are 'tribal' tattoos. According to the "Vanishing Tattoo" website, home of the world's largest online tattoo museum, the search phrase, "*tribal tattoo designs*, accounts for nearly a third of all search requests." Of these, the most popular are Maori, Polynesian, Haida and other Native American designs. Given the relative low numbers of actual members of these communities, it's safe to assume that Indigenous people are not the only ones getting this ink.

The Monias I've asked, say they get Aboriginal markings because 'they look cool'. I suppose that they want something they think Indigenous people have and they do not. Call it what you like, the exotic, "Indian" aura. Unable to secure the real thing, they settle for the simulation, they permanently borrow a signifier of those admired attributes and peoples. Affecting tribal tattoos is mostly about signaling one's difference from the society one was born into. The gesture is symptomatic of disillusionment with one's own culture, rather than marking an authentic relationship with another.

Being more generous, one could read this as a desire for a post national body, the creation of cosmopolitan bodies released from origins. Free floating signifiers. Collage people. It is an interesting idea, but available only to a few privileged nomads. The more thoughtful Monias, report that they had a deep connection with the image; that they experienced a metaphysical need for a more permanent attachment. I want to respect this. But when should an inner force trump cross-cultural respect? And how do you know that voice is not a demon? This sort of appropriation begins with a sense of entitlement, the

assumption that everything is for the taking as long as you pay someone (anyone) for it. In the mainstream culture, wanting something, shopping for it, finding it and having the cash is all the legitimation one needs. Why is it that when powerful people recognize value in some less enfranchised culture's objects, it fills them with an urge to collect?

Did I mention that I am an idiot? Finding nothing in Calgary, and desperate for a small gift for an elder I might meet here, I settled on sweet grass. Tobacco and cloth are the traditional elder offerings on the Prairies, but sweet grass is also a common gift. It is hand-picked by those who know where to find it. It is blessed and braded in a symbolic way. It comes with a teaching. I am not a Traditional person, but I smudge on the direction of Elders. I have always been gifted my sweet grass and not being raised in the Cree culture; I didn't know the protocol.

I was here eleven months ago as part of the Aboriginal curatorial delegation from Canada. We had a great time but were idiots and forgot to bring gifts. Anyway, four days before my flight, and with no luck at the powwow or Calgary shops—no way I was going to palm off a dream catcher as authentic—I come up with sweet grass and in desperation Facebook my friends to see if anyone can hook me up. I asked where I could *buy* [my Monias aspect] sweet grass. In no time, my non-Aboriginal friends helpfully told me where to purchase it and my Aboriginal friends shamed me for thinking I could. Sweet grass is sacred and can only be gifted or traded. I am an idiot.

Non-Aboriginal people buy their sweet grass in the new-age shops, because, like me, they are ignorant. We want to participate in the Cree culture, but not really. A Cree guide took pity on me and gave me two braids, one for me, one for whomever I need to gift it. I think the message is that I am idiot, needing the medicine as much as an Elder here warrants the gift. [He also gave me this. The eagle feather is one of the highest honors given by Cree to their leaders and gifted people. It acknowledges their gift and right to speak. I got plumes. It means I'm on my way, but not yet there. It's a blessing and a warning.]

I am being less than charitable. There *are* times when we need to mark a personal event, and tattoos are a socially accepted alternative for those lacking the rites of passage and other legitimating rituals of a home culture or religion. When dominant culture imagery doesn't cut it, when Jesus and Mickey Mouse just don't quite say 'transformation', many go to what they consider the last site of authenticity—Traditional Indigenous cultures. What do these folks want? To shade their Whiteness with a little colour? I am not sure. But, if so, it is going to take quite a few tattoos to endanger that.

My mother used to volunteer at the Drumheller Institution, a medium security penitentiary in the Alberta Badlands. She is a calligrapher and taught these tough men how to make fancy cards with pen and ink. They called themselves the Pen-Pushers and were very popular because, for a fee, they would make exquisite cards for the sweethearts of other inmates. They are also famous for their brilliant tattoos. She is an active listener, and stories ease out of people in her presence. She was curious about one fellow who was missing his left arm. Eventually, he volunteered his story. Years earlier, he had been in

San Francisco and went to a tattoo parlor, admired some flash and had it reproduced on his arm. He was happy. Life's progress sent him to prison where his ink was much admired. Among the curious, though for proprietary reasons, were members of an outlaw motorcycle club who noted that the tattoo was one of theirs—and later that night retrieved their property.

I heard, but am unable to confirm, that Dee Dee Ramone—the heavily inked member of the seminal punk band the Ramones—had a Haida tattoo. Good thing for Dee Dee there are no Haida bikers!

People misappropriate because they think they can get away with it. They imagine that they can have gain without expense. Misappropriation is a dare, an exercise of power. Contemporary, non-Aboriginal artists do not "quote" contemporary Aboriginal artists. They copy their less enfranchised cousins, people they assume to be less powerful and less likely to collect their due.

Wisdom from the elders:

Before you judge a man, you should walk a mile in his moccasins.
Then, you are a mile away, and you have his moccasins!

Cree elders tell me that their knowledge—of the environment, medicines, stories, philosophy and spirituality—does not belong to them. They are keepers, not owners. Because the teachings are true, gifts shared by the Creator, they must be available to any who ask. Now, there are protocols that protect and guide transmission. Teachings are not bundled into packets, transcribed and published, bought and sold. The knowledge is not textual but contextual, a human-to-human exchange shared in special settings; an embodied gift unwrapped over time.

The Traditional Aboriginal worldview is eco-centric rather than economic-centric. It is about the inter-relation of all things and beings. It does not privilege, for instance, just one impulse (gain) over others. When the Indigenous man lends you his moccasins, he does so because of a cultural imperative to be hospitable, and a desire to offer you an intimate, tactile sense of what one small aspect of his experience feels like. Walking in his moccasins gives you a different orientation to the earth than treading in rubber soles. It would not cross his mind that you would steal his footwear and contest his worldview.

The fellow who walks off with the moccasins is also expressing a worldview, an astigmatic one that assumes that relationships are temporary and expendable. Possessing the fancy footwear has more value to him than does a future relationship. This orientation is provisional and nomadic rather than inhabited and communitarian. And besides, what's all this about judging a man?!

Most First Nations people do not live on reserves, but many do and maintain ties to these places, and most see themselves as inter-related. It is common for elders to open a

meeting with a prayer reminding the gathered that their work has an impact on the absent members whom they represent. A familiar closing prayer ends with the phrase “all our relations;” another reminder of connections and responsibilities. Among the first things Métis and First Nations people ask upon introduction is ‘where are you from’ and ‘who’s your mother’. The conversation continues until a connection is found and it is determined that you are cousins. If you understand yourself in continuous relation, you are less likely to engage in shoe stealing and person judging because the victim is likely to be a relation and word will get around the moccasin telegraph.

The moccasin joke reveals a fundamental culture clash. It takes an apparent bit of Aboriginal wisdom and turns it on its head—suggesting that the world is not like that—the White perspective is true, the Indigenous false. The fellow whose moccasins are pinched is pictured as sincere in the first sentence, then naïve in the second. The world is not full of people who want to know more about you. It is full of thieves who want your property.

Indigenous and Settler relation begins with a fundamental anxiety. ‘I want to share my culture with you, I want you to share yours with me, but if your perspective is based on possession and commodification, we have a problem. Knowing your acquisitive drive and experiencing a long history of appropriation and expropriation, how can I now trust that you will not steal my moccasins, copy write our stories, or patent our medicines?’

From the moment of contact, Indigenous cultures have sought to cope with Settler cravings for their things by creating screen objects—sculptures, masks and garments that have the patina of the originals but none of the meaning. They created *artifakes* to protect the originals—objects that could be traded without giving anything away. The Haida, for example, carved argillite to look like ‘authentic’ ceremonial pipes, only the holes in the bowl and stem did not meet. Visitors bought signifiers of Haida culture but could not enjoy full use. These Indigenous people had a canny understanding of the Settler worldview and strove to pacify the Windegos. They gave them what they wanted, *works of art*, in the European sense of aesthetic things, objects to be looked at rather than used. Settlers are consumers of Aboriginal appearances rather than content.

Old ethnology wants a division between Traditional and post-contact Aboriginal art. This attitude does not see cultures as dynamic and leaves little room for contemporary creators who, under this gaze, could only be either ‘authentic’, derivative late-comers if they create copies, or contaminated if they devise hybrids and resistive practices that nevertheless extend earlier forms.

But a funny thing happened as the Haida were making their artifakes. They got into it. They liked making hybrids of Traditional and Settler cultures. The pipes started to represent not just their totem poles but ships and white folks. Ethnographers argue that this is a result of trade forces. Sure, it is adaptation, cultural metissage. The artists dealt with the new reality through symbolic manipulation. Traditionalist mourn a loss, Contemporary artists embrace the change.

The early anthropologist, Franz Boas, who among others studied the Inuit, observed more than a century ago that every culture has two competing internal forces, Traditionalists who want to keep things as they are and innovators who want change. These are compulsive tendencies, evolutionary useful strategies that ensure that cultures neither stagnate and fail to adapt to changes from without, nor become too dynamic and lose their cohesion and continuity.

Mettisage is neither good nor bad. It is inevitable. From a Modernist account, Haida adaptation are inauthentic because impure. The desire for pure "Indians" is difficult to resist but must be. It is a logic snare set by old colonialists as a means of clearing the land of its original inhabitants. The strategy was to make living Indigenous subjects impossible. It goes like this: Only the original, pre-contact inhabitants of the Americas are authentic Indians. There are no pre-contact Indians; therefore, there are no authentic Indians. No authentic Indians, no authentic land claims.

In the minds of some, this snare still has purchase. Some Settlers, under the principle of egalitarianism, would prefer to wipe the slate clean, ignore history, especially the treaties, and position Aboriginal people as just another minoritied group. You can appreciate the simplicity of the argument. It is an amnesic project designed to aid in their assimilation into the melting pot, dissolve them in the multi-cultural stew, or at least suspend them in the cultural mosaic. 'We'll forget your history and you should, too. It's what's holding you back.' A signal difference between the Indigenous and all later arrivals is that Settlers have places they came from. Indigenous peoples are already at home. There is no other homeland. This is it. First Peoples need to constantly assert this fact and struggle to have it enshrined if they are to continue *to be*. The struggle is not to return to pre-contact time, or some Romantic facsimile—that ship has sailed—it is about finding creative ways to be Contemporary Aboriginals.

Brian Jungen is Dunne-Za from the northeastern interior of British Columbia who appropriates the look of Haida masks (not his tribe) and mashes them up with urban sneaker culture. The resulting hybrids are a hilarious commentary on being a hybrid himself.

Some First Nations people decry baseball teams, like the Cleveland Indians, who co-opt Native imagery; others proudly wear their jerseys. The same jersey means something different when worn by a white fan in Cleveland than when it is worn by a Native youth in Winnipeg. Jungen demonstrates that contemporary urban Indian culture is becoming more hybrid than purist and because many are savvy about visual codes, they can redeploy oppressive images for their own resistive, and ironic uses.

White students often wonder why First Nations and Métis artists are applauded when *they* appropriate and distort Western culture, while White artists, if they just dream of quoting Aboriginal images and styles, are pilloried. It's simple. Contemporary Indigenous artists are bi-cultural. They were raised in the Western tradition as surely as their non-Aboriginal colleagues. They are just playing the game they learned at school. If a White

artist were similarly raised, that is, as a Caucasian within a dominant Indigenous cultural setting, they might be inspired to similarly rage against their subjectification. As it is, Non-Aboriginal artists ought not to imitate Indigenous culture because it is not theirs for the taking.

When non-Aboriginal people 'borrow' from Indigenous culture, the intent is rarely critical. It is for gain: financial, social and spiritual. Caucasian artists are not yet in the habit, for example, of hijacking unflattering pictures of White folks by Aboriginals and refiguring them to set the record straight. There is no need. Euro-Canadians produce a flurry of images to reflect their many possible selves—some good, some bad—but there are plenty to choose from or ignore. It is easy to create an assemblage of oneself from the available pictures. Few of these images are addressed to Euro-Canadians by the state to show them how they ought to be—and the several campaigns that do try this have lots of competition. However, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are represented less frequently, less accurately, less flatteringly and with less range. Until very recently, they were typically displayed as a dying race, savages, Romantic antiques, or, the ever-popular 'deficient subjects in need of charity or correction.' There is no wonder that contemporary Indigenous artists have made a clever industry of correcting these mistakes and providing better examples.

Western art since Giotto is competitive. It begins with copying the masters, working in a tradition and then, as Norman Bryson explains, one generation tries to beat the previous by taking on their themes or styles and out-classing, out painting, or out maneuvering them. This defeat of the Father allows the artist to then move on to make a unique contribution—which is then challenged by the next generation. This type of appropriation is a means of showing your cultural competency while discrediting some aspect your master's took for granted—such as racism—and creating room for yourself to exist as a freer agent rather than as a copy copying.

The tragedy of the competitive model as it has evolved is that most Aboriginal artists don't go past satire to make a positive contribution to the culture because vitriolic mash-ups can pay quite well. Indulging patricidal rage is a dead-end. You know you have to rethink your strategy if decades on, you still find yourself poking a pale corpse hoping for a fight you can win.

First Nations and Métis artists signify within the mainstream because they speak its language. Settlers prefer to listen to those who sound and more or less look and dress as they do. Sure, they *will* collect exotica they cannot understand because they cannot understand it, but prefer to attend, human-to-human, only those who translate themselves into their "professional" discourse. The problem, predictably, is that many Indigenous artists lose themselves in translation and become whatever their masters require.

Those who simultaneously resist and yet also play ball, do so under enormous psychological stress. Having been educated, gained some social, psychological and other resources often creates a distance between them and their 'bush' cousins. Ironically, the element that the dominant culture appreciates in them—their ability to act as go-

betweens, to translate the elusive, magical Aboriginal world into English—is threatened if they lose their connections to their Indigenous roots. It's catch 22. Many feel that they cannot simply enjoy their earned privileges the way a mainstream artist might. They must make use of their position to help the community.

Appropriation allows the disenfranchised, and those working on their behalf, to re-form the mental images that shape mainstream culture's understanding of them by using these images against themselves. For example, Kent Monkman's faux 19th century paintings refurbish history not only from an Aboriginal but also gay perspective. His queering of historical "Indian" painting has many consider the previously unimaginable. Picturing same-sex imaginary "Indians" may open the door to the acceptance of real gay Aboriginal people.

However, elite culture is not damaged much by Monkman's cheeky interventions. If it were, there would be blowback; there isn't. His work is eagerly collected by the rich and by important institutions. His efforts are rewarded with government grants and public exhibitions. His paintings could not exist forty years ago. To minds that still entertain antique notions of Aboriginal and gay people, they shock and so have educational value. But they do not fluster the elites who now run the show. Post the Apology, such provocations are not just tolerated, but are actively encouraged. Public representations of minoritized ways of being and oppositional thinking are considered necessary for a dynamic society's evolution. Negotiating dissent and accommodating difference are the hallmarks of a mature and adaptable society. States accommodate a polyphony of dissenting voices as long as they remain dissonant. It is only when the discordant orchestrate into collective harmony that they threaten the existing order and are met with resistance.

Elite culture embraces angry Aboriginal art as a means of publicly distancing its members from the grim folks who started and perpetuated the whole colonial mess. Dominant Culture 2.0 has a sophisticated understanding of visual culture and dissent. It supports Indigenous rage as long as it is confined to the symbolic realm, and asks for exhibition space rather than real estate. However, given a choice, even this elite prefers its Indigenous art-lite. In the public galleries, 'give me righteous indignation. For home and office, I prefer abstract, decorative or oblique, rather than confrontational, embarrassing and didactic.'

Apart from homoeconomicus—the belief that people are defined by their ability to produce and consume—Dominant Culture 2.0 has no collective identity or purpose. These pursuits are relinquished to the realm of the private rather than the collective. Dominant Culture 2.0 is multiple, contingent and celebrates difference—after all, novelty and impermanence fuel consumer society. However there are deeper, contrary reasons for Settler interest in Aboriginality.

Traditional Indigenous cultures, real or imagined, are becoming a psychologically necessary counter-point for societies disillusioned with postmodern, late-capitalist

ideology. For Canadians, the “Indian” is a familiar other—a shadow-self, an imaginary metaphysical core at the Nation’s vacant center.

The Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) recently adopted (read appropriated-without-permission) a modified version of an Inuit inunnguaq (Ee-non-WAWK) sculpture to represent Canada to the world for the 2010 Olympic games. It was designed by an non-Aboriginal artist without consulting the Inuit. Canadian institutions often employ “Indian” art—especially totem poles, teepees, canoes and images of First Nations people in powwow regalia—for its international branding. And corporations and governments sponsor exhibitions of Traditional Indigenous art in an effort to associate their institutions with Indigenous cultural heritage *as synonymous* with Canadian heritage.

The images are familiar and benign reminders of the past: Canada’s quaint yet mysterious face. However, for the folks back home, this is not just public relations. They satisfy a deep need and are part of a Nationalistic strategy. The state deploys “Indian” images as a means of psychologically mooring Settlers to this land and releasing them from the places they came from.

Many Immigrants wander Turtle Island like phantom limbs; their hearts are buried in distant homelands. They don’t feel at home here. How do you unite a colony of disparate new Settlers? Dominate Culture 2.0’s “’Indian’ package” offers a common appropriated heritage, a set of symbols from Canada alone, different from every other place.

A century ago, the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung visited the United States for the first time. He recognized European bodies walking the streets but commented that their souls where not quite European, there something of the African in them.

It makes sense that Settlers want to feel comfortable, at home—in our ‘home and Native land’. And the elders tell us that they are welcome, as long as they respect the place and its keepers. But it makes better sense that Settlers have an authentic relationship with their neighbours—that they relate to and learn about the land from the real and the living, rather than from the fictional or the dead.

Selecting a non-Indigenous artist who hijacked an Inuit design was obviously a misstep. VANOC choose to weather the storm and keep the logo, despite the opposition. They know that an Indigenous symbol satisfies the need for a unified sense of belonging to this land better than any device from the polyphony of Immigrant cultural sources. The error was in misappropriating rather appropriating. They should have asked.

For Aboriginal people, Art Post the Apology will continue with more of the same. The work of decolonizing minds on both sides of the post remains a noble and necessary profession. However, the novelty of labouring in the irony mine will wane. Parodic appropriation of Western imagery is effective as an initial tactic—but over time, the sting is soothed. Dominant Culture 2.0 comprehends the opposition’s tropes, especially when

addressed to them in their own terms, however acidic—and buys them out. More importantly, the People, that is Aboriginal people, want constructive leadership from their artists and positive examples in addition to refreshed critical strategies.

The intended audiences of 19th century African American "Slave Narratives" were White people. Former slaves wrote about their lives and tried to signify to those who mattered—rich White people who might affirm their humanity. It wasn't until the early 20th century, during the Harlem Renaissance, that African American authors began to write to African Americans. Some of us in Canada are wishing, writing and painting into being a Red Renaissance, a central requirement of which is that we address our own people, not just the dominant culture. We should continue to make 'International art', if we like, but it should not feel that it needs to be alienated from home to be accepted. Its heart and first audience should be local.

Before coming here, I asked Elders about the role of contemporary artists within the culture. I assumed they would be averse to non-traditional art. But each told me that same thing. Artists are like shaman—not all, not always, not literally. To pursue their research, they may need to violate protocols and piss people off. They are granted a certain license by the community, though, because their products often provide a social good greater than the harms their research may inflict.

If artists are not quite shaman, they might be Contraries. In Plains Cree culture, contraries are possessed people. They break protocols, dress oddly, do crazy things and say the opposite of what they mean. It is hard to be this way for long. Eventually, the person gets straightened out, cured of whatever made them susceptible to the contrary possession. People in the community cautiously support this difference, let them act out, knowing that it will pass with an improvement. Some Contemporary Indigenous artists act like contraries. They are in the ironic mode saying the opposite of what they think and feel until they get right and can live a more sustainable existence.

Artists must be permitted their madness, their immaturity, their foolishness. For from this mad research can come aesthetic, even moral, breakthroughs. The boon is worth the bane. However, in the Indigenous world, contraries and shaman exist within a society. Protocols, elders and spirit guides shepherd them through their work. In the art world, artists have curators.

An old definition of curator is "one appointed as guardian of the affairs of a person legally unfit to conduct himself, as a minor, lunatic, etc." Curators stand between artists and the public. If artists are to be unfettered, even to the point of irresponsibility, it is in their studio. New ideas often require messy processes, but that doesn't mean that all messes are art and worthy of public display and discourse. When a curator elects to exhibit an artist's work, they take on a complex set of responsibilities. The primary one is to understand as many of its intentional and unintentional meanings as possible and communicate them despite the artist. There is in this relationship something akin to the editor/writer partnership. Both are gatekeepers that do not just open or close but filter. Of course, curators can only do their best. Great art always exceeds comprehension.

In conclusion, Indigenous ‘high’ art after the Apology no longer needs an apologetics, it is not an endangered species requiring protection. It requires critical attention that recognizes that it is a form of critical engagement with the whole of experience, rather than simply a minoritized cultural expression in need of translation. Indigenous artists need generous critique and the courage to accept it.